

509.03 Students and Staff Memorials

Friday, August 11, 2023

STUDENT AND STAFF MEMORIALS

The Board recognizes that when a school experiences the sudden death of a student or staff member, it is important to acknowledge the event. Additionally, certain traumatic events occurring outside the school community may also require acknowledgment through appropriate activities. Requests for remembering or memorializing a person or event shall be approved by the Superintendent, subject to this policy. Major school ceremonies such as graduation, awards, and scholarship events are not appropriate for significant memorial activities. School-wide recognition of anniversary dates will not occur. District counseling services may be made available to provide support.

The Board recognizes that memorials of flowers, personal messages and mementoes are often created at lockers, student gathering spaces and other areas on district property upon such losses or events. Memorials may be permitted at the discretion of the building principal. Administrators will consult with the family of the deceased, as appropriate. The display of all remembrances will be temporary in nature, removed in a timely manner and offered to the family. Temporary memorial symbols displayed on school grounds will be limited to a maximum of one month past the occurrence being memorialized. Gifts or donations to the District Foundation for scholarships are encouraged for a more lasting remembrance.

Requests may be made to memorialize an individual or event in the school yearbook or one edition of the school newspaper/newsletter. Information may be included on a "Memorial Page," but should be limited to the name, photo, dates of birth/death, and school activities in which the student or staff member participated. It is not appropriate to list cause of death in the publication.

In considering memorial activity requests, the administration will balance memorializing or commemorating the individual or event on the one hand, while not creating an atmosphere that may glamorize, romanticize or stigmatize a traumatic event. In the event the board approves a memorial to be placed on school grounds,

it is strongly recommended that such memorials be in the form of a living memorial, such as a tree. Individuals must realize that in the future the memorial may experience demolition when tree has died or been damaged, or modifications for any other reason if the board determines that the memorial should be moved or removed.

The district may receive items for the school as a memorial to a student or person having special significance to the students of that school. Items received as memorials become the property of the district. Donors must have the Superintendent's prior approval to donate any such item to the district. The Superintendent may establish guidelines for the acceptance of such memorials.

Existing memorials established prior to the implementation of this policy will be handled on an individual basis.

When deemed appropriate by the Superintendent, schools may observe a moment of silence in memory of the individual or in recognition of certain events. Otherwise, student, staff or community deaths will not be announced or memorialized over the intercom or on reader boards. School will not be cancelled, delayed or dismissed early on the day of a memorial service without Superintendent approval. Flags may be lowered only in accordance with state and federal law.