

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 283

SECTION/FILE 721 **DATE OF ADOPTION** 1/11/16

TITLE **Memorials and Memorial Activities for Deceased Students and Staff**

I. PURPOSE

St. Louis Park Public Schools recognizes that the loss of a student or staff member deeply impacts students, staff, and families. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the St. Louis Park Public Schools support students, staff, and families impacted by a death.

II. DEFINITIONS

Memorials: Objects to remember an event or deceased person(s).

Memorial Activities: Activities to remember an event or deceased person(s).

Permanent Memorials: A memorial intended to be sustained over time.

Crisis Support Team (CST): A designated group of trained professionals, as assigned by the principal, providing grief services following a death of a student or staff member.

III. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

In recognition that schools are designed primarily to support learning, school sites should not serve as the main venue for the memorializing of students or staff. Memorials and memorial activities expressed at school need to be coordinated and approved through the Crisis Support Team (CST), as well as the principal or their designee and in consultation with the superintendent or their designee. The CST will assist families and students in selecting memorial activities that are appropriate for school and assist students and staff in healthy bereavement. District funds and district student activity accounts cannot be used to support, finance, or fundraise for memorials or memorial activities. It is further recognized that principal or their designee should have a certain amount of discretion in these situations to make professional judgments, in consultation with the Superintendent, to best meet the overall needs of students, staff, parents and the community.

RECOMMENDED MEMORIAL PROCEDURES

Memorial decisions made immediately after a death may be made without full consideration of the potential implications for all involved. The following guidelines are offered to assist the Crisis Support Team and administration when making such decisions.

Recommended for Memorial Activities

Temporary Memorials

It is recommended that temporary memorials, as approved by the CST and the building principal, be displayed within the school building until one week after the death, at which time they will be given to the family by the school principal. Temporary memorials may include banners, pictures, student desk displays, etc. Memorials displayed by individual students or staff on school grounds (outside school building) will be limited to one month.

Permanent Memorials

It is recommended that permanent memorials for deceased students and staff be limited to endowments, scholarships, or items with educational significance. Scholarship and endowment memorials may be established one time, or in the form of a perpetual award, with a description of the purpose of the endowment or scholarship. It is recommended that memorials not include the retirement, alteration, or discontinued use of school property.

Memorial Activities

A memorial activity may be held in the name of a deceased student or staff member. It is recommended that such events not be held during the school day, and be sponsored by a class, club, or activity in which the deceased student or staff member participated. Notice of a memorial activity should occur outside the school day. It is recommended that the memorial activity utilize community partners such as employers and faith communities and be approved by the principal, superintendent, or their designee.

Graduation Recognition

It is recommended that one symbol representing all deceased members of a graduation class, such as a plant or bouquet of flowers, may be present on stage. It is also recommended the name of a deceased student or students be read at the beginning of the commencement process. The Superintendent is the final authority for all additional High School Graduation decisions.

Moment of Silence

A “moment of silence” may be used following the death of a student or staff member. School-wide moments of silence should occur within two school days following notification of the death. Moments of silence are also approved for use at ISD #283 Board of Education meetings, co-curricular events, and community based events and should occur as near the date of the death of student or staff member as possible.

Other Notes

It is recommended that existing memorials established prior to the implementation of this policy will remain intact. Existing memorials are generally the sole responsibility of the entity providing the memorial; district staff and/or finances may only be used to maintain current memorials as part of the regular maintenance processes and/or to ensure safe conditions. The district reserves the right to remove a memorial if it is not or cannot be maintained or is contrary to the overall educational needs of students.

Family Communication

It is recommended that the superintendent, principal, or their designee communicate as appropriate with the family of the deceased in applying the policy and procedure.

Not Recommended for Memorial Activities

Fundraising

It is recommended that selling and/or fundraising of memorial items occur outside of the school day. District student activity accounts cannot be used to support, finance, or fundraise for memorialization. Proceeds from district co-curricular events or contests cannot be donated to agencies for memorialization.

Memorial Services at School

It is recommended that school district facilities not be used for formal memorial services. However, the Superintendent has the discretion to consider approving community-based memorial events that utilize district facilities when the death of a student, staff member, or community member has a significant impact on students, staff, and community.

Anniversary Dates

It is recommended that formal, school-wide recognition of anniversary dates only occur with approval from the Superintendent. If the death of a student or staff member occurred in a public location accessible by community members, such as a crash site, district staff should not provide anniversary monitoring.