

Dedications, Memorials and Recognitions

The Board acknowledges that there are occasions when the loss of a member of the school community is deeply felt by students, staff, families, and the community. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the District supports those impacted consistent with Board policy.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- **“Memorial”** is a memorial, dedication, recognition or anything that is established in the honor of a deceased person.
- **“Temporary memorial”** is an organized collection of objects, typically left at the site of a tragedy, that exists for no longer than one month after the death of an individual.
- **“Permanent memorial”** is a donation, endowment or scholarship that has an educational purpose.

Memorial options

As places designed primarily to support learning, school sites shall not serve as the primary venue for memorializing students or staff.

1. Temporary memorials shall be limited to flower arrangements, banners, pictures, notes and locker or student desk displays and, once approved by the Superintendent in accordance with this policy, may be placed within the school building or on the school grounds as designated by the building principal. All temporary memorials shall be removed within two days of the date of the funeral, or within two weeks following the death of the student or staff member, whichever is earlier, and, if appropriate, will be given to the family designated by district officials or discarded. If temporary memorials have not been removed by those establishing them within the timelines provided in this policy, then District staff will remove the temporary memorials. Any temporary memorial that is placed cannot alter District-owned property.
2. Permanent memorials shall be limited to student or faculty awards, donations, collections of books or other donated items of educational significance; or endowments or scholarships as administered through the Thompson Education Foundation. Scholarships and endowments may be established either as one-time or perpetual awards, with a description of the purpose of the endowment or scholarship. The school principal, superintendent or his/her designee, or the executive director of the Thompson Education Foundation reserve the right to accept or decline such endowments or scholarships.

It is recommended that individuals requesting to establish a memorial combine their efforts to enhance the recognition for a significant loss.

Except as otherwise provided herein, all items received as memorials become the property of the District and the District makes no guarantees that memorials that become damaged or worn will be replaced or repaired.

Request for memorials

All memorials must receive prior approval from the Superintendent or his/her designee. Individuals or groups may submit a request to the Superintendent to establish a memorial in accordance with this policy. A complete request must include:

1. A complete physical description (and drawings or photos if appropriate) of the proposed memorial, including whether it is temporary or permanent as defined in this policy.
2. A detailed description of all initial costs and anticipated future maintenance costs of the proposed memorial, including removal.
3. A narrative detailing the purpose and rationale for the proposed memorial. It is the Board's intention for the individual or group requesting the installation of a memorial to assume the cost of the request and not cause undue financial burden on the District.

The Superintendent or his/her designee in consultation with best practices, and other feedback provided by the school crisis response team, will notify the individual or group making the request in writing within five school days of his/her decision whether to grant the memorial request.

Prohibited memorials and memorial activities

The District will not allow:

1. Memorials that interfere with the educational environment.
2. Memorials that require the altering of school property.
3. Memorials that require the altering of school activities or the activity schedule.
4. Memorials that infringe on the separation of church and state.
5. Memorials that require the use of public funds to purchase, develop, or maintain, including but not limited to custodial fees.
6. Memorials that draw attention or have the potential to glamorize the death.
7. Memorials in the yearbook, except that families may purchase typical student celebration advertisements and such printed recognitions shall be subject to the established school yearbook guidelines and procedures.
8. Memorials that otherwise violate federal, state or local law or Board policies or regulations.

In all instances, the Board reserves the right to remove, relocate, take down, discard, or discontinue any memorial if a facility or the grounds are experiencing maintenance, modification, demolition, or for any other reason deemed necessary by the Board or its designee. The thoughtful removal of any temporary memorial shall occur when no students are in session. The Superintendent shall make reasonable efforts to notify the individual or group that established the memorial or, in the case of an existing memorial, the original donor if the identity of such individual or group is known and can reasonably be located, of such considerations.

Existing memorials

Existing temporary or permanent memorials established prior to the adoption of this policy will remain intact as originally accepted, subject to the other guidelines on relocation, replacement, repair, and removal as designated in this policy. Existing memorials are generally the sole responsibility of the entity providing the memorials and the District will not expend financial resources or labor to maintain such memorials or to ensure safe conditions. The District reserves the right to remove an existing memorial if it is not or cannot be maintained or is contrary to the overall educational needs of the students.

Adopted April 24, 2019