

Regulation 5232R.1

Non-Instructional/Business Operations

Commemoration Guidelines for Deceased Student, Faculty, or Staff

A school commemoration is intended to bring closure to a period of grieving and serve as a way to remember and honor the deceased. Commemorations should reflect the needs of the District and school community while being respectful to the deceased individual and his/her/their family.

For each commemoration, it is important to consider the precedent that is set and the short- and long-term implications. These guidelines are intended to assist in concert with *Trauma, Illness, and Grief (TIG)* teams. The administrators and teams may work with families and/or help individuals or groups who want to commemorate current students and staff in the event of a death.

While each loss impacts the community and District differently, the guidelines below are intended to provide a consistent approach to common considerations.

Immediate District Commemoration: The West Irondequoit Central School District will coordinate with the family of the deceased to:

- Fly a mourning flag the next school day outside of the school building(s) and District office. (<http://www.gettysburgflag.com/mourning-bunting-ribbon-protocol>).
- Fly the flag of the United States at half-staff the next school day for adults who are active service members or veterans.
- Observe a moment of silence during morning announcements or at the end of the school day.
- Maintain awareness of school and/or community-based events.
- Facilitate via the TIG team for students/faculty/staff sympathy cards of support to be shared with the family of the deceased.

In the event of a large-scale tragedy, additional support may be requested and approved through building and District administration.

Attendance at Calling Hours and/or Funeral Services

- Faculty members who choose to attend funerals or calling hours or may volunteer to become part of a delegation representing the District.
- A faculty member who serves as a member of the District delegation and attends a funeral or calling hours outside of the school day will not be expected to supervise or intervene with students since ceremonies outside of the school District are private functions.
- When calling hours or memorial services fall within the hours of a school day, faculty should coordinate with the building principal to ensure appropriate classroom coverage. Faculty who choose to attend, independent of any District delegation, will do so by utilizing their personal time.
- Activities and support in the classroom to address the loss will be provided with the support of the building TIG team, counselors, social workers, psychologists, and administrators, and will be coordinated with the building principal.

Commemoration Requests

- The final planning of commemorations should take place within one year from the date/time of the loss.
- Commemoration requests should be made through an application process (*see attached form*) to the building principal or coordinator of the District TIG team.
- Requests for scholarships, awards, and educational materials are permitted. Plans for funding will be assumed by the family of the deceased and coordinated with the District.
- Commemoration requests will be considered in the context of District guidelines and in consultation with both impacted faculty and the family of the deceased.
- Physical commemorations will be permitted for *West Irondequoit Central School District* students/alumni up to one year post-graduation. Staff commemorations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Physical commemorations will be maintained to the best of the District's ability. If the commemoration requires removal, the District will partner with the initiator of the request to proceed respectfully. In all cases, efforts will be made to return items to the initiator of the request.
- Temporary memorials may be permitted in consultation with the building principal, the District TIG team, and the Superintendent. These memorials may be on display for up to five school days or when a natural break occurs in the school calendar. Items left at the temporary memorial may be shared with the family.

Response to Requests for Commemoration

- The building principal and/or the coordinator of the District TIG team will respond in a timely fashion to any commemorative requests.
- Commemoration requests will be considered through submission of the *Commemoration Request Form* to the building principal and/or the coordinator of the District TIG team, who will review requests with the District Cabinet.
- Recommendations for each commemoration will be reviewed by the building principal/TIG Team and District Cabinet prior to a recommendation to the Superintendent.
- The Superintendent will make final determinations.
- The District reserves the right to accept or reject any or all commemorations donated or purchased in memory of a student or staff member. Furthermore, the District reserves the right to request commemorations currently on school property to be respectfully disassembled.

Examples of Commemorations

- A brick inscribed in the courtyard. Wording on a brick will be limited to "Donated in memory of..." or "In memory of..." along with student/staff member's legal name and year of donation.
- School yearbook dedication.
- Contributions to a scholarship established in the name of the deceased through the West Irondequoit Central School District.
- Contributions by students/staff to memorials designated by the family, e.g., the West Irondequoit Foundation.
- The purchase of library books, school supplies, and equipment with the approval of the building principal. Donated books may include a bookplate, and other items may consist of an engraved plate no larger than two by six inches. Wording on the plates will be limited

to "Donated in memory of..." or "In memory of....," along with the student/staff member's legal name and year of donation.

- In addition to the above listed suggested commemorations, singular events may also be considered. Singular events are intended for the dual purpose of both memorializing and providing closure.
- Singular events such as acts of community service, a District event (athletic game or other extra-curricular activity), and the development of creative expressive works, including artwork, concerts, and films, may also be included in the request process.
- Any memorial fundraising efforts must comply with the *West Irondequoit Central School District* Board of Education policies.
- The approval and location of any commemoration are at the discretion of the building principal and the Superintendent.

Unacceptable commemorations include those which may:

- Violate Title IX or other federal guidelines.
- Contradict our school District's mission.
- Significantly alter the conduct of a regular school instructional day.
- Significantly alter school activities or the school activities schedule.
- Require the retirement or discontinued use of school property. This retirement may include such items as sport team jerseys or uniform numbers.
- Be permanent, such as monuments and statues.
- Infringe on the separation of church and state.
- Require the use of public funds for purchase, development, or maintenance beyond the normal care and maintenance of school properties.
- Involve permanent landscaping, including gardens and trees. The District discourages living memorials such as trees due to the maintenance and life span. Placement of such memorials has the potential to limit future building projects and diminish safety sightlines.

Yearbook guidelines

- Appropriate space may be designated in the yearbook commemoration of students/staff members. This space will include a uniform size picture of each student/staff member, if available, along with the deceased legal name and dates of birth and death as deemed appropriate.
- If there is a death after the printing of the yearbook and the student has not graduated, the student's photograph may appear in the next year's yearbook or in the year the student would have graduated.
- A deceased student/staff member's photograph, if available, may be included with the photographs of other students/staff in the class for the year covered by the yearbook.

Commencement Ceremony guidelines

- Commencement is a time to recognize the many years of work and achievement of the seniors; therefore, efforts to maintain the focus of the ceremony is essential.
- If the name of the deceased student is read, it should be read in the same order that it would have been read if the student were graduating.
- If appropriate, a commemoration that aligns with the primary purpose of the graduation ceremony and is of a suitable length of time in balance with the rest of the ceremony may be requested.
- If a student passes away in the senior year prior to graduation and has met the graduation requirements, a posthumous diploma may be awarded to the family of the deceased. If a

- student passes away in the senior year prior to graduation but has not met the graduation requirements, a certificate of attendance may be awarded to the family of the deceased.
- Families are not encouraged to participate in the commencement ceremony.

Established: 06-04-2020

West Irondequoit Central School District

Commemoration Request Form

Please return this form to the building principal.

Name of person(s) making request: _____ Date: _____

Name of deceased: _____

Date of death: _____

Relationship to deceased: _____

Requesting party's contact information:

Address

Preferred phone number

Email

Description of requested commemoration:

The West Irondequoit Central School District reserves the right to accept/reject any and all commemorations donated and purchased. Physical commemorations will be maintained to the best of the District's ability. If the commemoration request requires removal, the District will partner with the applicant of the request to respectfully proceed. In all cases, reasonable efforts will be made to return commemoration items to the applicant of the request.

Building/ TIG Team Review Date: _____

District Cabinet Review Date: _____

Rationale (if applicable): _____

Superintendent's Signature

Date

_____ *Approved* _____ *Not Approved*

Applicant informed of decision (date) : _____