Policy 560
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MEMORIALS FOR DECEASED STUDENTS AND STAFF

I. PURPOSE

Big Lake 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 Big Lake Schools support staff, students, and families impacted by a death are connected to appropriate school and community resources. Because it is recognized that memorial decisions made immediately in the aftermath of a crisis or death may be made without full consideration of the potential implications for students, staff, families and the community, Big Lake Schools will utilize a process for memorial decision-making, aligned to this Board approved policy regarding memorial activities. The District reserves the right to determine if a memorial is appropriate.

This policy recognizes that memorials after suicide require intentional messaging to appropriately recognize the deceased without contributing to additional emotional trauma or suicide risk of others. Therefore, careful and deliberate consideration has been given in determining approved memorial activities.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Memorials: Objects or activities to remember an event or deceased person(s).
B. Living Memorials: A memorial intended to be sustained over time.
C. Crisis Response Team (CRT): An appointed group of staff members at each building who consult with the building principal to help coordinate building-wide procedures and protocols for mental health needs in the recovery phase of a crisis situation needing grief support.
D. Crisis Support Team (CST): A designated group of district and non-district professionals to provide grief services following a death of a student or staff member including clergy, outside community support, grief specialists, school-linked therapist, etc.
E. Crisis: Any natural disaster or unexpected event that negatively affects a student, a staff member or a significant group of the school population and usually involves serious emotional, psychological and/or physical injury or death.
F. Impact: The magnitude of the potential loss or seriousness of the crisis.

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. Memorial activities expressed at school need to be coordinated and approved through the Crisis Response Team (CRT), as well as building administration. The CRT will assist families and students in selecting memorial activities that are appropriate for school and assist students and staff in healthy bereavement. It is further recognized that building administration should have a certain amount of discretion in these situations to make professional judgments -- in consultation with the Superintendent and CRT -- to best meet the overall needs of students, staff, parents and the community as a whole.

IV. MEMORIAL POLICY

Temporary memorials may be displayed within the school building or on school grounds until the day of the funeral, or within one week following the death, which ever comes first, after which time they will be given to the family by designated district officials. Allowable temporary memorials include banners, pictures, and student desk displays, and are only allowed in locations monitored by school officials. Temporary memorials cannot alter district owned property, including lockers and desks. All temporary memorial activities must occur under the direct supervision of the administration. Memorials for deceased students and staff will 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. Memorials may not include the retirement, alteration, or discontinued use of school property. Other recommended memorial activities include:

A. Yearbooks: A student or staff member who has died may be acknowledged in the yearbook during the year of their death. Information will be limited to their name, photo, age at death, and school activities in which they participated.
B. Commemorative Events and/or Items: A commemorative event may be established and held in the name of the deceased student or staff member. Activities cannot be held during the school day, and may be sponsored by a class, club, or activity in which the deceased student or staff member participated. Events held on district property require prior district approval. Advertisement of events must occur outside the school day.
C. Graduation Recognition: One symbol representing all deceased members of a graduating class, beginning with the freshman year, such as a plant, bouquet of flowers or empty chair, may be present on stage. A member of the school administration can also direct the audience in a moment of silence to collectively recognize deceased members of the graduating class.
D. Moment of Silence Recognition: A 'moment of silence' may be used following the death of a student or staff member to honor their memory. School-wide moments of silence should occur within 2 school days following notification of the death. Moments of silence are also approved for use at ISD 727 Board of Education meetings, co-curricular events in which the deceased participated, and community based events.

Approved 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 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.

V. PROHIBITED MEMORIAL ACTIVITIES

Selling and/or fundraising of memorial items during the school day is prohibited. 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. Utilizing formal all-school or school-

wide events, including, Homecoming festivities, Prom, and other thematic events or weeks to memorialize deceased students or staff is prohibited. Commemorative items or events can be sponsored by community-based agencies and promoted outside the school day. With parental request, commencement ceremonies may recognize a deceased student with an empty chair and program recognition.

School district facilities will not be used for formal memorial services or funerals.

However, the Superintendent, in consultation with the CRT, has the discretion to consider memorial events that utilize district facilities.

Formal, school-wide recognition of anniversary dates will not occur.

If the death of a student or staff member occurred on school property or in a public location accessible by community members, such as a crash site, district staff will not provide memorial monitoring and any displays on district property will be removed after the day of the funeral or within one week following the death, which ever occurs first.