

Memorials

The School District recognizes the far-reaching impact of a student's or staff member's death may have on other students, staff, families, and the community. The District believes that remembrance of a student or staff member whose life ended during his/her years in the School District should be consistent and equitable from case to case, and considerate of the grief process of family, friends, and coworkers, and in accordance with Board policy.

Further, the District recognizes that decisions made about memorials immediately after traumatic events may not take into full consideration the potential impacts to students, staff, and community members. This policy establishes guidelines for decision-making regarding school-related memorials and memorialization activities. A memorial is defined as objects or activity to remember a deceased person or an event that results in death.

Death of a Student or Staff Member

The School District establishes the following protocols for those experiencing grief due to the death of a student or staff member.

1. Grieving students will be excused from class to speak with appropriate staff members and counselors.
2. If staff members wish to attend a funeral service for a student or staff member, prior approval must be requested from their Principal/Direct supervisor pursuant to G-2500 GCC. If they are absent for a half-day or less, the absence will not be charged as personal leave, sick leave, or vacation. If they are absent more than a half-day, the absence will be treated as one day of personal leave, sick leave, or vacation (see Board Regulation G-2600)
3. Students wishing to attend the funeral service may do so with parent permission. These students will be excused from class but may be required to make up any missing assignments. Special arrangements will be made for siblings or relatives of the deceased student or staff member in coordination with school administrators.
4. Memorial services may be held in District facilities with prior approval from the Superintendent, but the service cannot be held during the school day and should not disrupt school events.
5. Memorial gifts may be considered pursuant to K-0850. All items received as memorials become the property of the School District, and the District cannot guarantee that memorials that become damaged or worn will be replaced at District expense.
6. Memorial/fundraisers organized in school must have the prior approval of the school administration and any other consent as required by District policies and/or procedures. The school's established processes and procedures for fundraisers should be followed.
7. Students and staff must seek prior approval from the Superintendent as to what is appropriate as a memorial or memorial gathering. Memorial gatherings may include a blood drive, partnering with local nonprofit organizations and related activities, or a

candlelight vigil. As a courtesy, the family of the deceased student or staff member should also provide consent before engaging in the activity.

Temporary School Memorials

Temporary school memorials must be approved by the school principal in consultation with the Superintendent and counseling staff, and may be displayed until the day of the funeral but for no longer than one week following the death, and will then be given to the custodial family by the principal. Temporary memorials cannot alter or damage District furniture, fixtures, and/or equipment.

Allowable temporary memorials may include flower arrangements, banners, pictures, notes, and displays approved by and monitored by school administrators. The school principal, in coordination with the Superintendent, has the discretion to remove inappropriate temporary memories that violate Board policy and/or regulation, the student code of conduct, or are likely to cause a substantial disruption to the school environment.

Permanent School Memorials

Any memorial erected on District facilities or grounds must not interfere with the District's educational mission and must be approved pursuant to K-0850 and F-0050 among other factors. If a death is ruled a suicide the Superintendent will decide whether a memorial is permissible following the recommendations offered by the National Association of School Psychologists and others. The Superintendent reserves the right to accept or decline permanent memorials.

Benches, tables, and other outdoor furnishings may be accepted as memorials with prior approval from the Superintendent only to the extent that there is a suitable location, and the style is complementary to the buildings and grounds. Each item may contain a plaque engraved with the memorialized individual's name, dates of birth and death, and the words, "donated in memory of" or "in memory of". Maintenance, replacement, removal, and other long-term considerations must be considered and clearly delineated prior to approval of any memorial.

The following additional guidelines apply to all requests for memorials in school facilities or on District grounds.

The Superintendent and campus administration will determine the location of all memorials on school grounds or in school facilities. Design parameters, whether the memorial blends with the school campus, ongoing and future maintenance, and the effect a memorial may have on students and staff will be considered.

Memorials and activities not allowed include:

1. Those that require the use of public funds to purchase, develop, or maintain the memorial (such as plantings or trees, shrubs, or perennials);
2. A monument, statuary, or marker on school property;
3. Memorials attached to a wall or in a trophy case;

4. Memorials that may alter the routine of a regular school instructional day, and Memorial activities that require the altering of school activities or the activity schedule.

Existing Memorial Options

Memorials established prior to the implementation of this policy will remain intact.

1. School sponsored events or gatherings, occur on District grounds, it is required that the school administration be notified.
2. School marquees will not be used to post messages about the deceased student or staff member.
3. The United States flag will only be lowered to half-staff in accordance with the laws and policies of the State.
4. Delineated in the high school journalism classes' obituary procedures: Upon request of the family, a student or staff member who has died may be acknowledged by the school in the yearbook of the year of their death, if prior to the final yearbook deadline. This acknowledgment, purchased by the school, can be no more than half a page in size and can include information limited to the following: name, photo, dates of birth and death, and school activities in which the student or staff member participated. Parent/guardian or family input is encouraged in the development of the acknowledgment.
5. The graduation ceremony is reserved for the celebration of scholastic achievement and the anticipation of future opportunities available to all graduates of the School District. Upon parent/guardian request, the school administration will award a certificate to a deceased student who has passed away during their high school career, but did not meet all graduation requirements. A member of the family will be invited to accept the certificate.

Upon parent/guardian request, diplomas will be awarded to deceased students who have passed away during their high school career and have met all requirements prescribed by state laws and the School Board for award of a diploma. A family member or representative will be invited to accept the diploma during the graduation ceremony on behalf of the students.

Adopted: date of manual adoption

CROSS REF: G-2500 GCC Professional/Support Staff Leaves and Absences

K-0850 KCD Public Gifts/Donations to Schools

K-0861 KCD-R Public Gifts/Donations to Schools