

9501 Student and Staff Memorials

The Grand Island Public Schools recognizes that when a school experiences the sudden death of a student or staff member, it is important to acknowledge the event. Additionally, certain traumatic events occurring outside the school community may also require acknowledgment through appropriate activities. Requests for remembering or memorializing a person or event shall be approved by the superintendent, subject to this policy. Major school ceremonies such as graduation, awards, and scholarship events are not appropriate for significant memorial activities. School-wide recognition of anniversary dates will not occur. District counseling services may be made available to provide support for the death of current students and staff.

The Grand Island Public Schools recognizes that memorials of flowers, personal messages and mementoes are often created at lockers, student gathering spaces and other areas on district property upon such losses or events. Such memorials shall not be permitted due to disruption of the learning environment. Donations to the Grand Island Public Schools Foundation for scholarships are encouraged for a more lasting remembrance. Private sales of memorabilia "for profit" will not be permitted in Grand Island Public Schools or at events.

The school yearbook will include a "Memorial Page" to recognize all students and staff who passed during the current school year. One edition of the school newspaper/newsletter will recognize the death of a student or staff member. Information on a "Memorial Page," is limited to the name, photo, dates of birth/death, and school activities in which the student or staff member participated. It is not appropriate to list cause of death in the publication. The designated "memorial page" sponsored by the school shall be the only memorial page accepted for the yearbook. No pages for memorials will be available for purchase.

In considering memorial activity requests, the superintendent or designee will balance memorializing or commemorating the individual or event on the one hand, while not creating an atmosphere that may glamorize, romanticize, or stigmatize a traumatic event. In the event the board approves a memorial to be placed on school grounds, it is strongly recommended that such memorials be in the form of a living memorial, such as a tree. Individuals must realize that in the future the memorial may experience demolition when the tree has died or has been damaged, or modifications for any other reason if the board determines that the memorial should be moved or removed.

Existing memorials established prior to the implementation of this policy will be handled on an individual basis.

When deemed appropriate by the superintendent, schools may observe a moment of silence in memory of the individual or in recognition of certain events. Otherwise, student, staff or community deaths will not be announced or memorialized over the intercom or on social media. School will not be cancelled, delayed, or dismissed early on the day of a memorial service without superintendent approval. Flags may be lowered only in accordance with state and federal law.

Policy adopted: 02.09.2017