

## **Commemoration Guidelines**

### **Alexander Central School District**

A school commemoration is intended to bring closure to a period of grieving and serves as a point from which to move on from the loss. Commemorations should reflect the needs of the school community.

For each commemoration, it is important to think about the precedent that is being set and the long-term implications. These guidelines are intended to assist building administrators in concert with their crisis response/TIG teams. Crisis response/TIG teams and building administrators should work with families and/or assist individuals or groups who want to commemorate students and staff to identify the appropriate commemoration.

Student commemoration will be permitted for students who were enrolled in a district program at the time of the student's death.

#### **Recommended practices:**

- It is recommended that the commemoration wait until the immediate impact of the loss has subsided but occur before the opening of the next school year.
- If a temporary location (ex. Student locker or desk) is established, specify time limits (ex. 1 week) and establish the practice of sharing any items left in the location with the family.
- Allow student and staff opportunities to attend services in the community.
- Within the classroom, activities that address the loss will be conducted in a developmentally appropriate manner with the support of the crisis response/TIG teams and building administrators.

The district/school reserves the right to accept or reject any and all commemorations donated or purchased in memory of a student, staff member, alumni, or Board member. Furthermore, the school has the right to cause all commemorations currently on school property to be discontinued. **Any commemorations will be privately funded.**

#### **Commemorations are limited to:**

- Purchase of library books, school supplies, and equipment
  - The purchase must be approved by the building administrator.
  - Donated books may include a bookplate and equipment may include 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" and the student/staff/Board Member's legal name and year of donation. Any engraved plate other than bookplates will be removed at the end of ten years and offered to the family.
- Trees in the Outdoor Classroom
  - The building administrator in conjunction with the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds will approve the type and placement of the planting. A moveable ground marker no larger than twelve by six inches may accompany such plantings. The engraving on the marker will be limited to "Donated in Memory of" or "In Memory of" and the student/staff/Board member's legal name and year of donation. Any engraved markers will be removed at the end of ten years and offered to the family.
- Scholarships

- Scholarships established in the name of the student/staff/Board member can be arranged with through building administrator.

**Unacceptable commemorations include those which may:**

- Violate Title IX federal guidelines
- Contradict our district 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
- 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
- Any item that is affixed to the building (ex. plaques)

**Yearbook guidelines:**

- Appropriate space may be designated up to one page in commemoration of all students/staff/Board members who have died during that school year. This space may include a uniform size picture of each student/staff/Board member, if available, along with 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 picture may appear in the next year's yearbook.
- A deceased student/staff/Board member's picture, if available, may be included with the pictures of other students in the class for the year covered by the yearbook.

**Graduation:**

- Graduation is a time to recognize the many years of work and achievement of the seniors.
- Any students who die during their senior year may be acknowledged at graduation (with parental approval) prior to the conferring of diplomas for the graduating class. If a posthumous diploma is to be awarded, the name should be read and the diploma presented to the family member by a staff member. The family member shall sit in a designated area for the presentation. Students should not be involved in the presentation.
- In the case of any students who have died during their high school career, their parent may request that they be acknowledged in a similar fashion at the graduation of their class.

**Existing Commemorations:**

Any commemoration in existence at the time these guidelines are adopted, whether in compliance with these guidelines or not, may be removed ten years after the death of the student/staff member involved and offered to the family.

**Notice of Address Change:**

Family members of deceased students/staff/Board members are encouraged to inform the school of any address changes so the commemorations can be returned to them in alignment with the guidelines.