

SENECA VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: PROPERTY

TITLE: STUDENT MEMORIALS

ADOPTED: October 9, 2000

REVISED: JANUARY 17, 2005

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| <p>1. Purpose</p> <p>2. Guidelines</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">714. STUDENT MEMORIALS</p> <p>The Board recognizes that memorials established upon school district property must be proposed, reviewed and adopted cognizant of concepts of equality, proper concern for all students and community members, appropriateness of memorials, and best usage of available property. Memorials will be considered for students who were enrolled in one of the district's schools at the time of their death.</p> <p><u>Memorials Involving Property/Installed Markers</u></p> <p>These same concepts apply to non-material memorials or events such as yearbook entries, ceremonial observances or other similar observance of those from our school community who have passed on.</p> <p>Written requests for the establishment of physical memorials to students shall be submitted to the Superintendent. The request shall include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The identity of the person(s) to be submitted for memorial. 2. A brief narrative justification for the reason(s) for the memorial. 3. A general idea of what type of memorial to be established given the options described below. <p>If deemed appropriate, the Superintendent may refer the request to the relevant building's Pupil Personnel Team to make a recommendation. The Superintendent or designee, however, will make the final decision. The Pupil Personnel Team may request further information if required. In making a recommendation for a memorial the Pupil Personnel Team must consider the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school district may provide family and friends appropriate opportunities to share their grief upon the death of a student. |
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2. The memorial should be unobtrusive and shall not be prominent to the point of drawing the attention of those at-risk of harming themselves to gain similar attention.
3. Plantings on school grounds (trees, shrubs, perennials) are discouraged, as such memorials may die or need to be removed. If one is permitted, the type and placement of the planting is subject to the approval of the principal and the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds.

Since there are currently a number of plaques and other assorted markers on grounds and in buildings throughout the district, the following guidelines apply:

1. Current markers or plaques installed within the district will be removed at the discretion of the building principal and Superintendent and offered to the family of the deceased after one (1) year.
2. Installation of further markers or plaques, if necessary, shall be no larger than twelve (12) by six (6) inches. As above, these will be removed and offered to the family after one (1) year. Should the family decline acceptance of the memorial, the memorial will be discarded in a respectful manner.

Other Non-Property Memorials

Memorials that do not involve property issues such as yearbook memorials or newspaper tributes should follow similar procedures. The building principal and pupil personnel team should review and approve all suggested memorials or tributes. The following suggested ideas for memorials should be shared with the family of the deceased for their input:

1. A memorial scholarship with award guidelines approved by the principal.
2. Purchase of library books, CD Roms, school supplies or equipment, with the approval of the principal. Donated books or equipment may include a label with wording limited to "Donated in memory of" and the deceased's name along with the name of the party purchasing.
3. Monetary funds designated to a particular school activity or department. The principal will approve the use of funds.

Spontaneous Temporary Memorials/Expressions Following a Death

Tragic incidents or deaths may be observed by spontaneous expressions of grief, support, or sympathy for a victim. These expressions often have taken the form of banners, locker decorations, or gatherings. So that no human life is taken to be more or less important than others, the following is established:

1. In enforcing this policy it is imperative that students and staff involved are treated in a sensitive manner by explaining the reasons for the policy to the student and their parents/guardians.
2. Since these expressions are indications that students feel the need to let out something they are feeling, individual or trained professionals should offer group sessions to appropriately address them.
3. Locker decorations should be limited to that of the victim's locker only. Principals should use discretion as to their appropriateness and when they are to be removed.
4. Spontaneous gatherings without the presence of an appropriate adult should be discouraged.
5. Formal observances should give the family final consideration in decision-making.
6. The district will not permit services to be held in school buildings or on school property.

Unacceptable Memorials

The following types of memorials are seen as inappropriate:

1. Memorials that alter the conduct of a regular school instructional day or school activities.
2. Require the discontinued use of school property.
3. Those that are planned to infringe on the separation of church and state.*
4. Require the use of public funds for purchase, development, or maintenance.
5. Memorials to those who have committed suicide or those that glamorize the method of death.

6. Memorials to those who have committed a serious form of illegal behavior on the part of the deceased.

*Current legal interpretations indicate that a district may not be involved in planning religious content, but may not infringe upon the right of non-school personnel to express themselves.