



## **Administrative Procedure: 8:064 Naming of School Building or Facilities**

### **DISTRICT PROTOCOLS FOR MEMORIALS RELATED TO STUDENT AND STAFF DEATHS**

In prior years, regrettably, we needed to create these protocols related to staff, student, and/or community member deaths. Addressing this issue requires sensitivity with a balance between memorializing an individual's passing with dignity and keeping with the family's wishes, while at the same time maintaining an uplifting learning environment and focusing celebratory events on their intent. Additionally, a variety of circumstances of death - some known and others unknown - can account for the loss of a loved one. To distinguish our protocols by cause of death would seem counterproductive because grief and consolation of friends and family is a universal emotion and need, regardless of the cause of death.

These protocols are organized by those that will apply to all of our schools district-wide with special notations and sections relative to elementary and secondary schools.

### **DISTRICT PROTOCOLS**

#### *Existing Memorials*

There are numerous examples of memorials found throughout the district. These range from memorial namings of all or parts of our facilities to trees, benches and gardens. These memorials are an important part of our school community. Current memorials will not be removed or expunged but as needs arise such as repurposing space, facility upgrades, these memorials may not be replaced or restored. Batavia Public Schools will work with families if such a case arises but cannot guarantee the current memorials in perpetuity.

#### *Current Staff Member or Student Death Memorials*

A staff member or student will be considered "current" if their death occurs while they are currently employed or enrolled or six months after they separate from Batavia D101.

Current staff members or students may be honored by donating a tree or memorial bench under the direction of the Building and Grounds department. The location of the tree planting will be determined by the school, based on the overall landscaping plan. No name placards will be placed by trees to maintain a tranquil atmosphere without creating a mausoleum effect.

Please be aware that trees or benches will be planted or installed when conditions are conducive.

#### *Funeral/Memorial Service Acknowledgement*

The district will express condolences regarding the death of a current staff member or student at the

funeral/memorial service by the superintendent's office sending a floral arrangement on behalf of the Board of Education, district personnel, and school/department staff. This does not preclude individual schools or departments from making their own acknowledgement arrangements but does provide an assurance the district will honor the deceased's memory.

#### *Donations in Memoriam*

Batavia Public Schools asks that individuals or groups who want to donate for a specific or general project to honor a lost loved one work with one of the District's partners. These projects must have the approval of the Board of Education prior to implementation. Any project will not be named or contain any lasting visible commemoration, as the project should be for the benefit and enjoyment of the living. Individuals or groups wishing to make these types of donations should consult with the Batavia Foundation for Educational Excellence or other District partner.

#### *Naming of District Facilities*

Board of Education policy 8:064 Naming of School Building or Facilities details the process for naming facilities other than Batavia High School. The District will no longer name parts of its facilities in memoriam. Rooms or areas of the facilities are not to be named unless the Board of Education specifically identifies a space for dedication and solicits ideas from the community of the dedication. Groups or individuals should not approach the Building Principal or other staff with naming dedications.

#### *Publications and Video Publications*

The issue of how to handle publications in the event of a student or staff member's death is always delicate. For those schools with yearbooks, memorial pages dedicated to a student who has passed away during that school year will not be included in the yearbook. However, in those yearbooks where family members can purchase and place messages and memories in the back of the yearbook, family members could choose to place something in the yearbook if the publication timeline allows for it to occur. Inclusion of pictures of students who passed away in the Content pages of the yearbook will be contingent upon publication submission dates and the student/staff member's date of death. Should a student/staff member pass away during the summer prior to the beginning of the school year, the student/staff member will not be included in the yearbook, Should a student/staff member pass away during the year, they will be included in group pictures which were already taken or pages which have been finalized for publication at the time of the student's death.

## **HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION CEREMONY**

Given the size and attendance at high school graduation ceremony, it is almost certain that someone in the audience will have experienced the loss of a friend or family member during the year. Therefore, each year a request will be made for a moment of reflection by a designated individual at the beginning of the ceremony to remember any members of the extended school family (student, staff member, parent, etc.) who are no longer present. The designated individual will read a statement to offer a moment of reflection to honor the memory of friends, family and staff who have passed away in the previous year. Additionally, a deceased student's name will not be read nor will a seat be left empty in their memory to avoid what could be perceived as an awkward or inadvertently insensitive method of recognizing the deceased student. A deceased graduate's name or current staff member's name will be listed in the

graduation program, "In memory of..." at the end of the alphabet.

### **MIDDLE/ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DURING AND END-OF-YEAR CELEBRATIONS**

Elementary schools and the middle school are a different environment and many schools do not host annual end-of-the-year celebrations or assemblies. Therefore, their protocols will vary from the larger high school. Elementary schools and the middle school will not use the end-of-year moment of reflection annually (as outlined in the high school section). In the event of the death of a current staff member or student, school administrators may use their professional judgment about whether and how to specifically acknowledge the current staff member or current student names and memory (only with the permission of the family).

The intent of these protocols is designed to find the most appropriate ways of honoring current students and staff that have passed away and to celebrate and remember their lives, but to do so in a way that is also sensitive to the emotional well-being of the students in the schools.

Adapted from Barrington D220