

Commemoration Guidelines

Webster 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. 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 teams. Crisis teams should work with families and or assist individuals or groups who want to commemorate students and staff and be prepared to offer acceptable options. Student commemoration will be permitted for students who were enrolled in a district program at the time of the student's death.

- 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 (i.e. student's locker or desk) is established, specify time limits (1 week) and that items left will be shared with the family.
- Allow student and staff opportunities to attend services within the community.
- Within the classroom, activities that address the loss will be conducted as is developmentally appropriate, with the support of the building crisis team.

Commemorations

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

Suggested options include:

1. Purchase of library books, school supplies and equipment, with the approval of 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 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.
2. Trees on school grounds. The school principal in conjunction with Buildings & Grounds Department 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 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.
3. Contributions by students/staff to memorials designated by the family, i.e. Cancer Society, MADD, local charities, etc.
4. Scholarships established in the names of student/staff.

Unacceptable commemorations include those which may:

1. Violate Title IX federal guidelines
2. Contradict our school district's mission.
3. Significantly alter the conduct of a regular school instructional day.
4. Significantly alter school activities or the school activities schedule.
5. Require the retirement or discontinued use of school property. This may include such items as monuments, statues, benches, etc.
6. Infringe on the separation of church and state.
7. Require the use of public funds for purchase, development or maintenance beyond the normal care and maintenance of school properties.
8. Any item that is affixed to the building (i.e. plaques)

Yearbook Guidelines

1. ***Appropriate space may be designated up to one page in commemoration of all students/staff members who have died during that school year.*** This space may include a uniform size picture of each student/staff member, if available, along with legal name and dates of birth and death as deemed appropriate.
2. 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.
3. A deceased student/staff member's picture, if available, may be included with the pictures of other students/staff in the class for the year covered by the yearbook.

Graduation

1. Graduation is a time to recognize the many years of work and achievement of the seniors.
2. **Any students who die during their senior year may be acknowledged at graduation (with parent approval) prior to the conferring of diplomas for the graduating class.**
If a posthumous diploma is to be awarded, the name should be read & 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.
3. **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 members are encouraged to inform the school of any address changes so the District may return any commemorations to them.