

FILE: EBCA

MEDFORD AREA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

DATE ADOPTED:	July 19, 2001	FILE SECTOR:	SUPPORT SERVICES
DATE REVISED:	December 16, 2004	POLICY TITLE:	STAFF/STUDENT DEATH
DATE REVISED:	January 17, 2013		
DATE REVISED:	October 30, 2017		
DATE REVISED:	October 30, 2023		

Medford Area Public School District is aware of the need to convey concern, sympathy and shared loss for those grieving a deceased staff member or student. The district has an obligation to provide educational services to those students not affected by the death. The district shall do this in a manner which is mindful of students or peers who may experience difficulty with the grief process. Support will be provided for anyone seeking it.

The building administrator is responsible for developing, coordinating and implementing the district plan of services in the event of a student or staff death. Open communication among all school staff and sensitivity to the impact of trauma is critical to the implementation of a school-wide program.

CROSS REFERENCE: EB, EBCA-R, EBCE, IGAC, KBC, KG, KNAJ, JE, JFCK,
Employee Handbooks & District Safety Response Plan

LEGAL REFERENCE:

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The building administrator is responsible for the plan of service including recognition, funeral service and support resources.

RECOGNITIONS

In the event of the death of a student or staff member, the district administrator and the director of student services shall be contacted. The director of student services shall be responsible for notification of building level administrators and student services staff. The district administrator shall be responsible for notification of appropriate district office personnel and the board of education (BOE).

The building administrator shall, in the event of the death of a student or staff member, consult with a representative of the family of the deceased to determine the family's wishes with regard to funeral arrangements, reclamation of personal property at school and how the school plans to recognize the death. All building information pertaining to recognitions, funeral arrangements, support resources and facility use shall be communicated to the district administrator or their designee.

Staff Member

In the event of the death of a staff member, the administration shall, on behalf of the BOE, recognize the death by sending a floral arrangement or memorial to the family.

Student

The building administrator or designee shall read the following statement to the entire school at the beginning of the school day: "I am sorry to inform you that (First / Last Name of Student) died on (day / date). At this time, out of respect for (First Name), we will have a moment of reflection.Thank you."

FUNERAL ATTENDANCE

Students may be given information directly regarding funeral arrangements. Parents/guardians/legal custodians of younger students may call the building office for information if they so choose. Responsibility for student attendance and behaviors of the student at funeral services is the responsibility of the parent/guardian/legal custodian. Absences that are pre-approved for funeral services shall be an excused absence.

Staff Member

Administrative representation from the building in which the staff member was employed, school counselor(s), an immediate supervisor (if other than the building administrator) and departmental peers shall be given preference in attending the funeral. Staff members who are relatives may be granted funeral leave. Funeral leave and substitutes shall be dealt with via administrative operational procedures.

Student

An administrative representative from the building, in which the student was enrolled, the student's school counselor and no less than one of the student's teachers shall attend funeral services. Classroom teacher(s), special education teacher(s), Title 1 staff and any others who had scheduled on-going contact with the student shall be given preference in attending the funeral. A staff member who is a relative may be granted funeral leave. Funeral leave and substitutes and funeral attendance should be dealt with via administrative operational procedures.

DISTRICT SUPPORT RESOURCES

At the earliest possible time, the building administrator(s) shall conduct a staff meeting to provide available factual details. Those details shall be delivered by staff to the student body as directed by administration. All district student services staff shall attend the staff meeting in the building in which the staff person was assigned or in which the student was enrolled. In the case of the death of a student, a student services provider assigned to any building where siblings of the deceased is/are enrolled shall return to the building of the sibling(s) and share the available factual details with the building administrator(s) and classroom teacher(s). All other student services staff shall remain with the building population most affected by the death until such time as the director of student services and/or the building administrator determine it is no longer necessary or there is a need to be reassigned to another building. In the event additional student services staff are necessary, the building administrator and director of student services shall contact adjacent school districts and request additional resources.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT RESOURCES

The building administrator shall consult with a representative of the family to determine what if any recognition or school/community support services should be provided. The building administration may also determine to provide resources from the religious community, county human services or private providers as non-sectarian counselors for staff and/or students. The building administrator and director of student services shall determine appropriate agency or clergy contacts, and afford these groups the opportunity to provide non-sectarian grief counseling on school grounds if appropriate and/or necessary. In the event that a local religious organization would find it beneficial to hold a before or after school memorial service off school grounds for students, the building administrator shall announce the location and time of that service to the student body or provide time and location information to the parents of younger students. Attendance at memorial services shall be the responsibility of the parent/guardian/legal custodian(s).

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

The building administrator and director of student services shall jointly prepare a statement when appropriate and/or necessary with regard to the availability and location of counseling services for staff and/or students. Announcements shall be made to the public via radio or other media when appropriate and/or necessary.

In the event of a death of a student or staff member when school is not in session the building administrator shall, upon being contacted by a representative of the family of the deceased, use their discretion with regard to recognitions.

In the event of the use of school facilities, the building administrator shall assure compliance with BOE policy KG - Community Use of School Facilities.

In the event of a crisis situation as described or determined by the District Safety Response Plan and/or the district administrator or their designee, the building administrator shall assure compliance with the District Safety Response Plan.

In the event of an on-going police investigation, the building administration shall assure compliance with BOE policy KNAJ - Relations with Police Authorities.

In the event of a suicide or suspected suicide the building administrator and director of student services shall assure compliance with BOE Policy JHH - Suicide Prevention.

In the event of a death or suicide the building administrator shall refer media requests for interviews or access to schools to the district office or official district spokesperson. Other media situations shall be addressed following the guidelines provided in the District Safety Response Plan.

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