



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

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September 11, 2023

There has been much discussion in our community regarding the placement of student/staff memorials in our schools. Out of respect for those who are grieving significant losses, we've stepped back from the public and media discussion, as we've felt it was better suited to private discussions with those directly involved, however there are many inaccuracies being stated as fact that we feel we need to address.

Losing a loved one, especially a child, is always heartbreaking, unimaginable and devastating. Our school division has experienced far too many losses in recent years – losses that weren't always recognized in the same kinds of ways. This led to us examining how we could best honour the legacy of those we've lost.

During the past few years, we have worked with trauma response and grief and loss experts, as well as our school administrators and counsellors, so that we could truly understand the complexities surrounding grief and loss and some of the negative impacts of permanent memorials within our schools on students and staff within our schools.

Throughout this process, our intent was to find a way to respectfully honour those we've lost, along with their families and their classmates/colleagues, while at the same time respecting that permanent or long-term memorials can negatively affect those who learn and work in our schools every day.

These two considerations led us to developing the guide. Our intended next step was to spend the next several months reaching out to affected families to have thoughtful conversations about transitioning these in-school memorials to a permanent home. It was never our intention for families to find out this information via the media and through misinformation in the community. Unfortunately, the way this situation unfolded has caused additional distress to families who are already grieving.

Please be assured that we do not plan on changing anything regarding temporary memorials, outdoor memorials, scholarships and awards. Moving forward, we will continue to work with families to find ways to honour these traumatic losses, help our school community grieve, and take steps towards healing together.

St. Albert Public Schools