

In Erin's Memory

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Standard 4:

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- emerging issues and trends that potentially impact the school community
- community relations and marketing strategies and processes

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- schools operating as an integral part of the larger community

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- high visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community is a priority
- credence is given to individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict

Issue:

As the superintendent of Northbrook School District, you have had a variety of positive as well as negative experiences in your five-year tenure. One experience that tugged at your heart occurred just recently. Erin, one of your high school senior girls, was killed in an accident just outside of the city limits. The community grieved for the loss of this student, with memorial services held in the local funeral home as well as several churches.

During the few weeks after Erin's death, some of her classmates and friends, supported by their parents, held garage sales and bake sales to generate money in order to erect a monument in her memory. Unbeknownst to you, the plans were for the memorial to be placed at the entrance of the high school parking lot.

You have just met with a group of Erin's friends. They have come with money in hand in hopes of building the memorial on the school site. You understand their grief and would like to accommodate them; however, you also understand the precedence you may set for the future.

Assignment:

- What factors should the superintendent consider in responding to the request made by Erin's friends?

Instructor Notes and Scoring Guide

For

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Instructor Notes

Discussion:

The purpose of this vignette is to prompt a discussion of the superintendent's role in promoting the success of all students by collaborating with the families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources. How should the superintendent go about addressing the request of Erin's friends? How should the superintendent gather additional information to help in the decision-making process? What kind of information should the superintendent gather? Who could the superintendent involve in the information gathering and decision-making process? How should the superintendent communicate with Erin's friends once a decision is made? In discussing this vignette, students should identify issues surrounding community relations, collaboration with community and responding to diverse community interests. At the heart of the discussion should be the understanding that schools operate as an integral part of a larger community.

Additional Standard:

This vignette could also apply to Standard 6. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economical, legal, and cultural context. Discussions could involve the political, social and cultural systems that impact schools, the need to recognize a variety of ideas, values, and cultures, the importance of a continuing dialogue with other decision makers affecting education, and that the environment that schools operate is influenced on behalf of the students and their families.

Scoring Guide:

Score 2

The student responds directly to the assignment by addressing the actions of the superintendent. The responses include three of the following:

- Specifically addresses other stakeholders (such as building level principal, counselor, director of public relations) in an effort to gather needed information/data.
- Actions clearly demonstrate knowledge of public relations.
- Specifically addresses the need to review district policies and procedures relating to the death of a student.
- Actions clearly demonstrate human relations skills of treating people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect.
- Actions clearly demonstrate an understanding of the political dynamics relating to the request of the students.

Score 1

Responses include two of the following:

- Identifies some individuals involved in the gathering of information/data phase.
- Actions suggest some knowledge of public relations.
- Limited understanding of the need to review district policies and procedures.
- Actions demonstrate some understanding of human relation skills.
- Actions demonstrate limited effort in understanding political dynamics.

Score 0

- Response does not address others involved in the gathering of information/data phase.
- Poor understanding regarding knowledge of public relations.
- No clear understanding of the need to review district policies and procedures.
- No clear understanding of human relation skills.
- No clear demonstration of the need to understand political dynamics.

Additional Resources:

- **Success Link**
Website designed to showcase best practices and programs which have proven to work in the state of Missouri. Site includes over 2,000 lesson plans for educators.
www.successlink.org
- **American Association of School Administrators**
Website designed to support leaders in education by providing information regarding laws, policies, research and practice. Site also links to publications such as The School Administrator, the AASA Bulletin, the AASA Professor, and School Governance and Leadership.
www.aasa.org
- **Education Policy Institute**
This website serves as a medium for on-line newsletters, newsgroups, educational conference information, purchase products, and other useful information in education.
www.educationpolicy.org
- **Education Law Association**
This website supports various education law issues.
www.educationlaw.org
- **National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAESP)**
Website provides useful information for enhancing the professional development of secondary school administrators.
www.naesp.org