

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

INFORMATIONAL REPORT

DECISION ON SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION SPONSORED PROJECT
HAVRE DE GRACE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
EILEEN FRIEL MEMORIAL

April 27, 2026

Background Information:

The Havre de Grace Elementary School (HDES) community is requesting approval to install a memorial consisting of a tree planting and an engraved bench in memory of Eileen Friel. The tree will be installed near the front entrance of the school, and the bench will be placed under the front portico near the Havre de Grace Elementary School main entrance. This memorial will provide the school community with a lasting tribute to Ms. Friel.

The Eileen Friel Memorial is being proposed per policy # 20-0043-000, *Memorials on School Grounds*. On April 8, 2013, the Board of Education of Harford County adopted policy #20-0043-000, which identifies the criteria relative to such memorials. The Memorial has been approved by the Superintendent and requires the approval of the Board.

Discussion:

The donation of the engraved bench was donated by a HDES family. The bench is engraved with "In Memory of Ms. Friel." The request for a memorial on school grounds has been endorsed by the Director of Elementary Schools, and approved by the Superintendent.

All of the necessary documentation has been submitted, reviewed, and approved by the appropriate school system staff, with comments through the Assistant Superintendent for Operations, as required by school system procedures.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the Board of Education approve the Eileen Friel Memorial on the campus of Havre de Grace Elementary School. The estimated cost for this project is \$565.00.



Havre de Grace Elementary School

600 S. Juniata Street, Havre de Grace, Maryland 21078 ~ 410-939-6616

Shelby M. Houseman
Acting Principal

Kelly A. Cross
Acting Assistant Principal

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to formally express my approval and full support for the planting of a cherry tree in front of Havre de Grace Elementary School and the placement of a Trex bench beneath the school's portico in memory of our beloved colleague, Ms. Eileen Friel, who passed away on January 11, 2026.

These locations were chosen with great care and deep intention. Ms. Friel was a familiar and cherished presence at our school, where she took great joy in greeting students, families, and members of our community every chance she could. In addition, she deeply loved being outdoors with her students during recess, always valuing connection, conversation, and the simple joy of time spent together. The cherry tree and bench will stand as lasting symbols of these moments and of Ms. Friel's enduring spirit.

As the Acting Principal of Havre de Grace Elementary School, I believe this memorial is a meaningful and appropriate way to honor Ms. Friel's legacy. She was a profoundly loved educator whose kindness, dedication, and warmth left an indelible mark on our students, staff, and community. Her absence is felt daily, and this memorial will provide a place of reflection, remembrance, and gratitude for years to come.

I fully support moving forward with this tribute and appreciate the thoughtfulness behind this proposal. Please accept this letter as official approval for the planting of the cherry tree and the installation of the Trex bench as described.

Thank you for your continued commitment to honoring those who have made a lasting impact on Havre de Grace Elementary School.

With sincere respect,

Shelby M. Houseman
Acting Principal



Eileen Marie Friel

September 18, 1967 - January 11, 2026



Obituary

Eileen Marie Friel, a devoted educator, loving mother and grandmother, and generous servant to her community, passed away on January 11, 2026. She was 58.

Born on September 18, 1967, in Chester, Pennsylvania, Eileen spent most of her adult life in Elkton, Maryland, where she built a life defined by care for others, commitment to education, and deep family devotion.

Eileen dedicated her professional life to children and to those who teach them. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from Salisbury University and a master's degree in education from Towson University. Over the course of her career, she held both teaching and administrative roles in Cecil County and Harford County, Maryland. For the past 15 years, Eileen served the Havre de Grace Elementary School community, most recently teaching third grade, where her patience, warmth, and high standards left a lasting impression on students, families, and colleagues alike. She was not only a teacher of children, but a mentor to fellow educators and a trusted presence within the school community.



Hicks Home for Funerals, P.A.

103 West Stockton Street
Elkton, MD 21921

☎ 410-398-3122

© 2018 - 26 Hicks Home for Funerals, P.A.. All Rights Reserved.
Terms of Use | Privacy
Funeral Home Website by Tukios®

Memorial service will be held 3:30 PM, Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at Hicks Home for Funerals, 103 W. Stockton Street, Elkton, MD 21921, with visitation beginning at 2 PM. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made to the Ocean Conservancy or the Turtle Hospital.

Services

Visitation

📅 Wednesday, January 21, 2026
🕒 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Hicks Home for Funerals, P.A.

📍 103 West Stockton Street
Elkton, MD 21921

Directions >

Email Details ✉

Memorial Service

📅 Wednesday, January 21, 2026
🕒 3:30 PM

Hicks Home for Funerals, P.A.

📍 103 West Stockton Street
Elkton, MD 21921

Directions >

Email Details ✉

Private Interment

📅 Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Email Details ✉

Guestbook



Stephanie Buczacky wrote on January 20, 2026

I remember Eileen as an accepting and caring colleague. She lifted your spirit if you needed a shoulder to lean on. Her energy was very infectious. She loved the children she taught. I admire Eileen for her dedication, unpretentious spirit and honesty she showed to anyone who was privileged to know her.



Megan Harris wrote on January 20, 2026

I am deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Ms. Friel. She was such a shining light, and she was such a beacon of light to all of her students. My thoughts and prayers go out to her family and friends during this very difficult time.



POLICY TITLE: Memorials on School Grounds		
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/12/1983	MOST RECENTLY AMENDED: 4/8/2013	MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED: 5/6/2002
POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY: District Management		

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the Board's authorization of memorials on school system grounds and criteria relative to such memorials.

II. Definition

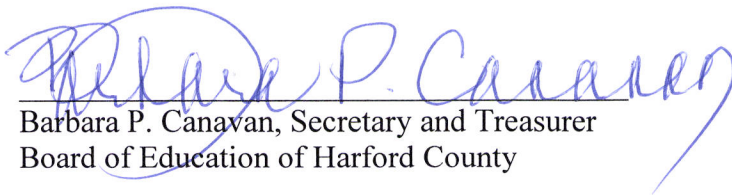
Memorial means a structure or physical object of any kind whether permanent or temporary including, but not limited to, buildings, signs, walls, flora, photographs, pictures which are erected, constructed or situated in or about a school or school campus for the purpose of honoring either a living or a deceased person or persons.

III. Policy Statement

- A. Only the following types of memorials are permitted on school system grounds.
1. A photograph or picture not exceeding 3 feet by 2 feet.
 2. A tree or shrub provided the Facilities Maintenance Department approves same.
 3. A plaque or inscription.
- B. Any memorial as listed in A above must be approved as follows.
1. Memorials on the grounds of schools must be approved by the school principal, applicable executive director, the Associate Superintendent, the Superintendent and the Board.
 2. Memorials on school system grounds where a school is not located must be approved by the Superintendent and the Board.

- C. Any memorial listed in A above and which contains writing may not be approved unless the writing contains only the following information:
 - 1. Name, Birth Date and Death Date (if applicable) relating to the person memorialized.
 - 2. Years and type of service to Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) if applicable.
- D. Memorials which are inconsistent with the educational mission of HCPS are prohibited.
- E. The Board reserves the right in its sole discretion to change, in whole or in part, or eliminate, at any time, any memorial.

Board Approval Acknowledged By:



Barbara P. Canavan, Secretary and Treasurer
Board of Education of Harford County

Policy Action Dates					
ACTION	DATE	ACTION	DATE	ACTION	DATE
ADOPTED	12/12/1983	AMENDED	4/8/2013		
AMENDED	7/9/1990				
AMENDED	1/21/1998				
REAFFIRMED	5/6/2002				

Responsibility for Policy Maintenance & References		
LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER NAME: Patrick P. Spicer, Esquire	JOB POSITION OF LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER: General Counsel	
PERSON RESPONSIBLE: Patrick P. Spicer, Esquire	JOB POSITION OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE: General Counsel	
DESIGNEE NAME:	JOB POSITION OF DESIGNEE:	
REFERENCE 1 TYPE:	REFERENCE 1 NO.	REFERENCE 1 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 2 TYPE:	REFERENCE 2 NO.	REFERENCE 2 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 3 TYPE:	REFERENCE 3 NO.	REFERENCE 3 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 4 TYPE:	REFERENCE 4 NO.	REFERENCE 4 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 5 TYPE:	REFERENCE 5 NO.	REFERENCE 5 DESCRIPTION:
POLICY NUMBER PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 1, 2005:		
POLICY NUMBER PRIOR TO APRIL 8, 2013: 06-0025-000		