

Dear Parent/Guardian:

September 28, 2021

Alturas was saddened to learn of the illness and death of Mariza Sanchez recently. Mariza was an outstanding paraprofessional who cared very deeply about the success and wellbeing of each and every one of her students. We will all miss her very much and it will be a difficult journey grieving her loss.

Some of your children may have interacted with her. They may have heard from others whispers of the sad news. We encourage you to share this information with them, and answer any questions they may have regarding death or other confusing feelings that might come up.

In order to support our students and staff during this difficult time, we have arranged to have mental health professionals available during the school day to assist them with the questions and grief that accompanies such a difficult situation. Experiencing a death such as this may affect a child or adult in a variety of ways; therefore, it is very important that students and teachers be given opportunities to ask questions and to talk about their reactions. For some children a death of someone they know may remind them of some other loss in their lives. For others, this may be their first encounter with death.

When reacting to a traumatic incident, students may display behaviors such as the following:

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| -Cling closely to adults | -Display regressive behaviors |
| -Ask a lot of questions | -Think about it privately |
| -Have difficulty sleeping | -Appear sad and withdrawn |
| -Appear frightened, agitated or angry | -Stomach aches and/or headaches |

We suggest that you make an extra effort to listen to your child during this time. It is important that you deal honestly and directly with any questions that he or she may have. Referring to death as passing away may result in confusion and it is appropriate that you use the word "death" in your discussions. Should you have difficulty approaching this issue or if you would like additional information about talking to your child about death, we have material available at school. Below are some other suggestions that parents may find useful in helping their child:

- Be a good listener. Listen carefully for any misconceptions or distortions your child may have and be sure to address them.
- Provide physical closeness. Spend extra time with your child. Talk and offer reassurance.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and to discuss their feelings.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if we can be of additional assistance to you and/or your child during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Principal Brad