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Sacramento City Unified Board President Jay Hansen & Superintendent José Banda:
“Great sadness” as schools rally behind students and community

SACRAMENTO—*Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education President Jay Hansen and Superintendent José Banda today issued the following statement following identification of the victims in the South Land Park tragedy:*

It is with great sadness that we extend our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of the South Land Park victims on behalf of our Board of Education and staff throughout the district. The children, 11-year-old Alvin and 14-year-old Mia attended schools in our district. Their mother, Angelique, is remembered as a loving and caring mother. We also grieve the loss of Ashley Coleman and extend our condolences to her loved ones.

Until a little more than a week ago, Alvin attended John Cabrillo Elementary School, before transferring to Sutterville Elementary School. He was a fifth-grader who loved basketball.

Mia attended Sam Brannan Middle School where she was an eighth-grader and a goalie on her school’s soccer team.

Crisis team counselors will be at Sam Brannan, John Cabrillo, and Sutterville on Monday and as long as needed. We have an outstanding Student Support and Health Services Office that has prepared guidelines for parents (*included below*) in talking to their children about grief and loss.

The three schools are strong and caring campuses that will rally together for their students and community. They will console and serve our families as they remember and honor the victims.

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Parent guidelines to help students through loss

Our school community has been affected by the recent loss in our community.

As parents, you play an important role in helping your children and your family cope with the stress reactions that can follow these events. Try to maintain a balanced perspective. On one hand, do take your child's reactions seriously. Don't say that "It wasn't so bad." Don't think "If we don't make a big deal, she will forget all about it." On the other hand, don't decide that the trauma was so bad that your child will never recover. Instead, try to maintain a hopeful belief that your child will heal and that your family will recover from the event as well.

What can my family do to recover?

You can help your family recover by doing the following:

- Be patient. There is no correct timetable for healing. Some children will recover quickly. Others recover more slowly. Try not to push your child to "just get over it." Instead, reassure him or her that they do not need to feel guilty or bad about any feelings or thoughts.
- Assure your child that he or she is safe. Talk about the measures you are taking to keep him or her safe at home and about what measures his/her school is taking to ensure his or her safety at school.
- Maintain regular home (mealtime, bedtime) and school routines to support the process of recovery. Make sure your child continues to go to school and stays in school.
- Limit exposure to media outlets, such as social media sites and television news coverage of the event to avoid further exposure to the traumatic event.
- Take time to think about your own experience of your child's traumatic event and any past traumatic events you may have experienced. Your own trauma history and your feelings about your child's trauma event will influence how you react.
- Consult a qualified mental health professional if your child's distress continues for several weeks. Ask your child's primary care physician or school for a referral to a mental health provider who has experience with child traumatic stress. If you need help, finding a mental health professional, contact SCUSD Connect Center at (916) 643-2354.

When family members care for and support each other, they can often overcome the fears and stress of trauma. Some families grow stronger after a traumatic event and are even able to help others in need. Of the many ways to cope and heal from traumatic stress, many families count on these:

- Community support
- Spiritual beliefs
- Friends and other families

There is no correct timetable for recovery. Some children will recover quickly. Others recover more slowly. Some families get better with time and the support of others. As a general rule, if your child's

reactions (nightmares, recurrent thoughts, fears) have been getting worse instead of better, or your family is having ongoing distress, crises, or trouble meeting your children's needs, you should seek a referral for a qualified mental health professional (psychologist, clinical social worker, psychiatrist) that will help your child and your family feel better, grow stronger, and recover. If you need help, finding a mental health professional, contact SCUSD Connect Center at (916) 643-2354.

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