

Chief Sealth International Families,

It is with profound sadness that I am sharing news of the death of a staff member from our community. Steadman Mathis tragically passed away in a house fire early Sunday morning. He supported our community in many ways, both formally and informally. He was an Instructional Assistant in the Access Program and was Chief Sealth's Tennis Coach. He was not just an educator and a colleague but a father, a brother, a son, a nephew and more.

As a community, we will come together and hold space for each other, and we will continue to have social workers, counselors and additional staff from Coordinated School Health available for students, staff, and families, as needed. If your child has been thinking about or is currently working with a therapist or counselor, this might be a good time to connect with those supports as well. We understand that everyone responds to tragic news in different ways, and it may trigger all kinds of expected and even unexpected reactions in students. Parents and guardians have important roles in helping children understand such tragic events. We recognize that even if your child may not have known or been close to Mr. Mathis, they may still feel a strong reaction. We also realize this may be your child's first experience with death or it may trigger feelings about other deaths your child may have experienced.

Here are some suggestions for how to help students cope:

- Maintain a normal routine.
- Answer questions factually.
- Remain calm and reassuring. Students take their cues from their parents and adults.
- Be a good listener and observer. Pay attention to changes in behavior.
- Notice when children have questions and want to talk.
- Be especially loving and supportive; children and teens need you even more at this time.
- Take care of yourself. You are better able to help your child if you are coping well.

We also wanted to share some mental health and grief resources. Chief Sealth's school social work team, school counselors, and School Based Health Center staff are also available to help navigate grief and mental health resources should your family have questions or want additional support.

Information and Resources:

- [Teen link](#) (Great for teenagers who want to talk with a trained peer)
- [Dougy Center](#) (Grief support and resources)
- [Community Based Mental Health Services](#)
- [Coping with Grief and Loss](#)
- [The Healing Center](#)

We are a community because we care about each other. In this time of sadness, our hearts and thoughts go out to Mr. Mathis's family. As we learn of more ways to support them, we will let you know. If you have any questions, please contact the school.

Sincerely,
Ray Morales
Principal