

Hiawatha schools address student's death

(KAIR)--A Hiawatha elementary student has died, and the school district is working to help her fellow students cope with the loss.

Lonnie Moser, the Superintendent of USD 415, addressed the death of 9-year-old Leighya Marie DeLong in a [post](#) to the school district's website.

In the release, Moser said DeLong died unexpectedly on December 23 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

DeLong was a 4th grade student in the class of Andy Runer. Noting that DeLong had only been in the class since October, Moser said "her smile and positive attitude were impactful and she will be deeply missed."

Saying that the "tragic loss of life will undoubtedly impact [DeLong's] classmates and other members of the Hiawatha Elementary School family," Moser said the district and school officials "are working to ensure appropriate support and resources for our students and staff as they cope with the loss."

According to a [GoFundMe](#) account set up to raise funds for the family of DeLong, the child died of influenza.

According to information posted with the account, apparently established by the child's paternal grandmother, DeLong was taken for hospital care on December 22 in Lincoln, Nebraska. Diagnosed with influenza, she was again taken for treatment the next day, when she died.

The post says DeLong and her mother, Odessa Kirkendoll, had only recently moved to Kansas.

Along with her mother and grandparents, survivors of DeLong include her three siblings.

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