



Martinson Elementary School

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BIRTHDAYS and OTHER CELEBRATIONS AT MES!



Dear Families:

As we implement the MA School Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages as mandated by the State of MA, Martinson Elementary School is committed to providing opportunities to improve the overall well-being of our students. One of the many ways we support this endeavor is by modeling and encouraging healthy nutritional behaviors in school.

The standards were developed by health and education experts using the "Institute of Medicine's Nutrition Standards for Food in School" and the "Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010." The standards are focused on "competitive" foods and drinks sold or provided in public schools from 30 minutes before the beginning of the school day until 30 minutes after the school day ends. The standards do not apply to school meal programs, which follow USDA national guidelines.

Our teachers will therefore only be conducting **HEALTHY CELEBRATIONS** throughout the year. Classroom parties such as birthday and holiday celebrations do not need to involve food, **just fun!**

- **Fun, not Food:** Teachers will **avoid** having refreshments at parties and will **not** use food as a reward or prize.
- **Different Drinks:** One 8oz. low-fat (1%) or non-fat milk (plain or flavored), one 4 oz. 100% juice or water with no added sugars or artificial sweeteners is an allowable option.
- **Snacks:** Fresh fruits, vegetables, low-fat cheese sticks, low-fat and low-sodium popcorn, rice cakes, and cheerios are allowable options, but again, are discouraged for classroom parties. ***(It is advisable to check with your child's teacher and/or the School Nurse before you purchase items to ensure they are acceptable for distribution in school.)***
- **Suggested ideas for parents (instead of food) for Birthdays:**
 - Birthday stickers for the class,
 - Birthday pencils (pens for older students),
 - Markers, crayons or colored pencils as a classroom donation,
 - Birthday bookmarks,
 - A playground ball (with your child's name and birth date on it) for the class,
 - A book or books dedicated in honor of your child's birthday for the classroom or the MES Library,
 - A board game or card game (for indoor recess),
 - Birthday hats, party favors, bubbles for younger children,
 - The suggestions could go on and on

Thank you for helping us to implement the Massachusetts School Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages. **Healthy Celebrations....Fun not Food!**

Sincerely yours,

Leslie A. Scollins, Ed. D., Principal

Carolyn Mudge, Nurse