



James C. Agostine
Superintendent

August 31, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you a few changes to our Wellness Policy #6142.101 that the Board of Education approved last spring. These changes pertain to food or beverages distributed to the general student population during the school day. I believe these changes will have a positive impact on your child's nutrition, safety, overall health and comply with the State Board of Health regulations.

The first change relates primarily to the elementary schools. Beginning in school year 2009-2010, Region 16 prohibits food or beverages for classroom celebrations such as birthday parties. This progressive change will support the classroom lessons students learn about health and nutrition, protect those students with food allergies, and adhere to food sanitation and safety measures. A list of many non-food ideas is attached and is available on our website or in each elementary school office.

Principals may use their discretion to approve other food or beverages distributed to students during the school day. However, such events are limited to no more than once per quarter. In accordance with the State Board of Health regulations, homemade food or beverage items will not be allowed to be served to the general student population. All food or beverage items must be obtained from a licensed food vendor (such as a grocery store) and must be commercially prepared, prepackaged, unopened, and, if possible, individually wrapped.

Food, beverages and candy are commonly used in the classroom setting as an incentive or to reward good behavior and academic performance. Rewarding students with candy, food and beverages of little nutritional value undermines the teaching and modeling of behaviors that promote student wellness. According to the Wellness Policy changes, teachers are now required to use reward incentives other than food, candy and beverages, except if it is waived in a student's Individual Education Plan.

The complete Wellness Policy may be found on our website at www.region16ct.org. If you have any questions regarding the changes, please do not hesitate to contact Victoria Biello, School Nutrition Director, at (203) 758-6671. I am looking forward to another great school year for Region 16 students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James C. Agostine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

James C. Agostine