



Dear Staff,

We love to celebrate! Birthday parties and holiday celebrations provide a perfect opportunity to role model how fun and healthy eating go hand-in-hand. We recognize that a child's birthday is a very special day of the year for him / her and we want his / her day to be fun and safe while at school. We started the 2018-2019 school year with all MSD Warren Schools aligning their birthday celebration policies to the district's wellness policy and had much success! We will be following this same policy for the 2019-2020 school year. As part of our efforts towards health and wellness, we will be continuing a "no birthday treats" guideline. The purpose of this is to assure a school environment that promotes and protects students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating, physical activity and healthy choices.

Why does this matter?

- Foods that are used in celebrations are typically high in sugar, fat, and salt with little to no nutritional value, and can play a role in establishing kids' preferences for unhealthy foods.
- Encouraging kids to eat healthy foods, but at the same time rewarding good behavior with unhealthy foods, could send mixed messages.
- Additionally, due to the increase of students with food allergies, schools must be extremely careful with any food items entering the school building.

We know it's important to honor a birthday, and we want to find new, non-food ways to celebrate. Non-food rewards and celebrations can be some of the most fun and popular ways to honor a special event. Here are some ways to ensure food is never used as a reward and ideas to consider for celebrations in your classroom:

- **Birthday Library:** Have families donate their child's favorite book to the classroom library. You could read it together and have all the children sign (or stamp) it;
- **Games or Crafts:** Have families bring in a game or craft to be completed in honor of their child;
- **Party Hats:** Have families send in party hats for their child's class to wear for the special occasion;
- **Stickers and Cards:** Have families donate their child's favorite stickers to the classroom to create birthday cards for their child.

Thank you for supporting our efforts in keeping our kids happy, healthy, and eager to learn. Parents have been informed of this improvement as well. Please help us reinforce this positive change. For more information on the district's wellness policy and to find additional resources on non-food celebration ideas please visit the district website at: <https://www.warren.k12.in.us/o/msd-of-warren-township/page/wellness--10>

Sincerely,

Timothy E. Hanson, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools