



August 18, 2023

Dear Parents of Riverside School Students,

A child's birthday can be a very special day, at home and at school. Given the increasing number of children whose access to food is limited by allergies, dietary restrictions, custom or religious affiliation, food at birthday celebrations has led to exclusion for some students rather than inclusion.

A number of years ago the district determined there would be no outside food permitted for classroom birthday celebrations in an effort to make a child's birthday an inclusive celebration for his/her classmates. This procedure will continue for the 2023-2024 school year.

In keeping with the goals of our Wellness and Food Allergy policies, outside foods (cupcakes, cake, candy, etc) are not permitted for classroom birthday celebrations. Each child's birthday may be recognized in school, but only with non-food items or activities.

The school administration has consulted with the representatives of the PTA and determined how birthdays will be celebrated in the classroom. Mr. Matejek or I will continue to provide a special "Happy Birthday Announcement" over the PA system in the morning to recognize the children who have a birthday that day (or a birthday coming up on the weekend or holiday break).

In addition, once a month, the grade level will have an extra recess to celebrate all the birthdays that month. The school will continue to provide a "Happy Birthday" pencil, given out by the classroom teacher on a child's birthday (or right before it).

Since we are providing recognition, a birthday pencil for each birthday, and extra recess time, we ask that no token items be sent in for students in the class. The goal of this is not to diminish the joy and excitement of a birthday, but to celebrate in a way that sends the message of inclusion, belonging and respect for all.

I am confident that we can work together to make all our birthday celebrations great fun and make your child's birthday very special.

Sincerely,

Christopher Weiss

Riverside School Principal