



# East Ramapo Central School District

105 South Madison Avenue, Spring Valley, NY 10977

A Unified Community Educating the Whole Child ...

**Summit Park Elementary School**

925 NY-45, New City, NY 10956

845-577-6290

**Dr. Deborah L. Wortham**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Kim A. Hewlett**  
Principal

Dear Parents or Guardians,

This letter is to inform you of a shift in mindset that addresses the health and wellness of children in Summit Park Elementary School. In accordance with our district mission of providing all students with a learning environment that is healthy and safe, our school is prohibiting giving food to students as a reward and withholding food as a punishment. This decision was made after much thought and discussion by the School Leadership Team, while considering the Healthier Schools initiatives. There are a variety of reasons why we made this change, the main one being to coordinate with our district's wellness policy on making healthy choices, in alignment with federal regulations. Other rationale for restricting treats at school includes the following concerns:

- **Allergies:** Due to the increasing number of students with food allergies, schools have had to be extremely careful with any food items entering the school building. It is a safety issue and something that we need to take very seriously.
- **Promoting Healthy Lifestyles:** The Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that one in six school-age children are overweight; triple the proportion in 1980. The agency has projected that one in three children born in 2006 will eventually develop a form of diabetes linked to being overweight.
- **Equity:** Some parents are not able to provide treats for their child on birthdays or special days because of financial hardships or work schedules.
- **Loss of instructional time:** Every minute counts! Although staff will continue to find creative ways of celebrating birthdays/special events with students, it is important to protect the instructional day.

The purpose of this change 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. This change brings together current research to create guidelines that help us with healthy choices for all of our students. Please know that we are not trying to take the fun out of birthdays. Classroom teachers will continue to recognize children on their special day in special ways. Thank you in advance for your flexibility and for caring about the health and wellness of our children.

Sincerely,

Kim A. Hewlett  
Principal