

November 25, 2009

Dear Parents,

At their September meeting, the Board of Directors approved the following policies related to the health and wellness of our students:

- We will eliminate the distribution of home prepared foods to P-12 students during regular school hours.
- We will eliminate the use of any trans-fat (partially hydrogenated oil) in food sold or distributed to P-12 students during regular school hours.
- We will eliminate the use of Styrofoam in serving or delivering food to P-12 students during regular school hours.

The Board also determined that these policies should be implemented as soon as possible with a target implementation date of January 1, 2010. With that in mind, we wanted to inform you of some of the progress that has already been made:

- Our Nutrition/Wellness consultant, Bonnie Minsky, has met with the P-12 staff, a core group of P.i.E. representatives and a small gathering of interested parents to explain more fully the rationale for her recommendations and give other suggestions and ideas related to the health and wellness of our students.
- The school cafeteria staff has already made plans to fully comply with the new policies. They have eliminated the sale of soda, our regular plastic ware has been replaced with biodegradable ware, and they continue to make improvements to provide our students with more healthy food – including the complete elimination of trans-fats. The use of Styrofoam will be eliminated by the January 1 deadline date.
- The P.i.E. board is planning to eliminate all home baked goods from our Tuesday lunches by January 1 and will be providing a “treat” that complies with the new policies from a list of possibilities provided by Bonnie Minsky. They have already replaced the potato chips with pretzels or apple slices, and they are exploring the possibility of providing trans-fat free hamburgers as soon as possible.
- At the beginning of the school year, we replaced our soda and snack machine with **Yo Naturals** machines which provide students with significantly healthier options.

With a view to the implementation deadline of January 1, 2010 here are some things that parents should keep in mind related to our changes:

- None of the policies adopted restrict your ability as a parent to provide **your child** with whatever food you would like them to have. If you send your child to school with a lunch from home, nothing will change.

- **Only pre-packaged food items that meet our new requirements (no trans-fat) will be permitted for students to mark a birthday** or any other celebration. Make sure that the food item package says “no trans-fat”, and be sure the ingredients list does **not** include “partially hydrogenated oil”. A short list of suggestions from Bonnie Minsky that meet the requirements for pre-packaged food choices is attached.
- We do **encourage** you to consider non-food “treats” to mark a student birthday. A book could be donated in honor of your child’s birthday to the library or classroom, a game could be given for the class to enjoy together during indoor recess, your child could bring a small plant or flower for the class, or you could consider a small donation to the grade level service project. And, of course, you should not feel compelled or pressured to bring any items (food or non-food) to school on your child’s birthday. Our teachers do a good job of making each student feel “special” on their birthday!

Thank you so much for your support and cooperation of a policy that optimizes student learning, protects our children, and advances our mission as a Christ-centered school. If you have any suggestions or questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely



Dr. Tim Hoeksema Ed. D.
Principal

P.S. Have a blessed Thanksgiving!