

Dear Palmer Lake Elementary School Families:

Welcome back! I want to make you aware of some positive changes occurring at Palmer Lake Elementary beginning in September. One of them is a pilot project to promote healthy food in the classroom. Several classrooms will be involved throughout the 2009–2010 school year, and teachers, students, and family members all will play a role in its success. With that in mind, *please read this letter carefully to understand how this may affect your children.*

The goal of this project and the benefits of healthy eating are better grades, improvements in classroom behavior, and healthy lifelong eating habits for Palmer Lake students. Research shows that five daily servings each of fruits and vegetables are the minimum number required for good health. No other snack food provides as much nutrition as a piece of fruit or a vegetable. This project goes hand-in-hand with giving kids the “brain food” they need to succeed in school and meet our district’s new academic standards. Families are asked to support the healthy eating project by providing their student(s) with nutritious snacks and alternatives to sweets for parties and celebrations.

Teachers involved in this project will:

- *Only allow healthy snacks* — Healthy snacks are fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, and low-fat dairy foods. (A recommended healthy snack list is attached.) Nutritious snacks can be inexpensive. Please take the time to discuss the snack guidelines with your children.
- *Use nonfood rewards and incentives for students* — Instead of candy, students may be rewarded in a variety of ways including sitting by a friend; listening to music; eating lunch with the teacher; receiving stickers, pencils or bookmarks; and having extra reading time or other activities of this nature. This approach reflects Palmer Lake’s positive health messages and commitment to promoting healthy behaviors.

If you have questions about the pilot project, please contact Julie Bocoock, school district health coordinator, at <bocoockJ@district279.org> or 763-391-7126; or Deborah Istre at <deborah.istre@co.hennepin.mn.us> or 612-348-3655.

Thank you for supporting our teachers in the food-in-the-classroom project. It promises to be a great way to improve our students’ learning experiences and lifelong eating habits.

Sincerely,

Tommy Watson
Palmer Lake Elementary Principal