



MOUNT VERNON
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Terry Eisenbarth, Elementary Principal

5-16-11

Dear Washington Elementary Parents/Guardians,

I would like to take this opportunity to clear up some confusion and questions regarding how we celebrated student birthdays at the onset of the 2010-2011 school year.

I believe strongly that birthdays are very important to everyone, especially our children. Traditionally, birthdays in our country have been celebrated in many ways. Some common celebrations have been the offering of gifts, treats, birthday cake, songs/singing, games, and even a “tap” or “pat” on the backside for the number of years accrued.

At the onset of the school year, I recognized student birthdays with an announcement on the intercom stating the student’s name and their special day. I also invited them to the office where I congratulated them on their birthday and gave students gifts of a birthday pencil and calculator with a personalized message from Mr. E. I engaged in conversation with the students about their age and would wish them a happy birthday with a song and birthday “tap.” To “pat” students on the backside in relation to the Happy Birthday song; I used a padded item that basketball coaches commonly use in practice, as an extension of their arm. I have included an image of this item, so that you understand that physical harm was never done to any of the students. Other staff members and students were always present when these celebrations occurred.

I would often even utilize a staff member or parent in the process. The purpose of this practice was solely and genuinely to cultivate relationships with students and highlight their special day. I did not have any intentions of anything but honouring their birthday. I am very sorry that I have caused discomfort to some by celebrating birthdays in this manner.

As the year progressed, I had received feedback from a few people that this practice of patting students created an uncomfortable situation. Due to this concern, I removed that portion of the celebration. I am currently recognizing students via the intercom and still providing them with a pencil and calculator with a personalized statement.

I care very much about the students in our school district, and never meant to create discomfort for anyone in our learning community.

In Education,

Mr. Eisenbarth



“Promoting Excellence in Academics, Arts, and Athletics”