

## **545 - Classroom Party Policy**

Approved by GWA Board of Directors 9-27-2012

In some schools, classroom parties have become time-gobblers and education distracters. When one considers 25+ students, each having a birthday party, and then adding all of the holidays, a large amount of instructional time can be sacrificed. Due to G.W.A.'s focus on academic rigor, teachers are expected to keep both the number of parties and time spent away from academic study to a minimum. Classroom celebrations, although fun for students, can distract from the academic program and take undue time away from the primary mission of the school.

Classroom teachers are asked to plan no more than a total of three class parties per school year and to structure them around educationally relevant themes whenever possible. The three main holidays celebrated at G.W.A. are Halloween, Christmas/Winter Celebration, and Valentine's Day. All classes will have their parties on the same day during the last hour of the school day unless otherwise approved by administration, and all primary academic blocks (Math, Language Arts) must remain unchanged.

Birthday celebrations may be held in addition to classroom parties, but for the same reason class parties are restricted, birthday celebrations are to be limited to no more than 5 minutes time and in conjunction with either the snack period, lunch period, or the end of the school day.

At GWA, we encourage a sense of community and giving among our students. Therefore, we encourage teachers to consider choosing to celebrate using a different format. For example:

- To celebrate birthdays, one might establish the tradition of the birthday student bringing a favorite book and then encourage the student to donate the book to our school's library, with the opportunity to be the first to check it out.
- For Valentine's Day, one might have the children make cards to be distributed to assisted living centers, rather than just to each other.
- For Christmas and other Winter Holidays, one might try doing a variety of 'Pay-it-Forward' and/or Community Service Projects.