

**TRI-TOWN SCHOOL UNION
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
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To: Parents and Guardians
From: Bernard F. Creeden, Superintendent of Schools
Re: Gifts to School Personnel
Date: December 4, 2008

The holiday season which extends from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day including the observance and celebration of Christmas, Hanukah and Kwanzaa provides all of us with many opportunities to extend expressions and gifts of thanks, appreciation and best wishes to those, who work closely with our children and families on a daily basis, throughout the year. Many families want to include school personnel in such seasonal expressions of gratitude. As educators, school personnel appreciate support and encouragement from students and their families throughout the year.

There have been a number of questions raised in recent years as to what is appropriate and what the limits should be relative to gifts to school personnel during the holidays and at other times during the year.

School Committee policy and the State Ethics Commission regulations and advisories to public employees interpreting Massachusetts General Laws (Chapter 268A and 268B) offer us clear guidance and direction. The letter and spirit of law, policy and regulations suggest the following:

- The School Committee encourages the writing of letters of appreciation to staff members as a most appropriate way of expressing thanks and encouragement at any time during the year.
- Gifts to benefit classrooms and other school programs rather than individual staff members are appropriate with the understanding, that once given, these gifts become the property of the school and not any individual staff member.
- Gifts for the personal use of a staff member presented by individual families or by a class as a group gift are to be limited to a value of \$50.00 in an academic year.
- Contributions to charitable organizations in the name of a staff member are permitted.

On behalf of all of our staff, I wish each an every family a holiday season of relaxation, refreshment and renewal. We look forward to working with you on behalf of children in 2009.