

# ZCES principal encourages balanced meals at lunch

By Nancy Cauley

This school year, I've committed to having a higher visibility with the students and parents. I make it a point to get outside and greet students as they arrive at school and again in the afternoon as they leave. It's great to see you parents as you deliver or pick up your children.

Similarly, I spend every day I'm on campus in the lunchroom. I enjoy this part of the day because I can check in on the students, ask how they're doing, and make sure they eat their lunch whether it's "brown bag" or a cafeteria meal. In that vein, I want you to know that I make every effort to have your children eat all of their lunch. Often, they've devoured the chips and chocolate bar, but have left the sandwich behind. I commonly tell students to eat their sandwich before the treats.

At times, after discovering that a student has not eaten the "meat and potatoes" part of their lunch, I will instruct them to return to the table to finish even after they've been dismissed to go back to class. Children can't function properly in the classroom on a bag of chips and a Jell-O snack; and frankly, neither could I – believe me, I've tried and it's not pretty.

I also extend this policy to the snacks sold in the cafeteria twice a week for grades 4-6. Students are not permitted to purchase snacks unless they've eaten the protein part of their lunch and have finished their milk. Quite honestly, I don't endorse the snacks sold in the cafeteria because they are generally unhealthy – over-processed and full of sugar and fat – which is why I am a stickler on whether or not a child is

allowed to buy a snack, especially if they didn't eat their meal.

Trust me, I love sweets and certainly think that a balanced diet can include a little "something extra" in the way of treats, but I also know that growing bodies need protein and good carbohydrates. I hope you understand my desire to ensure that each child at ZCES consumes a healthy, tasty lunch.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call the office or speak to me directly.

*Nancy Cauley is principal of Zephyr Cove Elementary School.*