

March XX, 2006

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Winston Salem Forsyth County School system, in partnership with the Sara Lee Center for Women's Health at Forsyth Medical Center, has launched an initiative to improve the health of our school children. As we informed you in last month's letter, we have calculated your child's body mass index.

Body mass index (BMI) is used to indicate whether body weight is appropriate for height given age and gender. If an individual's BMI is too high or too low, it may be indicative of increased health risks. Determining BMI is a health screening test. Screening tests are used to find problems early. Early detection of health problems may help prevent the development of serious conditions.

Once your child's BMI was determined, it was matched with his/her age and gender which placed him/her in a given percentile. Your child's BMI placed him/her at or below the 5th percentile for his/her gender and age. This is a health screen, not a diagnostic test. These results may mean that your child is underweight or at risk for being underweight as well as the health risks that accompany being underweight. Being underweight may inhibit proper bone development, cause vitamin and mineral deficiencies, lower the immune system, and lead to reproductive complications.

If you have not already discussed this with your child's health care provider, you should ask the provider if this is something about which you should be concerned. If you visit your child's health care provider, please bring this letter with you. Your child's health care provider may want to evaluate your child and or perform a nutritional assessment.

The habits you learn as a child are often the habits you carry for life. Please help your child and your family adopt healthy lifelong habits by making healthy food choices and being active every day! Look in your child's weekly folder for the "Health Notes" newsletter for more tips on healthy living.

Sincerely,

