

District Wellness Committee Meeting

January 19, 2016

Central Administration Building

Present for the Committee: Colleen Lawless, Mary Ellen Reed, Lisa Conrad, Jamie Langelier, Claudia Cope, Karen Reichers, Rita Heckmen, Tonia Donovan (1st Grade Teacher), Barbara Weber (community representative), Jennifer Shuemaker (3rd Grade Teacher), Susan Murray, Ann Tefft, and Thomas Conrad, Superintendent

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. by Susan Murray, Director of Nutrition and Food Services.

Citizens Speak

None

Priority Business

District Wellness Day, Thursday, April 28, 2016 –

Each school indicated what they would do to celebrate the District Wellness Day.

Orleans – Salad Bar

Stony Brook – Walk to School

High School – possible Health Fair with Barnstable County Health in cafeteria during lunch

Eastham – no sure yet

Middle School – Sue Murray will talk with them

Goal for 2015-2016 Wellness Committee

Superintendent Conrad reported that the district has a new policy manual in place for the current school year. He mentioned the fundraising policy and the need for fundraising lists to be brought to the School Committee for approval.

He reviewed wording changes in the Wellness Policy that were brought to the Policy Subcommittee for review and comment. He let everyone know that no policy is implemented in the district without the Policy Subcommittee signing off on it and School Committee approval.

Karen Reichers reviewed the wording in the policy relative to food brought to school and indicated there are other allergies, not just nuts and peanuts. If the food is purchased, packaged and labeled, who will be checking it? Food cannot come into the building without advanced approval. She suggested a 48 hour notice. Claudia Cope suggested putting this in the health care plans, who is responsible for checking the food and for reading labels.

Lisa Conrad stated there are many allergies, gluten, sesame, Kiwi, and milk, to name a few. Some students have multiple allergies. The School does not know how parents are preparing food. Some of the allergies are life-threatening.

Tonya Donovan stated Eastham is a food free school. She felt the school should train children to be responsible and that the teachers and nurses could help the students. Karen Reichers felt the students are too young and do need to be taught but there is a lot put on students. She felt the kids have to be put in a bubble.

Colleen Lawless indicated that bringing food into school works when there is advanced notice, it is cleared with the teacher, and not last minute. Tonya Donovan indicated at Wellfleet Elementary School teachers create a notice for parents. Students with allergies have an alternative in the freezer. Karen Reichers indicated she was uncomfortable with that. Eastham teachers decided as a school that they would not have food brought to school. Some teachers provide alternatives to food. She displayed a treasure chest that had a free homework pass in it. She said parents and students love it. At the morning meeting the treasure chest is presented. They found they can have just as much fun without having food.

Superintendent Conrad indicated that there are some very talented people working in Food Service in the district. Could the District provide food that we know and produce that is safe and could be purchased? He too felt the last minute parent bringing food to share is problematic.

Sue Murray, Director of Nutrition and Food Service stated the wellness policy spells out what celebrations should look like in school as far as food. Mary Ellen Reed felt the wording "will be encouraged" is not strong enough. Superintendent Conrad stated the main focus is to keep kids safe. Sue Murray stated as a District we cannot address all the food allergies and still must encourage education.

Lisa Conrad mentioned the volume of parties and activities which should require advanced planning. Jen Shuemaker, parent and teacher at Nauset thought the new wording of no home baked food at school was heartbreaking on so many levels. She felt if notices are sent, parents comply. She was disappointed in the proposed wording change in the wellness policy. Tanya Donovan suggested working to problem solve and making everyone safe. Classroom parties are what children remember. The committee should try to find a balance. The Principals should let parents know that they cannot drop off snacks and that advance notice is required.

Claudi Cope-Crosen stated that at Wellfleet, bringing cupcakes has declined and beautiful fruit trays/cheese and crackers are brought to school for celebrations. Wellfleet has seen a dramatic drop in sweets and portions. Parents are bringing in something healthy to share. Perhaps mid-year reminders should be sent home about classroom celebrations. Friday back pack mail should contain a notice reminding parents, especially as Valentines' Day approaches.

MaryEllen Reed agreed there is value in education and celebrating. She suggested these celebrations be limited over the year, perhaps four times per year within a grade level. Coordinating these events with teachers and parents well in advance would be helpful. She felt birthday celebrations are difficult as kids are eating snack at 9:30 a.m. Do we want them to eat a sugary, disproportional sized cupcake? She thought birthday celebrations should be limited to once per month with pre-planning and an advanced notice to parents. Then we can put out a list or criteria of what we want for a birthday

celebration. She felt we fall short in applying the policy equitably among the schools. Educating the staff is a must. Lisa Conrad felt that advanced planning would help the diabetic students and then they do not have to have a high blood sugar all day because they did not know about the celebration.

The Superintendent concluded by stating we would like monthly birthday celebrations and a limit on grade level celebrations. He would like to see this happen district-wide. He is looking to find consistency and balance in all of it. Any change will be driven administratively and communicated with families.

Tonya Donovan felt this was a good compromise. It was mentioned that a celebration at school is sometimes the only recognition a child gets on their birthday. A child can be recognized in so many ways on their birthday including being a line leader, having a birthday banner or crown, without a celebration with food.

Superintendent Conrad indicated that he will bring this policy back to the Policy Subcommittee with the changes. He would like to have something in place in September. He would like one clear statement that indicates there will be a combining of birthdays each month for a monthly celebration. The celebration can be a unique event that requires pre-planning.

Individual Wellness Committee Updates

Eddy School participated in the Turkey Trot.

Stony Brook School students walk to school day.

Orleans holds a monthly walk to school day.

Eastham students are dropped off at the Visitor's Center and teachers and students walk to school. This way every student can participate.

Jamie Langilier stated water was banned from the High School. Kids have been trying to get out of class to get the water. The Student Council is trying to get another bubbler on campus. (water cooler) She also stated there was no water in the gym and the vending machines have been removed.

Next meeting: March 22nd at 3:30

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Ann M. Tefft