

**Minutes
Wellness Committee
December 8, 2014**

Present:

Colleen Palmer, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
Jo-Ann Keating, Ed.D., Director of Finance and Operations, Co-Chairperson
Jill Patterson, Chartwells Registered Dietician
Andre Santelli, Chartwells Food Service Director
Sheryl Zulkeski, Nurse Supervisor
Dan Doak, Asst. Principal – WHS
Nina Daniel, Board of Education Rep.
Kristine Manoni, Parent Rep.
Rebecca Marks, Student Rep.
Meghan Skelton, Social Worker – WHS
Dawn Egan, Parent Rep.
Nicole Wilhelm, Asst. Principal – WIS
Dru Walters, Asst. Principal – WMS
Mark Berkowitz, Athletic Director

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Keating at 3:00 p.m.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding nutrition:

- Dr. Keating reported to the Committee that Lois Pernice, the Dir. of Pupil Services, is currently researching other districts to determine how they handle classroom celebrations. The District has investigated the possibility of not serving food during classroom parties. The District is trying to implement a standardized policy across all schools.
- Ms. Wilhelm reported that the third grade teachers have already transitioned to non-food celebrations. Ms. Zulkeski added that while there are many unknown food allergies that need to be taken into consideration, there is a cultural component to the inclusion of food in classroom celebrations and probably won't be removed completely.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding social and emotional health:

- Ms. Skelton informed the Committee that planning for Family University Night is currently underway. Given the fact that March and April are hard months to garner strong attendance, the format of the event will be different this year. Rather than having one big event in the spring, there will be several nightly workshops in February and

March, and then one bigger event in the fall. Weston Youth Services will still be involved in the event, but not to the extent they were in the past, and the District is hoping to get more PTO and community support. Topics will cover substance abuse, stress, and preparing children emotionally for transitions between schools, including college.

- Ms. Egan added that it's important to get the right speaker to fit the topic being presented. Ms. Skelton reported that they are planning on including college students, parents of college students and college staff members on the panel to discuss college transition.
- Ms. Daniel reported that she spoke to Chief Troxell of the Weston PD and he'd be happy to have someone from the police department speak at the sessions.
- Dr. Palmer inquired into whether or not the current trend of choking to get high would be addressed at any of the sessions. Ms. Skelton reported that they could include the topic in the program or address it some other way.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding physical health:

- Mr. Berkowitz reported that the high school has started it's after school intramural sports program for students. In the past they have also offered programs for staff members, such as yoga and Zumba.
- Ms. Zulkeski reported that staff members would like to have the IHS health screening program re-instated. Dr. Keating reported that the District will look to implement the program again.
- Dr. Palmer suggested distributing Aetna newsletters to staff members and parents. Dr. Keating will look into this.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding menu planning:

- Mr. Santelli reported that the District's foodservice program is being audited in January - the State will be auditing the elementary school. Mr. Santelli also reported that he is planning on posting nutritional information on the District website. Additionally, the Weston Senior Center is planning on beginning lunch service to its members, supplied by the District, beginning the week of December 15th. Mr. Santelli will look into piloting a juice bar at the high school. The equipment has been purchased, but a suitable candidate to run the program has not been found.
- Ms. Marks informed the Committee that the food at the high school has been excellent.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding the employee assistance program:

- Dr. Keating reported that the District is looking to implement an employee assistance program that will help employees with a variety of issues/questions, ranging from financial to psychological. Dr. Keating has an implementation meeting scheduled with the vendor on December 16th.

The Committee discussed the following items regarding the foodservice RFP:

- Dr. Keating informed the Committee that before going out to bid, the RFP has to be reviewed by the State. The District submitted the RFP at the beginning of November and was informed that the State will be revising their RFP format and will inform the District once that is complete.

The Committee discussed the following items during the roundtable discussion:

- Mr. Walters reported that the middle school would like to implement an after school fitness program for staff members. Dr. Keating will have Kim Kus, the assistant principal at the elementary school contact him as she implemented something similar.
- Mr. Doak reported that the high school is going to have a de-stressing week for students after mid-term exams.
- Ms. Wilhelm informed the Committee that the intermediate school PTO has put together a new indoor recess program, and the school is holding outdoor recess as long as the temperature doesn't fall below 20 degrees. Two teachers have piloted a program where they take their classes out for 10 minutes every day and have found that it has had a positive effect on their students.
- Mr. Berkowitz reported that he has spoken to all winter coaches and asked them to cut back on practice time during mid-term week.
- Ms. Patterson reported that she will be involved in a community partnership with ShopRite in Norwalk where topics such as healthy school meals, holiday meals and how to shop for good nutrition will be discussed. Dr. Palmer asked if Ms. Patterson would be interested in filming a presentation that would be placed on the District website and shown on CH 78, the District's cable channel, and which would focus on maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Ms. Patterson agreed.
- Ms. Marks informed the Committee that the honor society will be holding two nights of tutoring for freshman to prepare them for mid-terms.
- Ms. Daniel inquired into the possibility of having finance topics discussed at Family University Night. Ms. Skelton confirmed that financial topics were scheduled to be included.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on March 9th at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Galli

Administrative Assistant to the Director of Finance and Operations

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