

Wellness Taskforce

April 3, 2017

Facilitator: Trudy Gross, Assistant Superintendent

Consultant: Minh Le, President, Wilfred Jarvis Institute

Scope of Work

- Defined problem: students struggle with mental wellness, school-life balance and stress, and sleep deprivation.
- Definition: wellness is an individual's state of physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual balance, achieved through the active management of proper diet, exercise, stress, and illness prevention.
- Structure and mission of the task force: using scientific research, case study and survey information, develop consensus among a diverse group of parents, students, teachers and staff regarding the need to address our students' sleep deprivation, recommend to the teacher's association, with input from the classified association, a number of well-analyzed solutions to implement, and suggest to the District and Board other actions to consider or put into practice.

Ground Rules

- Stakeholders role
- Communication and gathering support
- Taskforce members have a responsibility to solicit input from their friends and neighbors, co-workers, peers
- Group member safety in participation.
- Addressing issues and concerns within the taskforce.
- Meetings will be from 3:30-5:30 p.m.; if additional time is needed it will be scheduled in advance and dinner will be provided

Communication:

- Shared resources; support with Google drive from Minh
- Meeting reports to all Taskforce members within 24 hours of a Taskforce meeting, 24 hour review; distribution to community members who applied for or were interested in the task force and posting to the FUHSD website
- Written input via the Wellness email address
- Evening forums: Thursday, March 2 (overview) and Tuesday, March 14 (topic specific) from 7-9 p.m. in the cafeteria at Homestead High School; planning one more that may be in connection with a Board meeting

3:30 p.m. Welcome (Minh)

Address feedback about the student survey

Minh started the meeting by acknowledging the efforts put in place to create the Student Wellness Survey. He reviewed questions 6 and 7 and suggested that they should be considered together:

6) What is the maximum delay to the end of your school day that you could tolerate considering your after-school activities?

- No change to the current end time
- 10 minutes later to the end of the day
- 20 minutes later to the end of the day
- 30 minutes later to the end of the day
- No preference

7) Because we cannot reduce class time, a later start time would mean ending school later as well. However, we could save time and not end school later if we made cuts to brunch or lunch. If we did this, which option would you prefer? (1 min)

- Eliminate brunch
- Reduce lunch time
- Eliminate brunch and reduce lunch time
- Do not change brunch or lunch and end the day later

- These questions may feel frustrating to some of the students completing the survey. Proposed solution is that when the data is reviewed for #7 it be analyzed in the context of #6 given that some students felt forced to choose between undesirable options.
- A parent shared that considering #7 in connection with #6 won't provide the necessary data. #6 is more connected to #5 and how flexible are student after-school activities. The survey won't provide an accurate view of the start time. The focus has been on what students can "tolerate", how much flexibility is there in their schedule.
- Minh suggested that a subcommittee could be formed to review the data.
- A parent reminded the Taskforce about the discussion and resulting decisions from the March 20 meeting. A decision was made that students were not asked about start time: #6 and 7 were to be independent variables. He stated that #7 should be a standalone item during the analysis and the focus should be on "do not change brunch or lunch and end the day later".
- A parent shared concern that her student was upset that they did not get to say whether they wanted a later start or not.

Minh transitioned to the main topic for the meeting and reviewed the Taskforce in terms of conflict resolution.

The taskforce was motivated to do something, after the work in 2016. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, endorsed by the American Medical Association, the National Sleep Foundation and others, coupled with the rather positive experiences of the later school start cases that we have heard about, were too impactful to be ignored.

At the start of 2017, it was recognized that we needed to hear from those in the community who were not ready to move ahead with later school start, so that we could draft better, stronger, more flexible and innovative solutions together. We added members to the taskforce to provide that important balance.

We heard directly from the community in two well-attended forums. Some of us thought the community was very resistant to later school start, and others thought they were very supportive. Most of us and the Superintendent heard both, because she concluded publicly at the second community forum that an intelligent compromise solution was needed to break us out of the impasse we would be finding ourselves in.

One of the ways to break through an impasse is to get more information from our students and parents to address the concern that the previous survey did not have a really high response rate. The taskforce spent a lot of time designing the new survey. Some members wanted to give the students an option to say “no change” and skip the entire survey. Others wanted to share very specific new bell schedules so that the students would know what they were being asked about. It took a lot of work to come up with a compromise set of questions, and not everyone was completely happy about it, even after most approved it in the survey, and the administrators piloted it with 144 students and made small changes to reflect their feedback.

Today we will hear from the Superintendent more about her ideas to help us minimize any negative impact while enhancing the wellness of our students and improving the quality of their education. At the last meeting, we heard from Polly for the first time about a parallel track that had been going on. This discussion will continue today, and hopefully help us start to come together with a compromise solution that works for most of the students and their families.

Review of parallel activities (Polly)

Polly shared that the Taskforce has been very helpful in many ways and the input has informed the parallel activities. Polly shared that the District and teachers are currently in discussion about schedules that address a later start, a viable no first period option at all sites, increased collaboration, increased tutorial time, and a common 2 or 4 block option. She reinforced that the Taskforce has raised visibility on the issue of later start.

- A parent commented that the survey has brought the conversation to many more homes.

Taskforce input regarding the schedule options that were reviewed:

- A parent asked about the impact to athletics at the end of the day.
- A parent asked about the factors going into the 2 different lunch times (late and early within the school day).
 - Does there have to be agreement across sites? Response was that there would need to be a decision for the 4 block and a decision for the 2 block.
- A parent shared that they were sad that passing period wasn't longer. They asked why the 7 period day in the 4 block was on Friday? Response was that students report that they spend the weekend preparing for all classes when Monday has all 7 periods.
- A parent asked why not move the late lunch up between 4th and 5th periods? If students agree to decrease lunch/eliminate brunch could time be shaved? Do students know that their activities can be moved?

- A parent expressed her thanks. Sees a lot of compromises, solutions in the versions shared.
- A parent likes the schedules. Reasonable compromise. Likes that brunch and lunch remain; students and teachers need the time.
- A parent likes the schedules. Asked for more detail about students taking classes at other sites and if the schedule versions would provide more opportunity.
- A parent stated that there was not much of a delayed start for HHS. Not much of an improvement. Pointed out a mistake in early lunch of 4 block: brunch is 10 minutes, no passing period. Disappointed. Suggested that the jet lag issue at HHS will be occurring at other schools; the schedule versions will make the problem worse. Recommends 2nd period then tutorial then brunch. More concerned about the beginning time.
- A parent asked what happens if the kids say they don't want a change in the start time.
- A parent does not feel something has been taken away. The process feels as collaborative as it could.
- A student likes the tutorials; evenly spaced; Monday and Friday lines up with teacher assignments. This may make time at home more efficient. 4 days of tutorial right now is a little too much and 40 minutes, rather than 35 (current), is good.
- A student had a wish there was a 3rd tutorial so this increase is good.
- A student likes the longer tutorial and 3 days per week. In terms of HHS not being much of a change, it is good that it will be in alignment with the other schools. Students at HHS may take the later start for granted right now.
- A parent asked more detail about students taking classes at different school sites.
- A parent stated that a huge selling point of the schedule versions is they allow students to take classes at other sites for vocational opportunities. Student wellness, vocational and elective offerings are important
- A parent likes the schedule, surprised in a good way. Had joined the Taskforce opposed to the change. Within the Taskforce they heard different opinions and began to understand their concerns. Good compromise. Keeps lunch and brunch. If students choose no 7th they can get out of school before 3, opportunity for other activities. Referenced the possible legislation for an 8:30 start at all schools and asked what that could mean. Response was that this will be watched closely; no current update on where the idea stands.
- A parent referenced a good compromise. Doesn't want to change but by doing this, the schedule versions, it can be accepted by the majority. Would choose the early lunch.
- A teacher stated "I love it." Collaboration is extremely important. Part of student wellness is on the teacher side; refine and prioritize standards; discuss meaningful homework. More tutorial is invaluable, embedded in the day furthers teacher reach to more students. Would like 4 blocks and could use the schedule version to influence colleagues. Shared an example of how block supports instruction.
- A parent shared that parents will be convinced to accept the change given that the end time is closer to 3 than 4.
- A classified staff member stated that can't make everyone happy; advocate for similar schedule across the district; consistent schedule across the days as well to support sleep patterns

- A parent expressed concern that it is not consistent for 80% of the students. How does the classified staff member respond?
- A classified staff member responded there would be an hour difference as compared to 90 minute difference, across days, now.
- An administrator shared that this year there was a 3:1 request for no 7th vs. no 1st.

Wrap Up (Trudy and Minh)

- Trudy referenced an updated data document with school start, brunch, lunch times located in the Google Drive.
 - The parent who completed the update shared that the average start time is 8:22 a.m. (21 schools, includes 1 school on the East coast and 1 in the midwest) and that those schools are finding ways to balance with athletic involvement. The average lunch period is 34.35 minutes and the average passing period is 6.1 minutes.
- Next meeting
 - April 17 PLC 3:30-5:30 p.m.
Review data from the student and parent versions of the Student Wellness Survey
Draft recommendations regarding delayed start time
Other strategies to address sleep deprivation problem
Issues or concerns related to above strategies
Drafting recommendations regarding other strategies
 - April 24 PLC 3:30-5:30 p.m.
Solidify the recommendations for FEA
 - May 8 Board Room
 - May 22 PLC

May 8 and May 22 are reserved for last-minute issues and challenges, to prepare for possible presentations or communications to Board, and if we are finished with sleep, we may move on to the next component of student wellness.