

Wellness Taskforce

March 20, 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

Welcome

Review from 3/6, any remaining questions

- Trudy opened the meeting with the introduction of a CHS teacher substituting for his CHS colleague and Taskforce member. He had attended the Taskforce as a substitute in December 2016 as well. He hopes to represent teacher perspectives and is very interested in the various activities and work of the Taskforce thus far.
- A student described wellness activities taking place at HHS this week to help reduce stress including mindfulness seminars, a self-defense class, and a yoga night.
- Trudy outlined the meeting agenda and asked for any questions from the Taskforce meeting on 3/6.

Review of the community forum on 3/14

- Trudy discussed the community forum that took place on 3/14 at Homestead High School. A meeting report was sent out last Friday. Trudy asked for comments from those on the Taskforce that attended the community forum.
 - The FEA President was impressed by the student perspective and articulateness - powerful thoughts presented well. He believes the taskforce needs to ensure a plan is developed that addresses all student needs.
 - A parent was surprised by the views of one parent disputing the research on sleep.
 - Trudy explained the presentations by sleep experts at FHS earlier that day as the result of a partnership between El Camino Hospital and FUHSD. She shared input from one of the physicians that despite the fact that many of the sleep studies cited in the American Academy of Pediatrics report have been carried out on the East coast or elsewhere in the US, and none have been done in California, the biological effects should be the focus given that regardless of the environment it is important for adolescents to get 8.5-9.5 hours of sleep per night.
 - A parent stated that she is hearing kids like the later start idea, but don't want this to affect finish time, brunch, and lunch. Also, breaks are important for teachers.
 - A parent stated that she believed people who attended the forum came to share concerns from a certain perspective, i.e. they want a delayed start.
 - A student expressed concern about lack of student representation. She felt the students at the forum were outnumbered 4:1. Issues hit home harder when kids present. Parents see the impact if students present so she believes it is important that a greater effort be made to secure student representatives on these types of committees.
 - Trudy has talked with principals about students being surveyed more specifically about late start issues.
 - A student described her efforts with another student on the Taskforce to seek more student representatives through IDC. They found this difficult as evenings don't work out so well for kids.
- The discussion then moved into more general areas about what students and staff want in terms of schedules and arrangements to meet their needs, and more specifically, a

discussion about the cafeteria and brunch/lunch times:

- A parent explained that she had asked her son about brunch and shortening the lunchtime. He said that kids don't want to shorten breaks. They want to get food, talk to friends, see teachers, etc.
- A parent stated that her daughter doesn't need a 40 min lunch. She suggested that perhaps students could bring a breakfast bar to eat in class, in lieu of brunch. Her daughter doesn't find brunch very useful. A later start will help more kids eat a good breakfast at home.
- Trudy feels it is important to survey students about these questions. 11% of students in the district receive 2 meals a day at school (students on free and reduced price meals).
- In terms of time in the schedule, a parent stated that there are bathroom needs for both students and staff.
- A parent felt that when tackling one issue we should be careful not to cause stress somewhere else, i.e. impact other breaks. Teachers need the breaks as well.
- Trudy noted that breaks and lunch for staff and teachers are written into contracts and will need to be considered based on next steps from student input.
- A teacher explained that teachers prefer not having students use the bathroom during class time as it reduces instructional time. Breaks are important for students to be able to use the bathroom.
- A parent explained that she started school at 8:35 in her day. She was hungry during the morning but could make it to lunch OK. Her school didn't have a brunch. She posited that there may be a strong feeling about brunch because students haven't experienced the compression of 2 classes, i.e. 2 block periods together. She feels this could be manageable. Brunch could be served to those receiving free and reduced meals as we do now. Thus, this would enable delaying start while keeping lunch at the same time.
- A school staff member explained that many FHS students are travelling an hour or more on the bus to get to school in the mornings. They don't eat at home because they eat free at school. He felt that extending class time and reducing breaks will be difficult for them.
- A food services manager explained the various food options available for students.
- Trudy clarified that kids can bring food from home. Compliance regulations are related to food that is sold on campus.
- A food services manager explained that 250 kids can be served at Homestead in 15 minutes. All the cafeterias move kids through very quickly.
- A parent agreed with another parent that we don't want to create new issues when we solve others.
- A parent asked for more information about how long it takes students to get and eat their food.
- A food services manager explained that most students are served in the first 20 minutes of lunch. But kids are continuously coming in throughout lunch. If time is shortened then this would impact kids who go to the library, extra-curriculars, etc.

- The parent then summarized that if kids have about 20 minutes to get food and the time is cut, it would impact their eating time.
- A principal said that students go through the brunch line in about 12 minutes. Lunch = 17 - 20 minutes, then they need 10 - 15 minutes to eat. They also need time for the bathroom and a break. More kids at CHS leave campus at lunch now due to options at the new nearby Main Street area.
- A parent noted that the lunch break is important for socializing opportunities as well as to eat.
- A parent explained that another parent had recently collected information about lunch times in Bay Area schools. The average = 28 min. FUHSD is longer with 40 min. She stated that the taskforce could look into these ideas/arrangements more and learn from other school districts. Polly cautioned that sometimes these lunch times are combined with a passing time of 10 minutes, so the effective meal times are in fact close to 40 minutes.
- A parent also raised the idea of 2 different lunch periods. Other districts have this. Polly and a principal pointed out that this approach is usually used in much larger schools, with 4,000 students.
- Trudy has reviewed local school lunch times and found that most are around 40 minutes. Information included in the handout from the community forum.
- A parent noted that Gunn has a 10 min passing period and a 40 minute lunch. Follow-up after the meeting, Gunn does not have a passing period before or after lunch; 40 minutes total.
- A parent mentioned that in her banking work experience, tellers have 10 minutes break for every hour working. The Taskforce will need to check labor laws to make sure we are in compliance with whatever we put in place for teachers and staff. If students want different options, then the Taskforce will need to check with unions in regards to contract agreements about breaks.
- A parent explained that she believes students leaving campus for lunch have the opportunity to practice independent and responsible living by choosing timely lunch options off campus.

Jason shared results of the FEA survey

- Trudy introduced the FEA President's recent teacher survey about a later start.
- The FEA President explained the results of his 5 question survey.

Steps towards recommendations

- Polly described the weekend meeting she and Minh held with Taskforce members. She emphasized that although a lot of energy is being focused on a later start, it's just one piece of a much larger series of initiatives being discussed and planned. There are lots of variables in thinking about a later start and there is also a lot of additional work going on in parallel that Polly is working on with the teachers union and other individuals and groups, e.g.:
- Minh introduced a draft student survey that will be administered to seek feedback on considerations for a later start

- Minh - There is concern about lack of student voice in the discussions about a later start and it is hoped that this new survey can be taken by the students during class time to increase the participation rate (to much closer to 100%) from that of the previous student wellness survey (15% approx.). However, it needs to be a focused and brief survey so as to impact instructional time as little as possible.
- The recent teacher survey carried out by the FEA President had a 90% (approx.) response rate. It is hard for people to question a survey with a 90% response rate.
- The taskforce reviewed each question in the survey.
 - There was discussion about the questions, the need to clarify what is desired from the survey, and what usable information would be elicited by these questions.
 - A variety of perspectives were expressed from members of the taskforce on ways to refine and phrase certain questions, theories on how students might answer certain questions, terms that might be interpreted in different ways, etc.
 - A parent stated that there is a need to give kids some information about the survey ahead of time (preview) so it's not a surprise and they can think about the issues.
 - A site administrator suggested a sample of students to trial the survey.
 - A student felt that the school end time is a major consideration for students.
 - An administrator suggested using a variety of schedule examples/scenarios that students could choose from and discuss pros and cons of. This may be easier for students to work with than a variety of questions in a survey and may give the taskforce better information on the actual schedule that students might prefer.
 - An administrator suggested that the Taskforce develop a way to evaluate level of agreement in certain questions (favorite, least favorite, tolerate, etc.)
 - At 5:30 p.m., Minh suggested that the taskforce allow those who wished to leave to do so, and suggested that if anyone wanted to stay another 15 minutes they could discuss the survey further. About 10 - 15 people stayed.
 - A site staff member suggested inviting people from other schools with late start to a meeting so the Taskforce can hear their views.
 - A student suggested that information about the survey questions be available outside class so that students could think about the issue ahead of time.
 - A parent suggested that teachers share information in class or via school bulletins, etc.
 - A parent suggested that parents be sent information about the survey ahead of time as well.
 - There was more discussion about questions that should be included, schedule examples/scenarios, ways to phrase questions and introductory explanations, the volume of background information/education text to include, and so on.
 - Minh suggested that the taskforce redesign the survey and test it with a group of students.
 - Trudy said that she could talk to the principals on Wednesday about the survey.
 - Minh suggested that ideally, the Taskforce should have the results of the survey for the next Taskforce meeting (4/3) due to the pressure of time to make a

decision on how to move forward. He suggested that it might be possible to trial the survey and launch it district wide the following week.

- There was some discussion about plans to launch another parent survey with similar questions to that of the draft student survey to obtain parent views about the later start.
- Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Wrap Up

- Next meeting

- April 3 Board Room *3:30-7 p.m.
Continue drafting recommendations regarding delayed start time
Other strategies to address sleep deprivation problem
Issues or concerns related to above strategies
Drafting recommendations regarding other strategies

Meeting schedule: all meetings are Mondays from 3:30-5:30 p.m.* at the FUHSD office, note location

- April 24 PLC
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.