

Wellness Taskforce

May 22, 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: Trudy and Minh

FEA voting process: May 19-24, 2017

- Trudy opened the meeting with some welcoming comments and a note that this meeting will be the last meeting of the Wellness Taskforce until the Fall of 2017.
- The agenda of the meeting is to go through the Board presentation and seek input.
- June 20th is the date for the Board presentation. This date was chosen over June 6th as it provides more time to prepare and more taskforce members are available to attend.
- Work of the sub-committee thus far has been to establish an outline and create a draft set of slides for review today.
- Today, the taskforce will also review the set of recommendations developed and agreed to go forward to the Board and check on these for anything to edit or add.
- The Taskforce will also spend some time looking ahead to the work to be done in the 2017-18 year.
- Trudy invited the FEA President to give an update of the FEA vote on the “values” that were included in the negotiations package relevant to the later start issue.
- The FEA President explained that ballots were given to teachers last Friday and voting will end on the afternoon of Wednesday 5/24.
- Minh said the results would be emailed to the taskforce when the process is complete and results are available.
- The FEA President said he felt positive about the likelihood of the package being approved by the teachers.
- The package included the “5 values” that the taskforce had recommended
 - 2 collaborations
 - 3 tutorials
 - 8:00 a.m. start for all
 - 2 different schedules for the 5 schools to choose from
 - A true no first period option for all schools
- A parent asked if there was a strong reason to specify a common 8:00 am start time. Will the 8:00 am start time still be up for negotiation?
- Trudy explained that the 8:00 am start time for all was based on trial schedules that incorporated all the values..
- The FEA President noted that the no 1st period option meant it would be necessary to create an 8:00 start time.
- A principal said that the start time standardization requirement across the district also necessitated the 8:00 start.
- A parent expressed concern about locking in the late start time. Wanted flexibility. Thought this was still possible.
- A parent noted that the no 1st period option means a student will start at 9:00 if they choose. However, the no 1st period option doesn’t work for all students. This is the only piece that doesn’t feel right to her.
- The FEA President said the start time will be adopted with the FEA vote this week.
- Trudy explained that FEA will be voting on these items as the values (the 5 main items).
- Minh noted that it’s possible there could be some minor changes decided by the committee working on bell schedules in the Fall.

- The FEA President said there could be flexibility, e.g. when tutorial occurs, but the start time is solid.
- The FEA President said that a committee of teachers and admin will explore related issues further next year and provide feedback loops to teachers, staff, taskforce, etc.

Recommendations regarding Sleep Deprivation:

- delayed start time by 25 minutes for MVHS, LHS, CHS and FHS, and 10 minutes for HHS, so all sites will start at 8:00 am
- a viable No 1st period option at each site
- consistent use of the time management worksheet at all schools, including a reminder to parents to check-in with their student(s) after the semester has started
- follow-up survey in future to assess the impact of above actions on amount of sleep for students
- ongoing education for students and parents on sleep hygiene

Other areas of impact

- increased collaborations from 1 per week to 2 per week
- increased tutorials so that all high schools have 3 per week
- two types of bell schedules: 2 block days per week (for MVHS, LHS, CHS) and 4 block days per week (for FHS and HHS and one or more from the other group if they would prefer 4 block days per week)
- common schedule to allow for teacher sharing across sites and student opportunities for course access across sites such as in Career Technical Education
- consider alternating the block schedule so that athletes do not miss the same class each time they leave early: A week = A B A B 7 period day; B week = B A B A 7 period day
- do not shorten or eliminate break/meal times
- review homework practices and the use of conflict calendars to optimize learning and wellness
- review practice/meeting structure for athletics and other activities to optimize performance and wellness
- recommend that the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League support later school start and end times by scheduling athletic games and meets no earlier than 4 p.m.
- establish an ad hoc committee that continues to periodically review the schedules and implementation
- Review extending passing period to give students more transition time between periods, particularly in a 4-day block schedule
- Where possible, recommend holding final exams later in the morning

- Minh reviewed the list of recommendations with the group.
- He explained 2 items discussed previously that were not included in the lists adopted in the last two meetings:
 - § extending the passing period
 - § holding final exams later in the morning
- These were discussed but not included in the original final list of recommendations.
- A parent asked what would be cut if extending the passing period went ahead.

- Minh reminded the group that there would be no change to instructional minutes.
- Polly noted that increasing passing period would work well with 4 or 5 day block schedule.
- A parent asked if these 2 items are new recommendations. They were explored in the past but were not actually considered as taskforce recommendations.
- A parent asked if these 2 items would impact start/end times.
- A parent thought that 8:00 start time and constraints on the end of the day don't allow for flexibility.
- A student asked if there is a constraint on the end time of the day.
- The FEA President noted that the only other constraint is the 450 minute maximum work day for teachers.
- A parent asked if we should have a firm end time.
- A parent said that sports and clubs create a constraint on the end time.
- There was discussion about end time, constraints, etc.
- A student said that Monta Vista has a 95 min block. This is a long period for student. Blocks are best used for labs. Some classes just have double lecture, which is not so necessary as a block.
- Polly explained that passing periods need to be the same length across the week for them to count as instructional minutes. Gunn has a 5-day rolling block. Block times are uneven currently across our 5 schools.
- A parent noted that there are lots of benefits to extending passing period – students can see a teacher, go to the bathroom, have a snack, relax a bit, etc.
- A student suggested that 5 minutes from a block period could be added to passing periods.
- There was discussion about tutorial and how this could be managed to avoid an impact on instructional minutes.
- A site administrator suggested passing this item over to the work of the taskforce for next year – mental health, etc.
- A Student Advocate suggested that these 2 areas could be included into “Other Areas of Impact” as the taskforce moves forward.
- A parent agreed.
- Minh asked the group and all agreed.
- The Student Advocate suggested moving items around on the list of recommendations to ensure they were in the right place.
- Minh suggested moving “consider extending passing period” up to “Other Areas of Impact.”
 - He also suggested that “Holding final exams later in the morning” could be changed to “where possible, recommend holding final exams later in the morning” - agreed by all.

- Trudy reviewed the draft Board presentation slide by slide.
- Minh spoke about why the introductions to the taskforce and its members were important.
- Trudy showed the “Agenda” slide which will match the other individual slides:

§ Wellness Task Force Goals and Work Focus

§ Committee Composition and Timeline

§ Study Sessions

§ Community Outreach -Parents, Teachers, Students

§ Survey Results and Analysis

§ Recommendations

§ Community Engagement (Communication)

§ Future timeline

- Trudy reviewed and explained the slides.
- A parent reminded the taskforce that the “no 1st period” option doesn’t reach all students.
- There was discussion about the “no 1st period” option.
- A student made the point that the entire list of solutions should work together to reach all students (i.e. the no 1st period options is only one of many options which together should reach all students).
- A parent suggested that “solutions” be changed to “recommendations.” The entire group of recommendations (as per the students’ thought above) should help all kids.
- A site administrator mentioned that master schedule work at each school is going on in the background to adjust section placement to be more supportive of a no 1st option..
- Polly noted that the work with the athletic league SCVAL, is going on as well.
- A principal noted that the impact of a block schedule depends on the schedule for athletics, i.e. different sports are played on different days.
- A site administrator noted that overall, kids like to get out of school early.
- A parent wants to make sure that all kids can have a no 1st or no ‘7th period option.
- Travel for athletics (e.g. Milpitas) is going to be a challenge due to distance and traffic.
- A parent indicated that not all sports are equal regarding start times.
- A parent suggested a change to the wording of the recommendations “Recommendations should help ALL students.” She feels this may may be a bigger promise than the taskforce can commit to.
- A student suggested this point be changed to “Recommendations collectively strive to help ALL students.”
- Trudy continued with the review of the slides by sharing the:
 - Goal slide
 - Membership slide
 - Timeline slide (some details to add, e.g. survey date)
 - Study Sessions slide – things taskforce looked at over this year.
- A student said that it would important to clarify the differences between the 2 surveys.
- Trudy suggested that, to avoid confusion, the 2nd survey be called the “Start time/sleep deprivation survey.”
- Minh noted that one goal of the 2nd survey was to gain a higher student participation rate.
- A parent mentioned a list of 32 doctors in the Bay Area who have signed a note to say they support the AAP sleep report.
- A parent stated that the slides presented to the Board should be the agreements of the taskforce.
- Trudy reviewed slides regarding factors behind insufficient sleep.
- A parent expressed concern about the 8:30 start time mentioned on slide 10. She stated that we are not recommending an 8:30 start time, despite the AAP recommendations, so we should remove this information.
- A parent wants to have a note made that the 8:00 a.m. start time is a starting point, not set in stone. It could get later over the years.
- Another parent agreed that the taskforce should omit the 8:30 time as it’s confusing.

- Trudy modified the statement to omit the reference to 8:30 start time and replace it with “The evidence strongly implicates earlier school start times as a key modifiable contributor to insufficient sleep, as well as circadian rhythm disruption (review specific statement)”
- A parent suggested the sleep study information could be added as a reference. She thought that it was not accurate to say the whole work of the taskforce was based on a certain study, as our community is unique and has its own needs, and the taskforce has designed the district’s response.
- Trudy suggested that the presentation could refer to the Wellness Taskforce website.
- A student noted that it would be important to keep in mind the need to be concise and not add in additional info that will overwhelm community members.
- Minh agreed that links to websites as options/further reference points for further reading is a good suggestion.
- A student said that it will be important to carefully consider what community members need/want to know, and condense content to match needs. There is a need to cut down the number of slides.
- Trudy continued reviewing the slides. There was discussion about the need to refine and reduce.
- The FEA President suggested adding information about communications with teachers throughout the process to the teacher outreach slide.
- A parent suggested developing a slide at the beginning of the presentation that shows what the taskforce was trying to ask and do with the survey and the work. This will help the presenters be more succinct. The presentation could show main questions and answers up front and then use additional slides to explain. There is a need to shrink the survey section by reducing to key questions asked and what we found out.
- Trudy explained the recommendation slides. Ongoing communication and next steps are not yet included.
- A parent commented that the taskforce has developed a long list of recommendations.
- Trudy suggested making a handout with the full list of recommendation for reference.
- A parent suggested making a table and categorize the list of recommendations f.
- Polly noted that if FEA approves the 5 values, then less time could be spent on them and more emphasis could be placed on the other not yet approved recommendations.
- A student suggested mentioning 3- 5 key recommendations from a handout with all recommendations to save time.

Foreshadow the work of the Taskforce for the 2017-18 school year

- Mental Wellness, School-Life Balance, and Stress
 - Study sessions on what is in place at this time
 - How to share information with and provide education to students, parents, staff
- Receive periodic updates on the progress of homework purpose and load
 - Shadow program
 - Challenging the notion of “the more the better”

- Trudy turned the discussion to focus on the work of the taskforce into next year and beyond.
 - The focus should turn from later start and sleep to mental wellness, school life balance, and

stress.

- There are a lot of things currently happening in schools to address these issues.
- Work in the new year will begin with study sessions for the taskforce to inform them of what is currently going on.
- Trudy said the question is how do we share this information to surface it more to the community.
- The outcomes would be to develop recommendations about mental health work.
- There are questions to answer, e.g. homework, where does this fit? How does collaboration support conversations about homework?
- Ideas for work ahead – 2 possible areas:
 - § Shadow program (staff shadowing kids)
 - § Balance meaningfulness with volume of HW
- Study sessions will introduce this work, e.g. Student Advocates/School Psychologists could share about what they do on campus now to support student mental health and reduce stress.
 - A parent suggested that perhaps discussions could take place with students about what their day looks like, maybe several times per year. Also, it would be important to talk with teachers about their strategies to gain more information than that which a survey can provide. The taskforce needs to start talking with students and staff.
 - Trudy explained the need to maintain participation and deal with turnover in the taskforce group.
 - A student said there is a strong need for increased student representation. Only students know how these issues affect them.
 - Trudy asked what would help encourage increased participation.
 - A student reinforced the comments made by the other student.
 - A principal suggested that each school could develop a student taskforce and have representatives attend the Wellness taskforce meetings
 - A student stated that the taskforce needs a consistent group of students. There need to be incentives to participate and attend regularly.
 - A student stated the importance of getting the word out to students.
 - A parent suggested ideas about incentives, e.g. HW pass.
 - Student suggested an extra day to do HW as an incentive.
 - A site administrator commented that there already might be existing groups on campuses which could contribute members, e.g. Challenge Success.
 - A student noted that time is at a premium for students.
 - A principal agreed with the site administrator that it might be possible to build into a system that's already functioning.
 - A parent suggested that students alternate attendance on the taskforce to address the time issue. Perhaps a pool of students could be formed.
 - A student suggested that an application and selection process might motivate kids.

5:15 p.m. Wrap Up

- Presentation to the Board of Trustees on Tuesday, June 20, open session begins at 6:15 p.m.

- Trudy closed the meeting at 5:35 p.m. She noted:
 - ○ The Board presentation is now scheduled for Tuesday, 6/20. All taskforce members are

welcome to attend in addition to the communication sub-committee.