

Equity Meeting

Meeting Minutes - March 7, 2022

6:04 PM Meeting called to order.
Board members present: Mariam Khan, David Asbery, Kevin Shea

Additions to the agenda: None.

Public comments on agenda items: None.

Information Item I: Review of Student Representative Selection and Responsibilities

Khan: As a Board, student voice is a priority. We recently unanimously voted to include a formal Student Representative report section. Let's go a step further and evaluate the bylaws regarding student representation at the Board level. Applications had been due the first week of March, but to ensure accessibility and opportunity for all interested students, has been pushed until the end of March.

Goeler: The process for the past 8 years: list of strong student picks put together by high school principal. Students interviewed by the principal and superintendent. Students are chosen based on commitment, background, and level of enthusiasm and needs to have decent grades. Other students not selected are invited to participate in the Superintendent's Roundtable, which has been halted for past two years due to pandemic.

Bylaw screenshared for Board and committee member comments

Melillo: [In regards to bylaws] the 20 signatures requirement is not the best way to go about this, is a form of compliance. Does not make use of student voice.

Goeler: This policy can be looked at in the Policy Committee. Changes made may have unanticipated consequences, such as popularity contests with student elections. Open to student engagement with process.

Khan: Can we get clarity on the policy committee timeline?

Asbery: Should go through policy committee. Less concerned about popularity contest, GPA regulation to reduce likelihood of removal of student due to academic issues.

Goeler: Will require 1 meeting to review bylaw in Policy Committee. Then, would go to BOE for vote, with 2 more looks at different meetings. Process would take roughly three months.

Khan: Less concerned with popularity contest. Students are mature, and the referendum process would ensure student accountability and action. Students are excited and there is lot of interest this year.

Goeler: Large number of students means more time is added for interview process and principal has to run school. Potential for more democratic process.

Shea: Teachers have student intel and their student picks provide good framework for the process.

Goeler: There are students who would thrive in this position and do not know it yet—the principal can pinpoint some of these kids. Variety of ways to increase outreach.

Khan: Lots of potential for outreach, including Board visits and Student Representative sharing their experience.

Goeler: Process is guided by the policy but there is room in practice.

Khan: Already, our current practice strays from bylaws and perhaps there is room to make this process more robust as we kickstart it.

Asbery: What are other schools doing?

Goeler: Will talk to CABE about Student Representation on Boards across the state.

6:31 PM

Information Item II: Food Security Report

Goeler: Grateful for Tom Ariola's time on this issue. Ariola put together report to share with the Board today.

Ariola: Whitson's has been a great partner.
Slides attached down below.

Food Service Updates

- For the 2021-2022 school year through February, 475,739 meals have been served. Free to all students for rest of school year.
- Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). Church Street, Helen Street, Shepherd Glen, Ridge Hill, and Dunbar Hill will remain free for all students when COVID waivers end.
- Planning now for the Summer Meals program. Expecting COVID waivers to sunset.
- The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) is ongoing at Church Street, Helen Street, and Shepherd Glen. Provides healthy snacks 3 times a month.



H.R.6613 - Keeping School Meals Flexible Act

Extend child nutrition waivers through next school year to June 30, 2023

➤ Letter from CASBO's Director of Government Affairs

Greetings,
CASBO has been working with SNACT for several years on many issues and they have asked for our help with the following matter.

As you all know, all school operations have been impacted significantly by COVID, not the least of which are food service operations. During the past two years, food service operations have provided school children with nutritious and healthy school meals, due in large part, to USDA waivers that enabled school districts to feed children at no cost to them or their families. These waivers expire June 30, 2022, which could put both the summer food service and school year 2022-23 programs in jeopardy. Food service operations cannot plan effectively when reimbursement rates are unknown and whether students will be required to apply for FRL.

There is a federal bill HR6613 (The Keeping School Meals Flexible Act) that would extend the expiration date for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) authority to establish, grant or extend child nutrition waivers through the upcoming school year, ending on June 30, 2023.

We call on all members to: **Take action!** by sending a letter to your representative in support of H.R. 6613 and waiver extensions. Click on link to find your representative and related information.

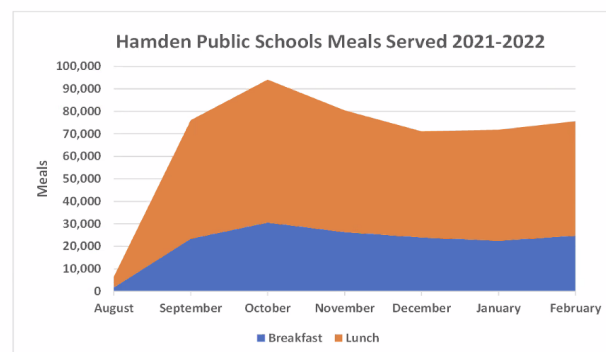
Your response can be a short email. Please tailor your response to the specific challenges in your individual school district. If you can send an email to your representative, please let me know as we are trying to ensure that all five congressional districts are reached.

Thanks for your help with this important matter.

David Lenihan
Director of Government Affairs
Connecticut Association of School Business Officials

Ariola: Community send letters to representatives to extend the expiration date of the program.

Meals Served



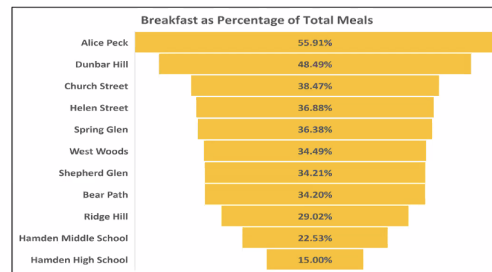
Community Food Distributions

- The Hamden Public Schools/Town of Hamden/Connecticut Foodshare drive-up food distributions continue at Hamden Middle School.
- From March 2020 through January 2022, a total of 248,475 pounds of free food has been distributed.



Breakfast Participation

- Breakfast participation is higher at the elementary level, and drops off at the middle school and high school.
- Developing and implementing strategies to increase breakfast participation at Hamden High and Hamden Middle Schools.



Ariola: Looking to increase student breakfast buy-in at high school. Seems to be related to behavioral issues at middle school level.

Asbery: Why? HS kids looking for breakfast to be Starbucks-like?

Ariola: Students may be coming in late. Covid restrictions are easing, and hopefully increased congregation helps.

Melillo: Cafeteria is smaller and less centralized in HS than in elementary schools. Hoping to create smoothie – barista type environment with HHS culinary students.

Cooking Matters at Church Street

- The Cooking Matters program will begin in April for Church Street families.
- Teaches families how to plan and prepare healthy meals, shop on a budget, as well as emphasizing the importance of good nutrition.
- Families are sent home with two bags of groceries after each class.
- Partnership between CT Health Network Foundation, Whitsons, and Hamden Public Schools.



Sustainability Initiatives

- Bear Path Food Waste Diversion Pilot Program
 - Grant through SCRCOG, implementing a share table, and a third waste stream for food scraps to be composted.
- Garden to Cafeteria Programs
 - Exploring programs for students to grow produce, and have what's grown prepared in the school kitchen and served in the cafeteria.



Melillo: Food waste turned into soil at CT facility. Sharing table items are donated through partner organization. Less trash fees.

Asbery: Surveys about student likes/dislikes would be good.

Khan: Excited for these initiatives. Students can't learn when they are hungry.

Asbery: Potential to involve mayor and other organizations in advocacy.

Goeler: Will send letter to the board chair and mayor.

6:55 PM

Meeting Adjourned

Motion: Kevin Shea; Second: David Asbery

