



HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 25, 2022

12:00 p.m. – Virtual Meeting

Committee members present: Dr. Tahira A. DuPree Chase, Mary O’Neill, Robert Stein, Dr. Roger Bloom, Guy Forman, Patrick McGovern, Michael Hardy, Grace Maschinski (Aramark), Kerri O’Donnell (Aramark) Gary O’Grady (Aramark), Karen Suarez, Cheri DeBellis, Angela Diglio, Dana Docar, Todd Goodwin, Elaine Lovell, Juanita Sherwood, Debbie Wachter, Andrea Ramos, Doric Capsis

Committee members absent: Karla Paz, Rachel Castillo, Francis Goodness

The virtual meeting commenced at 12:00 p.m. Mary O’Neill, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the committee meeting. She then introduced Dr. Tahira A. DuPree Chase, Superintendent of Schools. Following this, all committee members introduced themselves.

Dr. Chase - Explained that the purpose of this committee is to address District health and wellness and nutrition issues throughout the year. In addition, the committee will be discussing food service and overall health and wellness for students in our District. Lastly, the committee will discuss the current Health and Wellness Policy and how to implement these policies within the buildings.

1. **COVID-19 Guidelines Update**

Dr. Bloom– Reviewed updated the revised protocols for COVID-19. Although there is legal controversy, mandatory wearing of masks for all individuals in the building will continue. This is in conjunction with the recommendations made by the CDC, as well as physical distancing continuing. The District has coordinated a digital intake process for reporting a positive case, reporting a case of close contact, and release from isolation/quarantine. The District has accepted the CDC and DOH recommendation of a minimum isolation/quarantine period of 5 days, which is a reduction from the 10 days. If an individual meets certain criteria including being symptom free and fever free, they are cleared to return to school/work after the minimum 5 day isolation/quarantine period. The District has adopted universal procedures based on vaccination status. If a person is fully vaccinated and is determined to be close contact with individual who

tested positive for COVID-19, there are no restrictions and the student can continue to attend school, as well as the staff member continuing to work. If a family member who one lives with tests positive and you are fully vaccinated, there are no restrictions as well. If a person is not fully vaccinated, the District continues to follow NYSED, CDC, and DOH guidelines of a minimum 5 day quarantine period. Although NYSED and the DOH have eliminated the requirement to contact trace, the District will continue to do so only during the regular school day. If a positive case is reported after hours, the District will contact trace the following day. If a positive case is reported on the weekend, the contact tracing will occur on the first day that school is back open. Although some Districts have done away with this, we will continue to do so. The District continues to follow the CDC recommendations for international travel as part of the district's protocols. These guidelines and protocols are located on the District's website on a toolbar entitled, "COVID-19." The page is continually updated and every afternoon the statistics are updated. We have a page for isolation and quarantine procedures, which has been translated into Spanish and Creole. We continue to follow the news. Dr. Chase sent out a notification this morning regarding mask updates. Does anyone have questions or comments?

2. Ventilation Project Updates

Stein – Provided an update on the ventilation projects.

Elementary Schools - Plans have been submitted to the NYSED Office of Facilities Planning. Comments from NYS are expected by the end of February and approval is expected by March 15th. The majority of the work is expected to be completed in August with the minor remaining work being completed in early September. The cost of these projects will be charged to the Capital Reserve Fund. Estimated cost of the projects is about \$1,000,000.

Middle School - Ventilation remediation will be part of the MS Bond Project. The majority of the work is expected to be completed in August with the minor remaining work being completed in early September. The cost of these projects will be charged to the Middle School Bond Project. Estimated cost of the project is \$220,000.

High School - Ventilation remediation was originally planned to be part of the High School Bond Project. This project was moved into the ARP-ESSER Grant funding program, and received grant funding approval on December 7th from the Office of ESSER Funded Programs.

Applications and plans will be submitted to NYSED Office of Facilities Planning shortly. The estimated schedule for the completion of the HS ventilation remediation is September/October 2022. Estimated cost of the project is \$900,000.

The MS will be part of the BOND project cost to be \$220,000 charged to MS Bond project.

Capsis – asked if the ventilation projects can be expedited.

Stein – said doing everything he can to expedite.

3. Food Service

O’Neill – Aramark for Food Service Update.

Aramark – O’Donnell – Update on Food Service - The District participates in the breakfast/lunch guidelines. Must follow calorie and sodium restrictions. They will provide additional information as needed or requested by the District. They have been working diligently to grow the program. They are seeing meal participation of higher than prior to COVID-19. They have also started promoting after school snack project. Gary has made that his project to work with students to find out what they want, work with staff to make sure it is hot and fed to students. They are receiving great feedback from the students. They love the pizza. They loved the appearance of the pizza. They have added calzone and will be opening a taco bar tomorrow doing things they have done in prior Districts. They are trying to implement things as they are able as long as they meet the guidelines. They have had several nutrition meetings, but not at Park or Dryden as yet, but will continue to hold meetings which gives them an opportunity to implement guidelines. They also did a quick repair to the Dragon Café to ease the waiting time for them to get their lunch and to increase the variety of food they can get. They are looking for a goal of creating a food court. Everything is being mimicked. Once the Dragon Café is done, students will feel everything is done.

Surveys coming up – Aramark runs a student viewpoint survey. They will be working closely with each Administrators at the schools to obtain feedback to find out what they like or dislike about their program. Aramark are a data company and they make decisions based on student surveys. It provides pointed questions and is focusing away from COVID related stuff and not on all changes relating to COVID. It is really about finding out what they are not providing to them currently. Most times, they find out students are asking for things that are already available for them. Lots of times it is about communication issues. They are looking forward to getting the survey info from the students. We are hoping to help incentivize the survey for the secondary students. The secondary surveys are intended to have the students complete themselves. It will allow them to get forward thinking approaches going forward. They would like to be able to offer catered pizza lunch at each staff for each location being able to get 90% or more completion of the survey. Participation will allow better participation.

Lovell – Where are we in terms of reporting – how many lunch and breakfasts are being served by the District? Also, where are we with the fresh fruit and vegetable program? She would like updates. Who attended the building meetings and where are the notes from these meetings? There should be a written report filed within 14 days of the meetings. As a member of the community and PTA council, there are numerous complaints as to the quality of the food – the elementary in particular. The breakfast in particular. The students rely heavily on food breakfast. They look forward to and need the breakfast. To her knowledge she doesn’t think a hot breakfast has been served. Why don’t we serve the Elementary school some type of juice? Why are we only serving

them fat free milk or chocolate milk instead of juice? She only facilitates as a community person. Also, the High School...we had a salad bar with freshly made salads. What happened to that? We had a deli station. What happened to that? The High School does not smell like a kitchen. How many times are the students getting cooked meals? It seems like the students are getting fast food kits only. Something has to be done. What is up with the Slurpee machine in the High School?

Grace – should there be anyone... I always recommend that you do come and visit and taste the food. They have had a number of challenging issues with staffing. Breakfast in the classroom is very much a part of our day to day this can be subjected to service items. Teachers don't always want messy items in the classrooms. It is Hungry meal packed. Juice is not required. The state wants to serve whole fruit preferable to juice. They like to offer juice and juice at lunchtime. Milk fat free offers are ok. They are having HS meal issues. That is why they identified the Dragon Café as a means to address these issues. Slurpee's are 100% fruit juice. It is smart snack approved to be served in schools. It is not free. The students can choose.

Lovell – Regarding Slurpee situation. It is not on your a ala carte menu. As a far as she knows, it is not on their menu. Who set the \$2 price for the Slurpee?

Grace – They worked with the school District to approve and discuss the pricing.

Lovell - The Board does not know about this. They are not aware of it. As a member, she needs to know when it was approved and who make the change.

Grace – they followed the proper channels to get it approved. We have an opportunity to better communicate positive changes we are making to the program and the student feedback. She can summarize the notes from the meetings. We are doing wonderful things but want to make sure we are talking about it. 100% fruit juice is something that is to be offered a la carte. We had limited ability to do this but some issue with supply chain. We have been able to mitigate some supply chain issues due to the size of Aramark. It is a healthy alternative but may have a higher price point. We want to make sure we have a mix of items.

Lovell – Is this within the child nutrition program through the state?

Grace – Yes, everything they do is approved by the State.

Lovell – what is the sugar content?

Grace – there is no added sugar for this. It is 100% juice. It is an extra.

Lovell – Students can't pay for lunch, but can pay for Slurpee.

Grace – Students come to school with money to buy snacks/juices.

Lovell – they are buying it because most of them do not like the lunch. They are throwing it out.

Grace – She is seeing that students are lining up and getting and eating the lunch but also buying the Slurpee's. Come to the Middle School and see what we can do to serve. Walk through the cafeteria to see what the students are eating and/or throwing out garbage. We have tweaked our

menus to accommodate. Our serving is exceeded pre COVID meaning we are serving many more meals than prior to COVID.

Lovell – She looked at the remote breakfast and lunch on January 3rd when the bus came around. It was terrible. Maybe it was the packaging of the milk. The milk was outdated. It was dated January 3rd. Why would you serve that if it was for January 4th?

Grace – There is a sell by date for milk so technically it does not expire on the 4th.

Lovell - The parents said the hamburger was very good, but had no condiments to go with it. They should have been given condiments to go along with it. She is willing to work with you. She wants to work with the team.

Sherwood – Park Avenue – Last minute menu changes. When you do not follow the menu that is provided, it is an issue. For example, for diabetic students need to follow a specified menu. The teacher and nurse may know about the selections, but the aide or student may not know and may not get the food that was anticipated. It is important that changes made are communicated to the schools/District team. We also have lactose intolerant students so they cannot drink the milk. In the past, we had a water or juice option so if we could have a substitute like this, it is important. When you are doing training, please emphasize that masks must be kept on the entire time they are working. I understand that it can be difficult to follow, but they must keep them on. Please emphasize this.

Grace – Aramark is emphasizing this and making sure that these guidelines are followed. They will do a retraining with regard to proper mask wearing. We love your feedback. If you are seeing that someone is not following, please let us know.

Sherwood – We ask that you reinforce it so we are all on the same page. One final question... we have all been on this committee for years. Her question is she heard Grace say there is a sale of certain food items – chips, Slurpees – does the District get any of those funds? In the past, the District got money from these sales to go toward the kitchen repairs. Is this happening?

Grace – Yes, you do get a portion. The District identifies a portion of the funds to go back to the District. In this contract we have a contract in place to return \$1.5 million back to the District to apply to future capital projects.

Sherwood – We can't wait for you to come to Park. We have not seen anyone here in a while.

Grace – She has been there a few times but will make it a point to come soon.

Diglio – Powells Lane - the Elementary students always complain that the food is cold. When it is cold, the students complain that they cannot eat the food.

Grace – They do their best to make sure the meals are hot, but there is some transportation time for distribution to the classrooms. It should still be warm. If it is not, we should know this. They were restricted with COVID-19 this school year, but knows the District is interested in getting food back to normal.

Suarez - Dryden – Kids are only given a choice of a sandwich. Can that be changed? Some kids don't eat sandwiches. Sometimes the apples served do not taste right. Sometimes the kids are getting a milk a cheese, the variety is not there.

Grace – We can look into an acceptable alternative meal.

Kerri – there are alternative lunch menus.

Goodwin – Grace, you had said earlier that you are data driven. When can we expect that survey to come out?

Grace – It is live now and ends on February 18th.

Goodwin – At Park we always feel left out. Kerri – can we schedule the meeting for you to come here now. He has been on the committee for many years and the fact that we have not yet been visited as yet, it is disheartening. Ms. Sherwood and he have started their own committee with the kids.

Grace – we must get to Dryden and Park ASAP. We are waiting for the link on the survey to go live.

Kerrie – She will reach out to the Administrators at each of the buildings.

Grace - the link for the survey will be sent to the all the Principals. The Committees will also be notified.

4. SEL

Dr. Chase – SEL – She will wait for this process. She wants to comment on Aramark. They came in on an emergency basis. She appreciates them responded to all the District's concerns. If we had a prior meeting, we could have discussed the slushies situation. She hopes that in the future we will continue to participate in robust conversations such as this. She appreciates that Aramark is trying to improve upon. Let's use this committee to provide feedback, suggestions and collaborate together and invites all to participate with all the kids. There is a Board member who at the food in the past and said it was terrible but then ate recently and said how wonderful it is. Others have commented on the quality of the food and how wonderful it is. As Ms. Lovell said, there is nothing more than to make sure our students remain healthy and safe and continue to make good culturally responsive choices, I think it will go a long way. Let's give Aramark the chance to improve and hold them accountable to their contract. She will have lunch with Ms. Lovell. She would like to see more choices for the Elementary Schools.

SEL – She was going to the SEL committee and wants to meet with this committee to bring this committee's opinions to SEL. She wants to have this committee meet every month.

O'Neill – She will send out tentative monthly dates going forward.

Lovell – In previous years, we have had written minutes. Where are they? She hasn't gotten them since 2019.

Dr. Chase – We will release them to the committees as they are completed. We will post the minutes under food service on the website. This is about improving the District relations. We need to communicate to our food service staff how wonderful they are and offer our appreciation. If they are not wearing a mask, inform the Principal. They are required to wear a mask. The District is following SED guidance. Everyone is required to wear a mask when in a room with another individual.

O’Neill – SEL will be on the next agenda before food service. We will also include the current Health and Wellness Policy that we may want to look out.

Dr. Chase – send a link to the survey to all committee members following this meeting.

Grace – we will send you a list of all the questions on the survey so you can see it on a Word document.

DeBellis – Most of the conversations the conversations were centered around food. It was always called the Nutrition Committee and we only discussed food.

Dr. Chase - When you nurish kids’ bodies with good food, they perform better. I understand there is a greenhouse being revitalized at the High School. She has a vision that we are growing our own food in the greenhouse and kids will have an opportunity for them to have this experience farm to table. Having farm to table options even if just baby carrots teaches kids about nutrition about organic eating that they will be benefit.

Grace – Thank you for your compliments. She has had some Jamaican beef patties and they were delicious.

Lovell – Give me a chance to meet Mr. Gary. She has heard great things about him.

Dr. Chase – She and Ms. Lovell will make a surprise visit. She understands they have an adult pallet which differs from the childrens’. She wants to try the rice and peas because a Board members was bragging about it.

There was a meeting scheduled in the Fall, but Business Office changes took place. The meeting was delayed but not forgotten. There is a new team now. We are learning what everyone is used to and are trying to get on board and will do our best going forward to be transparent.

5. Other Matters

No other matters were discussed.

The next scheduled meeting will be **Monday, February 7, 2022 at 12:00 p.m.**

Follow Up:

- SEL will be discussed at the next meeting. (Dr. Tahira A. DuPree Chase)
- Distribute meeting minutes to committee members. (Michell Delmonte-Synnott)
- Schedule additional monthly meetings of the committee. (Mary O’Neill)
- Discuss/review current Health and Wellness Policy. (Committee – next meeting)

- Send link to the survey to Principals/Administrators and Word version of survey questions. (Aramark)
- Schedule meetings with schools Dryden and Park (Aramark).

The meeting ended at 1:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michell C. Delmonte-Synnott on behalf of Mary O'Neill