



HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 7, 2022

12:00 p.m. – Virtual Meeting

Committee members present: Mary O’Neill, Robert Stein, Guy Forman, Michael Hardy, Grace Maschinski (Aramark), Gary O’Grady (Aramark), Karen Suarez, Angela Diglio, Todd Goodwin, Elaine Lovell, Juanita Sherwood, Debbie Wachter, Doric Capsis, Cheri DeBellis

Committee members absent: Dr. Tahira A. DuPree Chase, Patrick McGovern, Karla Paz, Rachel Castillo, Francis Goodness, Andrea Ramos, Dr. Roger Bloom, Kerri O’Donnell (Aramark), Dana Docar

The virtual meeting commenced at 12:00 p.m. Mary O’Neill, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, welcomed everyone to the committee meeting. Ms. O’Neill had all members introduce themselves.

1. **The District’s Health and Wellness Policy** – Mary O’Neill asked that all committee members review the policy and use the Assessment Tool to evaluate the policy. She suggested that we break out into groups and have them complete the assessment survey to help us review our policy to see what needs to be changed and to see if we are meeting the USDA Guidelines. Does anyone have any suggestion as to how to review the policy?

Stein – It was not updated.

O’Neill – Please send her the revision. The last revision she has is from 2016.

DeBellis – She thinks the committee made changes last year during the meeting.

Capsis – Once the changes are made, the policy committee must approve the changes.

O’Neill – We will put a hold on this item to see if we can find edits made last year before changes. Once the changes are made, she will have the attorney review the changes and then bring it to the Board for their approval.

2. **Follow up questions from the January 25, 2022 meetings.** The survey questions were distributed. She has the meeting minutes from the meetings between Aramark and the children.

DeBellis – Aramark advised that they will schedule further meetings. She read the current policy. It has always been a rule ... No outside food is to come into the building. We have always said that it is in our policy. Our current policy does not explicitly say that anywhere. We did not discuss this with Ms. Taylor. Who makes the rule? Is it the committee that makes the rule? When we discussed this so many parents were upset about not being able to bring cupcakes and food into the classes. They were told they could bring in supplies. During that reign, they were given a list of approved foods teachers could bring in. One of the items was Utz pretzels. So many teachers prior to NYS, food was a great part of lessons – i.e., M & M's were used as part of lessons. We need to put in writing "This is what we can do" and "This is what we cannot do". We were told that PTA Fundraisers could not include chocolate. Some buildings know that they can only sell wrapping paper and no foods. We should clearly state what is allowed and what is prohibited.

Machinski – The FDA says that if you are going to sell food in schools, it must meet the guidelines. They must be compliant with the during school and after school requirements. They must meet specific caloric, sugar, overall saturated fats. We are already purchasing items that meet standards. They are called Smart Snacks. If you are selling them after school, it must be 30 minutes following the bell. Snacks in the classrooms that are not being sold, but given away as part of the celebration of the day, there are no NYS guidelines, but they discourage food based celebrations in the classrooms.

DeBellis – So when we re-write the policy, we have to be clear as to what the teachers want.

Machinski – There are a lot of concerns about allergies. They have safeguards in place to protect students. Home chefs may not be aware of students' allergies when making food items at home to bring in. If there were to be baking cookies once a month for students celebrating a birthday, we can make sure the allergen info is abundantly clear, we can assist to be sure they are not making foods with the allergens.

DeBellis – Two predecessors of Aramark, we always had vending machines in the teacher rooms. Now they want dark chocolate. All the vendor machines were ripped out. They want water and dark chocolate in the machines.

Machinski – Aramark works with vending machines. They can do a walk through assessment and work with the building principals and assistant principals to find out what is wanted and how we can accommodate this.

Diglio – the students are throwing out the raw cauliflower and broccoli (sides to lunches). They are discarding these. Can we substitute with carrots?

Machinski – the state guidelines mandates that we provide the red orange vegetables and dark green vegetables could be broccoli, kale or spinach, romaine. Must serve beans and legumes once a week. And there are other items with no a lot of vitamin density. They must all required categories. Maybe they can substitute other others. They can use the student meetings as a vehicle to find out what they would prefer. We also want to provide other items for them to encourage them to try new foods. Maybe they can tie in an educational feedback.

Suarez – Dryden Street - she brought in a food sample. She doesn't know what it is. Students cannot eat it. What is it? The food is 90% burnt. Some of the broccoli food is not good.

Machinski – she will follow up and find out what it is.

DeBellis – the apples were all moldy. They are mushy in the bag and moldy.

Machinski – the apples come in little bags and have best buy dates. The quality in the bag may not be what we want to serve. Anytime you get a pre-bagged product you must check the items out. That sounds like a re-training issue that can be addressed. They must be checking the quality before distributing to the classes.

Suarez – They are getting frozen milk.

Machinski – Milk is delivered many times a week. It is not delivered frozen. She will circle back to Facilities to find out what is happening.

DeBellis – If the milk is sitting there or may be put in temps above normal.

Lovell – Karen, thank you for bringing up some excellent points. Why does elementary getting different food than MS and HS. Why are they not being treated fairly? Why? Food is frozen and slimy.

Machinski – they are required by USDA to have different menu thresholds. Their tastes as they grow. If you are talking about frozen and slimy, what are you referring to?

Lovell – the spicy chicken sandwich made kids sick.

Machinski – do we serve a spicy chicken sandwich for the Elementary kids. The chicken products they use are Tyson products for K-12. They are similar to what you would find in the stores, but with lower calories, whole grain. She has been told occasionally gotten

feedback that the patty tastes spicier than others. The quality is Tyson Foods. Unless there was a substitution made, it should not be spicy. We use them all through all grades.

O'Grady – there was no spicy in January or February unless they had a waffle fry. Sometimes the waffle fries may be spicy.

Lovell – Last week, the cheese sandwich was served on a hot dog roll in Elementary. It was one slice of cheese on a hot dog roll.

Machinski – they were sub rolls.

Lovell – I would not think Syosset would never serve that.

Machinski – is that something that we menu as a main entrée. We do have minimum requirements. A cheese sandwich on a club roll would be something we would offer to picky kids and not pleased with other options. We do it to make more appealing. It is sliced wheat bread with cheese on. We are trying to focus on the main entrees ...we rather have them take that, but want to offer an alternative.

Lovell – Some kids got sick.

Machinski – the sandwiches are made that day unless it was dramatically old. If there is a true food safety issue, it must be documented and investigated.

Lovell – When they serve chicken fingers why are the students getting one ketchup packet.

Machinski – Aramark does not put a limit on ketchups. The ketchups are not limited. It cannot be a free for all, but appropriate for the meal.

DeBellis – When they have chicken tenders they put 2 packets and if chicken with fries, they put 3 in. They are not stingy there. Did you have lunch with Dr. Chase yet?

Lovell – Not yet.

Machinski – did everyone see the video for Taco Bar for Taco Tuesday. There is a full service made tacos, burritos and bowls.

Lovell – Glad to hear that. What about the salad bar?

O'Neill – last meeting we discussed talking about SEL today. Dr. Chase was not able to make this meeting.

Lovell – What is status of ventilations.

Stein – the drawings will take 3 months for HS. Work is scheduled to start mid to late summer into September.

Goodwin – we can we get a list of the buildings and rooms that are being worked on?

Stein – we can provide that to the building principals who can share that with them.

Sherwood – In the past, the committee would get a list of those types of items, and they could discuss. We had a nutrition committee and a health and safety committee. Nutrition talked about nutrition items and health and safety would discuss accidents and X and Y claims and discuss ways to mitigate. I can see nutrition coming under health. With regard to ventilation, as a committee, would we see or need to know all buildings....in the past, buildings in line to get work would get pushed back. We would have to push back.

O'Neill – Mr. Stein will be able to give a list of the buildings. We are limited in that we are awaiting state aid approval. It is based on when approvals and bids come in.

Goodwin – the ventilation is in response to COVID, correct? COVID started 2 years ago. What is taking so long?

O'Neill – We need state approval.

Goodwin – why wasn't it started last year? COVID will be over by the time the ventilation is done.

Stein – there is about 2 million in work to be done. Once the specs were done, they were submitted.

DeBellis – Should committees be separated?

O'Neill – she is fine with separating issues.

Sherwood – we had nurses on the committee in the past.

O'Neill – She would like to see a Health and Wellness Committee and a Nutrition Committee.

Capsis – It was health and safety (accidents/NYSIR). Sometimes had a presentation. Building concerns would be discussed. They were both chaired by the Assistant Superintendent for Operations.

Sherwood – Nurses were on the committees.

O'Neill – Both committees do overlap. We are working to work on the committees.

We could separate items. If this was a true nutrition committee, we would not discuss ventilation issues. She has not objection to it.

Capsis – we did not meet monthly. We met quarterly, not monthly.

O'Neill – I am hearing that you want quarterly, not monthly meetings and you want the two committees separately.

Capsis – you are having building meetings?

Machinski – they are as often as the buildings require.

Lovell – the food service is supposed to meet as per contract. She foiled a copy of the contract and hers says they should meet 10 times per year.

Parent/teacher/students. Supposed to have 10 visits per year.

Machinski – the management must meet with the business office 10 years per year.

O'Neill – We can forward the meeting minutes from the buildings to all of you.

Lovell – She thinks the principals should be involved in the process.

O'Neill – Are we in agreement to move away from combined meetings. We want them separated. How often do you want this committee to meet?

DeBellis – Once a month is too much. Four a year is fine.

Capsis – the health and safety and nutrition should be 4 per year.

O'Neill – I do think it is a minimum of 4 per year. She will put a proposal together to separate and have 4 per year.

Lovell – With the Wellness Policy you are referring to are we talking about the one from 2006?

O'Neill – Michell sent the committee the policy from 2016. She doesn't see what was done. She will speak with the Superintendent about meeting 4 times per year and separating the committees and to see what was done last year. We should still meet in March. She will look for the notes from last year with regard to the assessment that we done regarding the policy last year.

Suarez – Can we purchase food from Aramark directly?

Machinski – Yes, we could.

Sherwood – Can we get a price list so we can estimate the amount of money they would need for the year. 100th day of school is approaching. We would want string cheese. Can we do this for March?

Machinski – Give Ms. O'Neill a list of the items you want to see and we could get pricing for you. You can send the list to Gary. As long as it is ok with the Business Department, we can provide a list of items and pricing.

The meeting ended at 1:00 p.m.

Follow up items:

- Provide the committee with a list of items for sale and pricing by Aramark. (Aramark)
- Reduce meetings from monthly to quarterly. (Mary O'Neill)
- Have committee members submit completed NYS Wellness Policy Assessment Tools (one per school). (One designated committee member per school)
- Research implementing vending machines in schools. (Aramark)
- Separate committees and clearly outline the responsibilities of each of the committees. (Mary O'Neill)
- Finalize the Wellness Policy based on committee recommendations.(Committee)

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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