

**PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD UFSD**  
**WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEETING**



**MEETING AGENDA**

**February 11, 2026**

**Present:** Dan Erwin, Tracy Warrington, Emily Warneau, Carolyn Walsh, Anthony Cracco, Hollyann Ficco, Diana Andrade, Will Dortone, Annette Mroczkowski

**Note taker:** Danielle Steinberg

	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
1.	Dan Erwin Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Food Service Department outlined the structure, guidelines, and challenges of operating as a self-sufficient department. The department is fully self-funded, meaning all supplies, salaries, repairs, trucks, and related expenses are paid through the sale of food. No funds are allocated from the general district budget.</li><li>• The USDA calculates the total number of meals served in the previous school year to determine the district's entitlement funds. These entitlement dollars are used to purchase bulk food items for the following year and to support the operation of the program.</li><li>• Planning for next year's purchases is currently underway. Funds are typically used to purchase whole products such as turkey, beef, and chicken, which are then prepared and incorporated into menu items for students.</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Additional revenue is generated through snack sales, catering, and the faculty café. A profit margin is required on items sold; USDA entitlement funds cannot be used to offset costs in order to sell snacks at a lower price. All products must be secured through a competitive bidding process. Items can only be placed on the menu if they are awarded through a bid and meet strict USDA requirements.</li><li>• A handout was provided outlining USDA minimum requirements. These include weekly minimum and maximum calorie counts. Beverage regulations are also strict: in elementary and middle schools, only 100% juice, water, and milk at or below a specified fluid ounce size may be offered.</li><li>• Snack items sold in schools must meet specific criteria. The first ingredient must be whole grain-rich, fruit, vegetable, dairy, or protein. Items must also meet calorie, fat, and sugar limits. Snacks may only be sold during lunch periods. Vending machines may not be operable during meal service times, per USDA regulations, as this would create direct competition with the food service program.</li><li>• The committee discussed the new food pyramid and updated USDA requirements, and how these changes may affect district guidelines. Whole milk was also discussed; it has been signed into law and is now permitted in all schools at lunch (not breakfast).</li><li>• The committee explored how a gardening initiative could be incorporated into district food offerings. It was noted that nutrition is critical for students' brain function, and this may be an appropriate time to advocate for expanded initiatives that support student wellness.</li><li>• Implementing a farm-to-table program in a district serving 5,000–6,000 meals per day presents challenges. For example, crop loss due to frost or other environmental factors could disrupt supply. However, there may be</li></ul>
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		<p>potential to incorporate seasonal items. If fresh vegetables can be consistently sourced or grown, the program could expand over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment limitations were also discussed as a potential barrier. The possibility of expanding into an agricultural education model was mentioned as a long-term way to sustain and grow the initiative into a larger operation.</li> </ul>
2.	Review Survey Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee discussed the importance of staying current with activities that are both popular and sustainable for students throughout their lives. While competitive sports will continue to be taught, there is a growing emphasis on lifetime sports and activities that promote long-term health and wellness.</li> <li>• Opportunities for staff wellness were also discussed. Supporting staff wellness initiatives allows faculty and staff to model healthy behaviors for students and contributes to a more productive workforce.</li> <li>• The need for trained supervision in the spin room was reviewed. In order for students to safely utilize the space, a properly trained staff member must be present, which requires allocated funding.</li> <li>• The benefits of incorporating walking opportunities and brain breaks into the school day were highlighted, noting their positive impact on focus, mental clarity, and overall well-being.</li> <li>• The committee discussed ideas related to the upcoming 5K event, including creating staff T-shirts to promote the initiative throughout the year. Additional ideas included recruiting more students to become involved through the “Committed to Move” initiative.</li> </ul>
3.	Update: Using Our Voices Run	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An update was provided on the Mental Health 5K. Students at South Ocean, the high school, and River have begun securing sponsors and fundraising through partnerships with local restaurants and shops.</li> <li>• South Ocean students participated in a Zoom meeting with Brooke DiPalma, co-founder of PS I Love You Day. During the meeting, they discussed the connection between PS I Love You Day and the Mental</li> </ul>

		<p>Health 5K, reinforcing the shared mission of promoting mental health awareness and support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee is continuing to explore additional sponsorships and partnership opportunities.</li> <li>• The date of the event, May 17th, was shared again with the committee. Physical Education promotional visits to schools will begin in March to help increase awareness and student participation.</li> </ul>
4.	Review K-12 Meal Planning Requirements	*See Agenda Item #1
5.	Discuss Initial Policy Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health and staff wellness were added to the list of policy updates for review and consideration.</li> </ul>
6.	Stop the Bleed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYU Langone has reached out to offer staff training focused on student safety. The committee discussed utilizing time during initial conference days to provide comprehensive safety training for all staff members, particularly in supporting students with medical concerns.</li> <li>• The possibility of school nurses providing EpiPen training was explored. In addition, ensuring that Physical Education staff are trained in CPR, AED use, and first aid were discussed. Ideally, CPR units would be incorporated into all physical education classes to provide hands-on student training. Students would have the opportunity to complete both written and practical assessments, and those who successfully pass would receive certification cards.</li> </ul>
7.	OTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee discussed the need to strengthen health and wellness messaging across the district. Suggestions included providing more consistent wellness information, expanding adult education opportunities, and enhancing the district website with clearly identified health resources. It was recommended that health and wellness resources be included at the end of each district health newsletter.</li> <li>• The Family Center continues to offer parent workshops and posts information on the district website. The committee discussed utilizing</li> </ul>

		<p>social media more strategically to direct parents to available resources, rather than overloading ParentSquare with excessive information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Peer facilitators and prevention groups were discussed as a way to support younger students, including outreach to fifth grade classrooms.</li><li>• The idea of livestreaming valuable events was suggested, with recordings archived on the district website for future access.</li><li>• “Lunch and Learn” opportunities were also discussed, featuring presentations on student mental health, wellness, leadership, peer leadership, and curriculum topics. A presentation by Jonathan Chiamonte of the “U Matter” program was specifically mentioned as a potential offering.</li></ul>
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