

Newport Public Schools  
Wellness Subcommittee  
Minutes from December 4, 2008

## I. Opening

Dr. Galvin called the meeting to order.

*Members Present:*

Dr. John H. Ambrogi, Superintendent  
Mr. Arthur Bell, Jr. Supervisor for PE/Health Instruction  
Ms. Jeannette Bessinger, Parent & School Comm. (elect)  
Ms. Becky Bolan, Parent  
Ms. Kerry Clougher, Parent  
Ms. Susan Cooper, Newport City  
Ms. Amy Donnelly Roche, Director of Student Services  
Dr. Tom Galvin, School Comm.  
Mr. Peter Millinazzo, Newport County YMCA  
Ms. Solange Morrissette, Sodexo  
Ms. Lenny Phelan, Newport Hospital  
Ms. Judith Webb, Community Member

*Members Absent:*

Mrs. Meg Edward, Parent  
Ms. Jo Eva Gaines, School Comm.  
Ms. Donna Johnson, Parent  
Ms. Denise Kelly, School Nurse Teacher  
Ms. Carolyn May- Martin, School Nurse Teacher  
Mr. Richard Ratcliff, Parent

*Non-members Present:*

Ms. Amy Chandler, BCBSRI  
Ms. Karoline Cranson, Parent  
Ms. Lorrie Fedyszyn  
Dr. Sandra Flowers, School Comm. (elect)  
Ms. Kerry Kunze, Sodexo  
Ms. Terry Mason, Parent  
Ms. Sarah Mermin, Parent  
Ms. Margot Pires, EBCAP  
Ms. Joan Simmons, Parent  
Ms. Carole Toselli, Kids First RI

## II. Introductions & Updates

Dr. Galvin reviewed the progress that this sub-committee has made, and noted that he would not be expanding this sub-committee at this time, as he is resigning from the School Committee. He noted that he respects that the next chairperson will need to make decisions re. membership at a later date.

## III. Update from Sodexo

Ms. Morrissette presented her written report for the sub-committee, which is attached. She shared photographs from a recent tasting event.

Ms. Clougher noted that she has seen more food being thrown away since the district implemented the full serve option. The group discussed that research shows that this may be expected at first, as part of the change process.

## **IV. Update from Blue Cross Blue Shield Wellness Advisor**

Dr. Ambrogi introduced Ms. Amy Chandler, of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island.

Ms. Chandler explained that Muni Blue is a staff wellness program that has been in place for over two years. She gave a thorough overview of this program which offered to all Newport Public Schools employees.

Examples of recent events were shared, including: a body fat composition clinic at TMS, skin cancer screenings at RHS. Ms. Chandler also shared agendas, flyers, and other handouts from these and other events. Dr. Ambrogi asked why the elementary schools are not as involved. Ms. Donnelly Roche noted that while the events were located at our larger secondary schools, she is aware of many elementary and district-wide staff who did participate.

Ms. Cooper asked is we could “cross-pollinate” these Muni Blue events through the schools with similar opportunities offered at Newport City. Ms. Chandler agreed that that was absolutely possible.

## **V. Additional Discussion**

Dr. Galvin noted that other very good things are happening throughout the district. He referenced the backpack program that is in place with support from the Rhode Island Food Bank. Children are given backpacks each Friday with food they can eat over the weekend to stay healthy. They return the empty backpacks on Monday, in a very subtle manner.

Ms. Pires provided a brief update on the Carol M. White Physical Activity grant which the Sullivan Family Center and Newport Public Schools have received from the U.S. Department of Education. This grant is for one year, with a two year possible extension and provides curriculum training for physical education teachers, paraprofessionals, lunch aides, and staff from community-based after-school programs.

Ms. Toselli and Ms. Pires shared their joint work on “Healthy Kitchens” events. Last week, they held a demonstration of how to shop for, prepare, and cook an inexpensive healthy meal with Sullivan and Coggeshall parents. Next week a similar event will be held for parents from Carey, Underwood, and Cranston-Calvert. Participants learn to cook meals with ingredients from the dollar store and leave with a \$25 Stop & Shop gift card as well.

Ms. Cooper shared that the city of Newport has received a grant to support them in identifying and ameliorating environmental health hazards.

Ms. Mason noted that Visiting Nurses continues to provide support for community wellness through their “Kick Butts” smoking-cessation program.

Ms. Quigley-Harris suggested that the committee consider changing the order of lunch and recess in our elementary schools. Dr. Ambrogi asked Ms. Donnelly Roche to research this matter and report back to the committee next time.

Dr. Ambrogi also noted that the new dishwashing system will definitely be installed at RHS, which will facilitate having washable cafeteria trays.

## **VI. Future Meetings**

The next Wellness Committee meeting will be at Coggeshall School. The meeting has yet to be schedule.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Dr. Galvin concluded the meeting.