

Newport Public Schools
Wellness Subcommittee
Minutes from October 17, 2007

I. Opening

Dr. Galvin chaired called the meeting to order, and everyone introduced themselves.

Members Present:

Dr. John H. Ambrogi, Superintendent
Mr. Arthur Bell, Jr. Supervisor for PE/Health Instruction
Mrs. Becky Bolan, Parent
Ms. Susan F. Cooper, Dept of Parks, Recreation, & Tourism
Mrs. Meg Edward, Parent
Dr. Tom Galvin, School Comm.
Mr. Rah'd LeTang, Sodexo
Mr. Peter Millinazzo, Newport County YMCA
Ms. Kerry Clougher, Parent
Mrs. Amy Donnelly Roche, Director of Student Services
Ms. Carolyn May- Martin, School Nurse Teacher
Ms. Solange Morrissette, Sodexo
Mrs. Cathy Ratcliff, Parent
Mrs. Jan Watkinson, School Nurse Teacher

Members Absent:

Ms. M. Jane Barry, Retired Nurse Educator
Ms. Jeannette Bessinger, Parent
Ms. Donna Johnson, Parent
Mrs. Lenny Phelan, Newport Hospital
Ms. Judy Smith, RN, Newport Hospital

II. Committee Goals

Dr. Galvin shared updates from a state-wide meeting he attended last month. He read aloud section 16-21-27 of the Rhode Island General Law, governing sale of food and beverages in public schools. At the meeting, Commissioner McWalters linked this law to our state's problem with obesity among children and adults.

III. Superintendent's Update

Dr. Ambrogi explained the background and progress that this committee has made.

He then shared updates from his recent meeting with Blue Cross and Blue Shield re. "Muni Blue" which is an option for staff wellness programming. Dr. Ambrogi is interested in working with the School Committee, this committee, and both Council 94 and TAN leadership to develop wellness programming.

IV. Update from Sodexo

Ms. Morrissette reported menu reforms continue, in order to be compliant with all regulations before January, 2008. Ms. Morrissette's goal is to be compliant by the end of November, 2007. "Izzy Drinks" (80% seltzer and 20% juice) are now on the menu, replacing lemonade and other sugar/aspartame drinks. All elementary pizzas are made with whole wheat. Fluff has been eliminated; peanut butter (and all tree nut products) has been eliminated. Students without a lunch now get cheese sandwiches, rather than peanut butter.

More subtle recipes are also in use. For example, chicken nuggets are now made with all white meat chicken, with all whole wheat breading.

Sodexo is also using a “Farm to School” incorporating items such as roasted local potatoes, local apples, and local squash.

Sodexo sales are down significantly during this transition phase, but new menu items will be rotated through to find ones that our students enjoy.

Ms. Morrissette has applied for a grant called, “Love Your Veggies” from Hidden Valley Ranch for an award for \$10,000.00 to support parent education, nutrition training for staff, and exposure encouragement of eating vegetables.

V. Walking to School Initiative- Update

Ms. Cooper explained her work to link an existing AARP initiative for walking to our goal of encouraging students throughout Newport to walking safely to/from school. She provided an update, and plans to continue exploring options for encouraging healthy habits.

Dr. Galvin raised concerns re. background checks, supervision etc. for any such volunteers.

Dr. Ambrogi noted that current bus procedures require that all students who live within a ½ mile of school do not get bussing. Some of those students are driven by their families, yet many of those students are already walking. We could possibly map their common routes to school, and direct volunteers from AARP also use those routes.

VI. Honoring & Monitoring our Policies

Dr. Galvin shared a few sample surveys regarding our wellness policy with the group. Each principal will be asked to provide input re the survey within the next few weeks. Then the survey will be taken, district-wide. We will work from the results of this survey to increase knowledge and develop consistent implementation of healthy practices across all schools and classrooms.

VII. Additional Discussion

A. Staff Wellness

Mr. Millinazzo noted that the YMCA is already participating in Blue Cross’ wellness program which includes screenings re. skin cancer, etc. Ms. Cooper noted that the City of Newport is also already involved. Both reported that their employees value the service. Ms. Watkinson said she thought the staff at Thompson Middle School would appreciate such a program.

B. Encouraging Physical Activity

Ms. Clougher asked if schools could add more P.E. time and activities within the day. Drs. Ambrogi and Galvin explained the constraints of time allocation within the school day in terms of instructional minutes and test scores.

C. After School Activities

Mr. Millinazzo provided an update on the YMCA's after school programming at all elementary schools. Approximately 100 students are enrolled at this time. The first half hour of each session is focused on structured aerobic exercise.

TMS students come to the YMCA a few times weekly to engage in physical fitness activities, through the Community School.

D. Proactively Avoiding methicillin-resistant Staph Infections

Dr. Galvin raised the issue and explained that recent studies indicate that methicillin-resistant staph infections are on the rise in schools. He explained that this is primarily a concern of his at the high school, due to athletic teams and locker room use. We agreed that this is something to address with the School Physician, and that Ms. Donnelly Roche will contact her to address this issue proactively with coaches, PE teachers, nurses, and our Property Services department.

VIII. Follow-Up Needed

<i>What</i>	<i>By Whom</i>
a. Disseminate list of Healthy Classroom Rewards/Snacks on district list serve	J. Ambrogi
b. Share draft survey with Principals for their input/revisions	T. Galvin
c. Continue to Explore Walking Program Options	S. Cooper
d. Convene meeting of School Physician, Athletic Director, Nurses, & PE Teachers re. Managing Staph	A. Donnelly Roche

IX. Future Meetings

The Joint Advisory Council's meetings will continue to be held from 9:00-10:00AM.

X. Adjournment

Dr. Galvin concluded the meeting.