

District Wide Parents' Council (DWPC) DECEMBER 2007 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Pam Tack at 9:30.

Old Business – Secretary's report minutes were approved a motion to accept the minutes was given. The minutes were accepted by all present.

Treasurer's report – We currently have a balance of \$218.13. The following schools still owe dues Kennedy, Graves, Meagher, Meyer, Sophie Finn, Miller and KHS. Please give Caroline your check when you get a chance. Please note: someone gave Caroline money and did not give a form so please let us know if it is from your school.

Reschedule the speaker from last month – We are going to see if Marystephanie Corsonnes can be rescheduled to come in January.

Revisiting the Health and Nutrition Committee – we went over the questions that were compiled and given to Mr. Bob Pritchard and shared the answers. Topics that were brought up included - Celebrations – fundraising activities – Below you will find the questions that were submitted to Mr. Pritchard and his responses. At the meeting a thorough discussion took place involving this topic. (Please note - The blue print are the answers.)

The topics that have been discussed regarding the health and wellness policy as I see it are as follows:

1) TO WHAT DEGREE SHOULD THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY IMPACT CELEBRATIONS IN THE CLASSROOMS?

a) Food is a universal part of cultural celebrations. Eliminating food from celebrations is contrary to societal norms. When the foods that are offered have become too unhealthy to serve, are the correct response to eliminate food or set appropriate guidelines and limits?

I believe it would be feasible and advisable for the district to set out a collection of recipes for healthy party foods provided by the local dieticians and nutritionists that have already been involved in this to date. There are a number of programs in the local area that teach families how to eat healthier. Anna Devine offered the Healthy after School Program featuring the Five-A-Day way. My son really enjoyed it and still likes the recipes provided. I think it is sad that teachers are refusing offers of fruit salad and veggies platter that parents want to send in honor of their child's birthday or a holiday. Why can't these be offered at snack time in honor of the occasion?

What about the educational value of the thanksgiving feasts or holiday cookie bake? My grade school class used to look forward to making latkes with our teacher and a few visiting Moms each year. The most memorable day in grade school for me was when we had a United Nations day and all the families made recipes from different countries. The whole fifth grade went on a culinary tour of the world. There were posters, dioramas, costumes etc about each country. I tasted Vietnamese rice balls, Greek Slovaki, polish kielbasa etc. I will never forget the energy at school surrounding that event. There were so many parents involved. Everyone was so proud to share their heritage.

The excuse of instructional distractions that are caused by food celebrations is weak. The power of schools to help redefine culture is significant. That comes with the responsibility to think out policy very carefully. Instead of teaching children that birthdays and holidays are a distraction we should be taking the opportunity to teach healthy expressions and acknowledgements of special occasions- INCLUDING foods.

b) Alternative birthday acknowledgements by the school are really great; some of the activities currently in use are terrific. These should also be compiled and shared with school staff. The only problem I see is the lack of parent involvement on behalf of their child. Birthdays and holidays are the time when parents feel the opportunity to contribute and connect with their child's class. This is very important to families and should not be lost.

Celebrations. Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. The key word is "should" indicating that exceptions can be made.

2) THE IMPACT OF THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY ON FUNDRAISING:

a) Once again is eliminating all bake sales and food product sales the correct answer? Even a nutritionist will tell you it is okay to have a treat once in a while. Bake sales can be a great source of excitement for the kids. They are fun. A child feels proud when they bring in cupcakes they baked at home (or their parent provided). They make the families feel like they can contribute. They are part of our school heritage. Let's improve them by providing new recopies and recipe adaptations to make them a better option instead of eliminating them.

b) Candy, cookie dough, popcorn, etc. Most companies have responded to the national effort to eat healthier by offering low fat, sugar free or reduced calorie products as options within their product line. If these fundraiser products are not being sold in the lunchroom and families have the option to buy them or not, why are we constraining the PTA/PTO's from offering them as a fundraiser option. I would much rather by a tub of cookie dough and use it up at my discretion than to buy another candle holder or ceramic knick-knack. I buy the food products offered at fundraisers; in fact I count on them being available from the schools. What would America be like without Girl Scout cookies? I don't know what I would do without my stash of Thin Mints and Samoas. God forbid they make Samoas low fat- I'll loose it. I did choose the reduced calorie popcorn from the Boy Scout fundraiser and was happy it was an option. If the product line offers some healthier choices I say let the PTA/PTO have it. ALL THE CHOICES DO NOT NEED TO BE HEALTHY. IT'S A TREAT, NOT A MEAL!!!!

Fundraising Activities. To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The school district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

This regulation does not apply to the PTO/PTA's – they are separate not-for-profit organizations from KCSD. The policy should have no impact on their fundraising.

- 3) SELLING JUNK FOOD IN OUR CAFETERIAS WHERE THERE IS NO SUPERVISION OF A CHILD'S CHOICES IS HYPOCRITICAL!!!!!! (even reduced fat ice cream is junk food) You want everyone else to restrain from providing junk food to the students but they can buy it every day in the lunchroom and the lunches served are not much better.
- If the Federal food is the problem then serve it to our representatives in Albany every day for a week. See what happens.
 - Pick one day and have a school lunch boycott in the district. That will get somebody's attention.
 - Sell appropriate snack foods like granola bars, and yogurt cups, and fruit cocktails in addition to the federal provisions. See what happens.

I have no problem with boycotting junk-food (that's what this policy is all about). Presently, Mr. Carelli and I are reviewing POS systems that will permit parents to guide their children's choices.

- 4) ALLOWING KIDS TO GO FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER IS UNHEALTHY. Middle schoolers are out so early in the morning few eat breakfast. Most claim they don't have time to eat the breakfast at school. Why can't all 1st or 3rd period classes allow snack? The grade schoolers are allowed snack. Doctors say adolescents nutritional needs are even more difficult to meet with only 3 meals a day (2 if they skip breakfast) - 6 small meals is recommended. Why does my son have to sneak a granola bar in the hallway, terrified he'll get in trouble? He's just trying to feel well enough to stay awake for class. Think about it. This does not make sense.

There is nothing in the Regulation or Policy that states kids can't eat snacks. This is a "building-level" issue that should first be addressed with the Principal.

*Would like to know the nutritional content of the "pan cookies", iced animal cookies and ice cream bars that are sold in the cafeteria. Were told they were low fat? Do they have hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil in them? Our principal said they have "no added sugar". Does this mean they have artificial sweeteners in them?

*Would like to know the "future vision" of the school lunch program. What changes will be made for next year.

*Would like some recipes for low fat/sugar goodies that could be sold for a healthier bake sale. Does the school district use a nutritionist that could give the PTA's suggestions/recipes that would meet the nutritional guidelines? We are going to need to raise about \$1,000 for the yearbook which used to be done with bake sale \$ and we have not come up with an alternative way to fundraise. We had a popcorn maker donated but went to George Washington to see their popcorn program and we didn't think the popcorn was any healthier than a cupcake with the gloppy unhealthy oil it is cooked in and the added salt.

There are no restrictions beyond what is currently prescribed in the regulations...Mr. Carelli and the Wellness Committee (next meeting is December 17) provide oversight to ensure compliance:

<http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/WellnessPolicies.html#quality>

Foods

A food item sold individually:

- will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
- will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars;⁸
- will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.

A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric

sweeteners; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).⁹

Portion Sizes

Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:

- One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky;
- One ounce for cookies;
- Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, doughnuts, bagels, and other bakery items;
- Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream;
- Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;
- Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water; and
- The portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

A suggestion was made that we need to see something that would help educate the parents. Maureen mentioned that this is an area that the committee is going to be addressing.

Zena had a Thanksgiving feast – a lot of parents showed up. Renee shared some info regarding the feast that was held at Zena.

The Wellness Policy is mandated by law – by law we are required to have a Wellness policy – the regulations are comparable to the WIC standards – a template was used and the policy was written up and passed by the board – the implementation of the policy is being put into place by the district and we all realize that it is taking some time to get used to.

We are still confused as to what exactly can be regulated and what can be controlled.

Shared the info from the Health and Nutrition Committee meeting - minimum amount of PE is being reached – we shared the topics that were presented at the recent meeting. If anyone would like to get a copy of the minutes contact me and I will make sure that they get a copy. The next meeting is on December 17th - some confusion regarding the date we did get a clarification as to when the meeting is – Maureen thought it was changed to December 10th the meeting will be held on December 17th at 6:00 at Crown Street.

Administrative - Mr. Gretzinger – questions that involved the Wellness Committee – confusion that involves the control of the regulations regarding the PTO/PTA events that take place after the school hours – during the school hours can't be done – if an event is taking place after school hours such as fundraising the district cannot tell the group not to do it. The district would prefer that the kids not sell candy. Mr. Gretzinger did mention that sometimes there are exceptions to everything – they are trying to limit the amount of parties and the type of food served. The goal is trying to get healthy choices. It was noted that a lack of uniformity among the schools is going to be an ongoing problem and it will take awhile to get everyone on track.

American Heart Association and the American Diabetics Association websites are good sources where you can get healthy recipes.

Education needs to occur with the parents some ideas that came up were -

Nutrition seminars – providing outlets – cookbook - websites

Pam brought up the meeting that took place at the high school involving Joakim Lartey. A small group got together to discuss the –Diversity Student Survey. Pam asked Mr. Gretzinger if it would be okay if arrangements were made to have some type of Diversity presentation in the district. He did not see any problem with this. At the Jan. meeting further discussion on this topic will take place.

Mr. Gretzinger brought up the fact that the Flash Judgment Program – a diversity assembly program for 6th graders will be taking place at the Middle Schools next week. On Dec. 11 it will be at Miller and Dec 12 at Bailey.

Question regarding a clarification about recess regulation – the clarification is below.

Recess/Punishment: The following language has been added to the regulations, effective immediately. " Teachers and staff will not use physical activity (i.e.: Push ups or running laps) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (i.e.: Recess, PE) as punishment, except when health and safety are a concern

Board of Education Report – Maureen Bower

A lot is going on in the district the district is being audited – financial audit is occurring right now – it is a thorough audit done by the Comptroller’s Office.

We went over the packet from Maureen. A schedule of the budget calendar was provided, changes showing the polling places, Jan. exam week schedule, and an article Maureen wanted to share regarding cyber bullying and a list of healthy snacks!!

Question came up regarding the move of the Graves principal to George Washington as to when the announcement would be officially made – things will not be done until the spring.

If anyone has extra food after an event it can be donated to Queens Galley through Diane Reeder 338-3468.

Topics for the next meeting that will appear on the agenda –

DWPC positions opening in June (Co-chairs and Secretary)

Diversity report

Fundraising – what do the schools do - how much do they raise - what do the schools pay for

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:35 by Pam Tack and seconded by Cyndi Light.

Next meeting will be held on January 3, 2008.

Minutes submitted by Cheryl Oliver. Minutes are not official until approved at the next meeting.

Notes: A question came up regarding the number of students currently in the district considered homeless. Maureen was able to find out the information. Approximately 40-50 in district today, but that number fluctuates regularly.