Southampton Union Free School District

District Health and Wellness Committee

January 13, 2021:

The following individuals were in attendance for the January 13th meeting: Darren Phillips; Regan Kiembock; Brian Zahn; Michael Connell; Colby Salzano; Rebecca Capatosto; John Llera; (All UFSD) Heather Meehan (East End Food Institute)

The school district Wellness Policy was presented for a second time to the attendees for a final review prior to submission to the board of education policy committee for review and possible adoption. This follows a required review of the policy with the WellSat 3.0 scoring system to ensure adherence to federal law and practices (Section VI) h of the policy.

After reviewing the Wellness Policy, updates were presented on the physical education curriculum at the district buildings, food service, and the current state of the Farm to School Contract and the USDA grant with Heather.

I. Wellness Policy

There are no changes proposed for the first three pages of the policy. (Policy justification and why we need to have the policy). Starting with page 4 of the policy the following areas were looked at for revisions: (a) monitoring of the policy; (b) building representation; (c) senior lunch privileges; (d) school breakfast program (grab and go and breakfast in the classroom programs); (e) anti-shaming language and policy; (f) food and beverages; (g) nutrition standards and fundraising activities; (h) snacks; (i) rewards; (j) wellness promotion; and (k) physical activity and physical education.

1. Section I(a) Committee-Monitoring: Clarification on designee. This can mean anybody the principal wants to designate - to assistant principals for example. Everybody sort of plays a role in the different buildings of monitoring the policy. As one example, Rebecca, the school nurse, checks food that is brought into the building for food allergies. It was determined that it may be better for each building principal to monitor their buildings.
2. Section I(b-c) Committee -Building Representation: Additional outreach is needed to get individual(s) in each school building to serve on the committee.
3. Section II(a)vi Nutritional Quality: Seniors leaving school for lunch. There are no lunch privileges at the high school this year due to COVID-19.

Discussion revolved around safety and legal issues and changing the policy to discontinue students leaving school grounds for lunch. Support has been towards keeping the policy in the past. Since the policy is not being followed now, it would be easier to make a move rescinding it now as it will be hard to take it back after. There are more reasons to take it away then to bring it back. Legal issues being the school district acts as In Loco Parentis. Students are safe when they are in the building and the school district is responsible for students when they leave and come back to/ from lunch.

 From a philosophical point of view a parent may not have an issue with this policy allowing their child to leave for lunch but a lot can happen in terms of safety, health and wellness. We have had several disciplinary incidents and substance abuse incidents in the past because of it. Seniors would have still the privilege of coming in late and leaving early.

There is a conflict between the wellness policy allowing the senior privilege and the school policy that a fellow student cannot drive another student. More schools have been gravitating away from allowing senior privilege.

It was resolved that the suggestion to remove the privilege would be taken to the board of education policy committee first and they could either take it out or leave it in.

1. Section II (b)i. School Breakfast Program: The elementary school has been participating in the community eligibility program which started this year where all kids get free breakfast. Going forward, pay or free and reduced cost meals may come back. Hopefully we can maintain the community eligibility provision.

Serving breakfast in the classroom program started last year in the elementary school. Meals in the classroom are being offered to the 5th and 6th grades. There has been a decline with students coming into the nurse office hungry due to the success of the programs in the elementary school.

1. Section II (c) Free and Reduced Priced Meals: There currently exists a separate charge lunch and anti-shaming policy that addresses stigmatizing students that cannot pay for meals. A link will be added to that policy under this section.
2. Section II (e) Foods and Beverages Sold Individually: A new web link will be added here as the current one is no longer applicable.
3. Section II (e)(II) Nutrition Standards & Section VIII Fundraising: WellSat 3.0 scoring is saying to address adherence to the caffeine standards but very few kids want caffeine and it is only at the high school and it is a cultural practice for them to have a small cup of coffee in the morning. The high school cafeteria also has decaffeinated coffee.

There are currently no food fundraisers or food being brought into the elementary school due to COVID-19. Other kinds of non-food related fundraising are actively encouraged although physical activity fundraisers should be increased. Darren presents a list of ideas for teachers at the beginning of the year as well as a fundraising form that can be used to track fundraising activities. At the elementary school, the PTO is doing most of the fundraisers.

1. Section IX Snacks: Language addressing meeting the USDA Smart Snacks language was added. No snacks are being currently served in after school activities. Homework club is virtual this year. Regan offered a suggestion to offer free snacks through the national school lunch program in the future for any homework club. There is a requirement that some work has to be done under the national school lunch program in order to receive reimbursement for snacks in afterschool programs.
2. Section X Rewards: There is no indication that food is being used as a reward for reinforcing a desired behavior. In the past it was used but that practice has been discontinued. Celebrations involving have been stopped at the elementary school with parents on board. Kids are now celebrating with craft activities, outside recess, game playing, and board games.

It was suggested to add into the policy to only have non-food based celebrations going forward.

1. Section III Wellness Promotion: Addresses not advertising junk food and unhealthy foods.
2. Section IV Physical Activity and Physical Education: WellSat 3.0 scoring showing three zeros because policy does not specifically address time per week of physical education. It was resolved to add specific amount of minutes and days per week. Elementary school exceeds standards and grades 7-12 meet state standards. Grades 5 and 6 meet on alternate weeks. Southampton is doing much better than most schools as a whole in meeting state phys ed requirements.

Nutrition Education: With the school garden and the Farm to School program comprising a big part of the elementary and middle school nutrition program under the guidance of Christina Durea and Amy Lester it was resolved to add a line here emphasizing the role the garden plays.

II(a) PE Update:

 There has been no change in the program since the last wellness meeting in December. Waiting on a decision on Fall sports. Winter sports are progressing. The elementary school is still going outside for PE as much as possible weather dependent. The high school has been inside playing badminton

II(b) School Meal Program:

 During the 2 weeks the school district is remote (February 8th through the 19th), meals will be offered through delivery and at the pickup window. Meal delivery to any families will also be offered. We are currently providing meals on Tuesdays and Thursdays to about 35 to 40 students. A Connect Ed message will be sent out at the end of January and Regan will contact all guidance counselors and social workers via email to remind them to add any families to the delivery list.

II(c) East End Food Institute:

 Heather stated that although the Farm To School Contract with the state for the grant that was awarded last January has still not been funded, she is optimistic that it will soon be. Unfortunately we are at a standstill for farm to school activities. Last week the East End Food Institute completed an application for a USDA Farm to School Grant and we will probably not hear back from that one until June or so. The proposal was to expand the existing East End Farm to School project, which is currently done with Bridgehampton, Southampton and Tuckahoe - to include at least two new school districts. Mainly West Hampton and Riverhead since they are self-operated food service. Easier to start with them.

II(d) Wellness Committee Goals:

 Discussion on trying to do a better job at marketing. At the last meeting the idea came up with a seasonal newsletter so people can see what we are discussing, talking about, what we are doing, and the accomplishments of the Wellness Committee. In the past it was about a specific topic but we want to make this more. We want to present what we are about and joining the committee is encouraged. We hope to have the newsletter pique interest. It was resolved to have John work on the seasonal newsletter and make it more of a “What’s happening at the Wellness Committee meetings” each quarter.