Southampton Union Free School District

District Health and Wellness Committee

May 12, 2021:

1. Welcome and Introductions:

In attendance: Darren Phillips (SUFSD); Regan Kiembock (SUFSD); SunHe Sherwood-Dudley (SUFSD Board of Education); Anastasia Gavalas (SUFSD Board of Education); Michael Connell (SUFSD); Christina Duryea (SUFSD); John Llera (SUFSD); Michele Sacconaghi (Southampton Wellness Foundation).

2) Old Business / Updates

1. Wellness Policy Updates and Revisions –

Regan sent the wellness policy updates to Amy Pierson at the District Office. The committee is waiting for the board of education policy committee to review it. It is hoped that the revised wellness policy will be updated and reviewed by the board of education by the time school starts in September

1. PE Update – Spring Sports, Squash -PE Update: Darren Phillips

Cindy Corwith will be retiring this year and the district will not be replacing her. The elementary school physical education program that was revamped four years ago may be impacted with the transfer of a teacher to the high school. The high school PE classes have been outside doing backyard games, Kan jam is the favorite activity.  Spring sports are going well but a few JV sports were dropped due to lack attendance. Testing for lacrosse and unified basketball was dropped.

A flyer was sent out to district parents for a free squash clinic to be hosted by Sayed Selim this summer for the squash courts that they're looking to build in the village. Twenty-five kids so far have expressed interest. The district does not have squash courts but there are courts at SYS and I believe are for private use only.  If anyone has any ideas for the field day and physical education activities in general contact Darren.

1. Updates on school meal program- Meal service at each school: Regan Kiembock

The school district is down to twelve remote instruction students that require meal delivery.

The head cook at the high school recently left and staffing has become a real issue in the cafeteria. It has been hard to hire at this time of the year and food service typically has the lowest paid positions in the school district. There is a lack of affordable housing in the Town. It is getting more and more difficult to find affordable housing in our district. Regan is thrilled with the staff and they are passionate with what they do and they really do want to come and feed the kids.

Darren commented that in the past the district’s school buses would have stopped to get food for the students depending on certain games but that has been suspended since COVID-19. Parents are advised to pack snacks and extra food for their children. Coaches can still do curbside pickup. Regan commented that all students are getting free meals this year and they can pack up

breakfast or lunch from the cafeteria that they can take on the bus. It is hard on the students that do not get home until 7 or 8 at night during games.

Michele asked if any assistance was being offered to students that are food insecure for dinner or weekends. Regan meets with Esther Adler O’Keefe if any instances or requests arise. A letter is sent out over the summer and will again be this summer stating food is available through organizations such as the Heart of the Hamptons and in other organizations with nearby school schools nearby, namely Longwood. Currently the district does not provide meals on weekends. When the district was remote, meals were provided to families even during the holidays.

1. School Garden: Christina Duryea

There are now 15 students in the garden club and helping out with the school garden. They come between Tuesday and Thursday. Adam Halsey donated lettuce that we are currently growing. Currently the garden has snow peas, sunflowers, sweet potatoes basil, and parsley. Tomatoes are being grown inside until they get a little bigger and then they will be planted in the garden along with butternut squash.

Upstate New York DEC donated three dogwood trees which were planted. The Garden club has been collaborating with the Art club to make a big wind chime for the garden. The kids got to decorate it and hung it on the beechwood to put into the garden. Another project with decorating rocks and placing them around the garden is planned.

3) New Business

1. Wellness Foundation – Michele Sacconaghi

The W Kids program just finished the online third through fifth grade curriculum allowing a seamless K-5 experience for teachers and children. Feedback is requested from teachers as the curriculum is designed for either classroom and/or virtual use. Videos can be downloaded when teaching a lesson and there is a lot of supplementary materials that go with it for the teachers.

Christina asked besides health, and home and careers, are there any other subjects that would be useful with the online curriculum? The curriculum could be modeled as part of a science and/or PE class and could fit in anywhere. It was taught it in the past as a 40-minute class but can be broken down into much smaller segments. As an example, if the teacher has 20 minutes, a 10-minute lesson video could be played with time for discussion on the lesson. For remote instruction it is a great tool for the teacher.

Darren stated that the program will be used next school year. There was discussion about it being used this year but COVID delayed that with an emphasis on physical activity outside, and will be incorporate into our elementary health curriculum next school year. Michael stated there is currently one remote teacher for fifth grade and one remote teacher for sixth grade and they still have students on their roster. Michael will email the names of the two teachers to Darren.

1. East End Farm to School Project – FS2 Grant Update: Regan

Heather and John decided to partner with Daniella Azzi’s art class to help with the Farm to School branding. Monies were set aside from the state grant to help with branding costs but why spend money when the best resource comes from our students right here. They get the experience and we get help with branding and saving money. As student designs are unveiled a decision will be made as to what the winning design(s) will be.

Farm To School taste testing has continued every month. Fish tacos and microgreens were done last month. Roasted parmesan asparagus is the taste test this month. Microgreen wraps were sent to elementary school students as well as fifth and sixth graders in their classroom. Seventh through twelve graders were sent in the serving line and in the cafeteria.

An intern from Stony Brook has been helping Regan with the taste tests. Regan is trying to get dairy from New York State with the new bid out - because there is an incentive with New York for providing more farm to school produce in the school cafeteria. New York's 30% Lunch Initiative increases the reimbursement schools receive for lunches from 5.9 cents per meal to 25 cents per meal for any district that purchases at least 30 percent ingredients for their school lunch program from New York farms

Southampton is actually on the New York State bid, but Long Island schools were awarded milk from New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. New York City schools are able to shoot for that 30% because they were awarded milk from New York State.

It would help the bottom line if more money was spent by buying New York State products and by promoting New York state products while helping the farmers at the same time. Heather Meehan and Kate Fullam of the East End Food Institute have been instrumental in helping us get letters out. I did speak to a person from the New York State Office of Government Services the other day, but she didn't sound very promising because they have to go with the lowest bidder and it is a regional bid.

1. Wellness Committee Newsletter: John Llera

John is still working on the newsletter and will have it ready soon.

4) Open Discussion

Anastasia asked what are some of the goals of the Wellness Committee are and what kinds of initiatives are being anticipated for next school year. Darren responded on behalf of the committee that a better job of marketing the wellness committee is needed citing the newsletter project by John as an example to keep people informed about what's happening.

This year it was about educating the staff at the beginning of the year about the wellness policy and promoting staff and student wellness whether it's physical activity or Nutrition as we did not get to engage in any fundraising this school year.

Anastasia further asked if it might be helpful to reach out to the guidance counselors, social workers and psychologists and have them involved in the committee. Nurses have been on the committee before and having guidance counselors, social workers and psychologists would be helpful and we can invite them. Further, if we could have one person per building that would be ideal on a rotating basis stated Darren.

Sticking around till 3:30 at 3:45 has been one of the bigger challenges of getting people to come out for committee meeting, but this year was actually a little easier with the virtual meetings stated Darren.

At the beginning of the school year in September Darren will send out a newsletter to all the parents in the school district explaining what the wellness committee is and if they want to be put on the email list. Usually we will get parents, but only get a handful will show up each year and they only attend a few meetings.

Michele asked Anastasia and SunHe if they were aware of the changes to the wellness policy and in the revised senior lunch privilege language because it will be important to understand the thinking of what went into it. Anastasia further asked why the committee made the decision to change the senior lunch privilege language. This lead to discussion involving the current policy that removes the ability of seniors to leave for lunch and making this restriction permanent going forward since the status quo is no off campus lunch privileges. Discussion involved equity, tradition, and safety issues. It is the understanding that some parents will likely push back against the rescinding of off campus senior lunch privileges and being a tough sell.

Regan was asked if lunch would be offered to students during the summer program in July with Regan stating that she has not received an answer as to the number of students that would be attending from the various people she has asked. Financially, last summer we lost a lost a lot of students for delivery because the Shinnecock reservation has their own summer feeding program. At this time Riverhead is not going to run a summer food service either.

If there is a summer need we will address that that need. Michael will get back to Regan with a summer student count. In the past, Sherry Blakey Smith has ordered snacks and drinks from the cafeteria and has provided them to her students for her half day program.