Southampton Union Free School District

District Health and Wellness Committee

October 13, 2021:

1. Welcome and Introductions:

In attendance:

In attendance: Darren Phillips (SUFSD); Regan Kiembock (SUFSD); SunHe Sherwood-Dudley (SUFSD Board of Education); Anastasia Gavalas (SUFSD Board of Education); Cara Conklin-Wingfield (SUFSD Board of Education); Michael Connell (SUFSD); John Llera (SUFSD); Colby Salzano (Nurse - SUFSD); Olga Warden (SUFSD); Michele Sacconaghi (Southampton Wellness Foundation); Rachel Phillips (LIU Post); Miranda Capriotti (East End Food Institute); MarieLine Grinda (Parent); Lisa Haley, (Parent); Marta Blanco (Senior Bilingual Nutritionist Cornell Cooperative Extension).

2) Old Business / Updates

1. Updates on school meal program - Regan Kiembock

October is National Farm to School Month. Activities in the schools are planned with our new Farm to School Coordinator Miranda Capriotti. We will have apples from Milk Pail Farm and from Wikhams Farm. Apple and kale salad with kale from the school garden will also be prepared for the month.

Amy Lester is our new garden club coordinator at the middle school. She is out there with the kids every Thursday tending to the garden.

1. Non-food fundraiser brochure – Rachel Phillips, graduate dietetic intern, LIU Post /
2. Revised fundraiser form – Darren Phillips

Rachel worked on a non-food fundraiser brochure that was shared at the meeting. The brochure is posted on the wellness committee school website. The brochure was sent out to the staff and administrators in the buildings. Going forward fundraising will not emphasize candy sales and food in general. We are no longer allowing food and bagel sales as fundraising activities.

Rachel mentioned that the brochure was updated to show the various non-food raising activities that the school could use.

A question was asked as to the types of non-food fundraisers done in the past. A volleyball and basketball tournament happens every year as well as a dodgeball tournament through our Mariner Athletic Club. A Halloween dance happens as well and is used as a fundraiser for our senior class. Car washes have been done in the past as well. A 5-K charity run was mentioned as possible fundraiser in the future along with a health and wellness fair which was done in the past.

A question was asked on who approves fundraising activities. Fundraising is usually done through a club or sports team. Class advisors also raise money for each of their classes (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior). The money is usually going to the American Red Cross or a related charitable organization. The coaches will also do fundraisers for a trip, or a staff member that’s involved with a team or club like the PTO or booster club.

Darren sent out a revised fundraising form to all building staff and administrators to use for data purposes, to see what kind of fundraising is going on in each of the districts buildings. If a teacher or club coach wanted to do a fundraiser they would have to get approval by the building administration first and in the past we were not asking them to get approval, it just went to the wellness committee for approval. We are now asking them to fill it out and we will collect it to keep track as to what is going on.

1. Discussion on the food service program at Southampton (addition)

A question was asked if Regan was still using Sky Blue Foods for breads and baked meals (They were used during the pandemic) and a question was raised about the sugar content of some of their breads and in school meal preparation. Food service is not ordering from Sky Blue at this time. Questions concerning sugar intake and meal composition should be addressed to Regan.

There is an emphasis on serving fresh fruits and vegetables as much as possible. Menus are posted online for parents to look at with nutritional values attached to them and for them to determine if a food allergy exists with their child(ren).

Staffing issues currently exist in the food service department and supply chain issues are adding a layer of complexity to daily operations. Substitutions in food preparation and staffing adjustments are becoming more commonplace. A question was asked if the food program is self-sustaining and going forward should the program be funded differently and/or structured differently. Another question was asked on how the board of education can help with the current situation with the response being more staffing is needed.

Last year was a difficult year financially for the food service department due to the pandemic. Two grants were secured with the help of Heather Meehan and Kate Fullam of the East End Farm To School Institute who worked with Regan. One grant was for $44,000 from No Kid Hungry and the second grant was for $20,000 from All For The East End (AFTEE). Both were COVID relief grants.

A question was asked how other schools are handling this dilemma of self-funded / profit centers or other solutions

Sag Harbor, Bridgehampton, and the Tuckahoe school district food service programs are not self-sustaining. The East Hampton school district is run by Contracting Services. West Hampton and Riverhead are facing the same financial issues.

Questions on fundraising were asked and about the Chef Brigade program and if the board of education should start thinking about making changes to the way food service is funded and presented.

Three food service staff are at the high school were trained by Chef Brigade, and two at the intermediate school. The elementary never really got any training because that’s when the pandemic hit.

Currently breakfast and lunch are free at the schools. We still have a-la-carte items. Smoothies are being offered once a month in the elementary school.

A question was asked if the Chef Brigade could come back. It has not been organized yet but it would be for a week of training to brush up on the concepts and training when they were here previously. The brigade training is part of the USDA Farm to School Grant which Miranda and Regan are working on. Chef Tyler and his girlfriend actually stayed here outside of the program to help with COVID delivery and food pickup up until mid-June.

A question was asked as to what food items are made in the school. Mostly salads and soups are made in the kitchens. Muffins are no longer prepared in the elementary school because they were taking too much time (2 to 3 days to make 300 of them). Breakfast at the elementary school is still being served in the classroom by 8:15 am (earlier than previous years).

A question was asked if the three school kitchens could be combined into one with the other two receiving the prepared meals. All kitchens cook their food on premises except for a few items that are cooked at the high school and shipped to the other schools.

Student hunger is not an issue as it was in the past with the free meals and there has been a lot of positive feedback about the new menu items. There is not as much scratch cooking but the kids at the high school like it more so our emphasis has been with the high school in scratch cooking. As an example the mac and cheese is popular in the high school but not the other schools.

It was mentioned at the meeting that food service should not be run as a business but in revolutionizing food service to deliver high quality nutritious meals to kids. Staff costs and time in meal preparation are factors to take into consideration. There is also a balance as to what kids will eat and their perception of what is good. The majority of kids will eat what is available and will eat with what they are comfortable with looking at the surveys prepared at the schools.

The discussion should also include locally sourced foods and how the farm to school program helps school districts access local foods.

1. Goals:
2. Committee Goals for 2021-22 1) SIS Playground/Climbing equipment 2) Better job promoting successes 3) students(s) on committee

A recap on the status of the playground equipment was given. Meetings were held between the facilities director and the director of facilities and discussed in the facilities committee meeting. A couple of different scenarios were discussed at the facilities committee, either getting the equipment piecemeal per year or getting pieces every few years. The idea of a survey on a ranking scale to ask the intermediate school kids what pieces of equipment they would like to use was discussed at the wellness committee as a way of generating interest in the project - as well asking the kids in their physical education classes.

It is not for certain that the playground would begin to take shape this school year, but we have an opportunity to get everyone on board before we agree to make any purchases.

Awareness and visibility of the committee is another goal. We currently have John helping us post items on the website and we sometimes have coverage on 27 East. We need to do a better job at promoting the committee and what we do.

Darren tried to solicit a few students mostly through their parents and email but with no success. Solicitation is ongoing with teacher recruitment. Darren is also trying is to contact some of the clubs to see if any of their kids might be interested in attending the meetings as a voice for the student body.

A question was asked if any progress was made in getting parents and the school’s social workers/psychologists to attend committee meetings.

There is an ongoing debate to either hold the meetings live or on zoom. A lot of the staff unfortunately do not stick around until 3:30 so the zoom meetings might allow us to get more participation.

Mike Connell will mention the committee during the weekly mental health team meetings at the intermediate school. Mike mentioned the idea of having mini wellness committees in each of the schools. Getting kids involved could be done in the 10th period and crediting them with service hours.

1. Newsletter/ anchor small space for updates

The committee is being granted space in the winter edition of the Anchor. That presents a good opportunity for people to see what we are doing.

1. Leftover money to use from grant

There is $660 dollars to spend. Ideas on what it should be spent on can be suggested to Regan or Darren.

1. East End Farm to School – Miranda Capriotti

The big effort right now is to build a procurement system for the Harvest of the Month tasting events at the schools so that food service directors can more easily access local foods. Miranda is the liaison between the school districts and the farmers. Miranda collects the pricing bids from the local farmers. (Regan has to collect three bids before she can purchase a product).

The East End Farm to School program has a virtual farmers market that is open to the public for wholesale purchases. Regan can then see the three bids that I have collected on the virtual farmers market and choose the lowest bid to purchase for the tasting events. Miranda hopes going forward school service food directors can purchase more local foods for their school menus as opposed to the current monthly tastings that are currently set up.

Hudson Valley Farms will be coming to the elementary school for a milk tasting. If a school district purchases more than 30% of its food products from local New York state farms, the school district will get an additional 19 cents per meal reimbursement from New York State. A big barrier to local school districts was that Long Island school districts were written off because we could not get a New York State dairy bid. The good news is that this year’s school milk bid went to Cream of Land who just recently agreed to process New York State milk getting us closer to that 30%.

Closing:

November 10 at 3:30pm will be the next meeting. It is to be determined if meetings will be live or on zoom.