

DISTRICT NUTRITION/WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of November 13, 2014

Attendees: Alison Friedson, Convener/Purchasing Agent
Laurie Baum, District Treasurer
Kerri Bivona, Aramark Food Service Director
Alyssa Demonte, Aramark Nutrition Intern
Ann Donnelly, CCS PTA President
Agnesa Downes, CBS PTA Vice President
John Franchi, Director of Phys. Ed., Health & Athletics
Steve Furrey, CBS Principal
Kevin Healy, BHS Assistant Principal
Nicholas Jantz, JFK Assistant Principal
Maria Karambatsakis, Business Office
Erin Lindsay, CCS Principal
Grace Maschinski, Aramark Food Service Director
Kerri McCarthy, KLS Principal
James McGlynn, BOE Trustee
Liz Skrypek, Business Office
Sandy Watson, BOE Trustee

Meeting opened: At 2:03 PM by Alison Friedson

- ❖ Alison greeted everyone and welcomed them to the first District Nutrition Meeting for the 2014-2015 school year. She mentioned that Mr. Marchesiello was out-of-town but had been involved in everything on the agenda for today's meeting. Alison introduced Kerri Bivona, the new Aramark Food Service Director for the School District and pointed out that Kerri was here previously as an intern. There is now a new intern working in the District, Alyssa Demonte. Grace Maschinski, the previous Food Service Director, has moved on to another district, Miller Place, but is a resource of information for Kerri and has helped to bridge the gap. Alison stated that she and Maria Karambatsakis would be covering several of the agenda items, Laurie Baum would report on the Fund Balance, and Aramark would report on the status of the Food Service. She also mentioned that the State notified the District that we would be audited this year, but no date has yet been given. The State sent the District a lengthy questionnaire to be filled out and sent back prior to them coming in. The State will notify the District four weeks before they come in to audit one or two of the buildings. Alison stated that there is good news regarding the Breakfast Program and turned the discussion over to Maria Karambatsakis.

- ❖ Maria stated that the Board of Ed. approved the reimbursable Breakfast Program for the High School and Middle School and that the program is going very well. An article regarding the program was in the last issue of the Bethpage Tribune, a copy of which is in your packet. Kerri Bivona will talk in more depth about the program, menu offerings and meeting regulations. Maria then said that the Board of Ed. approved waiving the 25 cent charge for students eligible for the reduced lunch, therefore there is now no cost to those students; it is a way of giving back to the community.

- ❖ Alison then stated that the students eligible for the Free & Reduced Lunch will also qualify for the Breakfast Program. The District is very excited about the Breakfast Program and getting it up and running. Last year the District had an al a carte breakfast, but with the new guidelines in place this year the District could not offer an al a carte breakfast. Now, because the Board of Ed. approved the Breakfast Program, students in the HS and MS can have a full meal with all the components, for which the Federal and State reimburse us. With the Breakfast Program in place and because of changes in regulations, the District can now offer a full breakfast. On another note, Mr. Bigley is back on point with the District as a resource. He was especially helpful in filling out the audit paperwork from the State and will be a huge asset in that regard.
- ❖ Laurie Baum then reported on the Fund Balance. She said that last year we operated at a loss of \$17,081 due to the purchase of new computerized registers at the end of the year. All the software was updated for the District and, therefore, it was necessary to update the registers at a cost of \$29,246. If we discount this purchase, we would have had a profit of \$12,000, which was down \$1,700 from the 2013-2014 school year. Overall, sales decreased by \$3,634, but reimbursable sales decreased by \$17,322. This resulted in a corresponding decrease in reimbursements from Federal and New York State of \$4,346. The net decrease for the combined sales and reimbursements amounted to \$7,980. Other expenses incurred were the purchase of small goods, cleaning of drains, air vent cleaning, and equipment purchases. The year end fund balance was \$241,000 and the State would have allowed \$261,000; therefore, we were \$20,000 under what we could have retained. Laurie pointed out that the purchase of the new computerized registers in the 2013-2014 budget had not been anticipated. The District continuously re-invests in the program and our reserve is more than adequately funded. We hope to rebuild the Fund Balance and an increase in reimbursable meals will help. Alison then interjected that three months of gross profits will go back into the program with the purchase of new small wares and will help to fund the cafeteria program. The District has contracted with Cornell University to do presentations in the schools, which is also funded through the cafeteria program. Part of the contract with Aramark calls for a guaranteed \$30,000 profit for the School District. If it's under \$30,000 Aramark does have to make the District whole; therefore, there is no risk to the District.
- ❖ Kerri Bivona said that the dollar meals for lunch in September started off higher this year than last year and they hope to do it again this year in June. They will be doing Lucky Tray Day and Holiday Placemats for winter recess. Every day they track trends and popular menu items. Nutrition Meetings are being held at every school; next week the meeting will be at the HS. Kerri said student opinions on menus are very important and they like to get feedback on changes the students would like. Guest chef appearances will begin in January and will be in each of the schools for taste testing. Kerri will be in touch with all the schools as to a date. She is working with Alyssa updating the nutrition & product labels binder, which will be available to nurses with information on nutrition and food contents as it relates to allergies and diabetes.
- ❖ Alison then asked Kerri to share some of her background. Kerri responded that she finished her nutrition degree last year, and is now a registered dietician. She said that if anyone has questions regarding nutrition she is a good resource.

- ❖ Kerri then stated that the participation analysis showed Aramark was averaging 1,845 meals a day compared to 1,781 meals last year, which came to an additional 64 meals a day. Lunch meals were up 1,274 vs. 1,277, and a la carte was up as well. Sales for October last year of \$209,747 compared to October this year of \$215,290, comes to an additional \$139 a day. Each year sales have increased over the prior year, and this year is stronger than last. The dollar lunch meal promotion helped to strengthen sales. Kerri said that the snacks being offered had to change as the USDA gets stricter. She said that they are not getting it in schools that the USDA has put stricter regulations on them.
- ❖ Alison asked if the food vendors are keeping up with regulations and Grace responded that they are trying but doesn't think they anticipated such a high demand. Manufacturers are trying to keep up and more products should be available. Grace said that a la carte sales are also up this year.
- ❖ Kerri B. said that on November 3rd the Breakfast Program was started and they had carts at the Cherry and Stewart Avenue entrances at the HS. The students don't always have a chance to go to cafeteria, so having the carts at the entrances is very convenient for them. Some of the choices include Cinni minis, egg sandwiches, pancakes, French Toast and more. Alison pointed out that menus were in everyone's packet. Kerri said that the reimbursable meals for breakfast have different components than lunch. Breakfast components include fruit, fruit, milk and grain, and students need to take three of the four components. They are allowed to get an egg in addition to the components. Kerri said students are asking for bacon and they are trying to work that in. Alison said they are working on getting the word out to students about the Breakfast Program. The program had started off slowly but the numbers have picked up.
- ❖ Ann Donnelly said they have a parent calling daily regarding ingredients and her child's allergies. She asked if the parent can call Kerri to get information concerning ingredients or should the nurse be called. Grace replied that the nurses might not know which product is being served that day and that the parent can call Kerri and discuss ingredient content and changes in food offerings, if they need to be made. Alison said the Food Service Director will cooperate with the Principals and nurses to make sure parents understand what is being offered and, if necessary, have a meeting to make sure the child's needs are covered. She then asked if Principals had anything to add.
- ❖ Kerri McCarthy said everything is great, however, children need to have more nutritious snacks during the day. At the beginning of year she found that what children were having for snack was very discouraging. One child was eating a bag of Doritos at 10:00 in the morning. The Kramer Lane Health & Nutrition Committee is putting together a letter encouraging parents to look at their children's snacks. Kerri recently spoke at a PTA meeting recommending a more nutritious snack list; overall it went well and parents were receptive.
- ❖ Alison said that students were asking for more yogurt and more fruit choices and by giving them what they ask for makes the kids feel more empowered. That their opinions matter. Kerri M. said the students love taste testing.

- ❖ Nick Jantz said JFK's first meeting was held in October and he also found that students wanted to try different things and, in addition, wanted more fresh fruit. Breakfast has also picked up as students realize it is available. The Eagle Eye media is doing a commercial about the Breakfast Program, which will be shown in the lunchroom. JFK will have its next meeting in December.
- ❖ Erin Lindsay said students at Charles Campagne are asking for more vegetables, particularly cauliflower. Students are starting to really be aware of nutritious choices. They are also asking for larger portions of vegetables.
- ❖ Kerri M. commented that the grapes were delicious today. She said if the District wants to do a pilot Breakfast Program at one of the elementary schools, she would be willing to have it at Kramer Lane. They have a few children who are not getting breakfast at home and they are helping them with breakfast at the school. Alison said they will take it up with Joe.
- ❖ Steve Furrey said Central Blvd. has not had a meeting yet, but Mrs. Downs will be attending the first meeting along with the students. Alison said she found the students to be very involved. Steve wanted to know what the guidelines are for kids buying double lunch portions. He understands that Aramark is following State guidelines regarding portions size, but the portions are very small. Alison said it's the entrée portion that is doubled and that as long as the parents elect it, the students can order it. The parents do have the ability to say "no" if they don't want their child to have a double portion. Steve said CBS is working with the parents to **not** allow the double lunch. Kerri M. wanted to know how much is charged and Alison responded that it is another \$2. It is setup to discourage students from taking a double entrée, it is preferred that students fill-up with fruits and vegetables. Students don't always take all five components to a meal, which would make them a little fuller.
- ❖ Kevin Healy said the High School started with a crisis this year regarding bagels, cream cheese and butter. He said things have calmed down now, but students feel they have a right to eat what they want. Kids wanted to know how to spread the string cheese on their bagel. Kevin said the Lunch Program is going well and there have been very few complaints this year; however, the double lunch is a significant issue. Breakfast is a tough balancing act in the HS. They want the students to be healthy, happy and nutritious.
- ❖ Kevin then wanted to know what was happening with the regulations for after school fundraisers as every club does some sort of food sale after school. Alison responded that the USDA regulations are in effect during the school day, which encompasses midnight to ½ hour after the last bell. During that time, food cannot be sold that does not conform to the USDA regulations. Grace then brought up the fact that fundraisers that involve just ordering foods (such as Girl Scout cookies) can be done during the school day, as long as it is not distributed until ½ hour after the school day ends.
- ❖ Grace stated that the USDA has a website that is available to parents to lodge complaints. Parents complained about the portion sizes and stricter regulations were changed because of that. They can go on line and also complain about the fundraisers.

- ❖ Alison said that vendors came up with smaller pretzels that fit into the USDA guidelines and can now be offered. Aramark is always trying to come up with more options that can be offered to the students. The District also helped get the school store up and running at the Middle School.
- ❖ John Franchi then brought up the fact that the vending machine by the gym in the HS keeps taking the money in and not giving out a snack. Grace said they will get someone to come in and look at it.
- ❖ Kerri M. said the water vending machine at KL is not being used and would like it gotten rid of. Grace said that isn't a problem.
- ❖ Steve wanted to know if all these regulations are really affecting children's choices. When they wanted to do away with French Fries, the Potato Lobby got it thrown out. We have had a healthy snack program and teachers are tired of fighting with the children's parents.
- ❖ Alison said that our District was ahead of the curve with the USDA regulations. Our kids were already accustomed to changes when the guidelines came out; we had healthy choices in place. Grace said that some Districts opted out of the program because of the strict guidelines, but Bethpage has benefited greatly from the program.
- ❖ Steve asked if Miller Place was without a lunch program for two months. Grace said that they went out to bid and had no response to the bids the first and second time. On the third bid Aramark & Whitson's both bid and Aramark won. She said that at Miller Place Aramark is doing the healthy lunch program that was started at Bethpage, and are serving between 1,900 and 2,000 meals per day.
- ❖ Laurie said the District actually got approximately \$202,000 in reimbursement from the State and Federal Government, including received food products and commodities from the Federal Government totaled around \$268,000. It was asked what was meant by food products. Laurie and Grace answered that they are food donations that are received, such as cheese, meat products and produce, which are then used in the foods served.
- ❖ Alison thanked everyone for coming to the District-wide Nutrition Meeting and also for attending the building meetings.

Meeting ended at 2:50 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Fran Boullianne, Recorder