

DISTRICT NUTRITION/WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of June 12, 2014

Attendees: Joseph Marchesiello, Convener 
Rick Cenicola, Angie Cintado, Alison Friedson,
Kevin Healy, Maria Karambatsakis, Grace Maschinski,
Kerri McCarthy, Bridget McCormick, James McGlynn,
Deirdre O'Shaughnessy, Louis Ricci, Scott Zanville

Meeting opened: At 2:04 PM by Mr. Marchesiello

- ❖ Mr. Marchesiello greeted everyone and welcomed them to the second and final meeting of the District's Nutrition & Wellness Committee. He stated that it has been a great year on all levels. The program has been impressive this year even with incorporating less salt and more grains into the menus. The District is heading into SY 2014-2015 with an effective fund balance projection somewhere along the lines of \$120,000 - \$125,000, depending on sales in June. We anticipate doing renovations and improvements using much of the operating profit from this year for repairs, replacement of equipment, and supplies. By State law the profits must be pushed back into the program. Grace Maschinski & Rick Cenicola, our partners from Aramark, will update everyone on the program and where we stand on a financial level. The year will end with a Fund Balance of between \$255,000-\$260,000. The program has shown a steady improvement in sales from last year, averaging 1800 meals a day; with Whitson's we were doing close to 1300-1400 meals. This increase is due to Aramark's dedication and we appreciate the hard work of Grace and Rick. We look at the Lunch Program as a business and try to run it as such by trying to understand trends and work it into the meals. In the future, we have been looking at a breakfast program as a possible reimbursable meal for it to be feasible and workable from a building standpoint.

The Lunch Program Free & Reduced is 10% of the population, which is low. Our District gets approximately \$200,000 in Federal and State reimbursements. Maria Karambatsakis spends a lot of time making sure everyone who qualifies gets Free & Reduced and she receives help from the schools with the paperwork processing. Alison Friedson & Maria will speak about improvements and upgrades to the cafeterias, the breakfast waiver, and USDA regulations. Grace & Rick will follow up with their program and profitability. The feedback we get from the students when we meet with them at the building level is very important. We find out through the students if the program is working and what they like and don't like. When the program went to whole grains at the beginning of the school year, we were hearing less and less complaints at the building-level meetings.

- ❖ Alison Friedson then spoke about improvements, some of which are on-going, and the program to replace smallwares in the kitchens that are no longer useable. The primary goal is to keep the staff and food safe. Also, cafeteria tables are inspected to determine if they are in good condition or if they need to be replaced. In the Spring, nice potted plants were added to the outdoor area in the High School and the kids are enjoying the space. Over the summer, the District is looking to degrease and clean all the cafeterias and the ceilings in the kitchens.

All the freezers will be cleaned and repaired for food safety and to remove any mold or mildew. The large walk-in freezer at the High School will also be repainted with a special paint. There are plans to repaint the cafeterias at Kramer Lane, Charles Campagne and JFK. Some new computers/POS registers were just purchased and are going through an upgrade with the new Windows 7. A new computer server for the POS was also purchased and will be put in place in time for September. There will be more information regarding the air-conditioning that will be done next summer, which was approved as a Capital Project at the Budget Vote and will be paid for through the Capital Reserve. All projects, outside of the air-conditioning, are done in-house and will meet health and safety requirements. Mr. Marchesiello said Grace will be doing a walk-through over the summer to ascertain if anything needs to be replaced. Also, at the end of the school year everything gets deep-cleaned before being stored for the summer.

- ❖ Deidre O'Shaughnessy, parent, asked about the air-conditioning for the elementary schools. Mr. Marchesiello replied that it was approved during the Budget Vote as Referendum #2 Capital Reserve and that reserve monies will be used; there will be no additional cost on homeowner's tax bill. He also stated that the air-conditioning is one of many projects and at JFK there will be improvements made to the wrestling room.
- ❖ Maria Karambatsakis then talked about the breakfast program, which is State mandated. In order for the District to be in compliance, it has to request a waiver with documentation. The documentation shows proof that there is no interest in the program or that the District will be in the red. Every year there has been little interest in the program and this year 93.6% were not interested. The results were sent to the State and the District requested a waiver. Mr. Marchesiello stated that the District needs to be open-minded in looking at the breakfast program and would have to research it to find out if it would be a success before advocating it to the Board of Education.
- ❖ Alison Friedson then stated that the USDA has come out with new regulations regarding Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. She said that some of the information is confusing and is checking for more guidance and explanation from the USDA. Mr. Bigley will be onboard in the summer to assist the District in the process of following the regulations. Mr. Marchesiello said there was an article in Newsday today regarding some deferments on the new regulations and there was mention of a waiver to allow the School District to attain the new requirements.
- ❖ Grace Maschinski then gave everyone a packet with which to follow her presentation and stated that the year-end review does not include June information. She found the regular Nutrition Meetings at the buildings were very informative and included wellness as an important topic. Student feedback at the meetings was impressive and students always liked to see their favorites served. Aramark has been following the regulations for 2013-2014, are serving ½ whole grain and are already within the sodium guidelines. Aramark started a few years ago following the regulations and were ahead of the curve. Grace said the guaranteed return to the District can be no less than \$30,000. This year, Aramark will return almost \$119,000-\$120,000, which will be invested back into food service program. We basically finished this year and last year around 1800 meals a day. One of the biggest promotions is

“Dollar Day.” Students and parents loved it. We will finish this year averaging 1900 meals a day in June. Establishing consistency in the program is important. Grace said having the iPod give away after the holidays was less effective; last year it was held before the holidays and had more participation. The High School teachers’ cafeteria sales unfortunately were low. It’s not being utilized as much as she would like and Grace feels the space can be better used to capitalize on sales.

Next Grace spoke about field trip lunches. Students leave the building for a day and parents are required to send lunch for students. Aramark would be able to provide lunches for these students as part of the reimbursable meals and also for students who qualify for the Free & Reduced rate. Parents who would normally have to pack a lunch for that day don’t have to worry about it. Grace said she sent an initial email regarding packed lunches for trips and did not get a response. This is something she would like to discuss. Angie Cintado said that her kids (from a parent’s perspective) look forward to having a special meal to pack for their trip. The children want a say as to what they want to take and like their little treats. Grace wanted to know if anyone had any suggestions as to how Aramark could make it more of a special meal as an incentive to the parents. Angie Cintado said there is a lot of behind the scenes work and that it takes time to get the lunches to the children. Grace said they have done this in other schools and have had a great success with the program, once the schools got on board. Kerri McCarthy stated that more logistics are involved with sending forms home and then collecting them; it is difficult enough getting the forms back for the trip itself. Grace asked if one of the elementary schools could give it a try and Kerri McCarthy said she would try it once, perhaps their Bronx Zoo trip. Mr. Marchesiello said that maybe a price incentive can be offered to gain interest and support.

- ❖ Grace then stated that “Dollar Days” and marketing incentives work in September to engage students, especially for elementary school to middle school and the students look to see what is being offered. In June, when they see a drop-off in sales, “Dollar Days” is very successful. To increase participation during the year, they had an iPod give away, guest chefs at each building, taste testing during October, and at the elementary level students get interactive placemats. At Kramer Lane, during Nutrition Month, ACE the Fox (mascot) came to visit and played with the kids during lunch, which generated much excitement. Aramark is always open to requests for something special in your building. The students in the High School don’t seem to know what is being offered, therefore, Aramark is looking to get new signage in the High School and are looking at purchasing electric sign boards.

Aramark has an agreement with CW Post for a dietetic intern to come to the School District and, in turn, the intern is assigned a special project. It’s a great learning experience for them and they are willing to take on projects. The L. I. Pizza contest was Rick’s idea for the schools on Long Island to be judged on their caliber of pizza. Charles Campagne Elementary was the pizza winner at the elementary school level. Everyone used the same recipe, but Ms. Mascoli, the cook at CCS, proofs the dough for hours and she puts a lot of effort into turning out excellent pizzas. Mr. Marchesiello said there is a \$5,000 marketing budget, as per our contract with Aramark, which can be spent on promoting the lunch program.

- ❖ Angie Cintado wanted to know if larger offerings can be made at the elementary schools and if frozen yogurt can be offered instead of ice cream. Grace responded that meal sizes are regulated by the State Education Department and in response to yogurt, they will be able to offer yogurt in every building.
- ❖ Bridget McCormick, the School Nurse at CCS, asked if pretzels can be offered instead of chips. Grace responded that yes, they can offer pretzels, it's not an issue.
- ❖ Mr. Marchesiello then asked the principals and others to let everyone know what was going on in their buildings and if they had any insights and/or concerns they would like to share.
- ❖ Angie Cintado said that right now they are focused on finishing the end of June and will then start to make changes at the school. As far as what they are doing in the buildings and regarding birthday celebrations she feels that should be handled District-wide. What happens in one school does not happen in another. She believes in moderation in the size of the snacks and treats that come in. Our District is moving in the right direction and having fun while we do it and remaining fit. With Nutrition Nuggets, she doesn't know how much the parents are sitting down with their children and discussing it. Cornell came in June to help promote healthy eating and trying to inform the community to help children make better choices. At their May Nutrition meeting they talked about helping children lose weight by making small changes in their food choices. It is important that children understand foods that they should stay away from because they are not healthy.
- ❖ Bridget McCormick said there should be a District-wide policy as to what snacks are allowed and what should be allowed for Birthday parties. Angie said at their last meeting the children came up with other ideas to celebrate birthdays that does not include food. Bridget said there seems to be a competition between parents, if one parent sends in a snack the next parent has to send in a bigger snack and some go overboard.
- ❖ Louis Ricci, School Psychologist, said we should think about getting the most out of children, so that they can do the best that they can. If they have a big sugar rush, most will not perform well; and what do we do? We celebrate with food. Parents have to be mindful of snacks they're sending in. We have to try to dissuade home baking and goods full of preservatives. Teachers had mixed feelings regarding snacks; some are more agreeable to a game or activity without food. Some schools have healthy snacks for K-2 and an activity for 3-5; another school has no baked goods. The District needs to consider allergy-free foods and portion control, which is difficult because there is no universal standard. Bridget stated America has the most obese people in the world, with a 13% obesity rate. Louis said that in Hicksville they send home an alternative list and children chose an activity. Food for thought.
- ❖ Kerri McCarthy said she lives in a district in which no food gets sent in and it's not a big deal. The child celebrating a birthday gets a crown and a pencil. It has gotten out of control in our District. There have been some changes made at Kramer Lane and the children have to bring in something healthy. Kerri said that some promotions they had this year were the Magic Show, Jump-rope for Heart, PTA Healthy Snack Day and T-shirt Day with colors

from “My Plate.” Kerri feels the more we educate the students the healthier choices they can make. She stated that the District is going in the right direction.

- ❖ Mr. Marchesiello said that choice is important and that the Wellness Policy is a living document. He said that as the State codifies changes it filters down to us. He suggested that perhaps next year it would be advantageous to do a sub-committee and then present alternatives to the policy for the BOE to opine on. This will be a topic of interest for next year.
- ❖ Scott Zanville said that Cornell came in and presented at JFK in two of their Family & Consumer Science classes. They were well received and kept their presentation in line with curriculum the students were learning. The students from the Fit & Fun program are part of the building committee. Scott feels there is an inconsistency between TGIF and bringing soda; he is rethinking that. He said that Lisa, the cook in the kitchen, is fantastic with kids and works hard.
- ❖ Kevin Healy said that at the beginning of year in the High School there were complaints about size portions. The response to the return of baked French fries was positive; kids all love French fries. Yolanda, head cook, and the kitchen staff have a way with kids which is unbelievable. Kevin said a lot of the same kids consistently go to the hot line and buy the same items: pizza, chicken, nachos, and/or tacos. It’s nice to hear it was a very good year for the cafeteria and that it’s making money.
- ❖ James McGlynn, Board Trustee, said that leftover milk at CBS is a big problem. The second graders have a contest on drinking the milk or chocolate milk left at the sharing table and the kids drink too much. Grace said K-2 students are required to take milk and the other grades have a choice. The lunchroom monitors help students and apparently encourage the students to take everything. It was a Board decision for K-2 students to be full serve. Mr. Marchesiello wanted to know if there was a milk substitute. Grace said it’s very high in calories and high in fat. There is a USDA requirement of no more than 1% fat and flavored milk has to be fat free. Aramark tries to offer a variety of milk. Alison stated students can have a substitute if there is a medical reason.
- ❖ Mr. Marchesiello asked if there were any other comments. He stated how he was always surprised at how articulate everyone is at the building meetings. He thanked everyone for coming and participating and hoped everyone has a nice summer.

Meeting ended at 3:11 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Fran Boullianne, Recorder