



## MINUTES

### Providence School Board Health & Wellness Committee Meeting

Pursuant to Executive Order 20-25 issued by the Governor of Rhode Island, the Providence School Board held this meeting remotely. A recording is available on the Providence School Board YouTube channel at [bit.ly/pvdschoolboard](https://bit.ly/pvdschoolboard)

**December 16, 2020**

#### CONVENE MEETING

1. Call Meeting to Order - Committee Chair Diagneris Garcia called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

#### **In Attendance:**

Diagneris Garcia, H&W Chair

Aaron Lenart, Sodexo Operations Manager of Secondary Schools

Dana Benton-Johnson, PPSD Manager of Social & Emotional Services

Ellen Cynar, Healthy Communities Office

Karin Wetherill, RIHSC

Kelly DeAngelis, Sodexo Director of Sustainability and Student Engagement

Linda Grossi, PPSD HPE and co-chair

Lisa Hoopis, Sojourner House and co-chair

Lynne Conca, Sodexo Operations Manager of Elementary Schools

Paula Paolino, URI SNAP-Ed

Penelope Pare, PPSD Social Worker

Rachel Newman-Greene, Healthy Communities Office and co-chair

Sarah Dinklage, RISAS and co-chair

Solight Sou, PPSD Wellness Coordinator

Yeimy Bakemon -Morel, Day One

Rosemary O'Brien, Neighborhood Health Plan

#### APPROVE AGENDA

2. Approve Agenda as presented  
**A motion was made to approve the consent agenda  
MSV – Dinklage, Hoopis (16-0) MOTION APPROVED**

#### CONSENT AGENDA

3. **Approval of Minutes - October 28, 2020**  
**A motion was made to approve the minutes from October 28, 2020**  
**MSV - Dinklage, Hoopis (16-0) MOTION APPROVED**

#### COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL UPDATES

4. Welcome and introduction  
Chair Garcia welcomed everyone to the meeting.

5. Comments from the Community/Guests  
There were no comments.

## PRESENTATIONS

6. Sodexo Metrics Report

DeAngelis provided a PowerPoint presentation [here](#) on the following:

- Quantitative and qualitative metrics (September - October 2020)
- Thanksgiving meals
- Local procurement

Since the start of the 2020-2021 school year mid-September, Sodexo has seen a steady increase in meal consumption due to the addition of the snack and dinner programs. DeAngelis stated that with approximately 6,000 students enrolled in the Virtual Learning Academy and 800 students in quarantine per day, participation rates remain a challenge. The addition of Grab and Go meal distributions at 8 sites, expanded services, and different service models such as hot lunch pilots and cafe style meals, aid in increasing participation in both elementary and secondary schools.

DeAngelis shared metrics regarding school breakfast improvements displaying baseline metrics and progress made over the past 3 months. Efforts to increase protein options included adding string cheese to the menu twice a week, and offering yogurt and granola once a week (previously offered once a month).

Decreasing the sugar content in breakfast options has also been a longstanding area of concern and Sodexo has made some recent improvements which include reducing weekly chocolate items to only once a month, reduce offering novelty/sugary cereals, removing novelty/sugary cereal bars, reducing pastry/dessert-like items, increasing fruit-based muffins from three times a month to once a week, increase offering apple sauce and fresh fruit from once a week to twice a week with the addition of fruit cups, and decreasing offering Craisins from 3-5 times a week to once a week.

DeAngelis noted that current challenges with distribution have hindered some progress, such as the introduction of BelVita breakfast biscuits as a healthy alternative to previously offered novelty cereal bars.

During the month of November, Sodexo served 233,982 meals which included 92,545 pounds of locally grown, harvested, landed or produced foods such as apples, potatoes, butternut squash, sliced bread and dinner rolls. During the Thanksgiving break, students were provided with multi-day meal boxes to take home. Efforts to increase local produce from applicable vendors have resulted in purchases from Confreda Farms, Gotham Greens, and Quonset Farms to supplement current local supplier Pezza Farms, along with foods produced by Calise, Shri, and ICM.

DeAngelis also shared with the committee plans to increase student engagement as stated in the health and wellness metrics. In January, elementary schools will participate in a Vote and Be

Heard event. In January, elementary and secondary schools will host Meet the Chef events and efforts to begin the Student Advisory Board will be underway with members of the Providence Student Union. Sodexo's annual Future Chef competition is tentatively scheduled for April. Newman-Greene asked about the significant increase in meals throughout the months and Conca explained it was a result of increasing services and the staggered return for students at the beginning of the school year.

Wetherill inquired about efforts to increase meal accessibility for Providence students, a challenge that is being seen in other districts across the state. She also asked about percentages served compared to last year. DeAngelis stated that she did not have those exact numbers ready, but will be able to provide them next time. She added that the numbers are skewed due to the daily fluctuations of students in school and learning virtually. Efforts will be made to provide the committee with these numbers and percentages to better prepare and identify gaps and areas of need within student populations in Providence.

Wetherill shared that efforts to increase communication about meals could mirror those of other districts, where school nurses would share out flyers and information. DeAngelis shared the newest flyers created in collaboration with PPSD's Communications Office. The flyer is in both English and Spanish and supplements efforts by the City of Providence to provide dinners.

Sou offered to share out the flyers with Donna O'Connor and her nurses and Benton-Johnson also will share out with her team of social workers. Sou asked if the meals could also be provided to students who are not Providence public school students and was told that these meals are currently operating under the summer meals program and all that was needed was a student ID number or school schedule.

## **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **7. Physical Health & Nutrition Subcommittee Update**

Co-chair Grossi updated the committee on recent progress. An upcoming PD from Recess Rocks in RI will be provided to all interested elementary schools on January 25. Central Office is still awaiting finalization from the Elementary Network but the PD will most likely be offered during the afternoon after the pre-scheduled lunch break.

Co-chair Newman Greene provided recent information on H&W metrics. The quarterly reports will now be given bi monthly to align with the future H&W meetings, with the August meeting containing an end of school year review along with summer meals progress.

### **8. Social Emotional Subcommittee Update**

Co-chair Benton-Johnson shared out a link to a presentation [here](#), given during the SE Health subcommittee meeting held on December 9<sup>th</sup>. This presentation provided additional guidance differentiating between social emotional health and social emotional learning, sharing out standardized tools such as BIMAS that is used by the district to screen students for social emotional and behavioral functioning. A secondary tool is now in use known as SECA, assessing social emotional learning skills and being piloted K-12 this school year. There was also a review of anchor standards aligning district goals to CASEL standards. Internal resources, including an intranet site for staff, was created for social emotional support, as well as a parent guide. A request by Chair Garcia was made to share out before meetings any presentations and

information. Sou stated that she would work on providing this information beforehand and also share out PDFs of all of tonight's presentations as soon as she could.

Wetherill stated that she would suggest any social workers interested in sharing out the next training offered by Dr. Marc Brackett wait until conversations with RIDE regarding this next PD concluded so that they could receive reimbursement for registering.

9. Healthy Relationships Subcommittee Update

Co-chairs Hoopis and Pare announced they will be formally reaching out to Donna O'Connor to include her in efforts to update the existing PPSD health curriculum. Pare said that while she has been given access to the health files and curriculum, the documents she has access to are similar to a syllabus and references several text books that she does not have. In order to properly review the curriculum, the subcommittee hopes to have a meeting to discuss with Donna O'Connor ways that they can support this work and the goal of the subcommittee.

Wetherill had previously provided an evaluation tool to support a needs assessment with this endeavor. Ongoing efforts to increase membership are also underway.

The Healthy Relationships Subcommittee will meet again on January 19, 2020.

Wellness Coordinator Sou asked if Cynar was able to provide an update on the city's budget, which included funding for a strategic plan following the school health needs assessment. Within this assessment, it was recommended that the health curriculum be reviewed and updated as needed. Cynar replied that the city has not yet finalized their budget but they are hoping to provide funds towards consultant services, developing a plan based on needs assessment, and a health curriculum review.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

10. Announcements

Hoopis inquired about PPSD's involvement with the Unite Us initiative and Benton-Johnson explained that conversations were in process with RPA regarding this platform to align with the district's systems and procedures. Hoopis also asked about the current referral system for safety plans being utilized by educators. Benton-Johnson explained that assessments and safety plans are currently being followed that follow state and district guidelines.

Dinklaga announced that the district received funding from the Governor for a partnership with Bradley Hospital to train guidance counselors and school psychologists to support the existing suicide prevention initiative. The Student Assistance Program has been expanded to 6 more schools to support students with suicide prevention and at-risk behavior.

Benton-Johnson shared that DayOne provides several trainings for youths and parents as well as free professional development sessions for school staff. An upcoming PD on gender identification will be provided to social workers and school psychologists.

Newman-Greene announced the Providence Schools Farm to School Action Plan has been finalized and the PDF was shared in the chat. This work focuses on school gardens, nutrition education, and local procurement. As highlighted in the presentation earlier, efforts to improve locally procured foods and food accessibility to students and families is a part of the Farm to School work.

Cynar shared that Providence families can call 3-1-1, the city's information and referral service to learn where meal sites being run by the city and school department are located.

Chair Garcia requested that all co-chairs invite her to their upcoming meetings and suggested a listserv to share information from the subcommittees, as well as a webpage to share out reports and documents internally and externally. She also shared that she will be seeking reappointment for her school board position.

**ADJOURN**

11. Adjourn Meeting

**A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 6:07 PM**

**MSV – DeAngelis, Hoopis (16-0) MOTION APPROVED**