



## MINUTES - DRAFT

### Providence School Board Health & Wellness Committee Meeting Physical Health & Nutrition Subcommittee

Pursuant to Executive Order 20-25 issued by the Governor of Rhode Island, the Providence School Board held this meeting remotely. A recording of the meeting is available upon request.

**December 9, 2020**

#### CONVENE MEETING

1. Co-Chair Grossi called the meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m.

In attendance:

Linda Grossi, PPSD HPE and co-chair

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

Solight Sou, PPSD Wellness Coordinator

Kelly DeAngelis, Sodexo Director of Sustainability and Engagement

Aaron Lenart, Sodexo Manager of Secondary Schools

Lynne Conca, Sodexo Manager of Elementary Schools

Paula Paolino, URI SNAP-Ed

#### APPROVE AGENDA

2. Approve Agenda  
**A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented**  
**MSV- DeAngelis, Paolino (7-0) MOTION APPROVED**

#### APPROVE MINUTES

3. Approval of minutes – 10/28/20 and 11/12/2019  
Item three was tabled for the next meeting.

#### SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

4. Welcome and introductions  
Co-Chairs Grossi welcomed all members and allowed them to introduce themselves.
5. Physical Health Updates  
Sou announced that PPSD will be providing a Professional Development during the upcoming statewide Professional Development Day on January 25. Through a partnership with Playworks, all elementary schools will be able to participate in a Recess Rocks in RI support training. Over the past 5 years, 13 elementary schools have joined up as participating schools to bring the power of play to their students with the support of their school based teams. This year, due to the pandemic, Playworks has modified their program to offer supports for remote learning. The schedule is being finalized through the Elementary Network and this PD will serve as an informational session to engage and re-engage all elementary schools and

their staff. Providence educators will also receive a free Keep Playing subscription with funds provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield. This subscription offers free ongoing online resources and support to supplement the Recess Rocks program.

Co-chair Grossi expressed interest in offering a PD for the secondary schools through BOKS and Sou stated she currently shares out their free resources but has not finalized a PD just yet.

#### 6. Nutrition Updates

Newman-Greene announced that the Farm to School Action Plan is available for viewing and the Farm to School team will be working to move forward with the Action Steps during these challenging times. Curriculum integration still remains a challenge. An additional piece of this work also includes H&W metrics that overlap Farm to School goals.

Other nutrition concerns were addressed with Paolino reviewing this work which began with discussions around breakfast concerns at elementary schools. Input from teachers and school nurses revealed that there was a lack of fruit and proteins leading to frequent nurse visits with repeated complaints about upset stomachs after eating breakfast. In February 2020, a meeting was held at Asa Messer with teacher Kerrilynn Viccione, URI SNAP-Ed, PPSD, and Sodexo. Improvements were made to decrease breakfast pastries, increase fresh fruits and protein. Paolino noted that while all the foods being offered at breakfast met state and Federal guidelines, there was no limit on sugar. However, there were noticeable differences between Pre-K and ES guidelines. Additional concerns around copycat foods, specifically breakfast cereals, were discussed. Paolino proposed that Sodexo follow the CACFP guidelines to address the sugar concerns.

#### 7. Nutrition Metrics/Report

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. In place of BelVita, Sodexo is providing whole fruit cereal bars. She highlighted a new local supplier, Jeff's Granola, which gives back 10% of proceeds to Sodexo's Backpack Program.

Co-Chair Newman-Greene thanked Sodexo and their staff for addressing the concerns during these challenging times. She asked about feedback from any educators regarding these specific changes and if there has been any noticeable impact on decreasing food waste.

DeAngelis replied that she and Ms. Viccione will be meeting and Sodexo is planning to develop a way to gather feedback from educators. Co-chair Grossi stated that she has noticed middle school students eating more and that many of them will comment on the healthy items available based on what she teaches in health class. She has been noticing a positive impact and that the only complaint she has received is that the breakfast confetti muffins are too sweet. This is with students now receiving pre-bagged breakfasts, eliminating breakfast choices as done in previous years.

Co-chair Newman-Greene inquired about the BelVita bars and why that specific brand was chosen. Sou responded that this decision was made during the meeting at Asa Messer. Paolino offered to further look into the nutritional contents and see if BelVita could be substituted for a similar product.

#### **PLANNING**

8. New Business

Co-chair Grossi asked the committee to consider changing the upcoming meeting schedule for the remainder of the year. Sou stated that it has been a bit difficult to provide meaningful updates at the larger committee meetings with the current schedule and proposed an email vote to decide on meeting at least one week in advance. She will follow up with the email to the current subcommittee members and allow all to continue meeting virtually if time constraints were an ongoing issue. DeAngelis responded that it would be helpful to her to have a gap between meetings to better prepare the H&W reports and discuss with the subcommittee which highlights and data she should the following week for the larger committee.

9. Announcements

There were no announcements.

#### **ADJOURN**

10. Adjourn Meeting

**A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m.**

**MSV- DeAngelis, Paolino (7-0) MOTION APPROVED**