



MINUTES

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.

April 14, 2021

CONVENE MEETING

1. Co-Chair Grossi called the meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

In attendance:

Linda Grossi, PPPSD/Co-Chair
Rachel Newman-Greene, Healthy Communities Office/Co-Chair
Solight Sou, PPSD
Kelly DeAngelis, Sodexo
Aaron Lenart, Sodexo
Tanya Gilbert, Healthy Communities Office
Karin Wetherill, RIHSC
Doug Victor, Community Gardener
Lynne Smith, PPSD

APPROVE AGENDA

2. Approve Agenda
**A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented
MSV- Wetherill, Gilbert (9-0) MOTION APPROVED**

APPROVE MINUTES

3. Approval of minutes – February 10, 2021
**A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented
MSV - Wetherill, Sou (9-0) MOTION APPROVED**

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

4. Welcome and introductions
Co-Chair Grossi welcomed attendees and introductions were made
5. Physical Health Updates
Wetherill provided an update on the Recess Rocks in RI program. Over 30 educators from PPSD attended a PD session from Playworks in January and received a free Keep Playing subscription that was funded by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island. Certificates from participating schools were sent out and activated subscriptions included Broad, Pleasant View, MLK, Webster, Carnevale. The subscription goes through the end of summer.

A final workshop in May titled Designing a Safe Return to Play to prepare schools to safely play for the upcoming school year. Also, a Playworks coach will participate in the Spring Parent Academy series through PPSD's Family and Community Engagement Office on May 12th. This will be an interactive, virtual session to support families with play and learning.

RIHSC has also partnered with American Diabetes Association through Project Power, providing youths ages 5-12 with kits to support physical activity with virtual sessions. An additional incentive to schools is also being offered if 75 students participate, a \$1,500 incentive will be awarded.

6. Nutrition Updates

Grossi provided updates on behalf of URI-SNAP Ed. With their support, Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program (FFVP) handouts are being distributed, providing recipes and tips on the fruits and vegetables being offered. There will also be a PD session for Health and PE educators on May 17th.

DeAngelis added that these handouts are being provided every week when a particular fruit or vegetable is being distributed at the 8 Grab and Go sites. This past week, papaya was included and the handouts included preparation and cooking tips as well as recipes. Fun Facts are distributed to youths every Tuesday as well to provide additional nutrition education content to youths along with their meals. In the past, FFVP was only available to elementary school students, but because of the pandemic, FFVP is now being offered throughout the district Pre-K through 12th grade at the Grab and Go sites as part of the weekly distribution.

Grossi remarked that the fruits and vegetables have been appealing and met with positive feedback from families, students and staff. Improvements around breakfast items have also been made at Gilbert Stuart and the students love the warm bagels and waffles.

Smith commented that the same improvements have not been made at her Nathanael Greene.

DeAngelis stated that improvements are ongoing and there will be more to come.

7. Nutrition Metrics/Report

There was no report this meeting. A report will be presented at the District Health & Wellness meeting on April 27, 2021.

DeAngelis provided an update on progress being made regarding communications for Grab and Go meals. She is currently collaborating with PPSD's Communication Department to regularly update the PPSD Cares webpage, an extension of the district page that focuses on wraparound services specifically for distance learners and their families.

A recent partnership with Gotham Greens allowed Sodexo to distribute basil and lettuce seedlings to families. Another collaboration with URI Master Gardeners is also resulting in seed distribution as well.

April break distribution will be on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 with an anticipated increase in families visiting distribution sites. There will also be a bike raffle and 8 bikes will be raffled off at the end of the day. Along with a week's worth of meals and snacks, fresh grapes will be distributed and transportation needs must be considered beforehand. The flyers will be shared out and

volunteers can sign up to help at one of the eight sites from 10:30 am to 4:30 pm. There will be no Friday distribution that week.

Grossi asked if schools were receiving all the flyers and also over KinVo. DeAngelis confirmed that she has been working with PPSD Communication Department to share out to all students and families, along with a press release.

Wetherill asked if the amount of food being given is a barrier to families who do not have transportation. DeAngelis relayed that conversations with the district have expressed the same concerns but that all notices will reference that a mode of transportation is recommended. Wetherill inquired if a change in schedule for school breaks to allow multi-day distribution was being considered and DeAngelis responded that those changes must first be approved by RIDE. With April being the last school break distribution, future conversations regarding this will be mentioned.

Grossi shared that local college students were available to volunteer and help with the food distributions at Gilbert Stuart.

DeAngelis added that Sodexo is always hiring and has new positions available, including Chef and Manager positions. Former Providence students or individuals in Providence are encouraged to apply.

PRESENTATIONS

8. Community Gardens

Doug Victor is a local community gardener overseeing the Peace and Plenty Garden in Providence in the Elmwood neighborhood. In 1971, Victor started a special needs program based on play, exploration and discovery which was successful. His academic field was Kinesthetic Learning during his time at Lesley University.

A Free Little Library with books on gardening and nature for all age levels and adults is in the community garden, providing educational materials to all who utilize the space. There are 46 plots in the current garden with over 30 individuals participating. Garden plots are prioritized to encourage local people and organizations and immigrants to partake, resulting in a variety of diversity of people and crops.

A pergola was constructed by DownCity Design known as the Oasis. The structure also houses a shed built by YouthBuild and through grant funding, tools are provided to support it and its members.

Victor allows many school groups to utilize the garden as outdoor learning spaces, including 2 local agencies who held classes about gardening and nature. The chain-link fence in place allows the garden to be locked and only members have the key, but artwork from the Wheeler School is being placed around to make it more appealing and welcoming.

An upcoming project will be a food corridor, which will house various fruits and vegetables. There is also a produce stand to make the produce accessible to all. Overage from other partners are also available along with the overage from Peace and Plenty.

Victor's vision is to bring life and vitality to this particular neighborhood by creating opportunities for people to connect with the garden in a variety of ways. He offered to give

people a tour of the garden and shared that Peace and Plenty will also partake in the June garden tours being conducted by the Providence Preservation Society.

Newman-Greene asked if any Providence Public Schools had relationships with the garden and how this opportunity is relayed to them. Victor responded that many educators hear about his space through word of mouth and that Bailey has used this garden as a walking field trip. When the students arrived, they were asked to quietly observe from outside the gate. Led by their senses, they were then allowed to explore the garden and harvest some vegetables to taste the produce if they wanted to. Students were also able to plant okra plants in the garden themselves.

Victor wished more educators knew that community gardens are throughout the city and that many are accessible to schools who may not have school gardens and that expanding this partnership to include Southside Community Land Trust be a great starting point.

Grossi shared that Gilbert Stuart has raised garden beds outside the school built by DownCity Design and would the gardeners be willing to come to the school to work with the educators. Victor responded that there are no paid employees and that this is all volunteer led but he would be happy to connect with Jane O'Connell at Gilbert Stuart.

Smith asked if it would be possible for students from one side of the city to collaborate with another school and expose them to different sides of the city to bridge the "neighborhood gap."

Action Item: Smith and Grossi will discuss this opportunity with their schools and students.

PLANNING

9. New Business

There was no new business.

10. Announcements

There were no further announcements.

ADJOURN

11. Adjourn Meeting

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:53 p.m.

MSV- DeAngelis, Wetherill (9-0) MOTION APPROVED