

RI Healthy Schools Coalition  
Annual Full Membership Meeting  
**March 14, 2011**

**Meeting Notes**

**Attendance: 21 RIHSC Members**

**Introductions**

Dorothy asked members to introduce themselves. She asked each member to speak about one significant action that they have been working on for improving nutrition, physical activity and physical education for children in RI.

Some of the highlights that were mentioned include:

- Power Up program is going strong beyond the Team Nutrition funding.
- RI produce is being served in 34 out of 36 school districts across the state.
- Shape Up RI is starting a program for children.
- Lifespan is holding their annual Parenting Workshop in Barrington next weekend.
- To celebrate National Nutrition Month, several schools are promoting whole grains.
- Davies Vo-Tech High School served smoothies for breakfast that used local produce.
- Wellness Committees are learning about and wanting to “weigh in” on the USDA Commodities Program selections for RI schools
- Fuel Up To Play Program is being implemented in 15 RI schools.
- RIAHPERD hosted a very successful conference in March. Members are experiencing a transformation within the field.
- The Healthier US School Challenge has been awarded to 10 RI schools – all in Pawtucket (Sodexo). RI has received the most awards in New England.
- There has been an increase in after school programming for physical activity in Narragansett.
- There will be a community heart walk in Narragansett involving the community and schools.
- ARAMARK is celebrating a Wellness Week in all its schools during March by serving foods made from scratch.
- The RI Whole Child Report is almost ready for distribution and will be officially launched on March 31.

**Proposed Steering Committee**

|  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Dorothy Brayley, Kids First                                      | Kathi Masi, RI F&CS, S. Kingstown HS |
| Thomas Hoagland, ARAMARK   | Michelle Sagristano, Chartwells      |
| Marianne Stepanian and Marsha Weiss (position-sharing), Lifespan |                                      |
| Jane Vergnani, New Eng. Dairy & Food Council                     | Deb Ranaldi, RIAHPERD, Narragansett  |
| Cindy McDermott, YMCA  | Angela Ankoma, RI DOH, IHW           |
| Megan Tucker, Amer. Heart Assoc.                                 | Solange Morrissette, Sodexo          |
| Linda Sweet, BLOOM-RI, Inc.                                      | Becky Bessette, RIDE                 |
| Kate Balestracci, URI SNAP-Ed                                    |                                      |

Dorothy asked if there were other volunteers at the meeting who would like to serve on the 2011 Steering Committee in addition to those on the list above who submitted their names prior to this meeting. Wendy Fachon, a parent and health professional in East Greenwich and Kristen Coutoulakis of RIAHPERD and East Providence Schools, previously serving on the steering Committee for the past 5 years, both asked to join the 2011 Committee. Their names were added to the above list.

The attendees voted in the new slate of 17 Steering Committee Members.

## **Discussion of Major Activities and Plan for 2011 & 2012**

### **1. 2010 RI HSC Breakfast and Planning for 2011**

Karin reported about the 2010 Breakfast. She mentioned that each district reported out at the breakfast about “what they were proud of” over the previous year. The planning and execution of that activity was very powerful in terms of re-engaging and solidifying district engagement in wellness issues for the 2010-2011 school year. Central Falls School District received the annual RIHSC award and Superintendent Gallo’s acceptance speech was widely requested after the event. Karin will send out the dates under consideration for this year’s breakfast to RISSA, RIASP, RI Association of School Committees, RIDE and DOH to check on potential conflicts before settling on a date in September. Karin asked for volunteers for this year’s Breakfast Planning Committee.

### **2. Legislative Update**

Dorothy reported out on the update for Megan Tucker of the American Heart Association. There are two bills that have been introduced into the legislature. One bill (H5334) focuses on the nutrition labeling of foods served in the cafeteria. The second bill (H5189) deals with allowing advertising on school buses.

The group discussed the Nutrition Labeling in schools. Concerns voiced included:

- Logistical challenges for having the nutrition information posted on all items daily
- Concern that students won’t even read the information
- What would be the benefit, given that school meals already must meet nutrition criteria
- Would the calorie counts be detrimental to students who are predisposed to eating disorders?
- Evidence of the effect of nutrition labeling for adults is not available yet – should we wait before requiring schools to provide this information to children?

The group briefly discussed Bus Advertising and there was understanding that schools are in need of funds. However, how would districts decide what to advertise? Would the advertising be inside the bus as well as outside the bus? Does advertising on the bus imply that schools endorse the products advertised?

The RI Department of Health has not taken a stand on these bills. Randi Belhumeur from the DOH is looking for feedback from members about these bills. She can be reached at 222-7462.

Another bill that has just been introduced into the legislature would tax sugary beverages. This Bill was not discussed, just the mention that it had been introduced.

### **3. Wellness Committee Updates**

Karin and Carole gave updates on the Wellness Committees. Carole cited the following from Kids First’s most recent report to the RI Department of Health:

***District Health and Wellness Committee Activity Summary Table: 2010-2011 School Year***

| <b>Health &amp; Wellness Committee Status/Activity Level</b> | <b>Number of Districts (N=36)</b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Active Engaged Committees, High Activity Level               | <b>21</b>                         |
| Active, Engaged Committees, Low Activity Level               | <b>3</b>                          |
| Committees Re-established, Re-gaining Momentum               | <b>4</b>                          |
| Inactive Committees, High Wellness Activity Level            | <b>3</b>                          |
| Inactive Committees, Low Wellness Activity level             | <b>5</b>                          |

All agreed that this was overall an excellent level of activity for District Health & Wellness Committees, given the constant “fluidity” of people and priorities in each school district. This is surely indicative of ongoing success of the Wellness Committee structure.

Currently a hot topic is that some districts are reworking/updating their wellness policies of 5-6 years ago. There are a few districts who are working on stronger and more specific language for their policies to deal with issues like classroom rewards, fundraisers, foods brought in for celebrations, withholding recess as a punishment, and more. There was discussion about updating the RIHSC Model Policy so the language reflects the 2010 Dietary Guidelines, RINR, the continuously improving wellness culture in our schools and continued growth of support for more nutritious and physically active school environments, etc. The possibility of including a “best practices” piece as an addendum was discussed.

The group discussed the importance of the role of District Wellness Committees in ensuring the implementation of PE Curriculum to be in compliance with the PE Law. Denise Johnson (PE Teacher) in Barrington has made recommendations within her Wellness Committee for the implementation of PE in her district. Helping PE teachers become more engaged with their Wellness Committees could be a strategic direction for the RIHSC.

Other topics that are being discussed at Wellness Committee meetings include bullying, teen pregnancy, and dating violence – so the structure put in place in 2005 is serving other health-related purposes too.

**4. Nutrition**

**Review and Comment on RINR Proposed Revisions *Mary Elena DeLuca for Becky Besette***

Mary Elena DeLuca read the proposed RINR revisions received from Becky Besette and much discussion followed. Mary Elena prepared a summary of the discussion for Becky Besette as follows:

“There was resistance to changing the Whole Grain section of RINR. Tom Hoagland, ARAMARK, Solange Morrissette, Sodexo, and Fran DeRiuter, Sodexo, all felt that the 70/30 was working fine and both Homestead and Calise were producing products that were adhering to the 70/30 blend. I was not sure if you were in contact with the bakers and how it was determined that the products they are baking are 70/30. They also felt that going to 100% now would be too costly and not readily accepted. Michelle Sagristano, dietitian from Chartwells, had no comments concerning this. Tom suggested that they would be ready in 2 years to go to 100% whole grain continuing with 80/20 in the 11/12 school year and 100% in the 12/13 school year. Solange and Fran seemed to agree with this. There was also a discussion on how to determine the 100% and the 51% as concerned with menu planning. Dorothy commented that it maybe should not be by volume but by the number of times a grain product was on the menu for the week. Solange complained that it was difficult to be counting the grain products each week.

They also felt initially that having 3 different types of 100% whole grains per week would be difficult because many of the different grains that they could serve were costly. During the discussion others stressed the importance of offering grains other than wheat. Solange suggested that the wording would be acceptable if combining breakfast and lunch were added to the sentence. The others seemed to agree.

All were agreeable to the changes in the Competitive Foods for Elementary Schools. The only suggestion was to add smoothies to the list of kitchen prepared items.

The Sodium section for the last paragraph needs to be revised to say 2010. It is still saying 2005 DGAs and does not state that 1500 mg are recommended for half of the population.”

### **USDA Commodities Updates**

There will be a few new Commodity items available to RI school food service for the next school year (the order was placed.) Some of the new foods that will be available are pork roast, cooked 8 piece unbreaded roast chicken, and breaded and unbreaded Pollock.

A Commodities 101 workshop was prepared and presented by Solange Morrissette, Tom Hoagland and Andrew Viveiros in January and several districts sent Wellness Committee representatives to attend and learn more about the RI Commodities voting process and about what items could possibly be ordered. Newport school district's Nutrition Advisory Group went so far this year as to make decisions for which Commodities its school district was willing to take and which items its district did not want. This is seen as the first time that non-food service representatives have gotten involved in influencing Commodity selections for their children and is controversial amongst Food Service Directors and others, given the complexities of the Commodities system.

### **Farm to School**

Between 24-26 food products from RI farms are now being used in school meals. One new local product that is being used for school meals is honey. School districts continue to increase their local purchases and improve the variety of RI foods offered. There is concern that when other institutions like hospitals and universities begin to purchase more RI grown foods that RI grown will no longer be available for schools. Vinny Confreda (Confreda Farms) has stated that Whole Foods will take everything he grows! We do

need to keep an eye on perhaps purchasing foods from neighboring states too – more of a Regional approach.

### **National Food Day**

The RI National Food Day committee is underway and is getting organized around the celebration that will take place October 24, 2011.

### **5. Physical Education**

RIAPERD has available resources for developing standards-based curriculum for PE.

Deb Ranaldi will be going to Washington DC on “RIAPERD Speak Out Day” during the week of March 21. She will be meeting with RI legislators to speak to them about Physical Education and physical activity.

PE Curriculum has been developed with the help of consultant Linda Newman in Barrington and recently Linda Newman was hired by East Providence. This is a good sign when resources are being expended to be compliant with the PE Law!

All discussed how some districts are clearly not in compliance with the 100 minutes mandate. *Also discussed under this topic was the lack of Nutrition Education in our schools. Not sure how to go about changing this... but this should be discussed further by the Steering Committee.*

**Possible Solution: Develop a one-pager on PE and the current requirements in RI. (similar to what was done with RINR)** RIAAPERD and Wellness Committee facilitators agreed to do this as a means of communicating what should be happening in the school districts regarding PE. This one-pager can also set the stage and messaging for the 2012 5K.

Also discussed was the “Educator Evaluation System” currently in development and how ensuring that PE is part of that system and administrators are held accountable to implement the PE Law and required minutes – *need more information on this. (Betty Britto is a good resource for the Steering Committee to tap into to help us understand this.)*

### **2012 5K Planning**

The 5K race will be held in City Park in Warwick on May 19, 2012. There will be a 5K, 1K and a 500 yard dash. One of the goals of the event is to get PE teachers across the state to work on preparing their students at school and bring their students to the race. There will a planning meeting on March 22, 2011 at the Oakhill Tavern if anyone is interesting in joining the committee. Sponsors are being sought – Linkage, Cox, Amica. Road Runners and the Narragansett Running club have volunteered to help at the event. More volunteers are being sought.

Dorothy reminded everyone that the purpose of this 5K is to create the opportunity for significant Statewide Media Messaging/Communications and discussion about the importance of quality Physical Education in all RI schools.

***Meeting was adjourned at 5:15PM.***