



NEWPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**NEWPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
WELLNESS SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Minutes from February 25, 2009**

**I. Opening**

Ms. Bolan called the meeting to order.

*Members Present:*

Dr. John H. Ambrogi, Superintendent  
Mr. Arthur Bell Jr., Supervisor of PE & Health  
Ms. Rebecca Bolan, Subcommittee Chair; Sch Committee  
Ms. Amy Chandler, BCBSRI  
Ms. Kerry Clougher, Underwood Parent; Chef  
Ms. Susan Cooper, Newport City  
Ms. Caroline Cranson, Cranston-Calvert Parent  
Ms. Amy Donnelly Roche, Director of Student Services  
Dr. Sandra Flowers, Sch Committee  
Ms. JoEva Gaines, Sch Committee  
Ms. Denise Kelly, School Nurse Teacher  
Ms. Johanna Kilroy, Thompson Human Services Mall  
Ms. Carolyn May-Martin, School Nurse Teacher  
Ms. Renee Mason, Student Representative  
Ms. Terry Mason, Thompson Parent  
Mr. Jan Mermin, Carey Parent  
Ms. Haley Murphy, Student Representative  
Mr. Peter Millanazzo, YMCA  
Ms. Solange Morrisette, Sodexo  
Ms. Lisa O'Donnell, Coggeshall Parent  
Ms. Margot Pires, EBCAP  
Ms. Jennifer Quigley-Harris, Underwood Parent  
Mr. Richard Ratcliff, Sullivan Parent  
Ms. Coleen Raposa, School Nurse Teacher  
Ms. Carole Toselli, Kids First RI  
Ms. Judith Webb, Community Member

*Members Absent:*

Ms. Mardie Corcoran, Rogers Parent  
Ms. Med Edward, Parent  
Ms. Lori Fedyzen, Family Service Coordinator  
Ms. Donna Johnson, Parent  
Ms. Sarah Mermin, Carey Parent  
Ms. Melissa Pattavina, Underwood Parent  
Ms. Pauline Perkins-Moye, Newport Housing Authority  
Ms. Judi Smith, Newport Hospital

*Non-members Present:*

Ms. Glenna Johnson, Speech Language Pathologist  
Ms. Kerry Kunze, Sodexo  
Ms. Nancy Wilcox, Nursing Student  
Mr. Ryan Zilly, EBCAP

**II. Introductions & Updates**

Ms. Bolan, our new chairperson, convened the meeting by clarifying the charge of this sub-committee of the School Committee. She read from the state regulations and noted that her vision of this committee is that we serve as a dynamic, vibrant group that supports students' readiness to learn in the broadest sense.

The group meets formally on a quarterly basis and makes recommendations to our School Committee. Ms. Bolan noted that she aims to establish several work-groups that may meet more frequently between our formal sub-committee meetings.



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Ms. Bolan shared her idea of instituting a district Health & Wellness newsletter. She then asked each person present to introduce themselves, and share why they are participating on this sub-committee.

### **III. Old Business**

#### ***A. Consideration of Minutes from our Last Meeting***

The committee reviewed the draft minutes.

Two edits were made, and then the minutes were approved.

#### ***B. Update on Carol M. White Physical Activity Grant***

Mr. Zilly provided the group with an update regarding the Sullivan Family Center's Carol M. White Physical Activity grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Cooking demonstrations have recently occurred for parents, with collaboration from Kids First, Rhode Island.

This is the first year of this grant. The Sullivan Family Center hopes to apply for up to two additional years of funding, for activities focused on nutrition and fitness.

#### ***C. Update from Recreation Department***

Ms. Cooper referenced a previous subcommittee conversation regarding the City's pending grant applications. She was please to note that the City have received several letters of support and will be going ahead in responding to request(s) for grant proposals.

#### ***D. Update on Muni Blue- see addendum***

Ms. Chandler shared a list of recent BCBSRI sponsored wellness stop=bys. She noted that the event at Carey School today had a great turnout. This event focused on portion control. The other stop-by at Rogers today had a lower turnout, which may have been due to the assemblies and academic activities that kept staff members busy.

Additional stop-bys have been scheduled at each Newport school, as explained on her handout, which is attached here.

Ms. Chandler also noted that BCBSRI continues to offer screenings to all staff, as well as classes such as yoga and Pilates. Interested parties can schedule these activities through Ms. Chandler directly as well as Ms. Constance Donnelly. It was noted that a stress reduction workshop might be needed for School Committee members.

#### ***E. Update from Sodexo –see addendum***

Ms. Morrisette distributed a draft newsletter as well as her usual Sodexo wellness update (attached.)



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She noted that officers of the Newport Police Department got a great response from students when they served lunch at each of our elementary schools.

A discussion occurred regarding a federal grant that Coggeshall received won and Sullivan has already had. It turns out, after a delayed release of the funds, more funds than anticipated are now available and reportedly must be spent this fiscal year. Ms. Morrisette expects that there will be approximately \$75 per Coggeshall student to spend on expanding students' palates. This grant enables these two schools to offer expensive fruits (such as packaged pineapple, kiwis, & fresh grapes) and other high-end fruits that the USDA commodity-funded standard lunch programs do not.

The funds are not available to use for USDA lunch itself, nor are they able to supplement Newport's backpack programs for weekend meals. The funds are targeted for use only during the school day. Sodexo will be requesting to either carryover these funds into the next year, or share the funds among all Newport elementary schools.

Ms. Toselli congratulated Ms. Morrisette on taking the initiative to complete the applications for these two elementary schools. She noted that Coggeshall and Sullivan are our only two elementary schools that currently meet the eligibility criteria of having at least half the students eligible for reduced lunch status.

It was noted that the funds might be allowably used on nutrition related instructional materials. Should that option be an allowable use of the grant funds, Dr. Ambrogi told Ms. Morrisette to seek direction on what materials would fit best with out curricula from Dr. Jacqueline Naspo, Executive Director of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development.

Ms. Morrisette raised the suggestion she had received prior to the meeting from Ms. Jennifer Quigley-Harris regarding the establishment of Table Hosts for all schools. These adult volunteers would be able to sit with students to develop enthusiasm for fresh and healthier dining options. No decision was made at this time.

The flyer regarding Sodexo's healthy cooking training for parents was disseminated. Ms. Webb asked how this flyer was shared and marketed. Ms. Morrisette responded by noting the flyer was sent home to all parents in the designated school one- two weeks ahead of each event.

The USDA is now providing both wheat pancakes and wheat wraps through their program. Our two new student members, Haley and Renee, noted that really only eat the wheat pizza and the chicken patties when they dine at TMS. Ms. Morrisette thanked them for their input and asked if they would seek feedback from their peers who purchase lunch more often re. how the new and healthier food options taste

Ms. Clougher asked Ms. Morrisette to explain the offering of "Fun On The Run." In response, Ms. Morrisette noted that this bag lunch choice includes a warm wheat pretzel, yogurt, and a choice of two regular sides. It was noted that this does meet the federal nutritional guidelines for a healthy full-serve lunch.



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Ms. O'Donnell noted that the warm pretzel choice was popular with one student he knows at Coggeshall.

The subcommittee reviewed photos from a recent display cooking line. Ms. Morrisette asked our 8<sup>th</sup> graders if they have gone through line. Both Renee and Haley said no, but noted they have heard that their classmates like it. Ms Morrisette shared that over 100 students went through the last display line.

The free "Be Fit Guide" from Dr. Quaglia and the Quaglia Institute is now available to all districts, and supported by Sodexo. So far, Newport is only district in the state taking advantage of this guide and will be signing up three-four employees for training to be held on March 9, 2009. Guides are available now for grades K-2, and will be coming soon for grades 3-5.

## **IV. New Business**

### **A. Recess Before Lunch—see addendum**

Ms Bolan reintroduced the topic of *Recess Before Lunch*, which had come up at the last subcommittee meeting. Ms. Donnelly Roche shared a packet of information she had researched and gave a brief overview of the pros and cons she found in the literature on this topic. She thanked Kids First and the RI Department of Health for helping her locate resources on *Recess Before Lunch*.

Dr Ambrogi shared his thoughts and experiences with having children play at recess before they eat. He has scheduled that way in the past, as needed. He noted that one school in Woonsocket had implemented *Recess Before Lunch* and cancelled it the next year. Aquidneck School simply flipflops their schedule so that some children eat first and some eat after. Ms. Martin shared that Sullivan flipflops the schedule at times.

After some discussion, the consensus was reached that scheduling this way might be beneficial to some students, and not for others.

Ms. Bolan suggested that one school try this change, and Dr. Ambrogi noted that he would talk with his principals about trying this option at one school when the weather warms.

### **B. Alliance for a Livable Newport's Food Connection Flyer—see addendum**

Ms. Webb shared a flyer developed by the Alliance for a Livable Newport. She reported that local soup kitchen clientele is changing in town. No longer is it just single adult, but entire families who are accessing the meals provided by soup kitchens.

She is a member of the Alliance for a Livable Newport which funded a brochure entitled The Food Connection. Ms. Webb shared the flyer; which lists all the local available resources for food, by location and time. Agencies throughout the city including the library and the schools will have these available.



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Ms. Donnelly Roche asked for additional copies so that she could disseminate them to the school social workers, school nurses, and family service coordinators.

***C. Concern about Free and Reduced Lunch Applications***

Ms. Webb raised a concern about the type of outreach that the schools do to encourage and support families to access free and reduced meal applications.

Dr. Ambrogi explained that our principals are expected to do significant personal outreach, as the funds which support our individual students' nutrition, also offset district costs and support the school department as a whole.

***D. Work Groups***

Ms. Bolan asked that interested parties take a moment to sign up for one of three work groups, as explained earlier: Public Relations; Physical Activity; and Nutrition. Her goal is to have each workgroup convene at least once prior to the next subcommittee meeting.

***E. Distributing Meeting Minutes More Widely***

Ms. Toselli noted that Kids First remains available for posting the subcommittee's approved minutes on the internet. Minutes are currently posted routinely at the open meetings website provided by the state.

Ms. Toselli encouraged the group to share their work more broadly, as this subcommittee has done a lot of work of which to be proud.

It was motioned and seconded that the subcommittee will post minutes at the Kids First website as well as the open meeting website, once they are approved.

**V. Future Meetings**

The next Wellness subcommittee meeting will be on April 22, 2009 in the Underwood School cafeteria. The meeting will start at 4:00 PM.

**VI. Adjournment**

Ms. Bolan concluded the meeting. Before the group disbanded, Mrs. Gaines recalled how hard it had originally been for Dr. Ambrogi and her to establish this subcommittee just a few years ago. She noted all the expertise and enthusiasm on this committee, and thanked everyone for their contributions.

Sign up sheets for work groups were available as the meeting adjourned.