

Suffield Board of Education
Policy Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 18, 2018 at 7:30 am
Middle School Annex

Attendees: Debra Dudack, Board of Education; Karen Berasi, Superintendent; Brian Hendrickson, Assistant Superintendent; Natalie Donais, Director of Special Services; Eric Senger, SHS PE/Health teacher; Julie Haefner, SHS Family Consumer Science teacher; Heather Casinghino, SMS PE/Health teacher; Judith Stafford, SHS School Nurse; Dr. Roxanne Pangallo, AWS Principal; Ben Gashi, Food Services Director; Pam Hardy, parent; Sarena Sharp, parent; and John Dion, SHS student.

I. Call to Order: 7:35 am

II. Policies for Review and Discussion:

Policy 6142.101 - Wellness Policy: The Wellness Committee met to review draft language for the updated Wellness Policy and discussed making additions, corrections and deletions to the proposed language. Suggested language changes to the policy included adding references to encourage offering organic foods and fresh fruits and vegetables. Our Food Services Director is currently researching options for utilizing Fresh Point to bring in fresh produce. He plans to report back to the committee on what he finds out. The Committee also discussed potential action plan items to move forward with once the revised policy is adopted by the Board. Such items discussed for consideration included replacing ice cream with healthier snacks in vending machines, adding after school exercise classes for staff, opening and encouraging staff members to utilize district fitness room after school, implementing student gardening options, and offering a Wellness Week focusing on preventive health and wellness options. Members discussed the marketing component of the policy in greater detail. Members also discussed the need to add a list of healthy snack options to the Policy Appendix and whether developing a list of transition or activity breaks would be helpful to teachers. The Committee also discussed whether the revised Policy should allow homemade goods brought into the schools for distribution in classrooms. After a discussion of the pros and cons, members expressed support for no longer allowing homemade goods to be brought in as treats for classroom celebrations. After discussion, members also expressed support for implementing food-free birthday celebrations. They suggested a short explanation about why those changes are being made should be communicated to parents so they can better understand the changes. Reasons for both of the above mentioned changes include a desire to embrace a culture of healthy eating and wellness in order to reduce childhood obesity, ensure not all celebrations are associated with food, and to be mindful of allergy concerns. Members also discussed additional options that could be added for food-free rewards, such as homework passes, fun videos, and lunch with a teacher or principal. Members also discussed what impact this policy should have on PTO/PTAC fundraisers, which included a desire to express support for reducing food sales as fundraisers, but not eliminating them entirely. Members expressed support for implementing a system where such sales would need approval from school leaders. Another option would be to allow a couple of food fundraisers each year at each school, tracked by the building principal or designee.

Next steps for the Wellness Committee entail organizing short surveys for middle and high school students, teachers and parents. The Policy Subcommittee will also meet again to review draft language and incorporate thoughts from those surveys. From there, the revised policy language will be presented to the full Board of Education for consideration over the summer.

III. Adjournment

The subcommittee meeting adjourned at 9:00 am.