

**Suffield Board of Education**  
**Policy Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**  
**February 23, 2018 at 7:30am**  
**Suffield Middle School Annex**

**Attendees:**

**Board members:** Maureen Sattan, Susan Mercik Davis, and Debra Dudack

**District staff:** Karen Berasi, Superintendent; Brian Hendrickson, Assistant Superintendent; Eric Senger, SHS PE/Health teacher; Julie Haefner, SHS Family Consumer Science teacher; Heather Casinghino, SMS PE/Health teacher; Anne Kelly, SMS Family Consumer Science teacher; Roxanne Pangallo, AWS Principal; and Ben Gashi, Food Service Director

**Community Members:** Pam Hardy, parent; Sarena Sharp, parent; John Dion, SHS student

**I. Call to Order:** 7:33 am

**II. Policies for Review and Discussion:** Policy 6142.101 Wellness Policy

The subcommittee meeting began with introductions from participants and then focused on a brief overview of state-mandated changes to our current Wellness Policy. Those changes include determining evidence-based goals for the policy, deciding how to assess progress towards meeting goals, reporting progress to the public, deciding standards for food and beverages provided during the school day, and marketing.

The committee then discussed the food and beverage and physical education/activity components of the policy.

Food and Beverages:

Food Service follows the Healthy Foods Program and is also compliant with USDA and state guidelines. They currently take steps to limit sodium and sugar in foods and utilize whole wheat flour and whole grains. There are calorie requirements set on meals. They serve low to no sugar drinks. Top sellers are pizza, chicken nuggets, tater tots and nachos.

Discussion centered on whether we can look into a farm to table program, whether to place restrictions on snacks and fundraisers, whether to place restrictions on food allowed for birthday and other celebrations, whether to restrict homemade goods, how Family Consumer Science classes would not expect to be impacted by such changes since food they make is typically exempt, whether to incorporate a meatless day, whether to withhold dessert sales once a week, and the potential financial impact of making such changes.

Discussion also focused on some policies in place in other districts, such as South Windsor, East Granby, Granby, Simsbury, Fairfield and Boulder, Colorado which has a highly-regarded farm to table program. It was noted that some policies are brief while others are much more expansive.

Committee members talked about setting a vision for the policy prior to establishing goals, determining whether it should be a bold, broad vision of community wellness or one embracing smaller steps. It was also noted that consistent messaging is important for the cafeteria, classrooms, and other activities as well as education about how nutrition impacts health and learning.

Dr. Pangallo described some steps taken at her previous school where they moved towards having birthday children donate a book to their classroom that is read that day or having healthier birthday snacks such as decorated cheese sticks. Twice a year they allowed something special beyond the guidelines for classroom celebrations.

#### Physical Activity:

Discussion regarding physical activity started with an overview of current practices at the high school, middle school and elementary levels.

At the high school, students are currently required to take one credit of PE over the four year period, which involves 40 minutes a day for the entire year. They are also required to take a half-credit of health. These requirements meet state standards, however it was noted that we used to exceed state standards. Students do not earn credits for participation in sports. It was noted that PE is important because it teaches lifelong learning skills. It is no longer just about sports, but also teaches teamwork, personal fitness and yoga.

The middle school PE curriculum has been impacted by the current schedule. Students have PE two weeks in a row and then shift to health for two weeks in a row, so they get no physical activity for two out of every four weeks. It was noted that students have expressed concerns about the current scheduling of PE as they want to be active. In the past, the middle school had PE year-round with health being a separate course.

The elementary schools offer PE once a week for 40 minutes. They have one recess every day with students going outside a second time on some days. Classrooms also offer movement breaks during the day. In addition, McAlister offers the Funky Foot program at the start of the day. It was noted that they want kids to be physically active as movement helps with learning, but there is room for improvement.

The committee also discussed challenges to implementing changes, such as finding the time for added physical activity and hiring the necessary personnel. It was noted that gradual changes may be better as it would be tough to make them all at once, as it may be best to prioritize the main things we want to accomplish and add more later. Additional cost-neutral options to incorporate more physical education activity were discussed such as adding more movement breaks into the day to help ease anxiety and enhance student learning.

Committee members were encouraged to do research in their specific areas of expertise, as well as research policies in other districts, and be prepared to work together to make recommendations for policy goals at our next session, which is planned for Wednesday, March 21 at 7:30 am in the Suffield Middle School Annex.

### **III. Adjournment**

The subcommittee meeting adjourned at 8:41 am.