

Wellness Committee – Meeting Minutes October 25, 2016

Meeting attendees:

Will Verbits (chair)

Kathy Horan

Lori Desjardin

Sue Robichaud

Nancy Anderson

News from the Kitchen

Clark Farm wants Sue to buy from them. However, the Clark Farm prices are very high. For example, a box of lettuce costs \$112 and lasts for three days. Jim O'Shea would like Sue to make a special organic lunch that will be offered next Friday. It will consist of vegetables and curry; additionally a sweet and sour option will be offered. It will be served over rice. Future offerings include an organic salad bar in June. Sue noted that little kids do not eat salad or curry. Different foods have to be offered for little kids and older kids.

Sue is offering a teacher's lunch on Fridays. It was suggested that she ask the staff what they would buy. Many staff members bought salad when it was offered.

Will wondered if there was a way to spin these lunch offerings to educate students about organic food. For example, what does it mean to be organic? Maybe there could be posters put up and/or presentations about the health benefits of organic food.

Right now our students take field trips to Clark Farm. We also compost. Mr. Andrews comes once a week to pick up the compost.

It's busy in the dining room. Sales are down but that goes along with enrollment being down. The best day for sales is chicken nugget day.

Allergy Discussion

We are allergy aware through 4th grade. However, middle school often offers food in classrooms. Student council says that bake sales are some of their biggest fundraisers, but in order to stay allergy-aware, they should come up with other ways to raise money. Will is going to speak with Student Council and Carrie Wilson about this issue, with the goal of having an allergy aware PK-8 school.

News from the Health Office

The nurses have been busy since the first day of school. They are conducting vision and hearing screenings now. Kathy wrote a grant for a new vision machine through the PTO.

A lot of time was put into opioid training and education. The talks were well attended.

It is important to support the social and emotional needs of students. At least 50% of visits to the nurse are anxiety-based. Kids here are stressed out. Concord-Carlisle High School has noticed that the Carlisle kids have higher anxiety. This might be due in part to coming from a smaller place to a larger place, and the fact that many Carlisle students have never transitioned to another school before. A positive thing that the CCHS staff pointed out to Will was that Carlisle kids are very well prepared academically for the high school. However, academics also cause stress in our students.

What action steps are we taking to deal with stressed out kids? Parents put a lot of pressure on kids. If we coddle the parents, are we making the problem worse?

The nurses noted an example of a student who came into their office with a temperature of 103. The student was asked if he/she was feeling sick that morning. The student said he/she was, but came to school because there was a math test that couldn't be missed. The nurses said they hear similar stories on MCAS days too. There is a lot of pressure on these young students, and some is self-directed.

Kathy noted that 24 years ago when she started working here, many moms stayed home with their kids. Now it's the opposite. Schools are dealing with school attendance, mental health and anxiety/panic disorders. What action steps can be taken about this? Should we gather information about these issues and pass it along to staff? Should we ask speakers to present at school? Should there be presentations for staff and parents? A couple of years ago we had Sarah Ward present. Maybe we could dedicate one early release day to mental health. We might do a similar format to the Opioid talk, where there was training for staff during the day, and a parent session at night.

One part of Goal #1 of the Carlisle Public Schools' District Goals for 2016-2017 is to "... identify and implement a more formal social-emotional curriculum." The Wellness Committee would like to help with this. The committee would like to invite Jim O'Shea, Carrie Wilson, and at least one school psychologist to our next meeting to discuss ways we can help.

We are asking everyone to bring at least one article related to stress or anxiety in children to our next meeting, which will be on Tuesday, January 31, 2017 at 3:15 in Will Verbits' office.