

Woonsocket Health and Wellness Subcommittee Meeting
March 28, 2016 @ 4:00 p.m., Rm 124
Woonsocket Middle School – Hamlet Building

Present: D. Burke, S. Pawlina, E. Shalvey, M. Thompson, D. Engels, S. Moroczka, A. Holt, D. Martin, G. Lambert, P. McGee, K. Wetherill, N. Rotatori

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 P.M. by D. Burke

Motion to approve minutes of February 22, 2016 meeting: S. Pawlina
2nd: D. Engels (unanimously approved)

D. Burke and S. Pawlina will meet with the core committee during April vacation to write the policy. These discussions are useful because they bring attention to other issues that could be included in the health and wellness policy. Nutrition and physical activity are the focus of the policy but there is room for other items related to promoting good health and wellbeing.

Update from 2/3/16 RI Wellness Collaborate Workshop and WED's WellSAT policy assessment

The scoring of the existing policy was poor because the policy is old and does not reflect current legislation and best practices. The monitoring is a new requirement and specifics of nutrition need to be identified.

Subcommittee discussion regarding topics and initiatives that the Woonsocket Wellness Subcommittee would like to work on and include in WED's finished Wellness Policy.

Many districts in the state are also discussing other health issues such as mental health, substance abuse, and bullying, though not required to be a part of a wellness policy. A section may be inserted into the policy to include these or other wellness issues.

K. Wetherill listed the key categories and provisions to address or include in the policy:

- nutrition education
- standards for child nutrition programs in school meals
- nutrition standards for competitive and other foods and beverages
- physical education and physical activity
- wellness promotion and marketing
- implementation
- evaluation
- communication

There are two bills pending in RI legislation concerning competitive food and advertising which could prevent marketing of unhealthy items in schools. Details about these bills can be found on this link: <https://yourethecure.org/aha/advocacy/details.aspx?BlogId=2&PostId=4775>

Some staff may not be aware of certain food restrictions. This information must be circulated to parents and staff continually. Language can be drafted to include local vendors that could provide healthy options, such as the [shribark snacks](#), a nutritious snack bar that meets all USDA and state school standards and is manufactured in RI. More info on that here:

USDA has come out with standards for competitive foods. Competitive foods are anything that is not part of a reimbursable meal. Besides vending machines and fundraisers, this includes any foods that are sold during the school day (which is defined as midnight before and one hour after the end of a school day).

The second major component of the wellness policy is physical activity. The average recess is 10 minutes once per day. Organized play time is helpful. Coordinating recess with lunch is a good model used by some principals, if not all. Recess tends to be more organized when there is a structured playtime.

Language can also be included into the policy that will encourage physical activity outside of school time. RI Kids Count mines data for the state and they did a research brief promoting an increase in physical activity during, before and after school.

School gardens are gaining in popularity. Nina Rotatori, master gardener, was an invited guest, and is here to share some of her familiarity with successful gardening. In Nina's experience, kids tend to get excited about being outside and eating what they grow. Even with space limitations there are other ways to grow things; container gardening is easy and popular. Gardening is a wonderful learning process for kids, and promotes being outdoors. She offered to share her gardening expertise with the Woonsocket District at any time, on any level.

D. Martin said there are a lot of organizations in Woonsocket that are working on similar issues. It would be great if these organizations could work together to accomplish certain things. Formulating one plan could be beneficial to the community and the kids.

Availability of free drinking water is a major issue on policies. All cafeterias must have water available. Water bottles are encouraged in the district.

Increasing physical activity before and after school should be looked at as a way to promote physical activity outside of school hours.

Mental health issues are an ongoing concern in the community.

The next meeting will be held on April 25th at 4:00 p.m. in Room 124 at the WMS Hamlet Building.

The meeting adjourned 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Houle