

2010-2011 Wellness Committee Annual Report

Committee Members:

Robert Angeli, Chairperson
Scott Hozebin, Board of Education Representative
Angela Simpson, Health Department Representative
Kaisha Cave, Parent Representative
Lois Lehman, Curriculum and Adult Education Administrator
Ann Hushin, Maloney High School Principal
Dan Coffey, Ben Franklin Elementary School Principal
David Levenduski, Platt High School Assistant Principal
Roberto Soto, Washington Middle School Assistant Principal
Frank Auletta, Maloney High School Physical Education Department Chairperson
Jordynmarie Dudley, Student Representative
Riley Bartolomeo, Student Representative
Antonietta Baggetta, Cafeteria Manager, John Barry Elementary
Susan Maffé, Food Services Manager, Co-Chairperson

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 required that each local education agency (LEA) or school district participating in National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program develop a local wellness policy that promotes the health of students and addresses the growing problem of childhood obesity. As per the legislation, each school districts local wellness policy at a minimum must address/establish:

- Goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school based activities that are designed to promote student wellness
- Nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity
- Implementation measurement, including designation of one or more persons within the local education agency or school, charged with the operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the local wellness policy
- Involvement of parents, students and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policy.

The Student Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy, HF1.4, requires an annual report to the Superintendent and the Board, evaluating the implementation of the policy and the regulations as well as recommendations for changes or revisions. The Wellness Committee is proud of their accomplishments in the 2010-2011 school year. A brief summary of these accomplishments is below.

Revision of Student Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy

In the 2009-2010 School Year, the Wellness Committee worked with the Connecticut State Department of Education and The Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity at Yale University to review, strengthen and revise our Student Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy. The policy was reviewed and accepted by the Board on August 17, 2010.

Revision of the Recess Policy

After acceptance of the Student Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy, it was determined that the language in regards to recess was inconsistent with the policy on recess. The recess policy was modified to reflect the content of the Student Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy, requiring daily recess, to complement, not takes the place of physical activity.

Coordinated School Health Grant Award

The Coordinated School Health Leadership project was designed to build a district's capacity to implement policies, practices and programs that reduce health and educational disparities for all students and to align health and wellness strategies to the district's school improvement/strategic plan. Meriden is one of the few districts in Connecticut that was selected to participate in this pilot.

Nathan Hale, Platt and Washington are pilot schools for this program, with approximately \$13,000 in funds to use over a 3 year period (July 2010 – June 2013). Some of the notable efforts and accomplishments of each school are below.

- Nathan Hale - Additional opportunities and encouragement to participate in physical education and activities before and after school, K-5 Health lessons on nutrition/food pyramid, personal safety, drugs and drug use, HIV/AIDS, and family nutrition and physical activity events.
- Platt High School – Making the school campus a smoke free environment, encouraging staff wellness and educating parents and students on wellness opportunities.
- Washington – Implementation of a new health curriculum and offering of health classes to all students for the first time. Hands on activities about communicable diseases, diabetes, the benefits of healthy eating and being active. Monthly newsletters to students, staff and families including health tips and fitness facts and physical activity evenings for student, staff and families.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Grant Award

Roger Sherman was awarded \$26,286.00 to participate in USDA's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. The goals of the grant are to: create a healthier school environment, increase the variety of fresh fruits and vegetables that children experience, make an impact in children's diets by increasing the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, and to serve fresh fruits and vegetables to all students for free throughout the school day. With the success of the program at Roger Sherman, other eligible elementary schools were excited to take advantage of the opportunity for 2011-2012. All seven eligible elementary schools applied for this grant for 2011-2012. Should all seven grants be awarded, the award would between \$198,100 - \$297,150.

Fuel Up To Play 60 Grant Award

The Wellness Committee encouraged participation in Fuel Up To Play 60, a partnership by the National Dairy Council and the National Football League, further empowering students to take action to improve nutrition and physical activity at their school and for their own health. Each school is eligible for up to \$3,000.00 of funding each school year. Nathan Hale was awarded \$300.00 for their recent grant application. Other elementary schools have expressed interest and are in process of applying for a Fuel Up To Play 60 Grant.

Meriden's Health Heroes Initiative

Based on a similar program in New Haven, one of our student representatives has partnered with Nathan Hale Elementary to introduce this program, with the goals of: increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, getting one hour of physical activity daily, limiting television to two hours a day and getting eight to ten hours of sleep each night. This initiative is in its early stages and will continue throughout the 2011-2012 school year.

Wellness Committee Webpage

A webpage was created to further notify parents and students of our policy, efforts and progress. The link to the website is:

http://www.meriden.k12.ct.us/Content/Wellness_Policy.asp

Resources for Parents and Teachers

Additional parent and teacher resources were added to the Food Services Website and will continue to be enhanced. The link to the website is: http://www.meriden.k12.ct.us/Content/Parents_and_Teachers.asp

Continued Healthy Food Certification Participation

Meriden proudly continues to voluntarily certify with the State of Connecticut Department of Child Nutrition to sell only snack items that meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards, which focus on limiting fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and sugars, moderating portion size and promoting increased intake of nutrient dense foods, such as whole grains.

Meriden Gets Fit

A grant has been submitted in a partnership between the Meriden Board of Education and the YMCA of Meriden to implement a three year initiative intended to assist local education agencies and community-based organizations initiate, expand or enhance their physical education and nutrition education programs, and assist students meet their state standards for physical education as well as promote and encourage lifelong and healthy eating habits. If awarded, this after-school program will be offered to Platt and Maloney High School Students.

School Garden

On May 31, John Barry students proudly planted eggplant, yellow squash, grape, cherry and beefsteak tomatoes, string beans and cucumbers in their new school garden. Water and weeding is a before school activity, with plans for a "summer in the garden program", fall farmers market, student activities for preK-5, and an after school garden club. A proposal has been submitted to "Donors Choose.org" for funding.

Participation in "Chef's Move to Schools" Initiative

With the support of Mrs. Obama and her "Let's Move!" campaign to solve childhood obesity within a generation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is supporting "The Chef's Move to Schools Program", which helps chefs partner with interested schools in their communities, so that together they can create healthy meals that meet the schools' dietary guidelines and budgets, while teaching young people about nutrition and making balanced and healthy choices. Chef Kaisha Cave of My City Kitchen has partnered with and is working closely with Meriden Public Schools.

Participation in USDA's Recipes for Healthy Schools Challenge

The "Let's Move!" campaign with the U.S. Department of Agriculture provided \$12,000 in funds to encourage school nutrition professionals, chefs, students, parents and interested community members to create tasty, healthy exciting new recipes for inclusion on school lunch menus across the country. Each recipe submitted had to include either: whole grains, dark green vegetables, dark orange vegetables or dry beans and peas and meet stringent nutrition standards for calories, fat, saturated fat, sodium as well as meal pattern standards for school lunch. Although Meriden's recipe for Roasted Poblano Five Bean Chili with Baked Tostito Scoops was not a finalist in the challenge, it was a great learning experience for all.

Summer School Breakfast and Expansion of Meriden's Summer Feeding Program

This year, John Barry Elementary will be piloting a breakfast program through the seamless summer food service program for our elementary students entering grades 1, 2 and 3 enrolled in summer school from July 5 - 22 . Summer is a time of food insecurity

for many families and breakfast will be offered in the classroom to each student enrolled at the beginning of the school day and will also be offered to all children 18 and under from the community for a 45 minute period on the patio outside of the cafeteria. Due to differing regulations for the seamless summer food service program, these meals will all be able to be provided at no cost to families and the food services program will be adequately reimbursed to ensure this program operates profitably.

Staff Wellness Initiatives

A voluntary wellness program was offered by the City of Meriden to all Board of Education employees who purchase health insurance. CIGNA, our health insurance provider, has also provided opportunities for reduced cost wellness classes and Weight Watchers at Work.

Partnerships with University of Connecticut and St. Joseph's College Dietetic Programs

The Food Services Program has developed partnerships with The University of Connecticut and St. Joseph's College Dietetics Programs and hosted two senior students for School Food Service Rotations, further encouraging Dietitians to choose School Nutrition as a career choice.

Recommended Policy Changes and Revisions

The Wellness Committee currently has no recommendations for policy changes or revisions. Our committee looks forward to another productive year and assisting our students, families and staff in meeting the health and wellness challenges they encounter.