

Minutes of the School Food Subcommittee
August 26, 2004

Present: Norah Schwartz, Leah Rimkus, Meyla Ruwin, Ed Wilkins, Laura Brainin-Rodriguez, Dana Woldow (co-chair) and Colleen Kavanagh (co-chair)

Dana Woldow called meeting to order at 3:55pm.

Dana proposed a revision to the nutrition policy: add language to part 7 of section 2 (the SFUSD nutrition standard) to include the words "no artificial sweeteners"

New text would read (addition underlined):

“Foods shall be minimally processed, using whole meat whenever possible, whole grains or converted grains that retain most of their whole grain nutrients, minimal dyes, sodium and added sweeteners. No artificial sweeteners (includes aspartame and sucralose) may be used. Cooking methods shall retain the maximum nutrients possible.”

Passed unanimously; will be sent to the full committee for approval no later than the November meeting.

A proposal to sell bottled water bearing the name of each high school as a fundraiser was discussed. It was agreed that the vendor would be included on the list of non-food based fundraising ideas, but that no further recommendation would be made by the committee concerning this proposal.

Leah updated the group on the status of the meal application return project. Ten elementary schools have been targeted as part of a pilot program to try to increase the number of meal applications returned to SNS. The schools were chosen on the basis of having a relatively low rate of return combined with a high perceived rate of eligible students and also a large cash loss due to “uncollectibles.” Volunteers are contacting the Principals of the schools as part of the return effort. It was suggested that parents might later be surveyed to determine how they learned of the importance of the meal application return, in order to identify successful strategies. A possible reward system for high returns was also discussed.

Dana described the Point of Sale (POS) system pilot project. The LEAF grant will pay for the cost of implementing a POS system at Lowell and Mission High Schools, which are the two schools included in the LEAF grant. The POS system operates with a card issued to each student; no one knows which students are coded for free lunch and which students have a “debit” card to pay for their lunch. The advantages of a POS system include: elimination of the stigma associated with standing in the free lunch line, no cash handling meaning lines move faster and students have more time to eat and also for recess, no potential cash loss, no expense for courier service to pick up cash and take to the bank, no bank fees from excess deposits, less paperwork for SNS employees. There is also the potential to be able to provide a reimbursable meal from the a la carte line. This pilot is still in the proposal stage, but should be able to be implemented sometime during the first semester.

Ed gave an overview of the new K-5 meals provided by Preferred Meal Systems. There will be less fast food type entrees (hot dogs, pizza, burgers, chicken nuggets) and more home style dishes like meatloaf or turkey and mashed potatoes, and more Asian or Mexican entrees, like mandarin chicken and tostadas. A greater variety of vegetables will accompany the entrees. Also, trans fat free snacks should be available in the after school program 60-80% of the week.

Leah described the salad bar pilot project at Harvey Milk Elementary School. It will debut during the week of September 14th and be available on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On those days, the entire lunch will be from the salad bar, which will offer all five components of the lunch (protein, vegetable, fruit, bread, and milk.) A media event to celebrate the opening is planned for September 23rd.

Dana provided information on Provision 2, and it was agreed that this is a program that would be of great benefit to both SNS and the participating schools. Elementary schools participating in Provision 2 collect meal applications only once every 4 years, and provide free meals to all students during that time period. Advantages are similar to the POS system (reduced stigma, etc.) with the added advantage that Provision 2 schools would not need to have POS systems installed, which is estimated to save about \$300,000 off the cost of installing POS district wide. About 60 elementary schools are believed to have a sufficient number of low-income students to make participation in Provision 2 economically feasible.

It was suggested that the meeting place be changed to Aptos Middle School and that the day be changed to either the second Monday or second Wednesday from 4-5pm. Dana volunteered to contact absent committee members to see whether this plan would work.

Meeting adjourned at 5pm.