

Minutes of the SFUSD Student Nutrition and Physical Activity Committee Meeting March 21, 2006

Present: Libby Alpert, Caroline Grannan, Colleen Kavanaugh, Jan Link, Meyla Ruwin, Ed Wilkins, Dana Woldow

The meeting was called to order at 3:40 p.m. Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

Subcommittee reports

School Food: Ed Wilkins reported a decline in lunch participation of 2,000 students per day from November 2004 to November 2005. The district lost 1,000 students overall during that period. Ed said the decline is clearly linked to the new co-payment that the district insisted on implementing for students who qualify for reduced price. There has been a slight decrease in paid participation and a major decrease in reduced. The missing reduced-price students are not eating free; they are not eating in the lunch line at all. The income from the co-payment does not offset the losses caused by the drop in participation.

Ed and members of the committee had predicted that a co-payment would discourage participation. SNS has received many complaints about the co-payment, and some parents have revised their applications to qualify for free status. Ed has recommended that the co-payment be eliminated.

SNS expects another drop in losses this year because it has been controlling expenditures, Ed said. The district is demanding zero encroachment on the general fund. Ed said that won't happen this year and predicts that encroachment will be about \$250,000. Encroachment has dropped steadily for the past few years.

The SEIU sickout on the first day of school cost SNS close to \$200,000. The district ordered SNS to provide meals for the full district enrollment, though it was clear that that wasn't necessary.

However, the deficit has dropped year by year from \$1.2 million in 2002-'03, the last year SNS was selling junk food, Ed said. Subsequent deficits were \$750,000 in '03-'04 and \$414,000 in '04-'05.

Dana Woldow provided an update on the Grab-n-Go breakfasts at Balboa and expanded locations. A grant from the city's Department of Children, Youth and Their Families will provide a Point of Sale (POS) swipe-card system for the existing Grab-n-Go pilot at Balboa and a new pilot at Bessie Carmichael Elementary. An additional grant from the California Department of Education may be approved, and would provide Grab-n-Go programs at an additional elementary school (Tenderloin) and a middle school (Marina).

Many or most sites would need new wiring to implement a POS system. It's hoped that the improved cost savings at the pilot schools will persuade district decisionmakers to invest in new wiring.

At Balboa, the POS system will allow students to pick up breakfast as they come in the school's front door rather than having to go out of their way to the cafeteria.

Dana reported that there had been a drop in participation after the Grab-n-Go's early success. Libby Albert had the idea of putting some kind of prize in the bags to attract more kids. Dana has been volunteering her time to photocopy Sudoku math puzzles, cut them up and stuff them in the breakfast bags. Since that began, participation has risen 18%.

Channel 7 just did a news story on the Grab-n-Go, and CNN is reportedly working on one.

Ed is drafting an RFP to install POS systems districtwide. POS systems have other uses in schools outside the meal program.

Colleen Kavanaugh asked if Grab-n-Go items are whole grain. Dana explained that they're not because of the need to keep the cost of the food to 76 cents per meal.

State legislation has been approved to fund a second piece of fruit in the breakfasts at 10 cents per meal, but it has been held up by the debate about "fresh" vs. "nutritious" fruit. Cut-up fruit won't qualify even when it's not packed in sweetened syrup, which will limit the offerings.

Wellness policy: Meyla Ruwin reported on the progress of the policy, which is mandated in school districts nationwide. Meyla noted proposed changes in the draft policy.

Issues discussed included whether to recommend that parents not include peanut products in lunches sent from home, and concerns about parent-requested exemptions from required swim tests.

The policy must be completed by July 1, so will go before this committee on May 16 for approval.

New business

Nutrition education proposal: Colleen Kavanaugh reported that the Digital Arts Alliance will offer a program to Aptos Middle School, providing computers and technical support for students to do filmmaking on a nutrition-related topic. There was discussion of whether this could expand to other middle schools and into high schools.

Department of Children, Youth and Their Families projects: Libby Albert reported on results from a working group on nutrition in the community.

The summer lunch program will increase publicity this year. Ed Wilkins discussed participation in lunch at SFUSD summer schools and the scheduling challenges, especially when students are relatively free not to come back after a lunch break.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

