| Wellness Policy Assessment & Review – Belleville Mennonite School |
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Minutes from November 8, 2023 Discussion & Subsequent Correspondence

November 8, 2023

1. Wellness Policy:

The purpose of a wellness policy is to guide in establishing and maintaining a school environment that promotes students’ health, well-being, and ability to learn.

1. Progress Report:

**How well are we meeting policy goals?**

All students K-12 have the opportunity each day to receive a healthy lunch which complies with NSLP

nutritional guidelines. There are more than thirty different meals offered throughout the year. Any foods

and beverages which are sold on campus during the school day are in compliance with Smart Snack

guidelines. All students K-12 participate in PE class two times each week. BMS offers Jr High and Varsity sports (Soccer & Basketball).

**Are we in compliance with policy guidelines?**

There is a scheduled break each day for students in grades 6-12 when they are able to purchase Smart Snack compliant foods or consume foods brought from home. Elementary students have a snack bread during their first recess. This break time is monitored by faculty and staff, but not by food service staff. While students are *encouraged* to bring in healthy snacks, there is no regulation of the items which are actually brought into the school and sometimes shared with peers.

We utilize parent volunteers in the Café on a daily basis and conduct a survey regarding school lunches with the students and staff annually. These surveys have been analyzed and results have been used to make adjustments which improve the overall appeal of school lunches.

There are four lunch periods from 11 AM to 1 PM: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Each lunch period is at least 25 minutes. High school students do occasionally have meetings during their lunch period; however they are able to eat during the meeting.

Water is available at water fountains and sinks throughout both buildings and cups are provided at lunch for drinking during mealtime. In addition, water bottles are available for purchase at any time. There are no vending machines on campus and no soda is served during the school day, with the exception of a few special events and class parties (less than four times per year). Concession stands which sell food during evening sporting events offer a variety of menu items, including some healthy snack choices. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy snacks when offering birthday treats to their children’s class.

A variety of PE classes and physical activities are available to all students throughout the school year. Elementary grades (K-5) have recess at least two times each day. Weather permitting, recess is held outdoors. Field Day is an annual event held as a celebration at the end of the school year which promotes physical activities for all students. School facilities and fields are used by a variety of groups and community teams throughout the year as they are available.

**What progress has been made since the last revision?**

Several healthy and appealing new meals have been added to the cycle menu. Fresh fruit is available for purchase during morning break and at mealtimes. Emphasis had been placed on buying local produce (seasonally) and beef. We have eliminated beverages containing artificial sweeteners from the a la carte drink cooler and instead opted for Bubly sparkling water. At the elementary level, students have been given a PB&J uncrustable lunch option. This encourages younger students to eat a complete meal (as opposed to reluctantly taking the main menu item and then throwing it away). Middle school and high school students have been given a new grilled chicken salad option which has been received remarkably well. Steps have been made to eliminate Red 40 from the school (which unfortunately included removing strawberry milk from the menu). New whole grain rich products have been added to the menu including churros, breadsticks, and cookies. Fresh veggies are available in the lunch line everyday (often in addition to a hot veggie and/or potato option).

**Summarize school activities, any wellness events, and outline areas for improvement.**

Nutrition information and healthy snack options are provided in brochure form to all families at the beginning of each school year and are available on the website at all times. However, the Food Service Director could periodically send suggestions and reminders to parents and teachers about healthy snacks. Monthly menus could be created with a featured fruit and vegetable, which would provide increased opportunities to learn about and try the featured foods prepared in a variety of ways. Introducing new foods utilizing a “taste test” method could be utilized also.

Physical Education and Health teachers Dana Varnerand Ally Zook noted that more time is needed for health classes. Currently they have 8th (Dana) and 10th (Ally) grade students for one class period per week. There is a need to rush to get through the curriculum and topics are not given the time needed. In addition, teachers find that they must add items sporadically in order to meet grading requirements. Meeting 2-3 times per week would be much more ideal.

In addition, the school owns weight equipment which is currently not utilized. A weightlifting class for interested students would also be very beneficial.