

BCSD Wellness Committee

Meeting Notes

November 18, 2020

Highlights from the November 18th Wellness Committee meeting. We conducted breakout groups to discuss how we could achieve this year's committee goals.

Updates

Karen Pagano - Director, [BCSD Food Services](#)

The meal kits have been very successful for both pickup and delivery. Since we had to stop programs we're working on with the USDA grant for now, we're doing farm-to-school kits with recipes and a veggie of the month in the kits. We've also included helpful kitchen items like peelers, knives and cutting boards in the kits, plus videos highlighting the veggies and recipes ([check out this one for December's vegetable, squash](#)).

John Giametta - Director, [BCSD Physical Education & Athletics](#)

The Fall Season has been a success! You can find updates on our Fall Athletics teams on Twitter: twitter.com/bcsdbulldogs and game videos on the BCSD website: www.beaconk12.org/domain/28. The highlight of the season was the senior ceremonies for fall athletes, which were held on the first game of the season. The ability to play has been important for our student athletes, with students being recruited for college sports. We've also been able to offer several different intramurals for students in grades 6-8, with about 80 students signed up so far, separated by cohort and activity. All sports are now delayed until January 4, but off-season workouts have begun.

Elissa Soto - Principal, [Beacon High School](#)

Student-Lead Circles have begun and the kids have really appreciated speaking to other students. We also provided Circles Conversations for our teachers, giving them an opportunity to breathe and offering a refresher on how to manage circle conversations in their classes. [Dutchess Mediation](#) has been helping with that process. I also participated with discussions around trauma-informed practices with [Ramapo for Children](#), and that was great. The organization really understands our lens as educators.

Cathryn Biordi - Asst. Principal, [Rombout Middle School](#)

We hope to continue intramurals (includes 5 different activities on Tuesdays and Thursdays) until the weather gets too cold. In general, we've been trying to maximize time out of seats for hybrid students, with use of outdoor classrooms and improvised outdoor spaces. Also had the first season with the school garden, growing veggies and holding a few pop-up farmers markets, with free vegetables handed out at dismissal. We're looking at implementing a Backpack Program similar to the one at the elementary level, and working with the guidance counselors on that. We're running Student Circles on Wednesdays, and every student attends a social-emotional wellness circle.

Sember Weiman - Acting Director & Education Director, [Common Ground Farm](#)

The Backpack Program is up and running, including a Thanksgiving distribution with Key Food gift cards. We're working in partnership with the district's Transportation and Food Services departments. We received United Way funding, with a Holiday Helping Hands grant for grocery bags of produce for the program, which now includes about 36 kids. We work with Mutual Aid, Fareground, Green Teen, and Land to Learn on have a weekly meeting. They have partnered on them on food access.

2nd year of USDA farm-to-school grant (not eligible for applying for the next cycle grant).

Nicole Porto - Education Director & Garden Educator, [Land to Learn](#)

We've begun our programming for the school year, with virtual classes and video lessons for remote students, and in-person education for hybrid students. We've essentially doubled our outdoor time because each class is split into two. We want to ensure that every student gets the garden time lessons, and sometimes we share videos when teachers don't have time in their day for the classes.

Goals & Strategy for the 2020-21 School Year

Goal 1: Reassess the District Wellness Policy

We'll assess the [BCSD Wellness Policy](#) this year, using the NYS Wellness Policy Assessment Tool. Principals will measure compliance and use of the policy in their schools, and we'll use that information to help guide us in what we need to do to reach the new USDA standards. We can add to the policy any initiatives currently being done but not identified. Resources include:

- [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) Can compare assessment results to their 10 required elements
- [NYSED Info on School Wellness Policy](#)
- [Resilience in School Environments \(RISE\) Initiative](#) - for social-emotional health initiatives
- [RISE Application](#) - This has an assessment tool. Identify a Committee point person to register for the district and conduct a pre-implementation survey. Need to assign.

Timeline:

- December - Assessments completed. Bill and Karen will manage this process.
- March - Add new initiatives to existing policy. Need to assign.
- April - Revised policy ready for review by superintendent, attorney, Policy Committee
- May - Revised policy reviewed and adopted by BOE
- June 30, 2021 - Submit revised policy to USDA and State Ed Child Nutrition (required)

Goal 2: Ensure equity of resources/services among all schools and learning cohorts by bringing together building representatives to share ideas and initiatives.

We should continue developing regular newsletters for sharing ideas. It would also be useful to have representatives of various resources present at PTO meetings, and PTO/PTA leadership present at committee meetings. Other ideas include: E.G. Chrissy Jorgenson – Liaison,

Wellness webinars, dieticians, Pulse MD, mental health and wellness, meditation, diet and exercise.

Goal 3: Build more school partnerships with local service providers and community organizations.

We should partner with organizations who can bring in wellness webinars, virtual classes, and videos on mental and physical health. Possible resources include:

- Shinyere Davis - Sexual Health & Wellness Educator
- Shadé Martin - Love Yourself to Health program

Goal 4: Create a directory of community resources for students, staff, and families on the district website.

This year, we plan to improve the information on the resources webpages, with updates to coincide with the launch of the new BCSD website.

Student Resources

- What kinds of things do students need that they may not want to ask adults for directly? More for secondary level, but also can be a resource for parents of younger students to use to help their children.
- Mental health, addiction, suicide prevention, bullying, wellness, support groups, youth groups, college readiness, sexual health, activity centers for kids, all the sports clubs and library clubs

Staff Resources

- How can we better support teachers in their professional development beyond what is paid for by the district? Are there free, online options available? Are there grants/scholarships for PD? What about helping them manage stress and physical well-being?
- Mental health, PD, classroom strategy, support groups, idea groups, certification programs

Parent & Community Resources

- Family needs are increasing during Covid-19 and the related economic recession. How do we help the school community connect to resources without having to specifically ask for them? Create a hub for help.
- Mental health, free Dutchess County mental health programs, food assistance organizations, additional assistance programs (coat drives, etc.), wellness resources, facilities available to use freely or inexpensively in the region, tech guide, info on how the tax cap works, shelters, mutual aid, fareground, clothing drop-off locations, weeplay, tutoring centers, library hours and programs,