

GPS Food Service Program Review Committee

Date: April 8, 2019

Place: Havemeyer Boardroom, 290 Greenwich Avenue, Greenwich, CT

Present: Committee: Lori O'Donnell, John Hopkins, Abbe Large, Jeff Ramer, Nerlyn Pierson, Lauren Rabin
Guest: Dave Nanarello, Julie DesChamps

The meeting began at 10:08 AM.

Ms. O'Donnell reviewed the agenda from the posting for the meeting: approval of minutes, financial review, updates from the BOE meeting, continued discussion on pilot scenarios and continued discussion on trays. Ms. Rabin asked to add a summary of the menu planning sub-committee.

Mr. Hopkins confirmed that all draft minutes were sent to all members in *.doc form. Ms. Large commented that she hadn't received them. The committee decided to curb that discussion to a later meeting.

Ms. Large began the discussion about F& R reimbursement and wanted to have a better understanding of how those dollars came into the district and the methodology for making that happen. Mr. Hopkins explained how schools serve reimbursable meals and a la carte items. He went on to explain that all served reimbursable meals (Free, Reduced Priced, Paid) are accounted for and reimbursed at the USDA's current rates, \$3.37 for Free meals, \$2.97 for Reduced Priced meals and \$0.37 for Paid meals. He also explained that a la carte items are available to all customers and funds are collected at the registers for these items. Funds are in the form of cash or student accounts. Ms. Large brought up the concern that students who are buying a la carte products are putting unhealthy products in their bodies which could jeopardize their learning potential. This spawned a conversation about who determines what is sold a la carte and with what frequency. Mr. Hopkins explained that in 2010, K-5 school principals started to make their own decisions on how a la carte products will be sold at their schools with reference to grade sensitivity and frequency. The business office helped make a decision that would allow K-5 principals to make site based decision on two products: ice cream and fresh baked cookies. The remaining items would be available daily and the list would be informed by products approved for sale by the CSDE, Food Services and PTAC H&W input. Mr. Ramer commented that a la carte items and hence all food item standards, should not be determined by these bodies, but may best be formed by the BOE itself. Have the BOE set a standard and then hold everyone to that; including self- operation, consultant, FSMC, boutique food service or any food providers. In addition, Mr. Ramer is not convinced that committee has given the BOE the range of options associated with piloting and felt that if a food standard is

set, the BOE would be better informed to make a decision on which options they would like to pursue. Ms. Pierson agreed that standards do need to be set and that the new Menu Planning sub-committee has begun this work. Ms. Rabin explained that the BOE is interested in piloting, testing a few options, excluding an FSMC, for a year against our selves. Mr. Ramer asked why not an FSMC for a pilot. He was answered that an FSMC would not want to pilot, but would want the whole district. He asked for confirmation on this and Ms. Rabin agreed to ask a Chartwell's representative if this was the case.

Mr. Nanarello commented that and FSMC and/or pilot could be disruptive to the community based on employee layoffs/employment concerns. He went on to say that our staff is part of this community, cares deeply about their students and wants to do better. Ms. Large asked then why do they feel they are being held back as mentioned by several department workers at the February 22, 2019 board meeting. Mr. Hopkins explained that, yes, given the opportunity to be more creative, we would all want that to happen, however, there are guidelines (NSLP) that we must adhere to. Until the playing field is changed, we do the best we can with the variables that are in place now. Ms. Pierson commented that until we get a commitment (financial) by town leaders (BOE, BET, RTM) the change will be hard to make to more nutritious, higher quality food.

Ms. Pierson briefed the committee on the work the Menu Planning Sub-Committee has been doing. Looking to set a standard for the district's food with reference to sustainability, local, organic, animal welfare, nutritional, etc. The hope is to have this standard adopted and applied to the department's bid specification. Mr. Ramer made a motion to have Ms. Rabin asked the board to remove non-nutritious a la carte items from the food service program. Ms. Pierson disagreed and explained the scope of that motion is too restrictive and does not address the larger picture of re-imagining this districts food service program and what we should want for our students. She explained the Menu Planning committee tasked itself with looking at the program as a whole and the vision of what we want to accomplish without working in the confines of the current frame work. When that standard is defined, then cost it out with reference to our current operation and the changes need to implement it; and bring that report to the BOE for discussion/approval. Mr. Ramer agreed with the philosophy and feels this should be done before any pilot is started. Set the standard first and then apply it to pilot award. Ms. Rabin disagreed, stating the proposed pilot programs have historical information that show they are successful at delivering a higher standard of food and that it will provide valuable information and allow us to learn over a school year to their acceptance by and ability to serve the Greenwich School community.

Ms. O'Donnell talked briefly about budgetary procedures and how they may affect the conversations on the table. Specifically siting that the 2019-20 budget has been approved by 2 of the 3 branches of government and that cost increases to the program would have to be handled through an increase in appropriations that may or may not be approved.

Ms. Rabin was asked what she is bringing to the BOE at their next meeting (April 25, 2019). She stated that she will inform them of the Menu Planning sub-committee that is developing guidelines for food served in this district. That Food Service would price out this standard if it were to be adopted. That two pilots are being considered for 2019-20 school year.

Ms. Large circled back to the reimbursement topic asking the total man hours used to submit a monthly claim to the state. Mr. Hopkins said he would supply it.

The committee decided to add a meeting on Monday April 22, 2019 1:30PM-3:00PM to review information that will be provided at the next meeting.

Ms. DesChamps (PTAC Green Schools) gave a historical president in the district to replace polystyrene trays. She cited the environmental impact, and the savings to the town of carting less waste. She also stated that there is no paper disposable option for our town (citing chemicals used in the manufacturing process); that there is pending legislation in the Ct State government to ban polystyrene use in schools and the investment in mechanical dishwashers, while having a startup cost would in the long run be an operational savings to the food service department. Ms. Rabin said that this is an agenda item for the BOE at its April meeting and if provided enough data they should be able to vote on. We discussed the use of stainless steel trays vs. melamine and agreed that pricing was around \$5.21 to \$5.72 each.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04PM.