NEW HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOOD SERVICE TASK FORCE

MINUTES

May 9, 2018

The meeting was held on Wednesday, May 9, 2018, 5:30 p.m., at the Gateway Center, 2nd Floor Board Room, 54 Meadow Street, New Haven, CT 06519.

Present: Mr. Joseph Rodriguez, Dr. Tamiko Jackson-McArthur, Ms. Gail Sharry, Ms. Sarah Miller, Ms. Nijija-Ife Waters, Ms. Sarah Serana, Ms. Maria-Threese Serane, Mr. Nico Rivera, Ms. Hyclis Williams, Ms. Angie Monack. Staff: Ms. Patricia DeMaio, Mr. Mackie McMillian

I. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Joseph Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 5:44 p.m.

II. COMMITTEE PURPOSE: After committee introductions, Mr. Rodriguez distributed and read aloud the New Haven Board of Education’s Resolution to Establish a Food Service Task Group, unanimously passed at its March 26, 2018 meeting, as follows:

“The New Haven Board of Education, (BOE), shall form a Food Service Committee to monitor the food program, get feedback from parents, students and school staff members, and address questions or concerns.

The committee shall monitor the program throughout the year, identify ways to improve it, and address any questions or concerns.

The group will be composed of the Superintendent of Schools or her designee, the food services director, two parent, two students, two representatives of food advocacy groups, and two BOE members appointed by the president.”

Mr. Rodriguez reported that the BOE initiated the resolution after a number of complaints, including photos sent by a parent depicting moldy tomatoes on the service line. Although that incident was addressed by staff, the BOE recommended further review of the service. He noted that the committee will be solution-based, setting both long and short term goals in an effort to improve service. Committee goals will be discussed after a presentation from the Food Service Department.

III. PRESENTATION: Ms. Gail Sharry, Director of Food Service, distributed an Overview of the Food Service program, including, budget information, staffing and production/quality assurance workflow charts. She reported that meals are distributed in 52 locations: 13,000 breakfasts, 16,500 lunches, 650 after school snacks and 648 suppers.
In addition, Ms. Sharry explained the Community Eligibility Provision for free and reduced lunch, as well as restrictions imposed on use of USDA foods.

IV. OPEN DISCUSSION – GOALS: The committee participated in an open discussion, facilitated by Mr. Rodriguez. Issues identified: temperature of food, frozen or spoilt milk, plastic wrappers on muffins that have are microwaved, as well as, the food allergy policy. The following items were identified by committee members for continued discussion and review:

1. Examine inconsistencies in food service from school to school, and identify contributing factors, such as volume issues or training; identify potential solutions.
2. Packaging of food, toxicity of heating plastics
3. Review what works well in food services in other location, including internationally
4. Review the process for reporting and resolving complaints
5. Review the life threatening food allergy policy and implementation process
6. Examine utilization of school kitchens which appear underutilized. Is it feasible to prepare some meals at the school, including hot breakfast during winter months, rather than food from Central Kitchen?
7. How does management ensure implementation of instructions/accountability?
8. Review selection and variety of Food
9. Provide opportunities for student participation in menu development
10. Develop a survey for student feedback. United Way is working on a survey in Hamden, which may be a valuable tool. Mr. Rodriguez reported that committee member, Makayla Dawkins, will report on a food survey she is conducting in her high school.
11. Examine the vendor process: how is food delivered; what quality control practices are pre and post-delivery and how is it monitored?

Mr. Rodriguez asked Food Service staff to review their challenges, obstacles or restrictions, for the next meeting, which the committee may be able to alleviate.

V. NEXT MEETING: The Committee will meet the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 5:30pm at Gateway Center, 2nd Floor Board Room. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 13, 2018.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia A. DeMaio