

Wellness Policy Committee Meeting

Monday, December 1, 2025 – 3:00 pm

Virtually over Zoom

1. Welcome and introductions, including new members – Sebastian Varas

Members Present	Position	Subcommittee Assignment
Sebastian Varas	Nutrition Service Director	Nutrition
Emily Jenkins	Nutrition Services Dietitian	Nutrition
Shauna Flash	Canyons Living Chair, HR	Public Involvement
Mark Martin	Parent	Policy Adjustment
Karen Pedersen	School Board Member	Unassigned
Kelcey Kemp	High School Administrator	Public Involvement
Julie Fielding	Elementary School Administrator	TBD
Caleb Vickers	Student	Nutrition
Jeff Christensen	Legal Counsel	Policy Adjustment
Camryn Adams	Nutrition Services Intern	N/A

2. Review of previous meeting minutes – Emily Jenkins

3. Reports and updates from subcommittees

a. Policy Adjustment

- Nothing to report at this time

b. School Nurses

- Nothing to report at this time

c. Nutrition

- HB 402: This bill introduces restrictions on food additives in Utah public schools, targeting specific potentially harmful chemical compounds. Starting in the 2026-2027 school year, public schools will be prohibited from selling, donating, offering, or serving food containing nine specific additives during school hours, including potassium bromate, propylparaben, and several FD&C (Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act) color additives like Blue No. 1, Red No. 40, and Yellow No. 5. The bill includes some exceptions: parents can still provide these food items to their children, teachers can offer such items with parental permission at the start of each school semester, and these additives can be sold at school-sponsored events, extra-curricular activities, or in vending machines. Smaller school districts with 5,500 students or fewer are exempt from these requirements. The legislation defines key terms like "public school" and "school day" and is set to take effect on May 7, 2025, aiming to improve the nutritional quality of food available to students during the school day.
 - Jeff is unaware of any district policy related to this bill.
 - School meals are currently implementing these requirements.
 - This affects what is being served or sold on the school campus during the school day (the school day is defined as midnight to 30 minutes after school ends).
 - Sebastian presented this information to the administration at the beginning of the year, but there may be a need to communicate this again.
 - There was a concern brought up about vending machine companies and the need to communicate this to the companies.
 - The committee will discuss this further at our spring meeting after we hear more about what communities and individual schools are doing to implement this bill, and Sebastian will get more clarifying information from our state child nutrition leaders in the meantime.

- HB 100 was also passed in the Utah legislature this past spring and it provided funding for all reduce-priced lunches to be free for families (breakfast is still \$0.30).
- Report on survey “Do students in elementary school have enough time to eat lunch?”
 - This informal survey was conducted in the spring at 8 randomly selected elementary schools. In the classroom, students were asked to close their eyes or put their heads down, then they were asked, “Do you feel you have enough time to eat lunch?”. They raised hand for “yes”, then raised their hand for “no”. Of the almost 800 students surveyed, 53% of students felt that they have enough time and 47% felt that they did not have enough time.
 - In reviewing times allotted at these schools for student lunches, they ranged from 15-20 minutes. The wellness policy specifically states that students should be given 20 minutes to eat.
 - Julie shared what is working at her school where they enforce a 15-minute minimum and students can stay longer if needed. She feels that at 20 minutes the lunch schedule is lengthy and they start to see behavioral issues for students that have already finished eating and are anxious to leave the cafeteria.
 - Many members of the committee support this model, as it adheres to the wellness policy while allowing students that need more time to eat to remain in the cafeteria to eat.
 - Mark mentioned that in his experience as an employee of Nutrition Services he has seen success with a table to move students who need more time to eat.
 - Karen would like to see this practice widespread across the district. She feels that it may be happening at most schools, but we could do a better job at marketing to the community that we are giving students enough time to eat.
 - Sebastian mentioned that one practice that has stuck around after COVID measures is that many elementary schools are only serving one grade at a time in the cafeteria instead of overlapping two grades, which could allow for more time for the students and not extend Nutrition Services work hours.
 - Caleb mentioned that he sees the lines go faster when students bring their cards for scanning rather than type in their lunch numbers at the points of sale.
- Nutrition Services switched to reusable serving trays this year as both a cost-saving measure and a more sustainable solution. Sebastian brought up a concern from Nutrition Services about students throwing away reusable trays, specifically in the high schools.
 - Caleb mentioned that he has seen this at Brighton high. He feels that it would be helpful to have collection stations around the school, but also to just give the students time to adjust to the change.

d. Physical Education and Activity

- None at this time.

e. Public Involvement

- Canyons Living grants were all utilized last year incentivize wellness for employees!
- Employees are still welcome to use middle school tracks before and after school and may bring one guest that must go through a background check. They can contact Everett for more information.
- The pickleball tournament was a huge success!

4. Next meeting: Spring 2026