Wellness Policy Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 12, 2026 – 3:00 pm

Virtually over Zoom

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

Members Present	Position	Subcommittee Assignment
Sebasthian Varas	Nutrition Service Director	Nutrition
Emily Jenkins	Nutrition Services Dietitian	Nutrition
Susan Edwards	Public Engagement Coordinator	Public Involvement
Kirsten Stewart	Communications Director	Public Involvement
Mark Martin	Community Member	Policy Adjustment
Karen Pedersen	School Board Member	Public Involvement
Brooke Harris	Physical Education Teacher	Physical Education
Julie Fielding	Elementary School Administrator	Unassigned
Jen Gerrard	Nurse Specialist	Nursing
Jeff Christensen	Legal Counsel	Policy Adjustment
Holly Bishop	Community Member	Policy Adjustment
Jaime Hockin	Community Member	Unassigned
Toni Cornay	Canyons Living Chair	Unassigned
Heather Isbell	PTA Health Coordinator	Public Involvement
Amelia McNamer	Student, Brighton	Unassigned
Sam Wilcox	Student, Corner Canyon	Unassigned
Bridger Jones	Student, Alta	Unassigned

2. Review of previous meeting minutes – Emily Jenkins

3. Reports and updates from subcommittees
   a. Policy Adjustment
      - The Wellness Policy has been updated and Board approved to support Implementation of HB402 (food additives in schools) and as far as Jeff has heard implementation has been going well.
   b. School Nurses
      - Nothing to report at this time
   c. Nutrition
      - The School Nutrition Association is alerting members that there may be changes to school meals related to the updated Dietary Guidelines for Americans from early 2026. These changes *may* include an increase in protein requirements for both breakfast and lunch and a decrease in "processed foods". However, there is nothing set in stone yet and there is currently no extra funding tied to these changes. Sebasthian will update the committee as information becomes available.
      - Students, especially in the high schools, continue to throw away the reusable trays, which is also costing a significant amount of money.
        - Karen suggested some sort of incentive for returning trays.
          - ✓ She will engage students in meeting she has planned for December to get ideas.
        - Susan suggested a campaign to appeal to parents of students – specifically at Brighton high school where the highest amount of trays are being discarded.
          - ✓ Sebasthian and Emily will meet with Susan to discuss this idea.
      - It is time for the triennial assessment of our wellness policy

- ✓ Toni will have the Living Leaders at each school complete the assessment. Brooke suggested informing administration at the schools of the process, as there are some questions that Living Leaders may need administration support.

d. Physical Education and Activity
   - Nothing to report at this time.

e. Public Involvement
   - Karen brought forth a concern from a school kitchen manager about ensuring employees are qualified with basic kitchen skills prior to being hired.
     - Sebasthian discussed the screening and interviewing process, which includes a recipe review and basic math. We are unable to hire employees as temporary workers, so once they are hired as permanent and it becomes evident that they are lacking in skills that cannot be trained, it is difficult to terminate them.
       - ✓ Sebasthian will follow up with Everett.
   - Another concern that was given to Karen was how to encourage applicants who are getting older and can't remember directions or move too slowly to not be allowed a kitchen job, but offered something else in the district.
     - Response from Everett Perry from HR "The nutrition district staff have structured training for all new hires to ensure that new employees understand their essential functions and all the safety aspects of working in the kitchen areas. We also go through a hiring process including initial screening and interviewing all new hires before an offer is made. If the candidate cannot pass the interview which includes questions that demonstrate cognitive processing, then we do not hire them. We do not have an aptitude or cognitive tests that are done as those screeners have serious litigation issues when challenged. If we see that an individual may not be a good fit for the kitchens then we have recommended they look for alternative positions within the District."
   - Mark had a question about teachers now having restrictions on the food they can give out in the classroom.
     - Jeff clarified that this is related to the Utah legislation HB402 and that teachers are still allowed to give out food in the classroom as long as it does not contain any of the prohibited additives outlined in that legislation. Any packaged food provided by parents is still allowed, regardless of the prohibited additives.

f. Reports from students
   - Bridger has not eaten school meals since elementary school but he really likes when kitchen workers gave out samples and let the kids try the food being served. In regards to trays being thrown away, he suggested a mix of reusable trays for the students eating on campus and disposable for students to take their food out of the cafeteria.
   - Sam: eats school lunch fairly often and appreciates the service at Corner Canyon High. He sees students throw food right away when they are asked to take a fruit or vegetable. He wishes there was something that could be done about the waste.
     - Sebasthian clarified that It is a federal requirement for students to take a fruit or vegetable with every meal, or else they have to pay the adult price of $6.00
     - Holly asked about a donation bucket. Sebasthian clarified that Nutrition Services cannot use the uneaten food, but the school can implement a sharing table if they would like to but the school would have to coordinate it.
   - Amelia has never eaten school lunch at Brighton because she feels that the cafeteria feels chaotic and crowded. She also reports seeing lunch trays all over campus and outside of the cafeteria.

4. Next meeting: Fall 2026