



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NEW HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION FOOD SERVICE TASK FORCE

MINUTES

January 13, 2021

The regular meeting was held on Wednesday, January 13, 2021 via Zoom.

Present: Mr. Matt Wilcox, Mr. Larry Conaway, Mr. Billy Bromage, Ms. Leslie Brown, Ms. Susan Harris, Ms. Maria Karas, Ms. Claudette Kidd, Ms. Salina Manning, Ms. Maren Tornay, Ms. Nijija-lfe Waters
Staff: Ms. Gail Sharry

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The regular meeting of the Food Service Task Force was called to order at 5:06 p.m. by Mr. Larry Conaway.
- II. **INTRODUCTIONS and ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Mr. Conaway introduced himself. Afterward, attendees and members of the committee took turns introducing themselves.
- III. **REPORT from WITNESSES to HUNGER FOOD SURVEY:**
 - 107 out of 110 respondents (97%) said that the school food helps them to stretch their budget.
 - 108 out of 110 respondents (98%) said that they would like meals during breaks to continue.
 - The top two reasons that meals during breaks mattered to respondents were: having kids at home rather than school costs more (58%) and families running low on food (50%).
 - The top recommendations for improving school meals were: more vegetables in each meal (35%) and less fat in meals (28%), with 43% replying that they are good as they are, with several respondents expressing gratitude for the meals with comments like “I believe it is a wonderful program,” “Thank God for this,” and “Please keep it up.”
 - The highest number comments to Question 5 involved people being grateful for the meals during the winter break and praising the program.
 - There were several comments about having more fruits and vegetables.
 - Several people talked about reducing the amount of sugar in the meals.
 - Some respondents suggested providing larger portion sizes for older children.

- Some people requested more variety in the meals offered.
- A few people talked about the importance of meals since they do not have time to prepare food during the day due to their jobs.
- Some parents, particularly at Troup, suggested alternatives to fruit juice, including water.

It was also recommended that NHPS partner with other food sources – food pantries/Connecticut Food Bank, university food services, and potentially restaurants to supplement food available during school breaks, including the “August meal gap” between when the Summer Food Service Program ends and school resumes for a new academic year.

- IV. FOOD SERVICE DURING REMOTE LEARNING:** There are several options available to parents for obtaining meals. Parents can pick up meals daily at 39 locations from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Meal box distribution will continue whereas parents can pick up once a week on Fridays at three locations from 4:00-5:30 p.m. Meal boxes are delivered once a week to 13 Housing Authority sites via Food Service van/bus. Meals are served Monday through Friday via The Supper Program at 19 locations. Also, learning hubs are supported by NHPS Food Services. Meals are distributed at a total of 66 locations. Information on these options is sent to parents and students via text and email. It is also posted at schools, on the NHPS website, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The New Haven Public Schools Lunch Challenge is located on Google Classroom to promote continued involvement in the lunch program. It was also recommended to explore other ways to get the information out to parents about the distribution of food.
- V. FOOD SERVICE DURING IN-PERSON LEARNING INCLUDING STUDENTS with LIFE THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES:** To date, 4756 children are coming back to school through the hybrid model, but this number could change as parents continue to make decisions on whether to send their child(ren) back or not. Each manager has met with each principal of those schools to discuss their plans for serving meals and each plan is different. Most PreK through 2nd grade meals will be delivered to classrooms. Some of the older children will go through serving lines in the cafeteria. Children will be spread out and eating in the cafeteria, gym, and classrooms. Designated rooms have been established for children with life threatening allergies.
- VI. FOOD SERVICE DURING FEBRUARY AND APRIL RECESSES:** February Recess is February 15th and 16th. Since February 15th is a holiday, additional meals will be provided prior to the recess to cover meals for February 13th-15th. Food service staff will not be working on the 15th but will return on February 16th to distribute meals. April Recess is April 12th-16th. Meals will continue to be distributed as usual during that week.
- VII. UPDATE of POLICIES 3542.33 AND 3542.42:** Review of policies continue to be on-going and will stay on the agenda for future meetings. No updates have happened since the last meeting.

VIII. UPDATE ON LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES and ISSUES RELATED TO FOOD SERVICE:

Ms. Sharry reported that the school nurses are currently working on creating an easier way for Food Services to access food allergy information in Power School. Nurses are exploring methods that includes specific alerts, pop-ups, and special icons. This agenda item is on-going and will remain on the agenda for future meetings.

IX. DISCUSSION ON FEBRUARY AGENDA ITEMS:

The February agenda will include the update on policies and life-threatening allergies. Food Service Task Force members and guest will email additional requests for February.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday February 10, 2021 at 5:00 p. m. via Zoom. Agenda items are due to the chair (Mr. Matt Wilcox) and co-chair (Mr. Larry Conaway) by 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 4, 2021.

X. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m. by Mr. Larry Conaway.