

Colonial School District
District Operations
Safety and Wellness Committee
Meeting Minutes
9/23/10

Committee Chair Ms. Kathleen Oxberry called the meeting to order at 7:32 AM

Other Committee Members Present: Alan Tabachnick

Other Board Members Present: Sue Moore, Kelly Jowett

Also Attending: Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Dr. Maryellen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Terry R. Yemm, Director of Operations; Karen Berk, Director of Pupil Services; Lori McCoy, Director of Food Services; Tom Traister, District Safety Officer; Chief Eileen Behr, Whitemarsh Township Police Department; Lieutenant Christopher Ward, Whitemarsh Township Police Department; Eileen Lafferty, Drug and Alcohol Prevention Coordinator, Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol

Public Comment on the Agenda: None.

The Committee reviewed details of a proposed plan to allow local police department's access to the exterior cameras at each of our schools. Tom Traister, District Safety Officer, explained that he felt that providing access to our exterior cameras may be a benefit to the District in limiting crime on our campuses. The plan would allow the ability for one computer at each of the police stations in the three (3) local municipalities to log on to any of our exterior cameras in the event of a problem reported at any of our schools. Mr. Traister felt that the ability to access the exterior cameras would be especially beneficial during evening and nighttime hours and weekends as the District is not staffed to monitor the cameras during these times. Chief Behr provided that the Whitemarsh Township Police Department has a similar arrangement with local banks in the area and would be agreeable to participate in the program. Some of the Committee members expressed concerns about the District's liability if the use of the cameras resulted in a false arrest or were used inappropriately by members of the local police departments. The Committee directed Mr. Yemm to work with the District solicitor in determining the legalities of this proposal.

A proposal to standardize the identification badges worn by all District employees was provided for review. Mr. Traister explained that, under the current scenario, the identification badges differ for each school as they depict the specific school colors and mascot. In addition, the existing badges do not include a school year. Consequently, an employee that was terminated from employment could enter any one of our schools and there would be no ability to determine if the employee was still working for our District based on their identification badge. Additionally, the existing system is antiquated and the equipment used to make the badges is no longer supported by the manufacturer and the amount of time involved with making each badge is substantial. Mr. Traister met with

the vendor that makes the student identification badges and takes the student pictures to discuss this issue and was told that the vendor could make the new staff identification badges at no cost to the District provided that the work is performed at the same time that the student badges and pictures are taken each year.

The Committee reviewed a request for an additional EvacuTrak unit for the science wing at the Plymouth Whitemarsh High School. An EvacuTrak is a unit designed to transport disabled individuals down a flight of stairs in an emergency situation. The District currently has four EvacuTrak units, one in the east wing at the Plymouth Whitemarsh High School, one at the Colonial Middle School, one at the Conshohocken Elementary School and one at the Colonial Elementary School. The Committee provided support for moving forward with the purchase of another unit.

Lori McCoy presented information about a new program initiated by First Lady Michelle Obama. The program is a national campaign titled “Let’s Move” with the intent on solving the childhood obesity epidemic within a generation. Under the “Let’s Move” umbrella falls a program known as the “Chefs Move to Schools.” Mrs. Obama has called on chefs to get involved by pairing up with schools to work with teachers, parents, school nutritionists and administrators to help educate kids about food and nutrition. By creating healthy dishes that taste good, she believes that chefs have a unique ability to deliver these messages in a fun and appealing way to the larger audience, particularly children. Lori has expressed her interest in the District participation and was paired with Chef Carol Boehm. Currently, out of 56 school districts in Pennsylvania that have signed up, Colonial is the only one to have been paired with a chef, according to the United States Department of Agriculture’s Healthy Meals Resource Website.

The objective and goals of the District’s participation is as follows; Colonial School District will aide in helping to solve the childhood obesity epidemic within a generation by bringing fun to healthy foods and teaching about cooking/nutrition in an engaging way. Additionally the District will;

- Develop new, healthy, creative and fun recipes for children
- Generate new breakfast recipes/items to increase breakfast participation
- Create recipes using items from our school garden
- Enrich skills of Food Service Employees in the areas of knife use, meal presentation, scratch cooking, etc.
- Assist with training our staff on “presentation cooking” for students during meal times.
- Implement our own district “Cooking Show” for community members which would air on our local district’s cable channel. We could incorporate chef, dietitian, and students to demonstrate how to prepare easy healthy recipes for the children in our community at home.

Mr. Yemm was pleased to announce that Ms. Eileen Lafferty would serve as an ad-hoc member of the Committee. Ms. Lafferty is the Drug and Alcohol Prevention Coordinator

for the Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol. Ms. Lafferty indicated that she was excited to be a member of the Committee and was anxious to work with the District and local police department in keeping all informed about the counties programs for drug and alcohol prevention.

There being no further business before the committee, Ms. Oxberry adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:02 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry R. Yemm
Director of Operations