



MINUTES

Providence School Board Health & Wellness Committee Meeting

Pursuant to Executive Order 20-25 issued by the Governor of Rhode Island, the Providence School Board held this meeting remotely. A recording is available on the Providence School Board YouTube channel at bit.ly/pvdschoolboard

August 26, 2020

CONVENE MEETING

1. Call Meeting to Order - Committee Chair Robert Gondola called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

In Attendance:

Diagneris Garcia, Committee Chair
Dr. Barbara Mullen, PPSD Chief Equity and Diversity Officer
Solight Sou, PPSD Wellness Coordinator
Dana Benton Johnson, PPSD Manager of Social Emotional Services
Lino Cambio, PPSD Supervisor of Food Services
Penelope Pare, PPSD Out of District Social Worker/HR Co-Chair
Natalie Fleming, PPSD School Psychologist
Linda Grossi, HPE Teacher Gilbert Stuart/Physical Health & Nutrition Subcommittee Co-Chair
Sarah Dinklage, Executive Director RI, Student Assistance Services/SE Health Co-Chair
Lisa Hoopis, Director of Community and Education Programs, Sojourner House/HR Co-Chair
Mark Jeffrey, Regional Manager, Sodexo
Ellen Cynar, Director of Healthy Communities Office
Rachel Newman-Greene, Deputy Director, Healthy Communities Office
Yeimy Bakemon-Morel, Project Manager, Day One
Karin Wetherill, Co-Director of the RI Healthy Schools Coalition

CONSENT AGENDA

2. Approve Agenda as presented
A motion was made to approve the consent agenda
MSV – Hoopis, Jeffrey (15-0) MOTION APPROVED

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL UPDATES

3. Welcome and introduction
Chairwoman Garcia welcomed all attendees and thanked them their presence.
4. Comments from the Community/Guests
Bakemon-Morel provided information about Day One, the only agency in RI to provide multiple preventative and educational supports for sexual assault and violence.

Cynar announced that Providence has continued efforts to serve free summer meals and was recently granted an extension to meet the 2-week delay gap of schools reopening. Jeffrey offered to provide additional Sodexo staff at meal sites if needed.

Wetherill inquired if Providence is utilizing the Community Eligibility Provision throughout the District. Jeffrey confirmed but added that income forms are still being used for funding eligibility in other programs.

Fleming offered as a resource RI Health Standards to support student health and social emotional learning. Wetherill added that RIDE will be reviewing the Health Education curriculum's framework to align to national standards, and inquired about offering additional PD to support this collaborative work. Sou stated that Health Supervisor Donna O'Connor will be discussing the School Health Needs Assessments and its recommendations regarding the existing health curriculum with her team of nurses and health educators.

5. School Health Needs Assessment

Cynar and Newman-Greene presented on the School Health Needs Assessment, an assessment that captures specific health data for Providence schools. The finished 80-page document identified needs, prioritized goals for the District, and provided best-practice recommendations.

The work for the SHNA began earlier this year when the City of Providence's Healthy Communities Office and leaders at PPSD agreed to submit a request for proposals to conduct a school health needs assessment. This went up for bid in February 2020. An international consultation company, Baker Tilly, was chosen to conduct the SHNA and their work was completed in June 2020. This is RI's very first School Health Needs Assessment.

Through the collection of secondary data and key informant interviews conducted during the pandemic, Baker Tilly utilized the CDC's Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community (wSCC) model and social determinants of health to produce an 80 page document with key findings and recommendations for Providence Schools.

Highlights included:

Access to Care -Providence youths have high asthma rates that are disproportionately impacted by youths of color. Students are also requiring more behavioral health visits but there is a great need to increase capacity and address access barriers.

Health Risk Factors - 20% of youths are obese, disproportionately impacting youths of color impacted. E-cigarette use is rapidly rising in secondary schools. The older conditions of many Providence schools do not allow for safe recreation for students and contribute to health issues like asthma. School meals also need further improvement to be more appealing and reflect diverse student culture and should be leveraged as supplementing food insecurity.

Trauma - 80 - 90% of students have experienced some form of trauma. While reported violence is declining, Providence students still experience higher rates of violence, higher rates of incarcerated parents, child abuse/neglect than the rest of the state. However, there are lower instances of bullying in schools.

Behavioral Health - Students are reporting increased anxiety, depression and stress, exceeding statewide averages. Youth of color also report poorer mental health than White youth. LGBTQ+ students are also more likely to report mental health and substance abuse concerns.

School Culture & Climate: Feelings of belonging to school and positive school climate are declining, most impacting grades 3-5. SEL indicators are lower for Providence, but increasing at the secondary levels. Students and families want more opportunities to be involved.

The SHNA outlined district-wide health opportunities and recommendations to address and improve the school environment. Strategic prioritization of health has been shown to be a key factor in education achievement. A restructuring of the district wellness committee to better coordinate, monitor, assess, and support these efforts was also recommended.

Recommended immediate next steps were to:

1. Pursue a school health curriculum review
2. Finalize a cross-sector plan for student health and wellness, leveraging community partners and engaging students and families
3. Monitor and evaluate student health initiatives and outcomes

Cynar added that that state and city is currently awaiting budget approval to fund such efforts.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

6. Social Emotional Subcommittee Update

Benton Johnson requested that the subcommittee be referred to as the Social emotional health subcommittee to avoid confusion with social emotional learning. This subcommittee will focus on supporting students and families and is in the process of finalizing their mission and vision as they begin rebranding and selecting goals

7. Physical Health & Nutrition Subcommittee Update

Grossi explained that the subcommittee has been unable to meet due to COVID-19 but will reconvene to redefine a new mission and vision.

8. Healthy Relationships Subcommittee Update

Hoopis stated that the subcommittee has not met recently but is in the process of creating a one pager about the subcommittee to continue recruiting members. Goals to increase PD, awareness days to define healthy relationships, a review of the current curriculum, and better outreach for support had been pre-identified the last time HR met.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

9. Announcements

Hoopis shared out that Sojourner House offers a school-based advocate to address student trauma through one-on-one or group support. It was requested

ADJOURN

10. Adjourn Meeting

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 6:02 PM

MSV – Cynar, Grossi (15-0) MOTION APPROVED