**WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Date: December 11, 2014**

**Present:**

Peter Rowe – Town Chief Financial Officer

Tricia Laham – Coordinator of School Health Services (Baker School nurse for 14 years)

Helen Delichatsios – Parent (Baker, BHS)

Hillary Janowski –Parent (Pierce), nurse

Lynne Karsten – Director of Community Health

Mary Minott – Prevention/Intervention (BHS/BPH) social worker

Karen Campbell – Brookline Parent Education Network co-coordinator and writer/editor

Blanka Bogdanovic – Parent (BHS)

Sue Levy – Parent (Pierce, BEEP), company is Savory Eating, interested in nutrition

Teddi Jacobs – BPS Coordinator of Health and PE

Bettina Neuefeind – Parent (Lawrence) advocates disability rights

June Harris -- Brookline Parent Education Network co-coordinator, schedule master

Alden Cadwell – Director of Food Services

Betsy Dalbeck – Parent (BHS), B-PEN parent rep, executive coach and strategy consultant

Melissa Battite – REC Dept.

Alisa Lincoln – Parent (Lincoln, BHS) Associate Director of Institute on Urban Health (mental health)

Gail Corcoran – Heath School nurse

Donna Pertel – Parent (Runkle)

Kirsten Davison – Guidance? (Runkle, Devotion)

Sharon Jelden – Parent (Runkle)

Kerry Brown – Parent (Lincoln, BHS)

Stephanie Corrado, MD – Mind Body/Adolescent Medicine, Parent

Susan Phillips -- Parent

Eric Rimm – Parent (BHS)

Laura Gabel-Hartman – Parent (BHS)

Doreen Gallagher – Violence Prevention

**UPDATES**

**Wellness Website –** (Mary and Karen) A new stand-alone website for the committee has been created to give the group’s work more accessibility and visibility and to give us a place to store info about the work we are doing. The site – [www.brooklinewellness.weebly.com](http://www.brooklinewellness.weebly.com) -- will ultimately be linked to a page on the PSB site, providing a couple of places to go for information. Currently, there is a tab on the new site for each major component of the committee. For those that already have dedicated sites, the primary focus of the page can be to drive traffic to those sites for more specific information, as I suspect we’ll keep the Wellness site pretty broad. For now, stakeholders can send info/corrections/suggestions to Karen (kcampbell@brooklinema.gov) to post if they would like. However, the site is intentionally rather simple to navigate and to edit, and the ultimate goal is to have all manage their own pages. Karen can create a little “cheat sheet” to help everyone get started once the site is more settled. Currently, a work in progress, but goal is to have official launch announcement go out to schools, administrations, etc. in January.

**Food Services --** (Bettina and Alden) A group of parents and staff talked about challenges of existing wellness policy and practices outside of the school meal re: food from vending machines and ala carte lines (decisions made by the school district, but need to clarify) as well as for celebrations, etc. The takeaway is that practices vary from school to school, class to class, so recommend a district wide survey of what practices are. Work over next semester to see who the contacts are at each school, decide on best questions to ask, etc. so that have good information base before end of year. The big question is how to get fully a compliant and functional school wellness policy for the long term that is stable and coherent across the district. Can work through WC parent members and principals to get data and provide tools and solutions. Ultimately policy decisions are by school committee, but we can present to the appropriate subcommittee to help lay groundwork for consideration. Last time 2007 that committee took ideas and softened considerably (didn’t want to be “food police”), but Peter advises approaching them early and trying again with suggestions for strong administrative guidelines. Culture has changed since 2007 and if have some data showing what’s still happening with current guidelines, may be more receptive. Guidelines could be posted on food section of new website.

**Mental Health** – (Mary) So much going on seems siloed, so working on ways to coordinate and take advantage of opportunities for a lot of information sharing. Met with Christina and Teddi. Deb Holman at BHS is doing something on suicide prevention, coordinating with health, B-PEN, guidance, etc. This brought together lost of different people to share what we’re doing so we know who we can connect with around initiatives. Not specific next step as much as call to continue to share. Public Health Week is first week in April, aiming to do community forum. Topic recommended is resilience, perhaps promoted as a direct outcome of the last forum on “Teens and Mental Health.” Any ideas on speakers? What’s most interesting, needed for parents? Please email June (june\_harris@brookline.k12.ma.us) or Karen (kcampbell@brooklinema.gov) with suggestions. Primarily geared MS and HS. Sub committee to plan event, plus a breakfast meeting.

**Recreation** – (Melissa)

Tons going on, winter book just launched, after New Year’s release 4th annual Passport to Fitness, $10 opportunity to sample up to 13 health and wellness providers in town (tai chi, yoga, swim, etc.) for free sessions. Will participate in National Public Health week. Have new youth outdoors club for MS. Asking parents to please promote baseline concussion screenings for kids 11 and up (30 minute memory test) -- not getting enough buy-in given the importance of the issue. Complementing HS athletic program screenings. Have had some parents call back to send results to doctors. A lot of legislation moving toward mandatory screenings for all teams, but not here yet. (Awareness piece – training to recognize concussion symptoms -- is already in place.) Jan. 11 community-wide kids fair, find out what’s available in camps over summer and employment opportunities. Last summer was second summer extended food service into summer camps, very successful, loops health and wellness into the summer program.

**Health and Fitness** – (Teddi)

Several years ago, extensive program review results recommendation for comprehensive health ed k-12. Since already had 8-9 in place, built out from there adding 7th grade. Now health ed is 7-9, since then talking about adding grade 6 and 10 and up. Without override, however, this may be forever in limbo. Added four sessions of “Break Free from Depression” for freshmen, and kids are really starting to share thoughts, feelings, concerns on mental health issues. Form of early prevention, but only one semester, two times a week, and also squeezing in nutrition, relationships, etc. Adding two lessons on marijuana, always squeezing something in trying to be responsive. Getting creative – Peer Leaders presented on marijuana while kids were on spinning bikes.

**Discussion** -- So how do we push health ed forward? What can this committee do to raise awareness and visibility? Desire in district to expand more on language, arts, etc. so always tension within organization for time and funding. What’s the tradeoff at lower grades? Programmatic redistribution of focus has been in discussion for many years. Advisories, workshops, and extra blocks in MS at principal’s discretion. People often assume Brookline is progressive and kids are getting everything they need. Set up parent follow-up group to talk about health education. (June will try to coordinate.)

**Public Health** – (Lynne) – Runkle is having second breakfast and will have once a month – “Keep Calm and Enjoy Breakfast” – program encourages parents to come and share breakfast with kids at school.

* Climate change week in February – send in photos to share gardens, etc. to promote local eating
* Clothing drive – Mary will send flyer so we can post on Wellness
* Nominations for Women’s Commission for Woman of the Year – [Http://tinyurl.com/BCW-WOTY-2015](http://tinyurl.com/BCW-WOTY-2015)

**School Health** – (Tricia) –Not seeing a lot of any particular illness. Encouraging flu shots. Good turnout at flu clinics (call 710-2320 to get flu shot). Submitting updated emergency response procedures to all teachers in January.

**B-PEN** – Freshman parent network group facilitated by Hope Schroy (Parent Resource Advocate) had 30 people, focused on social/emotional/developmental challenges in freshman year, understanding transition kids make navigating new world of BHS. Parents talked about broader friendship pool, how to let kids be independent but stay safe. Good feedback, parents want another meeting. B-PEN can help facilitate meetings – part of mission is to help parents at different grade levels better cope with the stress of children at specific developmental points. Invited to speak to seniors about senior stress and also working on meeting about junior stress, responding to parent needs. At MS level, Jen Maylone has invited Dr. Laurence Cohen to address concerns of parents March 4 at 7 at Devotion.

**Override discussion** – if override moves forward, selectmen will probably make recommendation in January on scope, purpose, cost. Schedule for vote in May (same date as vote for Town Meeting members, at this point). There should be a lot of conversation in spring to help people understand the consequences. Institutionally, our committee can’t advocate, but can inform.

**Next meeting** -- March 4 at 8:30 a.m. (then May 6 at 8:30) – like to talk about hot topics, could parent committee members be eyes and ears and report on what parents are most concerned about re: wellness? Like to get feedback.