

Minutes of the School Food Subcommittee
December 13, 2004

Present: Ed Wilkins, Paula Jones, Ericka Lovrin, Philip Smith, Maribeth Goldstein, Maryann Rainey, Leah Rimkus, Caroline Grannan, Dana Woldow

Dana Woldow called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm. Minutes from the November meeting were read and a motion made to approve them as read. MSP.

The taste testing of new cafeteria food, which was held at Visitation Valley Middle School in October, was discussed. Ed distributed a summary of the student feedback sheets; most of the items were very well received by the students who participated.

Ed proposed switching from the current milk, which comes in a plastic pouch, to a carton. Drawbacks of the carton are increased waste (although the cartons are compostable) and the requirement of more space in the coolers. However, the new meals which include more vegetables mean there is space available in the coolers which formerly was required for vegetables. Also, the pouches are prone to leakage, which is unsanitary and has been the source of many complaints from the schools. One important benefit of the carton is that the milk is from Berkeley Farms and will therefore be a few cents cheaper than the pouch milk, for which BF acts as the distributor, but the milk is not theirs. Ed noted that neither the milk in the pouch, nor in the carton, contain Bovine Growth Hormone. Milk costs have shot up considerably this year, so switching back to the carton can help defray the cost. The committee supports a switch to the carton.

The issue of sodium limits was again discussed. Very few other districts have set limits, and those that have range from 360 mg to 1100 mg per meal. The committee has not establish any kind of permanent limit on sodium, but agreed to start with a working limit of 600 mg and see if that is feasible. Next step will be Ed assembling a list of the sodium content for the various meals served in the lunch program, to see how many fall within that limit. Ed believes most, if not all, of them do. This issue will be revisited at the next meeting.

Leah provided an update on the salad bar at Harvey Milk. Participation continues to be up on salad bar days, and in theory the salad bar covers its own expenses. Cash collection from "paid" students continues to be a problem, as it is at all schools. Potential problems with expanding the project into other schools were mentioned, including potential union opposition to the use of volunteers, the tendency of middle and high school students to take extra food to share with friends, and the added delivery cost for more schools. Next step will be Leah proposing several possible scenarios for expansion of the program, and the committee reviewing them. Funding for additional sites will need to be sought promptly to expand in 05-06.

Philip presented an overview of SNS operations. The department is getting a better handle on their financial situation. Milk price increases have hurt the department, but the Preferred Meal System K-5 menu appears successful. Invoices are being paid more

promptly and the cost of labor thus far appears to be as expected. The LEAF grant does not have enough money to pay for a POS as planned. Philip has not been able to get an explanation of what happened to the money that was supposed to be earmarked for this pilot. There are some unanswered questions related to the free and reduced price lunch numbers for 02-03 and 03-04. Some restructuring within SNS may take place shortly.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 pm.

Next meeting will be on January 10th at Aptos.