

Health and Wellness Committee
October 2, 2024
Minutes

Mrs. Roll called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM. Introductions were made and new members welcomed.

Karin Wetherill from the RI Healthy Schools Coalition spoke about the RIHSC Annual Breakfast scheduled for October 23rd at the Crowne Plaza. Lincoln Public Schools has reserved a Table of 10 and she encouraged members of the Wellness Committee to attend. A sign-up sheet was circulated and Mrs. Roll indicated that confirmations would be sent to those attending.

Mrs. Roll distributed the 2023-24 Annual Health and Wellness Report that was presented to the Lincoln School Committee at its September meeting. This report includes information from the Wellness Policy Evaluation submitted by the Principals at the end of the 2023-24 school year. Feedback from the evaluations indicates progress over time in meeting policy requirements but also suggests specific areas “needing improvement” in the key areas of Nutrition, Health and Physical Education and Staff Wellness that can help focus the work of the Wellness Committee during the coming year. She also noted that the work that goes on at the School level in between meetings of the Wellness Committee has been essential to everything that has been accomplished.

Mrs. Roll referred to the work done by Wellness Committee Workgroups, post-COVID: SEL (Social Emotional Learning), LHS Green Team and most recently Chronic Absenteeism. She suggested that the work within these focus areas should continue. Dr. McNamara noted that In addition to the integration of SEL competencies in the current curriculum, especially ELA, a common SEL curriculum has been adopted K-5.

Principals reported that the efforts of the school-based Attendance Teams have had over the last year have resulted in a significant reduction in chronic absenteeism. A discussion of persistent challenges, including family vacations scheduled outside traditional school vacation periods were discussed. Mrs. Roll noted that this is not a new problem but one that has become more prevalent for a variety of reasons. Messaging regarding what symptoms may require a student to miss school may need to be clarified along with the impact of lost instructional time on students. Mrs. Roll also suggested that the importance of Family Engagement, identified as a key component in the work last year at the school level reduce absenteeism, could also be included in the ongoing work of that Work Group. Dr. McNamara provided additional resource materials for use by the school-based teams as they continue their work in this area.

Student representatives from the LHS Green Team provided an update on their efforts to date to grow student participation in the Food Waste Recycling effort. Last year, efforts to establish a Share Table in the school’s cafeteria did not make much traction. The Green Team is working to build on last year’s efforts but is also interested in expanding student engagement in other environmental issues as a means of increasing student involvement. Mr. Frost, the Faculty Advisor to the LHS Green Team commented on the enthusiasm of the new student leadership that was demonstrated at the Green Team’s first meeting of the year. Mrs. Roll reported that the RI Recycling Project’s model for recycling food waste in the elementary cafeterias is expected to begin rolling out in 2025 as construction work is completed. This is the model that was presented by Warren Heyman and Jim Corwin to the District Wellness Committee in September 2024.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 4, 2024