

Pittsburg Unified School District
DELAC Meeting
April 8, 2019

Present:

Foothill: Adriana Medina, Aidee Cisneros

Heights: Virginia Martinez, Yazmin Cano

Highlands: María Rosales

Los Medanos:

Parkside:

Willow Cove: Miguel Alvarado, Miriam

Trejo, María Chávez, Silvia Portillo

Stoneman: Martha Carabantes

Marina Vista: Dalia Medina

Hillview JH: Yazmin Cano, Virginia

Martínez, María Rosales, Martha Rodríguez

Rancho Medanos JH: Mirta Rivas,
Adriana Medina, Elvia Gracián

MLK, Jr. JH:

PHS: Mirtha Rivas, María Rosales,
María Chávez

Ed Services: Sandra Guardado,
Lorena Asdourian

PUSD: Ms. Kathleen Culcasi, Child
Nutrition Services

Welcome and Introductions: Mrs. Sandra Guardado open the meeting and Mrs. Rosales, our DELAC president welcomed everyone and asked the members to introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes: The notes for the ELAC Reports were approved.

Presentation by Child Nutrition Department: Mrs. Kathleen Culcasi, from the Child Nutrition Services introduced herself and mentioned that she had prepared a short presentation regarding key information about the process of selecting the food they serve at the school and then she would open it up for questions.

She started by sharing that managers at each of the sites speak to the children to know what they like and don't like. We also do test group and have students try new foods that we as a department are considering to serve to see if they like it. Mrs. Culcasi shared that their department works closely with a lot of local farms and produce growers to get the best and freshest items. Through our own food gardens we are able to grow some of our fruits and vegetables and then we serve them to our students and through it we can have students try new items.

A committee member asked, how do you decide what to serve for lunch and what will be included in the monthly menu? She shared that they have meetings every month, we talk with the managers, to know what the students are eating and what the students are not eating. We have different meetings to get input from the elementary versus the secondary schools since the type of food that is offered at each level is different.

Mrs. Culcasi mentioned that she is in charge of the buying the food and working with our different suppliers. She expressed that this is the area she is passionate about she enjoys being able to buy the types of food the students like. She is also committed to getting our students the best type of choices and freshest items. She mentioned that at the beginning their philosophy was to introduce the students to new types of food but we rather focus on purchasing the food they really like and will actually eat because we want to make sure our students eat and consume the food. So we often serve pizza, hamburgers, tacos because we know they like it. We learned that if

students do not like the food they simply do not eat it and it gets wasted so we focus on getting the items they like. Aside from the hot item they are also required to serve students vegetables and fruits. Our students have access to self-serving salad bars and they get to choose what produce they add to their plate but they must add a specific serving of both vegetables and fruits.

Mrs. Culcasi shared that they are constantly re-evaluating the items that get served and that the monthly menus are on a rotating cycle. But they only bring back the items that they know the students like.

Another member asked, how do you make sure, that all the grade levels, get all the selections of the food items and that all students get a balance meal?

Mrs. Culcasi answered that the managers make sure they reserve food to be able to offer all the choices to the different grade levels. It seems that these happens more in the elementary schools than in the secondary schools. She shared that this is all a work in progress and an area that they can improve on at different sites. She expressed that the lunch schedules at the sites are all different which make things more complicated and challenging since they have to adjust based on the needs of the specific sites.

She also stated that as much as they try to make sure they have all the different food options for the students by keeping inventory of what is being eaten things also fluctuate based on what the students feel like eating that they. She mentioned that there is a factor of peer influence that can alter what food gets picked first. She said that students often make their selection based on what their friends are eating since they want to eat the same thing.

Mrs. Culcasi continued her presentation and shared the food guidelines they have to follow. She shared that our Child Nutrition department is regulated under the Healthy Kids Act and all the individuals who work in the cafeterias are Safe Served certified. She stated that our kitchens are inspected at least twice a year by the health department. We had four sites this year that are exceeding and had no findings two years in arrow from the Health Department. Those four sites are MLK, Jr. JH, Hillview JH, Marina Vista and Stoneman.

The Healthy Kids Act dictates what we can and cannot serve our students. We have to make sure our students are served whole grains versus enriched flour and also dictate the specific serving size students must be served of vegetables and fruits.

A member asked, do they announce when they do the inspection? Mrs. Culcasi stated that the visits are unannounced. They want to make sure that we are always doing what is expected and serving our students the best food. Which is what makes the recognitions more significant especially having a school like Hillview that has an older kitchen and is still able exceed on the inspections.

Another member asked, who are the managers are they the ones the serve the food? It depends, the managers do a little bit of everything in the kitchen and they also serve as the cafeteria supervisors. They take a lot of pride in taking time to talk to the students and find out what food they like. The goal of the supervisor is to make sure that the cafeteria is run smoothly and that regulations are followed but their ultimate responsibility is to ensure that students get served.

Members shared their concerns regarding the length of time students have to eat and how the inputting of the student ID in the computer seems to be a slow process.

Mrs. Culcasi mentioned that the issue of time has been an issue for years. She shared that the principals select their time and schedule. Given the specific schedule they configure their serving schedule to be able to serve all the eligible students. The students rotate through the serving lines by grade at the elementary level and they make sure the younger students get served before the upper elementary grades. She mentioned that the inputting of the student ID number is something that is required, they have to account for the number of students that are getting served. They must account for this for auditing and ordering purposes. She continued to share that some of the school schedules are more difficult to manage than others and some are more taxing than others just based on the number of students they serve and how they go about serving them. She mentioned Willow Cove as an example and stated that at Willow Cove it feels like they are serving food all day transitioning from breakfast, second-chance breakfast and then lunch for all six grade levels. She reassured the members that despite the different schedules they work hard to make sure all the students have enough time to eat and they do what they can to help streamline the process to serve as many students as possible. She also mentioned that every kid that wants to eat has time to eat but that she has seen students opt to go play because they see their friends out playing rather than staying in the cafeteria to finish eating.

A member asked, is there something that can be done to automatize the student ID process. Can they use an ID scanner to help expedite the process and grant time for students to eat?

Ms. Culcasi responded that they have explored with card/ID scanners but that it often did not work because of technology difficulties. She explained that the volume of students they are serving also impacted the speed of the scanning system that it became difficult to manage and hence have adopted the current student ID process. Students are expected to learn their ID number and they must state their name and last name to be served food. This is to make sure that the right student is served and it is also a regulation they have to follow. Students must self-identify themselves in order to be served.

A member mentioned that at Rancho Medanos the students are able to scan their ID to get food. She also stated that at Rancho Medanos the student that does not eat is a student that selects not to eat because they have enough time and their process goes super smoothly because the principal is there to help supervise the students and keeps the line moving. Mrs. Culcasi shared that the serving process is different at the elementary level versus secondary.

A member shared a concern she had about students at the secondary level giving an ID number that is not theirs and how then that impacts the actual student when they go to get food. Mrs. Culcasi didn't denied that it does happen but she assured the members that the impacted student will always be served food, she suggested that they go find the manager and report the incident and at the same time they will be served their food.

Members expressed their desire to have more food options for the students that they like. They mentioned that students love cucumbers and jicama with Tajin and wonder why they do not offer this more regularly to students. Various members supported this request stating that their students happily report to them that they love when they have cucumber and jicama with Tajin, they love it!

Another member asked, why can't we serve only fresh fruit to the students instead of the canned fruit, like peaches and the mixed fruit. Mrs. Culcasi explained that they strive to offer our student the seasonal items, that's how student get introduced to items like kiwis, papayas and melons. We know that our students love fruit and we work with some of the best farms to get the best and freshest items to bring those to our students but we also serve canned fruit because students like that as well. Some students prefer it over the fresh fruit and it is a regulation that students get a serving of fruits daily. She stated that she does not see them discontinuing the serving of canned fruit because it is an option for students and some really do like it. Mrs. Culcasi stated that she would take the information back to her department and consider serving more cucumber and jicama to the students.

A member asked, is there a way to tell and encourage students to only serve themselves the food they are actually going to eat so that food does not get wasted? Mrs. Culcasi explained that they have salad bar ambassadors and their job is to help students make appropriate food selection and explain students their salad and fruit options. But the challenge with the position is that they often get pulled to help cover if someone is absent in other roles which often leaves this position unfilled. She explained that it is a requirement to serve students vegetables and fruits. Because the students love fruit and do well in serving themselves fruit the only thing we make sure we serve them is the vegetables since we want make sure they make it on to their plate.

A member asked, how do you make sure that all the fruit choices get replenish and that all students regardless of the grade level have access to all the choices? Mrs. Culcasi mentioned that the manager takes time to keep an eye on the food items that need to be replenish and do so throughout the serving time. If needed they go and cut more fruit to bring out to students.

A member suggested that they conduct a student survey annually to find out the kind of food the students like and want to eat this way the data can speak for itself. He stated that is good that the managers talk to the students and find out what they like but a student survey would allow more students to voice their opinion and better inform the selection of food items. It is critical that the student is involved in the decision of what is being served since they are the consumers.

Mrs. Culcasi mentioned that she would take that suggestion back to her team. She expressed that she feels like her departments have a good understanding of what the students like by virtue of being out there and interacting with students and asking them directly about what they like. She explained that the Child Nutrition department ultimately make the decision of what food gets ordered and ensures that all the food that is served meets the guidelines and regulations they must abide by. As a department they determine the monthly food menus.

Another member stated, I completely understand all the regulations that we must abide by. She pleaded that personally she would like to see that students are served only fresh fruit and vegetables versus the canned stuff.

Mrs. Culcasi stated that they do not serve as much canned vegetables as they do canned fruit. The majority of the vegetables that we serve the students are fresh but she also stated that we do have students who prepared the canned vegetables and fruits over the fresh one and that their job is to make sure the students are given the required food servings.

Mrs. Culcasi concluded her presentation by giving all the members a copy of her business card. She encouraged the members to reach out to her if they had any other suggestions about the food selection and menu choices. She also told them that they could reach her if they had any particular concerns about their specific school sites in regards to how the food is being served to students. She invited them to share their ideas and suggestion with her since they are welcomed.

Needs Assessment.

Mrs. Guardado shared last year's ELAC Needs Assessment and had the committee review the questions and make any suggestions with regards to any additions and edits they would like to see.

A suggestion was made to add a couple more questions regarding parents' knowledge of our ELD rotation process as well as the ability to request additional teacher parent conference beyond the one the schools have do offer at the beginning of the year. Mrs. Guardado reassured them that she would add those additional questions to the survey prior to sending it out to the sites.

ELAC Reports.

Given the length of the Child Nutrition presentation ELAC reports will be reported at next month's meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm.