



# School Health Advisory Committee Meeting

September 21, 2023

Lee County Public Education Center

9:00 – 10:30 am

## Member/Guests/Presenters

Colon, Wildaliz	SDLC - Assistant Director - Health Services
Comella, Deb	Drug Free Lee Executive Director
Fleming, Jada	SDLC - Board Member
Fleming, Tina	LMHS – Project ADAM, Child Advocate
Goerke, Kurt	DOH – Health Education Program Manager
McRoberts, Sydney	SDLC – ESE Nurse
Miner, Moira	SDLC - ESE Nurse Specialist
Nieves, Nadia	DOH – Tobacco Prevention Program
Noble, Julie	LMHS - Safe Kids SWFL Coordinator
Parker, Heather	SDLC - Wellness Coordinator
Rodriguez, Mary Lynn	SDLC - Coordinator School Counseling Services
Roy, Leisha	SDLC – TOA Comprehensive Health Education, SHAC Chair
Thompson, Sara	SDLC - Prevention Specialist
Urquiola, Adrian	DOH - Health Promotion and Wellness
Wynne, Kathy	SDLC - Prevention Specialist

Meeting was called to order at 9:09 by Leisha Roy.

Minutes from the April 13, 2023, 10<sup>th</sup> meeting were unanimously approved with Deb Comella making a motion to approve and a second was made by Kathy Wynne.

Agenda for the meeting was unanimously approved with Julie Noble making a motion to approve and a second was made by Kurt Goerke.

## NEW BUSINESS

**Farm to School (F2S)** – Before introducing the presenter, Leisha Roy gave a brief overview of the Healthy Living Collaboration, which focuses on school gardening, nutrition education, and smarter lunchrooms. This collaboration is in its third year and works closely with UF IFAS and FGCU among many other community organizations. Currently, the Collaboration is focusing on ten “priority” schools with the goal that these schools will be mentors for future school garden programs.

Last year the Collaboration received a \$100,000 USDA Farm to School grant, that in part, pays for Heather Cook Gonzalez’s School Garden Educator position, but this funding runs out in December. Leisha stressed that she is currently working on finding additional funding.

After Leisha's introduction, Heather Cook Gonzalez introduced herself. She shared that she grew up in Lee County, is a product of the SDLC school system, studied art education, and then spent a couple of years working on farms in Wisconsin before moving back to Lee County and becoming a Master Gardener. Her passion of educating kids, love of gardening, and work experience brought her to SDLC in her current position as a School Garden Educator.

The presentation first covered why it is important to have school gardening programs. These programs provide hands-on opportunities in science, math, art, and more and they help students develop career ready skills, improve their food security, expose them to new fruits and vegetables, teach them sustainability and environmental stewardship, and increase their overall participation in a healthy living lifestyle.

Our Healthy Living Collaboration coordinates with and supports our Health, Food and Nutrition, Environmental, and Career & Tech educational programs.

Currently, there are fifty plus gardens throughout the SDLC. Ten schools are participating directly under the USDA grant and last year, despite Hurricane Ian, these schools harvested over 7500 lbs. of produce for their cafeterias.

Below are highlights from the presentation.

- Dunbar HS grew radishes, a vegetable that many students either had never tried or insisted they didn't like. But, when the radishes were harvested, many of these students started eating them while encouraging their peers to try them.
- Island Coast HS has a very large hydroponic farm and produces 50-60 lbs. of lettuce each week in addition to tomatoes, peppers, and other vegetables. The school cafeteria uses these vegetables to create their "Island Coast Crunch" salad.
- In Heather's opinion, East Lee County HS has one of the most beautiful gardens that includes hydroponic towers, raised beds and fruit trees. Due to Florida's subtropical climate, foods that are common in many of the students' homes, like guava, plantains, and jalapenos are grown here. Growing these familiar foods engage the students on a very personal level.
- Trafalgar Middle has the largest farm where they grow many different types of produce, like an "A-Z" vegetable farm. There is a strong collaboration with the Kitchen Manager, Brittany Brown, who works with the teacher in charge of the farm, to plan creative dishes for students based on what produce is grown. This garden produces so much that they share their harvests with other schools.
- Riverdale HS had an incredible bumper crop of watermelons last year.
- Young Parent's Education Program is also involved. These young moms and dads can take these skills home to teach their children.



- Buckingham Exceptional Student Center started a Garden Club that meets M-Th for an hour each day. These students are getting an incredible sensory experience by getting into the dirt, playing with the seeds, and smelling the different herbs that they are growing.
- The Healthy Living Collaboration is also working to pair schools with community organizations to develop and maintain school gardens. The Ft. Myers Rotary Sunshine Chapter is sponsoring Edison Park Elementary and Edgewood Academy is being sponsored by the Community Cooperative.
- Sprouts grocery store chain gave \$25,000 to sponsor a garden. This garden will be built at Heights Elementary and is planned to have six raised beds, twenty hydroponic lettuce towers, and an assortment of native plants and fruit trees. Some of this funding will also be used to support existing gardens in the district.
- Some of the other community partnerships include the Farmer's Market, UF IFAS Extension Office, USDA, Sakata Seed America, Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, FGCU, and Harry Chapin Food Bank.
- Heather created a Healthy Living Collaboration website that is currently available to anyone within the district and will hopefully go public soon.

**Farmer's Market Fridays** – Leisha Roy, SDLC TOA for Comprehensive Health Education, shared that October is National Farm to School month. In recognition of this, Dick and Jane's Educational Snacks company created a digital magazine featuring twenty school districts in the US. SDLC was one of those featured.

The digital magazine for Lee County features a video about RC Hatton Farm's, a local producer, who supplies the SDLC schools with fresh green beans and corn cobettes.

In addition, there will be Farmer's Market Fridays that will highlight a different vegetable each Friday to be served in the schools each Friday in October. The four vegetables are mini sweet bell peppers, green beans, corn, and lettuce.

**Employee Wellness Update** – Heather Parker, SDLC Employee Wellness Coordinator, shared that her primary job is to keep employees happy and healthy with lower health insurance claims. In this role, she presents annually to the Insurance Task Force, who is responsible for deciding what the SDLC Health Insurance will look like as a school district.

SDLC saves approximately 25-26 million dollars each year in health insurance claims. One example of how SDLC employees are keeping healthy is that about 15-17% of Lee County's population has diabetes compared to approximately 7 ½% of SDLC employees. Although, when Heather first started working with SDLC, nine years ago, our percentage was equal to Lee County's percentage. This means that the SDLC does not have to increase employee's health care costs.

Heather then shared where the SDLC's Employee Wellness program was when she first started and where it is now. The district went from offering on-site health screenings eight years ago to paying employees to have an annual physical from their medical provider. This year, employees



will receive \$200 if they have an annual physical from their primary care physician. In addition, there are other healthy opportunities for employees to earn money. One is by participating in Walking Spree, a daily step tracker. Employees can earn \$1 every day they reach 6000 steps. And there will be specific Walking Spree challenges during the school year. The first one, called the Holiday Hustle, starts in November. This will have six-weeks of walking challenges where you can earn six badges. Everyone who earns all six badges will earn an additional \$50. Currently, the wellness incentives total \$600 per employee with the goal to offer \$1000 per employee by the 2025-26 SY.

A major reason why employees are being incentivized to have an annual well-being physical with their primary care physician is improve the employee-doctor relationship, which helps improve overall health. Annual health screenings cannot address specific needs like a physician can. The SDLC is tracking these visits and last year 38% of employees had an annual physical. Even though that is less than half of all SDLC employees, nationally only 18% of employees with other health plans get an annual physical.

Other employee wellness programs offered are a diabetes reversal class, online Diet-Free classes with Zonya, Pivio, Noom and Noom Mood.

Every single year ROI (Return on Investment) is being tracked. Typically, ROI is \$2 to \$3 on the dollar whereas the SDLC Employee Wellness Program's ROI runs about \$6 - \$8 on the dollar.

Heather then showed a graph of the trends with health care costs. Typically, companies see about an 8% annual increase, whereas our health care costs have gone down.

**Health Services Update** – Wally Colon, SDLC Assistant Director of Health Services, gave an update on what her department has done this past school year and is currently doing. Last year was the first year that the law required written parental consent to give any health care service to students. Since this requirement was not clearly defined, it was very difficult to navigate. This impacted the number of vision and hearing screenings for the mandated grades (Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup>) they are required by the Department of Health to give. They were able to complete 23,000 vision and 19,000 hearing screenings, but this was below their required numbers. SDLC was not alone in this problem with school districts across the state also falling below their required screening numbers.

In addition to screenings, school nurses had over 118,000 RN assessments. This does not include medication administrations, 911 calls, or times when clinic assistants had to provide a service. This number is strictly with our school nurses, in the Health Services Department and does not include ESE or Head Start nurses. Our nurses are treating kids who are coming in more and more sick with increasingly complex medical conditions. School nurses are giving insulin, treating seizures, treating severe allergies, to name just a few tasks.



This school year Health Services implemented a Heat Index Guideline. This was a collaborative initiative between Health Services, Lee Health, various doctors, and the Department of Health. These guidelines were created to help school administrators decide on what outdoor activities students could do based on the temperature and that teachers were made aware of any health conditions their students had to prevent heat related illnesses.

A new law that just took effect is that students are now allowed to carry any over-the-counter medication that is regulated for the use of headaches without a doctor's order. Previously, SDLC has always required a doctor's order for school nurses to provide medication to students, but this bill now allows any student, regardless of age or grade, to carry this type of over-the-counter medication with them. In response to this, Health Services worked with the SDLC legal team to create a consent form for parents to complete so both parents and schools are aware that their child will be carrying the medicine, that parents will be taking responsibility, and that students are bringing medicines in their original containers.

Other House Bills that took effect this school year is HB 389 and HB 443. HB 389 allows school nurses to provide hygiene products to students and our district chose to provide sanitary napkins free of charge, but not to provide tampons. SDLC's communication team created posters for student restrooms letting students know that can go to the school clinic for napkins.

House Bill 443 requires Emergency First Aid for Choking posters to be in all public-school cafeterias. Health Services worked with our communications department to create these posters which are now posted in our schools. Teachers are also being encouraged to post them in their classrooms. Currently, Wally has been in talking with Lee Health about providing LifeVacs, a rescue suction device, for our schools and she was recently told that Lee Health was moving forward with this. LifeVacs will not replace current procedures for choking victims but will act as another resource to help them.

Wally then shared that Project ADAM has provided AEDs, which are used for someone having a sudden cardiac arrest, for all our elementary and middle schools. High schools already had them. Wally continues to work with Tina Fleming with Project ADAM to secure more AEDs for schools.

To ensure schools are prepared for a cardiac emergency, school AED teams are now required to have two AED/cardiac emergency drills each school year. Wally also shared that all Before and After School programs and coaches must be CPR certified. In addition, all 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students must have hands-on CPR instruction as a requirement for graduation.

SW Florida is trying to become a heart safe community. This would mean that 15% of our community has hands-on knowledge on how to perform CPR, even if they are not certified.

Narcan has now been approved to be in our schools and Health Services is working with Kimmie's Recovery Zone to provide Narcan to all schools. Narcan will be safely stored in the clinics.



Kimie's Recovery Zone has already trained all SROs and they are now carrying Narcan on them. All administrators and school nurses have also been trained.

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Deb Comella shared that the "Running Away from Vaping" PSA created by the Dunbar Track Club will run in Regal Theaters during the Taylor Swift concert shows.

Kurt Goerke brought up HB 305 which allows individual communities to enact laws prohibiting smoking in parks and beaches. Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, the City of Fort Myers will vote on an ordinance to prohibit smoking in their parks and any County parks within the City of Fort Myers jurisdiction. Unfortunately, this ordinance does not include vaping products, but it still is a step forward.

Kurt passed out a flyer on this and invited everyone to attend the City of Fort Myers council meeting to either show support for this ordinance or to speak to the Council members.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Leisha asked if anyone had anything for public comment. No one had any comments.

Meeting was unanimously ended with a motion made by Wally Colon and seconded by Heather Parker.

Meeting adjourned at 10:56.

### **2023 – 2024 Meetings**

November 16, 2023

February 8, 2024

April 11, 2024

