

Wellness Policy Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 8, 2024 – 3:00 pm

Virtually over Zoom

1. Welcome and introductions – Sebasthian Varas

Members Present	Position	Subcommittee Assignment
Sebasthian Varas	Nutrition Service Director	Nutrition
Emily Jenkins	Nutrition Services Dietitian	Nutrition
Susan Edwards	Public Engagement Coordinator	Public Involvement
Shauna Flash	Canyons Living Chair, HR	Public Involvement
Jeff Christensen	Legal Counsel	Policy Adjustment
Everett Perry	HR Administrator	Public Involvement
Mark Martin	Parent	Policy Adjustment
Sami Martin	Student – CCHS	Public Involvement
Clara Evans	Student - CCHS	Public Involvement
Karen Pedersen	School Board Member	Unassigned
Jen Gerrard	District Nurse	Nursing
Halley Nelson	Middle School Administrator	Policy Adjustment
Kirsten Stewart	Communications Director	Public Involvement
Holly Bishop	Community Member	Policy Adjustment

2. Review of previous meeting minutes – Emily Jenkins

3. Reports and updates from various subcommittees

a. Policy Adjustment (Jeff Christensen, Halley Nelson, Mark Martin, Holly Bishop, Holly Bishop)

- i. Shared exciting updates regarding an increase in parental leave from 10 to 15 days.

b. School Nurses (Jen Gerrard)

- i. Shared an updated report from the UDHHS with suggestions for standards of care for serving outside food in schools (see Appendix).
- ii. Has information from the nursing team regarding allergic reactions from the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program administered in 6 of our elementary schools. Certain fruits have caused reactions due to unknown allergies. Jen will share this list with Sebasthian to share with the produce company to remove them from the FFVP foods list.

c. Nutrition (Emily Jenkins, Sebasthian Varas)

- i. USDA has finalized the timeline for updates to nutrition standards for school meals. These include lowering sodium and lowering sugar in school meals, with the changes slowly rolling out over the next few school years.
- ii. We have expanded to include Sandy Elementary in the Community Eligibility Program (CEP), so they will all receive free breakfast and free lunch next school year.
 1. A concern was brought up regarding the lower number of free and reduced price meal applications being filled out at CEP schools, which alters the income data.
 2. Sebasthian will confirm with IT that the application is a part of the registration process and is simple to fill out.
- iii. We are working with Dr. Sanderson to survey the community regarding sufficient time for elementary students to eat in the cafeteria.
 1. This will be done in October, with just a sample of the schools instead of the entire district. Sebasthian will ensure that Dr. Robinson is involved in the process, as well.

Standards of care

Outside food in schools

Food that is served in schools is typically provided by the nutrition services staff for each district or school; however, there may be times when food is provided that is not prepared by nutrition services staff.

Management

Food provided by the school for meals, including breakfast and lunch, should have nutritional information available for families. This should include carbohydrate counts (essential for students with diabetes) as well as an ingredient list (which is vital for students with food allergies).

Treats given to students for special occasions should be brought in a store-bought sealed package and labeled with nutritional information. Homemade treats should not be allowed to protect those students with food allergies, since ingredients may include a life-threatening allergen. This will also protect students with diabetes, who must have access to nutritional information, including the carbohydrate count, which is necessary for proper insulin administration. Parents may still provide homemade or home-baked foods for their child's snack or lunch. However, those items may not be shared with other students.

There is also a risk for a foodborne illness if the food is not prepared according to FDA regulations. All food served must come from an approved food source. Proper food preparation, safe handling practices, holding criteria, and serving guidelines must also be met when serving food to students. Food should be unopened and in a sealed package prior to use.

- There can be a risk of cross-contamination. Even if parents write down the ingredients, there is no way to be assured that there is no cross contamination.
- Food and beverages should not be used as a reward or discipline for academic performance or behavior.

Food allergies

Students with life-threatening food allergies have the right to expect the food provided to them, either by the school for regular meals or treats brought in for special occasions, to be safe for them to eat. For this reason, all food brought into the school to be shared with students should be in a store-bought sealed package labeled with nutritional information, including all ingredients.

Diabetes

To maintain good control of blood glucose, students with diabetes must dose with insulin for all carbohydrates eaten. They may also require a dosage correction as determined by their healthcare plan. For this reason, all food brought into the school to be shared with students should be in a store-bought sealed package labeled with nutritional information, including carbohydrate count.

Snacks in school

Schools are encouraged to celebrate with fun rather than food. Principals, school staff, parents or guardians, and students should promote healthy classroom and school celebrations by minimizing the use of candy and snacks in school.

Non-Sweet and Non-Food Rewards: Findings from a Survey of Principals in the Canyons School District

Wellness Policy Committee, Canyons School District
April 2024

PURPOSE

This report summarizes the results of a survey of principals regarding the use of food and non-food rewards in their schools. The reward categories considered are sweet treats, healthy (non-sweet) food, and non-food rewards. For survey results, see Tables 1 and 2 for short answers. See Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C for a complete list of open-ended responses.

BACKGROUND

Due to concerns about the frequent use of sweet foods for student rewards, the Wellness Policy Committee formed a team to seek ways of encouraging non-food rewards. To learn about existing efforts and successes within schools in the district, the team surveyed principals in April 2023. The survey's purpose was to learn what *is* working, so that all schools can be encouraged to follow these successful practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on survey responses, these are the recommendations:

1. Promote a culture where non-food items are the preferred reward, while also allowing occasional food treats. (Do not ban sweet treats.)
2. Educate teachers, administrators, and the general public, particularly parents and students' families, on why non-sweet and non-food reward options are important. (Examples: allergies, diabetes.)
3. Provide a list of several non-food reward suggestions, following up on the list provided by Canyons District nurses a few years ago.
4. Share success stories from the experiences of one or more schools and teachers. Include how they overcame barriers to the use of healthy-food or non-food rewards versus sweet treats.
5. Use multiple communication channels to accomplish these recommendations.

CONCLUSIONS

1. A policy of forbidding sweet treat rewards should not be attempted. The backlash would prevent a wide-spread cultural change toward non-food rewards as the preferred option.
2. Buy-in is needed from schools, teachers, and parents. Parents and families need to understand why non-food items are preferable for events and parties. When most schools rely on food treats, the few schools who minimize food rewards face greater opposition. "Those of us who do become a target."

Members of non-food rewards team: Kirsten Stewart, Emily Jenkins, Mark Martin.
Report prepared by Mark Martin.

3. Barriers to moving away from sweet treats include:
 - (a) sweet treats cost less and are convenient
 - (b) students like food and sweet treats
 - (c) parent and community opposition
 - (d) long-standing culture of using treats for rewards, class parties, and birthdays
4. Effective selling points for non-food rewards include:
 - (a) less sugar
 - (b) less mess
 - (c) avoid allergies and manage diabetes
 - (d) greater options and variety
 - (e) school supply rewards are useful
5. Healthy food rewards are generally seen as more expensive and less convenient than sweet treats.
6. Non-food rewards are considered expensive by some, while others say that bulk purchases make it affordable.
7. One elementary school has done away with birthday treats. Instead, the student brings a favorite children's book to read to the class. Teachers and peers celebrate the student throughout the day.
8. The best practice is having multiple options for rewards, with the preference being non-food rewards.

SURVEY METHOD

A survey was emailed in April 2023 to the principals in Canyons School District. It was designed to learn which non-treat and non-food rewards have been used, what the barriers have been to using non-food rewards, and what rewards have been used successfully.

There were 7 questions: 3 yes/no; 1 choose all that apply; and 3 open response questions. Detailed open responses were encouraged, and the resulting comments were quite informative. See Appendix D for the survey questions.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Of 43 principals, 30 completed the survey. Surveys completed by school-level are in the first two columns of Table 1.

All 30 schools that responded have experimented with non-treat rewards in some way. Table 1 gives the number (and percentage) of schools trying "healthy" food rewards, and non-food items for parties, celebrations, and school-wide events. Table 2 shows which kinds of non-food rewards have been successful. Although percentages are approximate due to some schools not responding, the patterns are quite informative.

Table 1. Numbers of Schools Trying Non-Food or Non-Treat Rewards

(Percentages based on #schools that responded to the survey)

School Level	# Schools Responded to Survey	Experimented with Non-Treat Rewards	Tried Healthy Food Rewards (e.g. cheese & crackers, vegetables & fruit)	Tried Non-Food Items for Birthday Parties, Class Celebrations, or Schoolwide Events
Elem*	21 (of 29)	21 (100%)	2 (10%)	14 (67%)
Middle	5 (of 8)	5 (100%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)
High	4 (of 6)	4 (100%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Totals	30 (of 43)	30 (100%)	5 (17%)	19 (63%)

*Jordan Valley School (K-12) is included in the Elementary School category.

Canyons Virtual Academy, Canyons Transition Academy, and CTEC are not included.

Table 2. Successful Non-Food Rewards

Response by Principals to the Question:

“Which types of non-food rewards have been most successful?***(Choose all that apply.)”***

Non-Food Rewards	Elementary (21 schools)	Middle (5 schools)	High (4 schools)	TOTAL across Schools
Toys	15 (71%)	1 (20%)	0 (0%)	16 (53%)
Stickers	16 (76%)	3 (60%)	1 (25%)	20 (67%)
Temporary Tattoos	16 (76%)	3 (60%)	1 (25%)	20 (67%)
Activities (assemblies, field trips)	14 (67%)	3 (60%)	2 (50%)	19 (63%)
Privileges (extra recess, sit by friends)	19 (90%)	4 (80%)	2 (50%)	25 (83%)
Trinkets (erasers, pencils or pens)	17 (81%)	4 (80%)	0 (0%)	21 (70%)
Coupons or gift certificates	6 (29%)	0 (0%)	3 (75%)	9 (30%)
Recognition (appreciation letters, PA or social media announcements, or awards)	12 (57%)	1 (20%)	2 (50%)	15 (50%)

Percentages are based on #schools that responded to the survey.

“Other” response: “For birthdays we have done away with treats. Students bring their favorite children’s book and read it to the class. They are celebrated throughout the day by their teacher and peers.”

Summary of Open Responses

Appendix A lists complete comments on barriers.

Of 26 free-response comments on **barriers** to using non-food or healthier food options:

- 9 mentioned the cost being more expensive than sweet treats
- 9 mentioned that students like food and sweet treats
- 6 mentioned parent, family, or community opposition
- 4 mentioned the convenience and efficiency of sweet treats
- 4 mentioned the need for a cultural change (i.e. new mindset)

Appendix B lists complete comments on selling points.

Of 25 free-response comments on most persuasive **selling points** for using non-food or healthier food options:

- 9 mentioned less sugar
- 7 mentioned allergy avoidance
- 4 mentioned more options and variety
- 2 mentioned diabetes management
- 2 mentioned less mess
- 2 mentioned student supplies are fun or useful
- 1 mentioned buying in bulk

Balance and Consistency

Strategies for using healthy rewards need consistency across schools, and the strategies should not be unbending policies. Otherwise, there is little likelihood of success.

Balance. An absolute policy of forbidding sweet-treat rewards would be met with strong backlash. One principal said, “I would be opposed to forbidding food treats, sweet or not.” In a different school which *is* encouraging non-food rewards, “Some community members won’t follow the expectation and are upset when we send food items down.” This principal also observed, “Some teachers have been over reliant on sweets.”

Consistency. “When all schools aren’t following the nursing guidelines calling for no food, those of us who do become a target.”

Best Practice. One principal summed up the best achievable goal across our schools: “*I feel like having options are best, with the preference being non-food items. We don’t say treats can’t be an option, but [we] have previously noted that non-food items are preferred.*”

APPENDIX A.

Open response answers to: ***What barriers have you encountered to using non-food rewards, or such food options as cheese and crackers or fruit and vegetables?***

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

I had a few parents upset at first when we made the change two years ago, but haven't heard anything since.

I don't have anything against intermittent sweet treats.

Some community members won't follow the expectation and are upset when we send food items down.

Some teachers have been over reliant on sweets.

When all schools aren't following the nursing guidelines calling for no food, those of us who do become a target.

Some parents feel kids need to be kids and enjoy treats. Once we gave in to allowing "treats" many commented they were glad to be able to bring something easy for treats. It is harder for parents to find things other than food for rewards/parties.

Getting parents to cooperate

Parents

Tradition, Family desires

Kids with allergies, cost, perishable

Cost, efficiency

Cost, student preferences

Food is generally a less expensive option.

Depending on what it is, non-food items can be more expensive. Also, kids are more motivated by food than other items, especially older kids.

What motivates kids is sometimes food.

Our students are very motivated by food and less motivated by other items.

Some kids are most motivated by food.

Students don't want or eat healthy!

Students have different preferences that motivate them. We've used a variety of options food and non-food rewards. I think healthy food options may be a great option. We haven't explored this as an option, the increased cost of healthy food may be a bit of a barrier.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Harder to store and prepare. More expensive.

They don't want them.

Kids like candy

The biggest barrier is having time to purchase non perishable items and using them in a timely manner.

I have not used cheese,crackers. No barriers with pencil

HIGH SCHOOLS

Many students are not motivated or interested in these things. This means no change in behaviors.

I don't know that there are any barriers. Using these types of food rewards has never crossed my mind.

Cost

The costs are high for high school

APPENDIX B.

Open response answers to: ***What selling points to using non-food alternatives have been most persuasive for employees, students, and parents?***

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Allergies

Student health issues such as diabetes and allergies.

Impact of using food is challenging for diabetics, allergies, and for families who want to pick what calories their children consume.

Benefits of avoiding allergy issues, moving towards more intrinsic motivation, cost effectiveness, school ownership

Buying in bulk

Less sugar, less mess

Less mess, more desirable for kids

It's nice to not have sugary foods for students to be consuming.

None

Not sure

Sugar high, long term rewards

Healthier options to candy or other treats.

Health benefits

Allergy avoidance, nutrition

Allergies

No sugar, kids love extra privileges and dinosaur erasers. Haha

We don't say treats can't be an option but have previously noted that non food items are preferred so I appreciate having options

Different options being available help to meet the needs of more students. It also keeps options fresh.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Allergies

Asking students what they prefer

We have found school supplies are a great incentive, because they are needed and used.

Last longer no expiration date

We haven't really used any selling points.

HIGH SCHOOLS

As long as it's something desirable, I think lots of things will work.

We haven't used any.

Unclear

Not many of them are effective.

APPENDIX C.

Open response answers to: ***“Please add any comments you would like to make, which were not specifically asked for in previous questions.”***

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

I would be opposed to forbidding food treats, sweet or not.

I feel very strongly that food should not be used as a reward and that birthday treats don't have to be food.

I feel like having options are best with the preference being non food items.

We need to be unified in this practice across levels and schools to get buy in.

It's a big culture shift. I'm not sure it will ever be 100% but we can make progress.

I'm open to this but would need to get my teachers on board and especially parents.

We have been trying to use more "experiences" with our students like extra recess, bubble parties, games etc to get away from things that cost. The majority of our incentives are non-food rewards.

We use food, but if a parent requests not to we don't.

Thanks for looking into this!

MIDDLE SCHOOLS – no comments

HIGH SCHOOLS

At the high schools we use lots of different rewards and incentives, both food and non-food including privileges on occasion.

Food is cheaper

APPENDIX D.

Survey Questions

1. Has your school experimented with using non-food items as a reward for positive student behavior?
2. Has your school experimented with using such food options as cheese and crackers or vegetables and fruit as a reward for positive student behavior?
3. Has your school experimented with using non-food items as part of birthday parties, classroom celebrations, or schoolwide events?
4. Which types of non-food rewards have been most successful? (Choose all that apply.)
 - (a) Toys
 - (b) Stickers
 - (c) Temporary tattoos
 - (d) Activities (assemblies, field trips)
 - (e) Privileges (extra recess, sit by friends)
 - (f) Trinkets (erasers, pencils, or pens)
 - (g) Coupons or gift certificates
 - (h) Recognition (appreciation letters, PA or social media announcements, or awards)
 - (i) Other – please specify
5. What barriers have you encountered to using non-food rewards, or such food options as cheese and crackers or fruit and vegetables?
6. What selling points to using non-food alternatives have been most persuasive for employees, students, and parents?
7. Please add any comments you would like to make, which were not specifically asked for in previous questions.