

EOY Wellness Committee Update June 2023

At this time we have ten people on our Wellness Committee. We are so fortunate to have representation from classroom teachers, administrators, phys ed teachers, parents and Cornell Cooperative Extension as well as our Community Center, Capital Roots, Comfort Food Community and our own Food Forum Students.

This past year, we were able to complete our mandated Triennial Assessment for State Ed and met all the requirements. We set goals and attained most of them.

We were fortunate to have two dietetic interns from Russell Sage College, each here for 10 week food service management rotations. One of their focuses was to support and encourage meal participation. At year end we have seen an increase in breakfast participation of 7% and lunch participation 4 %.

We participated in a Student Food Show that was so well received by our kids and those in neighboring districts. Students met at the Saratoga City Center and had the opportunity to taste test new school menu items and offer a satisfaction survey so the Food Service Directors would know preferences and plan next year's menus accordingly.

The end of August, we will be having another dietetic intern with us for 10 weeks doing a rotation on Wellness. We are very excited about expanding our presence in the District and making wellness a priority and focus. Nutrition, Phys Ed, and Mental Health will be addressed appropriately at all grade levels. In February 2024 we will host another Intern focusing on food service management.

We are VERY happy to announce that our District has been approved to operate under The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the 23-24 school year. This means that more than 40% of our students are directly certified (receiving SNAP or some forms of Medicaid) This allows us to offer **FREE meals to all students**. There is no need for families to fill out a free/reduced meal application to participate, although families are asked to fill out a Household Income Form, as the cumulative data from these may provide benefits to the District as a whole in the way of grants, STEM equipment etc.

This past year we offered about 75% of our fruits and vegetables FRESH, and many of those items sourced from local farmers. We have been working hard to offer more scratch cooked meals using locally sourced products. We have applied for a grant through Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County in the hopes of increasing our Farm2School efforts by purchasing a cold food merchandiser for our elementary building. We will also be offering a salad bar for grades 3 - 5 next year.

We are the recipient of Supply Chain Assistance funding and Local Food For Schools Cooperative Agreement. These funds may only be used on locally grown, or processed products sourced from small farmers or socially disadvantaged growers. Our students at all grade levels have been offered a wide variety of fresh products this year.