

**Governor's Council on Physical Fitness
Health and Nutrition Subcommittee Meeting
Monday, October 22, 2007**

Committee Members Present

Judy Schaechter, Co-chair
Ana Viamonte-Ros, Co-chair
Javier Garcia-Bengochea
Carlos Castresana
Shelia Sheridan
Amy Young

Council Members Absent

Others Present

Kimberly Berfield
Catherine Howard

State Surgeon General, Dr. Ana Viamonte-Ros, called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM.

1. School Reporting

The meeting began with reports on the school visits. Dr. Viamonte-Ros and Ms. Young presented their findings from the school visits:

Dr. Viamonte-Ros

I visited Liberty City Elementary School 1855 NW 71 Street, Miami, FL 33147 on 10/18/2007. The Principal's name is Cheri Davis and she was present along with several teachers, the Physical Education teacher, the PTA president, and 2 aides for Representative Bendross-Mindingall. I was able to witness a P.E. activity (kickball game) taking place in the school yard. This school has 250 students and is serving an African-American underserved community. The recent 150 minutes PE mandate has not affected this particular school since they already had this requirement built into their schedule. Additionally, they are integrating healthy choices into their school lunch and breakfast menus. There is no after school program available at this site due to cost. There is only one child at the school that pays for his meals. All others qualify for the free meals program. There were several observations made by the group that I met with: 1) Schools that operate on block scheduling have a very difficult time incorporating 30 minutes a day for PE. They can meet the 150 minute per week requirement if they are given some flexibility on its implementation. 2) School officials were concerned about the lack of parental involvement in their children's education. Only 20% of the parents attend PTA meetings and the message of healthy nutrition and activities is often lost. They felt that a successful program had to be supported by the parents and they were having trouble getting that to happen. 3) School representatives also felt that healthy food choices had to be gradually introduced in the school menus otherwise the children would not accept it.

Ms. Young

Date/Time of Visit:

11:00a.m. – 2:15 pm, Wednesday, October 17, 2007

School Visited

South Olive Elementary School

Address of School:

7101 S Olive Ave
West Palm Beach, Florida 33405

List any media present:

Tonia Rogers---WPTV---NBC affiliate
Tony Araujo -----WPTV---NBC affiliate

Walter Stephens---WPB—TV

The NBC station aired the visit on their local news on the evening of October 17th and the West Palm Beach TV station (Channel 18) is airing the interview on a daily basis approximately five or six times a day with excerpts from my visits to the cafeteria and PE classes. During my interview I discussed the high priority the Governor places on physical education and health and nutrition in our public schools and communities.

I have ordered a copy of the taping to be viewed by the Governor's Council.

List any invited guests/delegation:

Timothy O'Connor---Public Relations Manager/Information Office Palm Beach County Health Department & Eric Stern---Administrator for Physical Education for Palm Beach County School District

GENERAL COMMENTS FROM THE TEACHERS, PRINCIPAL, KIDS AND OTHERS I ENCOUNTERED IN THE COURSE OF THE DAY:

The Principal introduced me in the cafeteria (to each class that entered and their teacher's) as a representative sent by the Governor to visit their school and spend time with the teacher's and children. The individual teacher's and the Principal asked me to take back the message to the Governor that sending a representative from the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness to spend a day at their school proves his commitment to this issue and they want the Governor to know how much that means to the kids and the South Olive Elementary School staff.

I told the kids how much the Governor enjoys swimming and they asked if he could get them their own swimming pool and come swim with them. Several asked me to find out if the Governor knows the President! I told them I would try to find out!

Additionally, the Palm Beach County School District representative who attended informed me that the Governor has been invited to attend the kids Marathon in West Palm Beach on December 1st to speak and hand out medals for the kids at the finish line.

Persons interviewed at the School:

11:00 – 11:30 Principal interview: Hank Smith, Principal of South Olive Elementary since 2006.

Tell me about your school?

The school is a gifted cluster site with 1/3rd of the children in the gifted program. Approximately 50% of the children are Hispanic, 30% Caucasian and the remaining "Other".

How many kids?

There are approximately 638 children at the Elementary School.

The Governor's Council is focusing on physical fitness and implementation of the legislation passed during the 2007 Session which mandates 150 minutes of physical education per week. Tell me your thoughts on the barriers and the general implementation of the program.

South Olive was holding 35 minutes of physical education classes before the legislation was passed in 2007. The principal issued surveys to parents to find out what issues were important to them for instruction for their kids and physical education was a top priority. It was implemented with the full backing of the parents and other instructors. They find no financial or other barriers to the mandate and are thrilled that the Governor and Legislature passed the minimum standards.

Any initiatives regarding staff wellness and physical education?

The staff gets involved in pre-school walks and exercise programs on the weekends with parents and kids.

Second element is obviously food and nutrition. What are your thoughts on the food service program in the school?

We toured the cafeteria and I ate lunch with the kids. The menu was excellent.....no fryers are allowed in the schools. The kids had a choice of fresh vegetables, fruit, hamburgers on whole grain buns, rice and beans, fresh salads, water and fruit juice. The school (along with the entire Palm Beach County school district) eliminated whole milk and substituted it for low fat and skim milk several years ago which cut out 93 million grams of fat within the Palm Beach County school district.

What are your challenges from a budget perspective?

The school does not feel as though they have budget restrictions. They teamed up with Subway and received a grant of \$1,000 to fund physical education efforts (i.e. funding for pedometers for kids to use in PE class at a cost of \$300 for 30 pedometer which were also funded through a grant from the PTO)

Any thoughts and recommendations in general that you want me to take back to the Governor's Council??

Principal Smith asked to take a message back to the Governor that they fully support the physical education requirements and believe it is a necessary and important aspect of the entire curriculum. With their successful efforts in building corporate partnerships, they do not believe they face any financial obstacles in implementing the physical education requirements or the ability to serve a healthy, nutritious breakfast (which is free to all the kids) as well as lunches.

11:30 – 11:45 TASK: Interview the Food Service Director

Tell me in general about your responsibilities??

Christina Lee works with the district to determine menus, etc. for the school. She reported that even when they do serve pizza it is on whole wheat crust and they typically serve brown rice and whole grain buns with hamburgers, etc.

What are your policies/guidelines regarding nutrition in the school?

The School District's Food Service Department is continually educating students and staff the importance of fruits and vegetables through health fairs and a local wellness policy for the entire district.

What kind of barriers do you face with serving healthy foods vs. popular foods.

Because the children are taught the importance of eating healthy in nutrition and science classes (some of the kids told me about the food pyramid and how vegetables and fruit are the most important food groups to stay healthy) they seem to embrace the concept of eating fresh, nutritious foods.

Are there any incentives for healthy food choices in your school?

We do not offer any incentives for eating healthy foods. The incentive is to feel better and live longer.

What do you think is the best way for parents to get involved in their kids healthy eating habits. We are trying to not only teach our kids healthy habits, but hope that their parents will realize that families can eat healthy on a limited budget.

By inviting parents into the school cafeterias and sending home literature on healthy eating habits and where to purchase healthy foods at reasonable costs.

What are your challenges from a budget perspective?

In order to research and provide more opportunities to students and families there needs to be a school budget just for health and physical education.

Any thoughts and recommendations in general that you want me to take back to the Governor's Council??

All students in physical education classes need to have a common assessment such as the FITNESSGRAM and a universal curriculum such as Physical Best. Physical education needs to be taught around the principle of health related fitness.

11:45 – 12:30 TASK: Observe the physical education classes and interview PE teachers

The kids obviously enjoyed the PE classes taught by an extraordinary certified PE instructor, Coach "Gabby" Vernachio who has taught at South Olive Elementary School for fifteen years. She is of Swedish descent and talked about how she grew up with exercise as a priority. She has three kids at South Olive and has won the Presidential Physical Fitness Award. Coach Gabby implemented the use of the pedometers during PE classes about five years ago, and as she put it "you put a pedometer on a child and they can't stop moving". I observed her PE classes which included stretching/dancing choreographed classes as well as time where the kids ran and played together on the equipment in the school yard. The school is also fortunate to have a city gym next door where they can take the kids to work out on field trips, etc.

Amy's questions to PE instructors:

Did you have a normal physical education class or recess before the passage of the 2007 legislation?

Yes, they previously had 35 minutes of physical education per week and now comply with the 150 minutes per week as well as additional hours on the weekends with approximately 140 out of the 638 children in the school.

What was your reaction regarding the "mandate" for phys ed classes?

The parents and instructors were all extremely pleased and found no barriers to working the 150 minutes into the school week.

What are your obstacles in implementing the new mandates for thirty minutes of physical education per school day??

No obstacles.

How do the kids feel about this?

The kids love their PE classes and wish they could have more time.

What kind of reaction did you get from the parents??

The parents pushed for physical education classes before the legislation was passed.

What successes do you think you have had with the increase in PE classes?

The kids are more energetic and more attentive in their academic classes.

12:30 – 1:00 p.m. TASK: Tour Cafeteria Facilities and Greet Classes for Lunch

I ate lunch with several of the classes. My choices of fresh cooked vegetables and salad were better than I get at home. The kids loved the fresh fruit and most of them I observed ate the salads along with a small sandwich and fresh fruits and vegetables. The kids seemed to have a very good understanding (for their young ages, particularly) of the importance of eating a healthy meal without fried foods, etc.

1:00 – 1:30 p.m. Parent Interviews

Amy's Questions to Parents (Five in attendance at interview)

How do you feel about the new PE classes?

The parents I interviewed embrace the PE classes and encourage other parents to get together and walk and run with the kids to school every morning. The mothers I spoke to also participate with the coach and kids in the Read and Run Marathon which encourages kids to read for 15 minutes a day and work toward running a total marathon (calculated on their pedometers) between the start of school in August and December 1st. Their activities on December 1st coincide with the annual Marathon of the Palm Beaches and the kids are given awards at the event held at the Meyer Amphitheater in downtown West Palm. The kids also work with their coach and parents on the weekends to make sure they meet their goals by the 12/1 deadline.

TASK: KIDS Interviews (Five Children in Attendance at Interview):

They think that PE is really fun and they love their classes and their coach. They have two PE teachers and wish they could have more time for PE. The five kids I interviewed all participated in sports after school including soccer, volleyball, gymnastics, basketball and others. They estimated that they each spent between two to three hours outside after school (weather permitting). They all said the more they get outside and run and stretch the better they feel.

Sheila Sheridan gave an update of the nutrition changes made to meals in Collier County to improve health of their students:

Sugar	No gelatin desserts or low sugar Low sugar baked products Fruit canned in juice No candy or foods of minimal value ingredients Sugar or a combination of sugars (fructose, sucrose, lactose) can NOT be the first ingredient(s)
Saturated Fats	Below 10% of calories from fat Eliminate whole milk (except for doctor prescription) 5 years ago Reduce 2% milk Serve only 1%, .5% or 0 fat dairy products No butter Low fat meats (ground beef = 90/10)

Breads	Whole grains
Fat	No butter or margarine on veggies, bread, or toast No fried food Reduced fat salad dressings Reduced fat desserts Offer meatless meals daily Total meatless meal at least one per 2 weeks Offer fish 2 – 3 times per menu cycle
Sodium	Reduced total sodium in menus Reduced total sodium in products purchased No salt shakers on tables No M S G in purchased products No salt or lower salt during cooking
Vegetables	Fresh when possible (offer 3 -4 4 choices daily) Only light, low sodium seasonings Use fresh in products (zucchini muffins) when possible
Fruits	Fresh when possible Use in desserts and breakfast products Only packed in fruit juice when canned Serve fruit crisp often Use fruit puree for baking to reduce fat

2. State Plan of Action Discussion

At the request of the subcommittee, Ms. Berfield provided the group with suggestions and recommendations on the substantive wording of the group's draft recommendations.

Dr. Schaechter reiterated her desire to raise the standards of school nutrition to align with the Institute of Medicine's Nutrition in Schools report (IOM standards). The majority of the group agreed. Dr. Garcia-Bengochea agreed as long as the wording of "no trans fat" is replaced with "no partially hydrogenated oils." Dr. Schaechter mentioned adding a third tier to the IOM standards to deal with nutrition in childcare facilities.

Ms. Berfield reviewed the draft recommendations to date and answered legislation and feasibility questions from the group.

Mr. Castresana asked for an update on the Department of Management Services recommendation letter to the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness. Ms. Howard reported that the draft of the letter is not yet complete.

Dr. Schaechter moved on to discuss the idea of a school report card that would allow parents to easily interpret the nutrition options available at their child's school. She proposed that School

Wellness Councils could be responsible for collecting and disseminating this data. This prompted Ms. Sheridan to ask Dr. Antoinette Meeks, technical assistance from Department of Education, about the reporting structure of the various wellness committees. She stated that the process is confusing.

Dr. Viamonte-Ros moved the discussion to modification of the Healthy Floridians website. She would like to model it after the California Governor's Council site <http://www.calgovcouncil.org/>. There was discussion that a website of this caliber would require financial support and that they would recommend gaining corporate financial endorsement. Carolyn Timmann, Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff as the Office of Governor Charlie Crist, mentioned that there are a number of 501(c)(3) organizations that can manage funds from private donors.

Ms. Timmann turned the discussion towards a potential Governor's Fitness Challenge. She asked the group to begin fleshing out what this challenge would be and how it should be rolled-out. Ms. Young suggested a phased approach starting with schools. She mentioned that to plan more at this point would not be feasible due to the limited timeframe. There was more discussion about the type of data that would be collected and what the mechanism of reporting would be. The idea of a pedometer challenge in schools was put forward as a possible component of the challenge.

Ms. Timmann explained to the group that there may be barriers to implementing any kind of challenge due to the fact that only three schools in Florida that won the President's Challenge. She states that this likely reflects a lack of schools participating rather than the lack of ability to win the challenge.

More discussion followed about the role of FCAT in the schools, whether the competition should be on a school, county, or district level, potential stakeholders, who would be rewarded for participating in the Governor's fitness challenge, how would it be rewarded and possible conflicts with the existing President's Challenge.

Mr. Castresana changed the topic to the layout and organization of the final report. He proposed that all of the committee's recommendations be summarized by main points that are easily digested by the casual reader. Mr. Castresana with the rest of the council members requested that Ms. Howard work on this and forward a draft to the committee members before the next conference call.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Submitted By: Catherine Howard

Approved By: Dr. Judy Schaechter