

1/22/2021 Wellness Meeting Summary

January 22, 2021 @ 7:30 AM

Attendance

Laura Adams, PTA Co-President
Dr. Elana Elster, Principal
Alison Gardy, Wellness Chair
Mitch Linnick, Parent
Jodi Mafдали, Special Needs Coordinator
Nildania Perez, Parent

Agenda

1. Check-In

- a. Brief introductions

- b. Share something you do that makes you feel well, relaxed, happy.

2. Dr. Elster's Update -- Game Night

3. How can Wellness continue to support SEL for all Booker T. students?

- a. After School Fitness
 - i. Led by physical education teachers
 - ii. Students grouped by neighborhood clusters and tasked with challenges

- b. Connecting Each Grade by Roblox on Private Servers
 - i. Here is [a possible model](#) of private Roblox gaming

- c. Valentine's Day: Student Bake-Off and Prepared Food Donations to the Food Drive

- d. [No One Eats Alone](#) -- virtual curriculum
 - i. Deirdre McEvoy reports

- e. ["Ask The Mask"](#) model of a pandemic advice column for and by middle schoolers

4. Wellness Day Reinvented

- a. Two 60-90-minute Zoom assemblies -- one per day over two days
 - i. Speaker ideas

- ii. Breakout sessions
- b. Possible In-Person “Yog-In” on the New School Field in May 2021
 - i. Randee Johnson’s friend, who is trained to do Yoga-in-the-Schools, would love to donate classes to Booker T. Anne McIntosh Pejovich suggested a “Yog-In,” on the new field in Spring, with hundreds of masked, socially distant students filling the field for a yoga class.
 - ii. Awestruck imagining the photo from the top floor of Booker T.....

Summary

Check-in

During our check-in, we shared different activities we do to feel well, relaxed, and happy. Our answers ranged from needlepointing and crocheting to going for long walks. It was relaxing and gladdening simply to recall and share.

Kindness Week -- February 8 through February 14, Valentine’s Day

Next, we turned to a document drawn up by Wellness Committee Teacher Co-Chair Deirdre McEvoy, [“Curriculum Resources for SEL, January 2021”](#) in which she explored ideas for in-school programs, ranging from a virtual approach to No One Eats Alone -- Beyond Differences to a Kindness Challenge through WeTeachKindness.org

One Kind Word

- Ms. McEvoy highlighted the “One Kind Word” idea in the document: “I particularly like *One Kind Word*...a simple activity that teachers could do for the first few minutes of class. In the chat, students can reflect on a quote given by the teacher, write a kindness quote of their own, recall a time someone was kind to them, then finally write one kind thing they can do that day or week.”
- Dr. Elster liked the idea and suggested that if we share it with teachers, many would do it.
- Dr. Elster suggested that the Week of February 8 -- leading into Valentine’s Day -- be Kindness Week, a.k.a. Respect for All Week.
- It would be nice to have teachers think about what to do and to share resources with them.

Family-to-Family Fresh-Baked Cookies to Donate to the MS54 Food Drive

- We could also encourage families to bake for the MS54 Food Drive, creating something sweet to add to bags of pantry items for families during the week of Feb 8 to Feb 14. Laura Adams suggested that cookies last longer than cakes. Dr. Elster thought we could simply ask people to make “two dozen cookies” and deliver them in a ziplock bag, tin, or shoebox to MS54. Alison wondered if Class Parents might help spread the word, and Laura suggested that we use the full force of MS54 communications -- Class Parents, Facebook, the e-Newsletter, Instagram. During the week of February 8, families can

drop off donations with Security at the West 108th Street entrance of MS54, between 7:00 am and 3:30 pm. It's vital that we coordinate with Anne.

Nearby Community Fridge

- Alison mentioned the Ujamaa Solidarity Fridge at 830 Columbus Avenue (and West 101st Street). Dr. Elster mentioned that Ms. Krikorian and Ms. Williams also donate to community fridges in other parts of the city, and she wondered if a map of city-wide community fridges might be available. Research has turned up the following so far:
 - [NYC Community Fridges - Google My Maps](#)
 - [freedge – | community fridges |](#) (a world map)
 - And this *New York Times* article: [New York City's Community Refrigerators Offer Free Food for Those in Need - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

Partnership with Ms. Hannon's "Random Acts of Kindness" After School Club

- Mitch Linnick mentioned that his daughter is in Ms. Hannon's "Random Acts of Kindness" after school club that meets every Tuesday. He wondered if they might be able to take on Kindness Week as an activity. Dr. Elster loved the idea and mentioned she would reach out to Ms. Hannon to see if she might want to present about "One Kind Word" at a February 1st faculty meeting. She thought Ms. Hannon could connect with Ms. McEvoy regarding resources.

Dr. Elster's Update on Game Night in February 2021

- Dr. Elster and Mr. Wilson put on the Game Night survey to parents and students, and received 134 responses. All respondents indicated that they did want to have a Game Night. Suggestions for games included: Among Us, Family Feud, Kahoot Trivia, Pictionary, Trivia Games, Word Bomb. Everyone except the "chess people" wanted to compete in groups. Those favoring chess wanted to compete one-on-one.
- Mr. Wilson will help Dr. Elster with all aspects of Game Night. People will sign up and form teams. Teachers can form their own team. Kids can form teams of teachers and track how their teachers are doing.
- The idea is to start at the beginning of February and launch a series of games over time. There will be set nights of play with progressive rounds.

Ask the Mask

- Dr. Elster mentioned that a student advice blog, such as Ask the Mask, requires a great deal of supervision, and may prove difficult to manage, as other middle school students are not always in a position to advise peers on sensitive subjects.

Zoom Workouts After School

- Mitch suggested that there might be afterschool training, such as a virtual soccer team workout or other workouts via Zoom.

Wellness Day Reinvented -- Tuesday, March 16, 2021, 9:00 am to 11:00 am

- Dr. Elster said Wellness Day could be similar to Booker T. Day in that we get people to speak or work out with the students via Zoom. She suggested that we set a date and then recruit speakers. The date should not be a Friday, since Booker T. Day is on a Friday, and Dr. Elster does not want students to miss the same classes. We decided on Tuesday, March 16.
- Dr. Elster will ask the teachers for feedback regarding presenters. We can use the Wellness spreadsheet that we created in March 2020.
- There could be three 30-minute sessions instead of one longer session, especially since students are Zoomed out.
- We do not think that the play yard will be ready by June 2021 for a “Yog-In.” But Dr. Elster thought we might be able to aim for Fall 2021, if yard reconstruction proceeds on schedule and school opens.