

Chalkboard

By

Dr. Randy C. Barrett, Superintendent
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With the state legislature gearing up to go in session on January 10, 2005, I find need to write to you concerning an act passed in the last regular session- Act 1220 of 2003. Act 1220 of 2003 is found in law at Arkansas Code Annotated 20-7-135 *Nutrition and physical activity standards - Implementation*. One of the provisions of the law mandated that in the 2004-05 school term school districts would need “convene a school nutrition and physical activity advisory committee that shall include members from school district governing boards, school administrators, food service personnel, teacher organizations, parents, students, and professional groups such as nurses and community members”.

This committee was given the following tasks to accomplish. “(A) Help raise awareness of the importance of nutrition and physical activity; and (B) Assist in the development of local policies that address issues and goals, including, but not limited to, the following: (i) Assisting with the implementation of nutrition and physical activity standards developed by the school nutrition and physical activity advisory committee with the approval of the Department of Education and the State Board of Health; (ii) integrating nutrition and physical activity into the overall curriculum; (iii) Ensuring that professional development for staff includes nutrition and physical activity issues; (iv) Ensuring that students receive nutrition education and engage in healthful levels of vigorous physical activity; (v) Improving the quality of physical education curricula and increasing training of physical education teachers; (vi) Enforcing existing physical education requirements; and (vii) Pursuing contracts that both encourage healthy eating by students and reduce school dependence on profits from the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value; (2) Begin the implementation of standards developed by the committee with the approval of the Department of Education and the State Board of Health; and (3) Require that goals and objectives for nutrition and physical activity be incorporated into the annual school planning and reporting process.”

The following people are members of the Gentry Public School Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Committee. Kaye Cripps; Chairperson, Renee’ Bradshaw; Secretary, Larry Cozens, Christi Coleman, Sharon Jones, Debbie Allred, Mary Baily, Shirley Philpott, Brenda Willett,

and me. You can review the list and see that the committee is comprised of two school nurses, an elementary P.E. teacher, the district's food service manager, an athletic director/middle school principal, a parent, a board member, a middle school teacher, a central office administrative assistant, and a superintendent. If you, a parent in our district, read this article and wish you had been asked to serve on this committee, I encourage you to contact Ms. Cripps at the middle school. The committee has room for a two or three more parents and still be a manageable size. We will also need to include a representative(s) from the student body.

The committee's initial discussion was focused on the amount of time students at all four campuses have for "vigorous activity". There was discussion regarding the food service program; specific discussion dealt with serving size, composition, and preparation of school meals. The remaining discussion dealt with health activities for the adult staff at the school. The complete minutes of this meeting and future meetings can soon be found at the district web site at www.gentrypioneers.com.