

EDUCATION & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A meeting of the Education & Human Services Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on September 27, 2016.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Monica Martinez, Chairperson
Leg. Thomas F. Barraga, Vice Chair
Leg. Kate Browning
Leg. Robert Calarco, DPO
Leg. Kara Hahn
Leg. Leslie Kennedy

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George M. Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Amy Ellis, Chief Deputy Clerk/Legislature
Benny Pernice, Budget Review Office
John O'Neill, Commissioner/Department of Social Services
Gail Vizzini, Suffolk Community College
Ben Zwirn, Suffolk Community College
Kevin Peterman, Suffolk Community College
Theresa Sanders, Chairperson/Board of Trustees/SCCC
James Morgo, Vice Chairman/Board of Trustees/SCCC
Christopher North, Student Trustee/SCCC
Dr. Paul Beaudin, Dean of Instruction/SCCC
Don Marmo, Mandatory Meal Plan/SCCC
Timothy C. Jahn, Cornell Cooperative Extension/Human Ecology Specialist
Erica L. Chase-Gregory, appointee to the Suffolk County Child Care Commission
Lisa Pinkard, Aide to Leg. Martinez
Justin Littell, Aide to Leg. D'Amaro
Alyssa Turano, Aide to Leg. Hahn
Ali Nazir, Aide to Leg. Kennedy
Michael Pitcher, Director of Communications/PO
Timothy C. Jahn, Human Ecology Specialist/Cornell University Cooperative Extension
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 12:37 PM

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Good afternoon and welcome to today's Education and Human Services Committee. We could all rise for the Pledge of Allegiance to be led by Legislator Kara Hahn.

SALUTATION

Thank you. Okay. And following today's agenda, we don't have any correspondence. We do have a card from the audience. If Mr. Don Marmo can come up? You have three minutes, Mr. Marmo.

MR. MARMO:

Okay. My name is Don Marmo and I'm here to express my opposition to Suffolk Community College's mandatory meal plan, which will cost me \$400 over my daughter's two-year enrollment at the college.

Before I begin I'd like you to know that I provided you with a handout that contains additional information, which I cannot include in my three-minute time limit.

Let me begin by saying that my daughter began attending the college this September; my son who is now at Stony Brook has attended classes at the college; and I also attended the college right out of high school. In addition, I've donated in the past to Suffolk College Foundation. I say this to show that I'm a supporter of the college despite being opposed to the meal plan.

It's not uncommon for elected officials or those appointed by elected officials, in the case of the Board of Trustees, to lose site of the high cost of living on Long Island in making decisions that affect Suffolk residents. I'm sure you're all familiar with the high cost of living.

On top of those costs, I'm currently in the middle of eight years of tuition payments and have recently purchased two cars to allow my son and daughter to commute to college. And while Suffolk Community College is a very affordable option, it does have the fourth highest community college tuition in the state. And if you add the \$200 annual cost of the meal plan, which I know is not tuition, but I need to pay it no matter what you call it, it is the highest community college tuition in the state.

I hope, then, you could understand how I'm outraged at the college's insensitivity that requires me to pay \$400 over two years on a meal plan that I don't want, I don't need and is literally a waste of my money. While I concede this plan is well intentioned to improve quality food and dining services while also improve -- while also providing students with an atmosphere of networking and socializing with other students, I'd like to call to your attention that the college has \$15.6 million appropriated for student activities. And I ask why these needs, socializing and networking, aren't addressed in the college's operating budget if it's such a priority for the college?

There is one simple reason that the meal plan is mandatory and that is there is not a market for a meal plan at a commuter college. I ask you, how many other community colleges in our state have a mandatory meal plan?

Furthermore, when forced to use up my daughter's meal plan balance, she will be purchasing beverages at a vending machine for say, two dollars, where I can purchase them at a fraction of the cost at BJ's, say for ten or fifteen cents each. Tell me how this is a good deal for me or how it's a good deal for your constituents? This fee has the same impact as a regressive tax; and too many families will be wasting money in the event their balances aren't used and ultimately are forfeited.

In closing, I'm asking you to allow your constituents to choose what's in their best interest by

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

ultimately making the meal plan optional and not mandatory.

I would now like to know what if any next steps this Committee will be doing in this matter; and what authority the Legislature has over changing the meal plan so it's no longer mandatory.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you, Mr. Marmo. We do have Suffolk Community College here today to present on the meal plan as well as other things that they're doing at the college so you're more than welcome to stay to hear what they have to say to us as a Committee.

MR. MARMO:

Okay. But what authority do you have to change the meal plan from being mandatory to being optional?

MR. NOLAN:

Mr. Marmo, we have almost no authority.

MR. MARMO:

Excuse me?

MR. NOLAN:

We have no authority to make the change --

MR. MARMO:

No authority.

MR. NOLAN:

-- to the meal. They are -- over time they've become more and more autonomous from the County. At this point the County Legislature approves a budget total and a County contribution to the college. Beyond that, the college has quite a bit of autonomy.

MR. MARMO:

Okay.

MR. NOLAN:

And, incidentally, let me just say, that's under State law. It wasn't a County law that gave the community college all that autonomy. It was the State of New York and some court decisions. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you, Counsel.

We will continue on with the agenda. We do have two presentations, but I'm going to do the resolutions first, if that's okay with the Committee.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

We will start with our Tabled Resolutions. And that's **1667 - To appoint member to the Suffolk County Child Care Commission Erica L. Chase- Gregory (Martinez)**. And I see that Miss Chase is in the audience, if you don't mind coming forward and speaking before the Committee and explaining as to why you would like to be a member of the Child Care Commission.

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

MS. CHASE:

Hi, good morning -- afternoon. Thank you for having me and thank you for the opportunity to present this morning for the Child Care Commission.

As you all have known me for -- in my past work with the Child Care Council of Suffolk County, I was very involved with them as the Associate Director. So child care has always been a priority of mine. As an individual with children, I used child care in my adult life while I was working. And I since now am the Regional Director of the Small Business Development Center at Farmingdale State College. And I have been very much involved with the child care industry as a whole in Suffolk County and Long Island. I since created a program for child care programs or child care centers and providers looking at their business practices in making sure that they are looking at their businesses as businesses and to ensure that there's quality education for the families that they serve.

Are there any questions in regard to my intentions of being on this commission and what I can bring to them?

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Do we have any questions? Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:

A little more of a statement. Having served on the board of the Child Care Council of Suffolk, you know, I thank you for all of your service to the community, to the child care community. Clearly, you know, you have extensive background and knowledge in this area and really we appreciate your willingness to serve on this Committee.

MS. CHASE:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Anybody else? Okay. So, Erica, thank you. I see now this Child Care Commission was established in the hopes of trying to find ways to make child care a little more affordable for our families here in Suffolk. And we've made a lot of headway already with the Commission so I'm very happy that you're coming on board especially with all the extensive knowledge that you have on child care in itself. So I look forward to working with you. And I am going to motion to approve her appointment.

LEG. BROWNING:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Second by Legislator Browning. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0)** You do not have to appear before the general session next week. But, you know, the vote will also take place next week for your final appointment.

MS. CHASE:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you.

Moving on we have **Tabled Resolution 1741** - and that is **To appoint member to the Teen Pregnancy Advisory Board Allison Heather Eliscu. (M.D., F.A.A.P.) (Spencer)** Oh, she's not here yet. Right? Oh, she's on her way. She just walked in. At the request of the Committee we'll

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

let Miss Allison get settled. So we're going to move onto Introductory Resolutions.

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

And that's **1774** - and that's to **Appoint member to the Suffolk County Community College Board of Trustees. And that is Christopher Murray. (Hahn)** Is Christopher here? Good afternoon, Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY:

Good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Good to see you again. If you could just, again, just similar to what Miss Erica did, just explain to the Committee as to why you would like to serve as -- at the Board of Trustees at the college.

MR. MURRAY:

Sure. First of all, I really appreciate the consideration to serve on the Board of Trustees. I think the community college is such an important institution in Suffolk County. It really provides a broad range of services that are not really available in any other circumstance. It's a college that allows individuals who may want to proceed to a four-year college to be able to do so in an affordable manner, to find out what they want to do and how they want to go about their career. And so it's a great stepping-stone for a four-year college.

It also provides services for individuals who may not be aspiring to a four-year degree but want to obtain skills in order to get employment. It provides opportunities to a whole range of population within Suffolk County. It truly is a community college. I think the emphasis is on community.

So I just think its mission is so important. Enthusiastic in trying to -- it has challenges, it has fiscal challenges, given State funding and County funding. I'd like to participate and be creative in how to address those challenges, how to expand the services in certain areas and also to recruit students to go to Suffolk Community College as opposed to possibly going to community colleges in other areas so as to help the school prosper.

I believe I can add a lot to that. I have a business background. I was President of the Nassau Council Chambers of Commerce, which represented about 6,000 small businesses so I feel that I can -- I have an understanding of what an employer is looking for from -- from a community college or a graduate of a community college in order to employ them. So I think I can use that background. I've been involved in a variety of community activities and I understand the importance of the community college. I hope I can contribute to its success.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you. Do we have any questions from the Committee? Okay. So -- okay, Legislator Hahn motions to approve, second by Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0)** Again, you also do not need to appear at the general session next week.

MR. MURRAY:

Okay. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you.

LEG. HAHN:

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

But you can stick around and listen to the presentation from the college if you have the time.

MR. MURRAY:

I will for a little bit, sure.

LEG. HAHN:

Great.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Okay. Next resolution, **1788** - and that's **Appropriating funds in connection with the Renovation of Kreiling Hall - Ammerman Campus Capital Project 2114. (Co. Exec.)** Make a motion to approve.

LEG. BARRAGA:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Second by Legislator Barraga. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0)**

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

Going back to our Tabled Resolution **1741** - and that's **To appoint member to the Teen Pregnancy Advisory Board Allison Heather Eliscu (M.D., F.A.A.P.) (Spencer)** I hope you've had enough time to settle in. If you can also come forward. Hi, welcome. Again, just a little background about yourself and how you will be able make a teen pregnancy advisory board even better than what it is.

DR. ELISCU:

Sure. First, I apologize for being late. I was told that this was starting a little bit later, so I apologize.

My name is Allison Eliscu. I'm an adolescent medicine physician here at -- in Suffolk County at Stony Brook. So I'm a licensed pediatrician and an adolescent medicine physician as well.

I think I can add a lot to the Teen Pregnancy Advisory Board. Clinically, I see a lot of patients. All of my patients are 13 to 26 so they're in the adolescent and young adult range. And I see a lot of patients who we try to prevent unintentional pregnancies in the young adult and adolescent population. And I also see people who come to me who are pregnant and are struggling with the decision what to do at that point or how to kind of continue and carry on and then care for their child afterwards. So that's a specialty of mine.

Additionally, I work with preventing sexually-transmitted infections, prescribing birth control and dealing with the adolescent population at large. So any issue that comes up in that age group, whether it's a developmental issue, a mental health issue, a reproductive health issue, that's my expertise.

Additionally, I'm already in the community. As my position and as the head principal investigator of our cap grant through Suffolk -- through Stony Brook, I'm in schools or the homeless shelter already doing presentations for the staff and for the teens or for parents. So I'm already out in the community, myself and my staff.

Additionally, I have a lot of experience advocating for adolescents and young adults and the

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

pediatric population as well. I've been to Albany or to Washington DC talking to different legislators. And I'm also teaching the residents how to do that as well. So I have an educational role as well at Stony Brook and a lot of experience with that.

I've been at Stony Brook for seven years, I feel like I've got a good handle on the Stony Brook area and the Suffolk community population. Stony Brook right now, the Adolescent Medicine Clinic, we have four sites. We just extended to a fifth site across Suffolk. We have clinics right now in East Setauket, in Islip, in Patchogue, in -- out in -- we just opened one in Smithtown and in Center Moriches, is the fifth one. So we are trying to spread out across Suffolk County make it easier and more accessible for adolescents, young adults, to get to our care. And I feel like based on my expertise in these three -- three different areas, that I'd be able to add a lot to the advisory board.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Well, Counsel's convinced. Do we have any questions from members of the Committee? Okay. Well, yes, I agree with Legislator Browning as well, and that was great and thank you. And I believe that you'll definitely be a great asset.

One of the things that we're trying to obviously combat is our teen pregnancy and we've done -- you know, right now we're actually focusing on schools through this Committee as well as our clergy who see a lot of our children. So it does get a little shady sometimes. Because in certain communities, as you may know, it's very -- it's taboo to even speak of it, all right, so that is one of the challenges that we have.

But I look forward to working with you. I also work on the Teen Pregnancy Advisory Board so I look forward to our meetings.

DR. ELISCU:

Thank you. I look forward to it as well.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

I'll make a motion to approve; second by Legislator Hahn. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0)** Congratulations, same thing goes to you as well, you do not need to appear at the next session.

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you for your willingness to serve.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

All right. That concludes our resolutions both introductory and tabled. We do have two presentations today. We will begin with Cornell University Cooperative Extension, but before -- as they set up I do know that we have our Commissioner Department of Social Services here, John O'Neill. John, is there anything that you would to present to the Committee as of right now?

COMMISSIONER O'NEILL:

No, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Good, okay. Motion none so we will continue with our presentations. And we have Timothy C. Hahn -- Jahn. Jahn, sorry, Human Ecology Specialist from Cornell University Cooperative Extension.

PRESENTATIONS

MR. JAHN:

Good afternoon. Thank you very much for letting me appear. Let me just load this. I have also a folder of materials for you. Some marketing materials, some other materials from Cornell Cooperative Extension. I know a lot of you are familiar with Cornell University Cooperative Extension. You probably have interacted with one or more of our programs over the years.

I'm with the Family Health and Wellness Program. And the topic is something that one of our initiatives is providing training for other people who work with children, youth and families. Children, youth and families are our primary audience and we work directly with youth and families, particularly parents, grandparents, foster parents, but we also work with others in Suffolk County who are also working with families.

I wanted to also mention that in Cooperative Extension we also have our other program areas: Agriculture, Marine, 4-H Youth Development. They also work with professionals. In fact, just last week in our office in Riverhead, I walked in and there was a fertilizer conference. And, I thought, who attends a fertilizer conference? But there were a lot of people who want to save money by applying the right fertilizer, be protective of the environment so our agricultural staff were presenting research-based information on the use of fertilizer.

So let me tell you a little bit about what we do here. Who are our audiences? When we talk about other professionals who work with children, youth and family, children and young adult librarians are a big part of our audience as well as child care directors, assistant directors and the staff of child care centers; family day care centers; even in some cases people who provide care in homes; youth development professionals; school personnel, faculty and staff in schools; family support professionals. That includes social workers, home visitors, mental health professionals and health professionals are among the folks who are part of our audience when we call the -- when we talk about professional development.

Some of the agencies and organizations: We work with County departments, public libraries, schools, child care centers, after-school programs. And in Suffolk County we work with Head Start, Early Head Start, the Child Care Council of Suffolk, the Family Service League, the Family Place Libraries, SCOPE, The Suffolk Coalition for Children and Families and many other organizations that either come to our programs that we host or we actually go to some of their sites and do on-site training. And that's some of the -- some of the kinds of things we do when we talk about training others who work with children, youth and families. We hold at our sites half and full-day professional conferences. We also go on-site and will do anywhere between a two-hour training program up to a full-day training program on-site for an organization.

We do programs called Train the Trainer, and which is a curriculum and we train them in the curriculum and -- and they use that curriculum with children, youth and families. We do presentations and workshops at conferences that are sponsored by other organizations. And one of the things that -- being connected with Cornell University is we're able to bring in Cornell faculty to Suffolk County, but also we also can sometimes connect with faculty from other land-grant universities around the country.

And why do we do this? Well, we do it for a couple of reasons. One, we're able to provide low-cost reputable accessible training opportunities, which these opportunities, this kind of low-cost training is not readily available for lots of not-for-profits whose budgets are limited. So we're able to help them out in many ways by providing this training for them.

We help some programs, particularly child care centers, meet their training requirements. And more than anything else it helps us multiply or expand the reach of our programs and extending research

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

information to audiences and communities.

So with that I'd just like to -- I'm going to do a little kind of showcase of some of the things we've done over the years to give you sort of a sampling of what I mean by this training. One of our earliest things is in the months following 9/11, we developed a three-hour training program. And we offered it twice. And each time it was completely booked, more than 125 professionals from all sorts of agencies and organizations attended these sessions, which the subtext was talking with children about our national tragedy. And from that we also got -- we were given a contract with Three Village School District, which had some federal funding and also with the Child Care Council. So for the year after 9/11, we did many, many trainings for all sorts of different people and probably totaled over a dozen sessions we conducted and reached probably more than 600, again, professionals, paraprofessionals, who work in settings with -- particularly with children and youth.

We also -- one of our success stories is we did a family literacy project, a early literacy, family literacy funded by the Verizon Foundation. And this is sort of unique for us because it was a week-long endeavor. It was very intensive; maximum number were 25 individuals who could attend. Many of them librarians, children's librarians and child care staff, but also some family literacy people, some home visitors attended this over the five years that we offered it. It was presented for five consecutive years. From that -- from that initiative some of our staff have been involved in family placed library training. Again, the purpose of getting this designation, this family place library, is that you're family friendly and you emphasize early literacy.

One of the things, we got a small grant, a mini-grant from the Office of Women's Health to do a conference called, Raising Health Girls, which CA Technologies in Islandia hosted for us. And, again, we had about 35 professionals who work with young women or with mothers and daughters, working families, attending that conference.

I mentioned Train a Trainer. These are two of the programs -- we've had some others over the years. Discipline is Not a Dirty Word is one of the most popular programs that has come out of Cornell University. We do it about every other year and we get a number of people coming to a full-day conference to learn how to teach this project to parents and grandparents.

We also are asked to attend -- to be presenters or workshop presenters at conferences that are sponsored by other organizations. For a couple of years now -- I shouldn't say a couple of years but a couple of times over the years I've been invited to the East End Gang Awareness Committee, hosts a conference and I presented workshops, Parenting to Prevent Violence is one of them at this conference. I also was involved in a conference, a drug awareness conference, that was held at Town of Brookhaven town hall there in the old Allstate building.

We bring Cornell faculty to Cornell. Here are just two examples. Dr. Francesca Adler-Baeder did a program at the Mastic-Moriches-Shirley Community Library a number of years ago called Working Step Families. She is now with Auburn University. And Dr. James Garbarino presented at Suffolk Community College, the presentation, What About Boys, which talked about boys and violence. Dr. Garbarino was at Cornell for many, many years and now he's at Loyola University in Chicago.

We also do programs not only just on terms of child and human development but also nutrition. We had a project that just ended last year: Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work and Play in Suffolk County, which was funded by the New York State Health Department. And one part of that project was this knapsack initiative in which we provided training to child care sites. There were six training sessions and a self-assessment to improve food quality and physical activity in child care centers.

And we also -- these are two video-based projects: Food and Fitness Matter and Supersize Me. And our staff, our nutrition education and human development staff collaborated to present conferences

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

how to use these. And we had a lot of -- actually a lot of family consumer sciences school teachers attend this because they were able to use these materials directly in a classroom of students.

More recently, a couple years ago, we did a project, a conference full-day, called the Digital Dilemma, which looked at the issues of technology and its impact on families; how does it affect the family communication, eating habits and the whole issue of screen time and social media. And it also included some sessions of cyberbullying and internet safety. This conference in particular was so popular that we actually added a second session, which also filled.

And this is just a couple of examples of some more recent ones: What Makes Family Strong, Taking Back Childhood. First Fridays, and you have a copy of that in your packet, First Fridays, what we did was we took some of the sessions that we had done in Digital Dilemma, What Makes Family Strong and Taking Back Childhood and we decided to do half-day programs for professionals, kind of doing a little bit of a mashup of some of the sessions. And it also proved to be pretty popular.

And in your packet there is coming up in January, we're doing a professional conference on promoting positive discipline and guidance, which always seems to be a hot topic for -- especially for folks who work directly with young children, school-age children and even adolescents.

Are there any questions?

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

You have quite a few.

MR. JAHN:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

We'll start with Legislator Browning this time.

LEG. BROWNING:

Thank you. And I know that Cornell has been doing a phenomenal job with the families, the Family Literacy Program at the library. And I know you got a great audience there.

So, however, Legislator Barraga and I, we were just saying, you know, things like 9/11, talking to children, and I guess it depends on the age. And I'm just curious how do you -- how do you decide whether you should be talking to them or not talking to them? Because kids are different. They adapt very different than adults do. And, you know, 9/11, my husband was a responder so my family was impacted. But a family that's not impacted or don't know anybody or have no connection, they might be sitting in the same room as one of my children, but they're not as impacted. So my concern would always be you're bringing up an issue to a child that, leave it alone. So how do you determine when you're in a group of kids?

MR. JAHN:

That's an excellent question. When we did that program, you have to remember, it was right in the aftermath of 9/11. So everybody was impacted in some way just because of the media exposure. I mean, all kids seem to be affected by it. When we did the project in -- when we replicated the project in Three Village School District, those families were directly affected. I believe, if I remember correctly, there were about 25 or 28 individuals who perished who were working in the towers.

LEG. BROWNING:

But the thing is is that even though my husband was a first responder, I didn't turn on the TV and let my son watch.

MR. JAHN:

In fact, that is --

LEG. BROWNING:

I don't think it's appropriate to let any child see --

MR. JAHN:

Right. And in fact, it's a very good point because it's one of the ones we made was that limiting exposure to young children, and like with any kind of -- in addition to 9/11 we also talk about talking with children about natural disasters. And one of the things is limiting media to young children who may not be able to interpret it. And the second thing is to answer their questions and answer them based on their age, what they're able to understand and with just the very basic information.

So, for example, a child might ask a parent because they've come home from school and something has happened, why are people so sad? And a simple answer would be, you know, people are sad when they experience something that they've lost, something that they care about. Okay. You don't have to necessarily explain all the dynamics of death, you know, they had a death in the family to be able to explain that. I think kids can understand that, that sometimes they're sad even when they lose a toy.

So we keep it very basic. But then also with that particular program we had also individuals who were working with teenagers who obviously are going to ask more thoughtful questions. So we had to be prepared to sort of have a range of responses and a way of understanding. But one of the key points was in that -- in that particular program was limiting the exposure, particularly of young children under the age of five, even under the age of eight, quite frankly, to all the -- the images that they were seeing on mass media. Because they -- they don't comprehend it, they don't understand it, they may not be directly affected by it.

So that was one of the -- that was one of the things -- when we're talking about talking with kids about one these things, one of the ways we tried to explain to them some principles how do you approach this? So we had teachers -- for example, in Three Village School District we had teachers in fifth and sixth grade who were asking some of the questions that their kids were asking, which were really pretty thoughtful and actually, quite frankly, we had to -- we turned it back on the audience to ask them well, what are your -- some of your ideas? Because we don't have all the answers for something like that, which is one of the nice things about teaching professionals, you know, because they actually, they can contribute to the process.

I hope -- I hope I answered your question. I know it's a really --

LEG. BROWNING:

I just am always worried about, you know, those types of occurrences and bringing attention to it, to a child that --

MR. JAHN:

Yeah.

LEG. BROWNING:

-- maybe isn't, you know, the parents are smart enough to say, turn off the TV, don't watch it when they're in the room and that, you know, I think sometimes we're causing the kids to have too much fear about stuff.

MR. JAHN:

Well, I agree.

LEG. BROWNING:

You know, that you don't want to -- you don't want to kind of create an undue -- an unnecessary harm to them. And kids are very resilient anyway. We were just saying that how they -- they can move on.

MR. JAHN:

Yes.

LEG. BROWNING:

You know, we overthink things more than they do.

MR. JAHN:

Right. And you know, this is the 15th anniversary.

LEG. BROWNING:

Right.

MR. JAHN:

And over the years I paid attention to the materials that come out for educators. And they're very different now. We're a whole generation removed. So the kids now in school were not born at that time. So a lot of the materials have a -- more like a historical study of it rather than some of the kind of social work counseling approach to -- to the events, so.

LEG. BROWNING:

Thank you. And my son was six. So good reason not to let him watch TV.

MR. JAHN:

Well, I would agree with that and I think our staff would, too. Are there some other questions?

LEG. BROWNING:

Thank you.

MR. JAHN:

That's a very good question.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you. But just to kind of piggyback on what Legislator Browning was just discussing with you, when was the last time that you presented this program, right after or have you done it constantly?

MR. JAHN:

No, we -- we did a -- all of this -- that particular program I was giving you sort of a historical perspective of the things we've done over the years. That one was done right in the aftermath. The full year we started, the first session was at the end October. And we actually continued almost through June into the next year into 2002. We did do, a year later, just -- we brought people back who attended that training. We, called it kind of a reunion, which is not necessarily the greatest term for it, but to see -- sort of a reflection exercise to see what they -- what they were experiencing and how -- how did it go in their classrooms and in their settings with kids, how did the whole process go in trying to, you know, understand what had happened.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

And what were the ages that you presented this to?

MR. JAHN:

Well, we presented it for professionals who work with kids and they worked with all ages.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Okay.

MR. JAHN:

They worked with -- we had child care providers who worked with kids under the age of five. Most of them worked with school-age kids. Most of the people we worked with were teachers and other professionals or youth professionals that work with school-age children.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Because now --

MR. JAHN:

I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

-- the tragedy of 9/11 are now in the textbooks.

MR. JAHN:

Yes, that's what I'm saying. So it's, it's -- yeah, we don't too much with it anymore, obviously. And as I say, I look at some of the materials that come out of the land-grant university system or some of the materials for teachers. And, again, it's mostly sort of a history lesson rather than a processing experience of dealing with your feelings about it.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Great, thank you. Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you. I'm always very impressed with what Cornell is doing.

MR. JAHN:

Thank you.

LEG. HAHN:

When you mentioned, I think it was the first slide or the second, depending on if you count the initial header, where you say who you're working with, do you also -- or I would recommend if you don't, connect with sports organizations like soccer clubs and lacrosse clubs and -- there's a whole group of, sort of, volunteers --

MR. JAHN:

Yeah.

LEG. HAHN:

-- that work with children. And, you know -- and, in addition, even physicians. You know, we had an adolescent physician speak earlier to be part of the Teen Pregnancy Task Force and pediatricians and OBGY -- I know that Cornell offers a whole host of programs that are directly talking to parents and sometimes children, you know, so just getting the word out about your programs --

MR. JAHN:

Right.

LEG. HAHN:

-- through connections there.

MR. JAHN:

We have -- we have worked with health professionals: School nurses, physicians, particularly around the issue of Type 2 diabetes and childhood obesity. And some of them have attended our programs over the years. We've actually -- I did a session a number of years ago on bullying and I actually had a physician attend that session; took the day off and came to it. He was not the target audience, obviously, for that kind of program, but, yes, we do.

We do have paraprofessionals come. We've -- I did a program a number of years ago, which I did on-site for coaches on sportsmanship. Because there is actually some very interesting materials, an extension system on sportsmanship and encouraging sportsmanship. But it hasn't been, you know, it hasn't been a widespread initiative that we've done.

LEG. HAHN:

Yeah, I would imagine there would be a market --

MR. JAHN:

Yes, I --

LEG. HAHN:

-- for something crafted specifically for -- that would include drugs --

MR. JAHN:

Yes.

LEG. HAHN:

-- information on, you know, addiction and drugs --

MR. JAHN:

Great idea.

LEG. HAHN:

-- and bullying and, you know, all kinds of adolescence -- and nutrition and, you know, there would be something that the coaches if they were, you know, if clubs -- sports clubs were interested in weaving that kind of training in and out with their coaches, I think there would be a real market, an interest in that, you know -- you know, there's all kinds of --

MR. JAHN:

I think it's an excellent idea.

LEG. HAHN:

-- all kinds of things you can touch on.

MR. JAHN:

I know -- I know our 4-H Youth Development Program has done some youth leadership things along that line for Scouts, Girl Scout leaders, Boy Scout leaders, 4-H leaders. But I don't -- I can't recall anything where we've really in an intensive way and a direct way targeting coaches, but I think it's a good suggestion.

LEG. HAHN:

Yeah, I know, my husband coached for the Stony Brook Soccer Club. And, you know, they -- and my brother-in-law is a coach for the lacrosse, Three Village lacrosse. I really think that they would

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

welcome that kind of training.

MR. JAHN:

And, you're right, the issues --

LEG. HAHN:

There are a whole host of issues and you can ask, obviously --

MR. JAHN:

Yeah.

LEG. HAHN:

-- you could ask clubs, which would be their highest priority, you know --

MR. JAHN:

Yes.

LEG. HAHN:

-- the sports-related stuff first, but you could weave in those other --

MR. JAHN:

Absolutely.

LEG. HAHN:

-- subject areas for sure.

MR. JAHN:

Are there any other questions? Thank you for the feedback.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you.

MR. JAHN:

You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you for coming and --

MR. JAHN:

Thanks for hosting me and having me. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

I appreciate it. Thank you.

Okay. And now, we have our Suffolk Community College who will also present. They are presenting on the Community Outreach and what the college is doing in terms of reaching out to our communities and hopefully increasing enrollment. And now we also have two trustees. We have Miss Theresa Sanders and I think I saw Mr. Morgo. Is he here? Okay, who then will, if you do not mind, along with Gail -- the student trustee, thank you, if you could then please after the presentation come up as the Committee may have some questions regarding the meal plan.

DR. BEAUDIN:

Thank you very much, Legislator. My name is Dr. Paul Beaudin. I am the Dean of Instruction and I'm an Associate Vice-President of Academic Affairs at the college. I'd like to say that I have the

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

best job at the college because I don't necessarily stay on the campus all the time. I'm out among our high schools and I work exclusively with Suffolk County high schools. And I'm helping high schools to develop programs with the college to ensure that students are college-ready.

I'd like to talk to you today about three specific programs that we use. The first program is called the Excelsior Program. This is a program in which the college does outreach to high school partners and we offer college-level courses at the local high schools. We provide mentorship and we provide a director who visits with high school teachers, administrators and guidance personnel. This year alone we will have about 4000 Suffolk County high school students taking courses for college credit. And those courses are transferable to not only Suffolk County high school -- I mean, Suffolk County Community College but to SUNYs all over the state as well as many private institutions. So we're very proud of that program. We provide mentorship and we provide faculty visiting with high school faculty or teaching college-level courses at the high school.

We also offer an Early College Program. Early College is a program in which students who are in partner high schools come to the college in early morning classes and late afternoon and evening classes, take college course work for credit. We provide this opportunity because many of our students, because we have such extraordinary high schools in the County, many of our students were actually finishing some of the courses that are available to them and they need something more challenging.

For instance, we have a high school junior this year, who as a sophomore in high school took the Calc AB AP exam, the BC exam, which is the highest mathematics exam that AP, Advanced Placement offers, as a high school sophomore. She got a four on the Calc BC AP exam. This year she's taking differential equations because her high school has no more math classes that they can challenge her with. So we're happy to provide that service.

We will have about 150 high school students taking courses at the college. We just recently, Pat-Med, it just became one of our new high school partners. We have this opportunity available to any high school in the County that looks to offer a partnership. Not only did those students take courses at the college but we work directly with the guidance staff at the high school and really provide progress monitoring. So we're proud of that program as well. We know that with Excelsior and Early College, 30% of the students who take part in our high school programs will subsequently enroll at Suffolk County Community College.

The next program is an Early Intervention Program, which started in Hampton Bays High School about four years ago. The Early Intervention Program is an opportunity for us to work with high schools to let them know what college readiness looks like. You know that from the Common Core there's the great promise of college and career readiness, but there has not been much conversation between the colleges and the high schools; so we provide that conversation. This year we'll have about 1,000 high school seniors involved in Early Intervention. The purpose is to provide support and mathematics instruction. So we are currently working with these schools and we're providing them through the help of the McGraw-Hill/Macmillan Company a Mastering Model Mathematics Program. And we provide training. And we'll be working with these high school partners.

We know that from our experience at Hampton Bays High School over the last four years, we've dramatically reduced the number of students requiring developmental mathematics placement at the college. Mathematics is really a gateway for so many of our students to get careers in engineering technology, medicine. And we know that for many students, because they had been moved along too quickly perhaps through the elementary school and the mathematics curriculum, that they come to college without all of the essential skills. So the purpose of Early Intervention is let's help them while they're in high school so that when they come to the college, they're taking college-level

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

courses for college credit and they're not stuck in a cycle of remediation.

If you look at the chart here, [Indicating], you'll see that last year we had about 14,769 credits taken in the high schools by our Excelsior students. We've gone from 29 schools participating in '13, '14. This year we have 42 Suffolk County high schools participating in this program for a growth of about 44%.

We've increased our Early College high schools from four. Currently we have 12. We have one more and we're waiting for the MOU to be signed so we'll be at 13. And we're looking to sign another school up for the spring semester. And those represent the names of the partner high schools in our Early College Program. [Indicating].

Lastly with the Early Intervention Program, as I said, I've communicated with all -- with 100 percent of our Suffolk County high school principals. I've shared data with 55% of them. I'm available to go out to any high school principal that requests the help. I meet with guidance teams, with administrators and with math and English teachers. This year we'll have about 15 schools participating; three will be primarily participating in our English program; and about 12 will be participating in a math intervention program.

And that's it. Does anyone have any questions for me and what we can do?

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:

How do you reach out to the school districts on what you were just talking about, the Early Intervention?

DR. BEAUDIN:

All of them got a -- received a letter from me. And then basically it's word of mouth. I make contact with them. I'll call them. They'll invite me to come in. Last year, as I said, was my first year at the college and I was actually in 55% of our Suffolk County high schools.

LEG. HAHN:

Do you need our assistance, you know, making contacts or trying to outreach?

DR. BEAUDIN:

No, I'm not sure that that's necessary, I welcome any help I can get. I really want to get the message out there. I think that many our students who come to the college and require developmental placement do so because they're high school guidance folk are not necessarily aware of what some of the benchmarks are that we look for when students come to us. So the more that we can get the word out, the more that we can provide services, the more likely students will be successful when they come to college.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Any other questions? Just quickly, Paul, you had said about 1,000 students are being provided with remedial services this year. Was that just Southampton School District or in total?

DR. BEAUDIN:

Come again?

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

You had mentioned 1,000 students are being --

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

DR. BEAUDIN:

Oh, I'm sorry, yes. That would be throughout the County: 1,000 high school seniors will be provided with our help at the high school in order to avoid unnecessary developmental math placement.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

That's just for this year.

DR. BEAUDIN:

That's just for this year.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

What was it last year, do you know?

DR. BEAUDIN:

Last year we are just working with Hampton Bays High School. So last year was about 150 students.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

And out of these 1,000 students, how many schools are involved in this 1,000?

DR. BEAUDIN:

There are 12 schools who are currently involved, yes.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

And these are just the 12 schools that are involved in the Early?

DR. BEAUDIN:

Early Intervention Program.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Early Intervention.

DR. BEAUDIN:

That's right.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

And I know there has been a question that I've asked at college before and I'm not sure, I know Central Islip was not on this list prior, are they on it this year? Have they accepted your offer?

DR. BEAUDIN:

There are some high schools that have not yet accepted our offer, but we gladly will work with any of them.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

So these schools that are rejecting or not answering your call, is there a reason that they are giving you as to why they are not accepting your offer?

DR. BEAUDIN:

Right. There are many high schools that have not accepted the offer for a variety of different reasons.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Such as?

DR. BEAUDIN:

For many of them, they did not have the funding that was necessary at that particular point in the fiscal year. So that for some of them, many students will not necessarily take high school math as seniors. And so in order to do that, they would need to fund a high school math teacher for those students needing it. I'm not sure what the reasons would be for Central Islip, but I know that that's one of the reasons I hear sometimes.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

What's the usual funding amount?

DR. BEAUDIN:

It depends. If you have 100 high school seniors in need of remedial mathematics, that is one full teacher's salary and benefits.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

The wheels are turning now.

LEG. BARRAGA:

So from the high school's perspective, if they don't go ahead with that program, they also note that those 100 students, if they all went to Suffolk Community College, they would get remediation there. So it wouldn't come off their budget. It would be incurred as an expense by the college for the remediation of those students.

DR. BEAUDIN:

I would not know what the superintendent or the principal would be thinking in that regard. Ultimately we want to make sure that every student who comes to the college is successful. So it becomes difficult to place a student into an advanced math class if he or she has some -- is in need of math remediation. We're hoping to help to provide as much as humanly possible that remediation at the high school level.

LEG. BARRAGA:

But I can see in a tight fiscal situation at the school district level, where that decision could be made, why incur the expense at our level when we have Suffolk Community College will have to give them remediation, let's say in math, once they get there.

DR. BEAUDIN:

Right, but the reality also is that many of the students who are in need of remediation don't necessarily come to us. Many of them might go onto a four-year school. We want to make sure that when they go to Suffolk Community or any other four-year college, that they're successful. And way too often students are not retained in college because they're not successful their first year. We're trying to avoid that from happening at our place.

LEG. BARRAGA:

But in accordance with the concept of open enrollment --

DR. BEAUDIN:

Right.

LEG. BARRAGA:

-- now when they show up, as long as they have that high school diploma, you have to take them in no matter.

DR. BEAUDIN:

Absolutely. Not only do we take them, but we educate them where they're at.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

So if these students entering the college and need remedial services, all right, and they take the course, is it a non-credit course or are they getting credit for this course?

DR. BEAUDIN:

They are getting credit, but it does not -- they're getting credit, they're paying for credit, but it does not help to their degree completion, it's not part of the program that they have to complete to get the associate degree.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Yeah, they're paying for it.

DR. BEAUDIN:

So there's a cost factor involved, right. And it's also something that they need to do before they move on to those courses, which will help them to get their degree.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

So then by having this Early Intervention, what you're trying to do is, make sure that before they come in, they are able to level off any type of remedial services they may need so, then, when they come in, they're paying their courses to complete their degree.

DR. BEAUDIN:

Exactly.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. So basically if the school rejects it, they just don't want to pay the money the -- so the student has to pay for it or is it covered under -- well, if they're -- for student aid of the FAFSA, do they get it paid for through that? Or is that --

DR. BEAUDIN:

I'm not responsible for that, but I do know that Pell money does pay for remedial courses. The reality is is that Pell money will eventually expire. It's only good for a certain number of semesters. So it really behooves the college to make sure that students come into the college, they take their courses, they're successful and they graduate because eventually Pell funding will expire.

LEG. BROWNING:

So does anyone know, does financial aid pay for those remedial classes?

DR. BEAUDIN:

I'm not sure of that answer.

LEG. BROWNING:

I'm looking in the back of the room and they're kind of --

MR. ZWIRN:

I have to find out.

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. You know, just curious if you had that answer because --

MR. ZWIRN:

Good question.

LEG. BROWNING:

-- if financial aid doesn't pay for it and the high school chooses not to accept your program, then the student's going to have to pay for it out of pocket. And that sometimes can be a little problematic for some kids. So, okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you. Any other questions?

DR. BEAUDIN:

Thank you so much for your time.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you.

DR. BEAUDIN:

I appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Oh, wait, hold on. The Board of Trustees are coming up next. Thank you.

Okay, so now if we can have the two members of the Board of Trustees as well as our student trustee and Ben's coming up. Gail, are you joining them?

MR. ZWIRN:

Madam Chair, we have Theresa Sanders, who's the Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees of Suffolk County Community College; we have the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees, Jim Morgo, who is also head of the Finance Committee; and Christopher North who is a student trustee. And we'll be talking about -- and Gail Vizzini is here as Vice-President in charge of Finance for the college.

Let me just give an overview. I mean, we have had -- I respect what Mr. Marmo said today about the meal plan, but it was never taken lightly by the Board of Trustees. Nothing that concerns the students at Suffolk Community College has been taken lightly by this board. They're unpaid. They go to Albany to advocate on behalf of the college, they go everywhere to fight to keep the college affordable. We eliminated positions in the budget this past year, do everything we could to try to keep tuition down.

The meal plan has nothing to do with tuition. When the contract was up with the prior vendor, the students were very unhappy with the choices and the quality of food that they had. So the college set up a committee, which included students, to find a better alternative. As Mr. Marmo said, and he's right about one thing, they weren't lining up, you know, to take over a commuter college without some incentives. And there were only a couple of people who even bid on the contract.

Aramark, which is very well known and is used by many colleges and institutions across the United States, was prepared to make an investment of up to \$2 million to improve the food service; bring in a Chick-fil-A, Starbucks, a Subway to try to improve the choices and also healthy choices. I know Legislator Hahn called me about that early on and they do make much healthier choices and the quality of food has improved dramatically.

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

The \$100 that is for full-time students, because the Legislature weighed in on this, and even though as George Nolan said, that the Legislature doesn't have day-to-day control over the college, we listen to what the Legislature has to say and how you deal with your constituents. The \$100 per semester fee, if it's mandatory, there is no sales tax included. So for every \$100 that a student pays, they get \$108 plus back. If it is not mandatory, if it is optional, sales tax will be charged to all the students. And we probably would lose Aramark and we would have to be -- either not provide any food service at all or it would be minimal.

The food service has been very well received. Students are using their cards, they're getting through the cafeterias quickly. I go there all the time because the food service has improved and I see the students using it and we talk to them and say *how do you -- how do you feel about this?* And they're very much delighted by it for the most part and we get very few complaints.

Also because the Legislature weighed in, we added another category. You can be exempt for dietary purposes, for religious purposes and also for hardship purposes. If you don't have the money to do it, you can make an application before a committee and they have on occasion said *you're excused*.

If you get Pell grants, which a lot of students do, if you get TAP funds, tuition assistance money from the state, that will cover the meal plan. So if you are a student that is getting financial aid, you do not have to pay this out-of-pocket; it will be picked up by the grants. And those are grants, TAP and Pell, which do not have to be paid back. They're not student loans.

So when we go through it, the question is, is it working and we think it is. Board of Trustees did not close the door on this issue. They said we were going to wait a year to review the facts to see how the students responded to it before they would make a definitive answer. And the results came in from a poll that was done and the results we can share with the Legislature or anybody, will see that they are very, very well received and that it is very, very popular. And, again, this was done with the student input and the students were recommending this to the Board that were on the committee.

And if there are any other particular questions, I'll turn it over to Board of Trustees, they can give you their thoughts on it if you like, but this was something that was not, again, not taken lightly by this group on the Board of Trustees.

MS. SANDERS:

Thank you, Ben. Really appreciate you having us here today. It's an opportunity for us to come before you. And we did deliberate quite a bit over the meal plan knowing the range of economic levels of all of our students. We had to take our time as a board and we did and evaluated everyone's input. So we took about a year before we got all of the feedback back. We did taste testings ourself. We wanted to hear from the students who some cannot get off campus in-between classes to be able to go grab something to eat. We have students that take buses there. We have working parents who take their classes back-to-back so that they could get to work so it's not always an opportunity to leave and go get food. It's not always convenient to bring food. So we did consider all aspects of the families and students that we serve. And as Ben said when the results came back, they did come back overwhelmingly positive.

MR. MORGO:

Yeah, and I just want to, if I may, and it's good to you see you all, underline a couple things that Ben said. On the first one, when he talked about the Trustees taking the meal plan complaints seriously, and, in fact, taking the whole question of affordability seriously, that is exactly on point. I've been Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee for three years. And I remember the first year that I had the chairmanship, we had to raise tuition by \$200 for the entire year, \$100 a semester.

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

And at that time I said, you know, \$200 doesn't sound like much, but it does if you don't have the \$200. And this has been an ongoing effort that the Legislature did get involved with because the committee that you formed along with the college for a five-year budgetary rational tuition plan is working very effectively. The first two years it was chaos, frankly. This last year because of the cooperation and the collaboration, we had a very smooth budget. So we do take it extremely seriously.

And something else that I know you know and I know -- knew as a Legislator and I certainly knew as President of the Long Island Housing Partnership, when's something's proposed and people comment, the people who are against it are there. They come to the Legislative meetings, they come to the town board meetings and you hear from them. We did have anecdotal complaints about the meal plan. I received calls. My fellow Trustees received calls. We all took them seriously. But as both Ben and Theresa mentioned, we had after a year something that made it not just anecdotal. We had a survey and the survey results you heard what they were, the methodology of the survey was scientific and deliberative. And Ben said the college plans to share that survey with you. So that after a year, and I heard the gentleman speak, I understand the situation. Our student Trustee keeps us aware of the concerns of the students.

So I'm underlying what Ben said and, but this hasn't been anything that's been in any way frivolous. It's been something that's been done very seriously. Thank you.

MR. NORTH:

Thank you for my time and requesting -- on the student perspective, a lot of the students did come to me with their concerns. And after the fact I gave them the benefits of this program where -- where I've told them that you are no longer being taxed where you can -- non-deductible tax. So there is a benefit of that. Where if we remove you now if you're -- if you don't get -- if you don't have the meal plan, the students will be taxed a price and then you have to pay the extra tax. So now having a non-taxable is a better benefit. And also the students can actually -- some of the students now this semester I've heard are starting to reload the card because it's a benefit of getting a percentage back actually.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you. So I know we have a couple of questions from members of the Committee. Legislator Barraga.

LEG. BARRAGA:

What are the parameters associated with the meal plan? I mean, do you -- timeframe wise? When does it open up in the morning? Does it go all day? Can you go back repeatedly or are you designated a certain number of meals per week? How does the process work?

MR. ZWIRN:

It's -- it's open. They can go back as many times as they want until they use up the money on their card. You know, when you put it in perspective --

LEG. BARRAGA:

That amount is how much?

MR. ZWIRN:

A hundred dollars.

LEG. BARRAGA:

A hundred dollars per semester?

MR. ZWIRN:

Yes.

LEG. BARRAGA:

So it's 200 for the year.

MR. ZWIRN:

Right. And you can use it over and over again. A lot of students run out and either put it back on their card, they load it up again. You know, when you put it in perspective, if you get a cup of coffee every day that's about \$10 a week approximately. So that's just a cup of coffee on the campus, not a cup of coffee and a hamburger, a cup of coffee and a sandwich so -- I mean, you can use up the card very, very quickly just by, you know, minimal use over a course of a semester.

LEG. BARRAGA:

And is it open all day?

MR. ZWIRN:

Usually. I think it opens about 8:30 in the morning and goes till 8 o'clock at night.

LEG. BARRAGA:

For evening classes. Okay. I take it there's the general cafeteria and then you have specialty foods; you mentioned Chick-fil-a and a couple of others.

MR. ZWIRN:

Chick-fil-a and Starbucks are coming in the future. We had some -- the college now does its own permitting, doing its own C of Os. And we were having some problems with Public Works getting this stuff moved along. So things should move a lot quicker. We would hope to have had them up by now. There's a Subway on the Grant campus. They're serving Starbucks coffee and things like that, but they will have these up and running because that's what the students want.

LEG. BARRAGA:

The reason I bring it up because I'm aware of a private university that charges anywhere from 11 to \$1500 per semester. And there's some speciality shops, but the reality is they're allowed just so many meals during the course of the semester and so many meals per week. But that cost factor is quite prohibitive, but they're paying it.

MR. ZWIRN:

Yeah, this money was not a way to get money into the General Fund Operating Fund; this was just for the meal plan.

LEG. BARRAGA:

I understand.

MR. ZWIRN:

So, I mean, some people see the \$100 as, well, why didn't you raise tuition, \$100 would cover it. That's not what this was for. This was to give the vendor the incentive to make the kind of capital investment that he's going to make, that he would have at least a guaranteed revenue so he can recoup his investment over time.

LEG. BARRAGA:

I mean, I know someone might say, well, you know, they're going to private school, they can afford it, they're at higher income. But there are many families that make unbelievable sacrifices to send their children to private school. And paying 14 to 1500, believe me, it's a lot of money per semester

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

for meals, but they do it. So, for me, 100 bucks is not bad. Yeah, and, you know, if it's a real problem -- you know, sometimes I wonder, I guess people just don't have part-time jobs anymore. I don't know. Maybe they should go out and if they're working take some of the monies and pay the tuition because it's around 47, \$4800 a year as opposed to the private sector where it could be 40,50, 60, 70,000 a year. It's still a huge bargain.

MR. ZWIRN:

And, as I mentioned, if they get -- if the students are eligible for Pell grants or TAP funding from the State, that will cover it, the cost of the meal plan.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:

Can you go into a little more detail about the hardship waiver and what it takes to qualify for that?

MS. VIZZINI:

There's a -- there's a Waiver Committee that consists of three vice-presidents to keep the determinations consistent. When we broadened the -- there's a definition of financial hardship on the website where you get the online form. Typically, the criteria would be that the family is -- all of the hardships have to be documented in some way. It was meant to be that the circumstances had changed dramatically since perhaps the FAFSA had been completed. Loss of employment, fire. And based on some of the requests that we have received, we also see that certain of our students, although they may be receiving financial aid, their families are in hardship situations where they're also receiving assistance, perhaps it might be SNAP, it might be public assistance or other forms of subsidy. So when we take all that into consideration at the request, we usually go along with waiving it.

LEG. HAHN:

You know, I'm just concerned that federal standards for hardships are set at a national level. And living on Long Island is -- is much more difficult than the national standards. And I was wondering if it -- it's just a little bit more flexible than the national hardship standards.

MS. VIZZINI:

We don't use the national hardship standards. We try to be consistent and considerate.

LEG. HAHN:

I know that clearly it wouldn't make sense for monies to be transferable overall, but what about students who may have to withdraw early on in the semester, is there a way -- obviously they -- I know you're probably not giving refunds, but is there a way to transfer any leftover dollars to needy students?

MS. VIZZINI:

Not legitimately, no.

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

I mean, I know what you're trying to do, but I have a young girl in my district who is in the nursing

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

program and she pays for it. She brings her own lunch. She doesn't like to go to the lunchroom or the cafeteria. She just brings her own lunch and she has never spent the money on the lunch program. So she would not qualify probably for any hardships, but -- so, you know, I think -- I think what she's looking at it is, you know, I'm spending all this money every year and I get nothing for it. And I'm not getting a refund and -- now, it doesn't roll over. Right? I know that that was a conversation we had initially.

MS. VIZZINI:

There's some IRS regulations for the tax exemption and the state law. If the student attended in the fall and did not spend everything, their balances roll over to the spring. But at the end of the then fiscal year, if \$5 were not used or something of that nature -- and I do want to point out that we do have incentives at the end of the semester for bulk purchase or, you know, buy one-get one types of things, in addition to our --

LEG. BROWNING:

But it's possible some are just not taking advantage at all. And -- because I know that she said she has not used it at all. Not one penny. And so that -- that's the -- her mom told me it's -- she felt it's unfair, "my daughter brings her own lunch. She doesn't go to the cafeteria and she has not used any of the money and she is " -- she says she just would like to see some kind of refund, but it's not something that --

MS. VIZZINI:

We can't do the refundability, as Ben stated, that would eliminate the tax exemption for the other participants. It's predicated on the non -- it has to be nonrefundable, unusual provision in the state law, but that's the refundability aspect of it.

I would encourage the individual to submit some sort of waiver request for whatever her circumstances are. Once the nursing students are doing their clinicals, they're exempted because the clinicals are off campus as are the OT students and the PT students because they're no longer on campus.

LEG. BROWNING:

I think she's in the Selden campus. She's in the nursing program so wouldn't it be Selden?

MS. VIZZINI:

It could be.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah. It could be Sayville.

MS. VIZZINI:

It could be Sayville and they don't have the food service.

LEG. BROWNING:

So they don't pay if they're in Sayville. Correct?

MS. VIZZINI:

Well, no -- not -- it's based on what campus your classes are given. So if the majority of your classes are either at the Brentwood or the Selden campuses and you're taking more than nine credits in the classroom, then you are charged.

LEG. BROWNING:

I mean, I can certainly encourage her to fill out the waiver, but she doesn't believe that she would

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

be eligible for a waiver. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you. I do have a couple of other questions that were provided by Legislator D'Amato who was not able to be here. His questions are as follows: first one, what is the entire revenue incurred from the meal plan? From that revenue -- okay, one at a time, I guess.

MS. VIZZINI:

Why don't you do part B?

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

(Laughter) Because there is a part B to that question. And from that revenue where does the money go towards? Like what does the college use that money for?

MS. VIZZINI:

I'd like to differentiate the revenue from the \$100 meal plan, which, for example, the fall semester, this fall there's 13,600 students who are taking more than nine credits at the Ammerman or the Brentwood campus. So we will ultimately bill -- we are billing for what, you know, 13,600 students, that's half our 26,000 head count, \$100. So we are anticipating revenue of \$1.3 million for the meal plan. That revenue is held in a liability account because the food service will sell the students food based on their swiping their cards and bill the college for the participants in the meal plan. So it -- all the proceeds from the \$100 are either remitted to Aramark to pay the bills. Anything that is left over is reinvested in the food service operation.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

So when you mean reinvested into the food service, this is where your new providers come in, new services? Is that what you mean by that?

MS. VIZZINI:

The business model is based on a profit and loss statement that the college receives every month from the vendor: Everything that they spent and all the revenue that they took in. All their expenditures are on there: Labor, any equipment they may have had to purchase and what have you. And remember please, too, in addition to the \$100 meal plan, there are students, faculty and staff spending cash or credit. So there's other revenue that will go to offset some of those expenditures. At the end of the year if there is -- well, on a monthly basis actually, we reconcile this profit and loss statement and we're either in the positive or we're in the negative.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

And as of right now where do we stand, negative or positive?

MS. VIZZINI:

Well, last year we were very fortunate in that we did end the year in the positive. But the college Operating Budget did also incur some operating expenditures: To replace the pizza ovens, to provide various -- a cart for the health -- sports complex where we hold a variety of student and community events. There's no food service immediately in that area so we -- we bought the food service a cart so they can bring the food into that area for various community activities. So the -- we do get -- the cafeteria plan gets some revenue at the end of the year, but the Operating Budget pays for the equipment, which the college owns.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Do you know how much revenue was made last year, the profit-wise?

MS. VIZZINI:

Between -- I would say about \$250,000.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

So this \$250,000 does not go back to Aramark. It stayed at the college, which then you used to purchase these carts that you just mentioned.

MS. VIZZINI:

Offset our expenditures, yes.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

So then -- but then aren't they supposed to be reinvested into the actual food preparation that you just mentioned before?

MS. VIZZINI:

Yeah, if there's any unused meal plan money, it goes to the profit and loss statement and could probably turn a \$200,000 loss into either a break-even or a \$200,000 positive revenue. Then that revenue would fall to the college.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Okay. The other issues that I think we have encountered in terms of constituents calling us and also follow-up to Legislator D'Amaro's questions is that why can't balances carry over?

MS. VIZZINI:

They can carry over from the fall to the spring. But pursuant to state finance -- state tax law and IRS regulations, they have to end in the fiscal year.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Okay. Also, for example -- and I believe it was mentioned before, but is there any possibility that the college can look into this? All right, so let's say, for example, someone -- can they use their unused funds and give them to somebody else? Can someone -- let's say I have a card and --

MS. VIZZINI:

The only thing they can do would be on a voluntary basis, if I -- if you're my friend and I know that you don't have lunch today buy you lunch. I can't come up with a mechanism for a tax exempt program to funnel monies in terms of what you're talking about.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

So they can't carry over one student to another if they wanted to because --

MS. VIZZINI:

It's not -- it's not legitimately transferrable. We've been working with student affairs in terms of whether they can -- students can use the money to make donations to our food pantry. The food service provider has been very gracious to try to offer bulk rates and has donated to all the campus food pantries themselves, but we don't want to do anything to jeopardize any of the auditable criteria there. But we are working with Student Affairs in terms of the possibilities in that regard.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

That's great. Thank you. Are there any other questions? All right. Well, I want to thank you, again, for always being available when we have questions and we greatly appreciate it. So on that note, there is no further business, Committee's adjourned.

9/27/16 Education & Human Services Committee

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:57 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY