

New lunch program discussed by school panel

By Donna K. Drago

The school board heard an initial report on the new healthy school lunch offerings provided by Sodexo at their Sept. 20 meeting.

Although daily meal counts are somewhat lower than they were two years ago, Fridays are seeing an upsurge in numbers, especially since it's "Pizza Day," Chairwoman Cathy Kaiser said.

School board vice president Julie Kallfelz said she had heard "anecdotal," from both students and parents that the food choices were greatly improved over past years' choices.

Since the beginning of the year, the lowest lunch count has been 114, on the first day of school, and the highest was 233, on Sept. 7.

Among the complaints aired at the meeting, the school committee heard that students are having to

stand in longer lines due to having to pay for their lunches in the cafeteria, where they formerly paid in the classrooms.

"This gives us more instructional time," Superintendent Marcia Lukon noted.

The lunch period will remain at 45 minutes, but aspiring principal Carrie Melucci said they were working to give a full 30 minutes in the lunchroom and will cut down the outdoor recess time to 15 minutes. "We'll give children more time to eat," Melucci said.

The Melrose Avenue School is planning a "Color My World" week, Oct. 15 to 19, to highlight the many colors of fresh vegetables available for lunch. Each day, the lunch offerings will feature produce in a particular color and kids are asked to wear clothing to match the day's color.

Parents can get into the act on Tuesday, Oct. 16, "Green Day," when they can sign up to eat lunch in the cafeteria with the children, while wearing green clothes, of course.

The cost is \$3.50 per adult and the menu includes a choice of homemade lasagna, tuna boat on a whole wheat hot-dog bun, or a Popeye salad. Fresh green beans, Rhode Island-grown apples and fresh nectarines are also on tap that day.

In other business, the School Committee:

- Discussed a tentative agenda for an Oct. 2 meeting with the North Kingstown School Committee, to be held at the Melrose Avenue School.

Kaiser said she hoped the two panels would come up with a process for filling major vacancies on either staff. A line of communication between administrators about job openings should be started to coordinate sharing of personnel, Kaiser suggested.

There is some space available at the Lawn Avenue School should North Kingstown need to move some students while making major changes to schools in that town. Kaiser asked principal Kathy Almanzor to take a look to see just how many students could

be accommodated. Kallfelz said she imagined the school could go back to holding four classes each in seventh and eighth grades.

Kaiser noted that North Kingstown would like to start having the joint meetings on an annual basis.

- Heard from Supt. Lukon that the school needs a data management assistant to enter information that the state requires.

The school panel agreed that the position could be advertised for 20 hours a week for one year. They will then revisit the necessity for the position after the initial

year.

- Learned from special education director Bob Fricklas that two new teacher assistants would be needed to meet the needs of two "severe and profound," students. Fricklas said the students' Individual Education Plans call for one-to-one assistance that is currently not being provided. He noted that both students are new to the district this year. Supt. Lukon said she would meet with the school business manager to figure out how to pay for the two new employees.

URI holds garden, energy demos at 'GreenShare' day

Traditional gardening workshops, sales and demonstrations will share space with renewable energy and energy conservation activities at the 17th annual GreenShare Field Day at the University of Rhode Island on Saturday, Sept. 29, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The free event will be held in and around the URI Botanical Gardens and Outreach Center on the corner of Upper College Road and East Alumni Avenue on URI's Kingston Campus. The rain date is Sunday, Sept. 30.

Highlights will include a showcase of alternative-fueled vehicles – biofuel, electric and hybrid – as well as an exhibit about the Outreach Center's photovoltaic roof tiles. There will be workshops on URI's energy conservation programs, and another on "Smart Tips for Home Energy Conservation." In addition, Rosanne Sherry, coordinator of the URI Master Gardener program, will lead a workshop entitled "A Gardener's Guide to Global Warming."

The day will kick off at 9:30 a.m. with the unveiling of a plaque recognizing the late Kathy Mallon, former director of URI's Cooperative Education Center (now the Outreach Center), and another plaque honoring URI Master Gardener Chet Clayton, whose generous contribution made possible the sustainable rose garden, which is the centerpiece of the Botanical

Garden. The rose garden features disease resistant roses, a dramatic circular arbor, and an innovative garden lighting system.

For more information, call the URI Outreach Center at 874-2900 or visit www.uri.edu/cels/ceoc.

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Saturday, Oct. 13 at 7 p.m.
 at the Jamestown Community Center

This concert is free. Admission is first-come, first-served.