

Fairfax County Public Schools - School Health Advisory Committee

Executive Report Summary

School Year 2010-2011

The School Health Advisory Committee's (SHAC) charge for the school year 2010-2011 is *"use the Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP) model to evaluate Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) resources and strategies that are in place to address issues that are identified in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey."*

SHAC held eight meetings during the 2010-2011 school year and focused on:

- Exploring health and school-related topics that foster the health and well-being of FCPS students and staff.
- Staying abreast and involved with programs, policies and ongoing discussions related to school health.

Summary of Recommendations

SHAC would like to thank the School Board members for the opportunity and support to explore topics that affect the health and welfare of the students of FCPS.

- SHAC reaffirms its recommendation from the 2009-2010 school year regarding the implementation of a tobacco-free school system policy.
- SHAC recommends that information about managing food allergies in schools be made available on the FCPS website. SHAC also recommends implementing a comprehensive education program on food allergies for staff, students and parents including the ability to recognize signs and symptoms of a food allergy reaction.
- SHAC recommends that the school board fully embrace Safe Routes to School. This could include incorporating safe routes to school in the design of any new or renovated school construction; providing guidance to principals; and working with Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to reinstate school education officers.
- SHAC recommends required implementation of the health curriculum in elementary schools to address health literacy. These measures can help the division meet and/or exceed the 150 minutes that legislative efforts are trying to impose. More importantly, happy, healthy, fit, and active students are the right initiative for Fairfax County Public Schools.
- SHAC supports the work of the Department of Special Services' Resiliency Project as they identify additional strategies to help students maintain and in some cases, improve their mental health and encourages the continued evaluation of the effectiveness of these programs. We urge the school board to provide the necessary resources for training and professional development that might be needed to fully implement these programs.

- SHAC supports the work of the Human Relations Advisory Committee (HRAC) and the Resiliency Project regarding identifying and eliminating bullying within the FCPS student population. SHAC recommends education on the importance of protective factors to be ongoing in any appropriate FCPS communications, such as the FamilyGram, Keep In Touch, and Channel 21.

Fairfax County Public Schools
School Health Advisory Committee
School Year 2010-2011

Annual Report

The School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) is an advisory committee to the school board and serves to assist with the development of health policy in the school division and the evaluation of the status of school health, health education, the school environment, and health services. Required by the Code of Virginia, this committee includes parents, students, health professionals, educators, and others.

During the 2010-2011 school year, SHAC requested and was given the charge of: *“use the Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP) model to evaluate FCPS resources and strategies that are in place to address issues that are identified in the Youth Risk Survey.”*

COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM



SHAC used the 2009 Fairfax County Youth Survey results to select topics for further investigation. This year, we also had public comments from members of the community who addressed the need for a comprehensive food allergy policy and the need for more physical activity during the school day.

SHAC met eight times throughout this past school year, including a joint committee meeting with the Human Relations Advisory Committee (HRAC) and focused on various health issues of concern to FCPS. The following were areas of emphasis this year:

Student Mental Health Support Strategies. According to the 2009 Youth Survey, roughly one-fourth of all respondents reported feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities. Overall, reports of depression and considering suicide are lower than in 2008; however there was a slight increase for considering suicide in twelfth-graders. To continue to support the mental health of our students, the Resiliency Project being developed in the Department of Special Services is focused on ensuring that students leave FCPS with the necessary skills to manage their own conflicts and challenges and bounce back from difficult situations in a productive way.

The Resiliency Project is a work in progress—it is a framework for effectively delivering integrated services to students in grades K-12. This means that school counselors, school social workers and school psychologists are involved, with the goal of working together seamlessly both on curriculum development and on a day to day basis when problems occur. Positive behavior approaches, i.e. Responsive Classroom © strategies and Positive Behavior Interventions Support (PBIS) are important components of the program as well. This year, the main foci of the Resiliency Project are bullying prevention, conflict resolution and providing students with skills to manage depression and anxiety.

SHAC was informed that individualized appointments with counselors during spring break 2010, offered via Keep in Touch messages, were much more effective in reaching parents than programs at individual schools. This program was also provided over the summer and was provided again this year during spring break.

SHAC supports the work of the Resiliency Project as they identify additional strategies to help students maintain and in some cases, improve their mental health and encourages the continued evaluation of the effectiveness of these programs. We urge the school board to provide the necessary resources for training and professional development that might be needed to fully implement this program. SHAC realizes that in the current environment, budgets are tight but the needs in this area are very high. SHAC also suggests that FCPS consider doing a videotape with specific points about what to look for as far as signs of depression, etc. in your child. A targeted video which addresses resiliency and signs of depression could provide a way to promote the one-on-one sessions offered over the summer and during school breaks.

Identification and Elimination of Bullying. SHAC supports the work of the Human Relations Advisory Committee (HRAC) and the Resiliency Project regarding identifying and eliminating bullying within the FCPS student population, on and off FCPS campuses. The 2009 Fairfax County Youth Survey Report cites that 70% of 8th-graders have bullied someone, that incidents of bullying increase dramatically from 6th to 8th grade and that 11% of our students experience chronic bullying. Any student can be the target of bullying. Cyber-bullying appears to be on the rise and can lead to life-long impacts from negative information available on the Internet for indeterminate timeframes. Bullying and cyber-bullying fact sheets should be created, such as those produced from the results of the Youth Survey on a number of topics. SHAC recommends education on the importance of protective factors and recommends that the information be ongoing in any appropriate FCPS communications, such as the FamilyGram, Keep In Touch, and Channel 21. In addition, more use

should be made of emerging technologies, such as student-created online videos, links to informational websites, and web-based tutorials on social networking.

Food Allergies. Food allergies resurfaced as an issue of importance for SHAC to address. Two members of the community provided public comments on this topic at SHAC meetings this school year. The public comments pointed out that FCPS could improve what it does to ensure that students with life-threatening food allergies are not put at risk in the school environment. According to the Annual School Health Report, fifty-one epi pens were administered in the 2009-10 school year. A close review of the contributing factors and circumstances surrounding these incidents indicates some safety measures could be implemented to decrease the risks of exposure.

FCPS has reconvened an Allergy Review Team on food allergies and SHAC looks forward to reviewing the guidelines to make sure that some simple, yet essential steps are implemented. Currently, information regarding food and other allergies is difficult to find on the FCPS website. SHAC recommends that this information be easier to find than it is now, and be part of comprehensive information about chronic health conditions. Online videos could be useful tools in educating the community and staff about food allergies.

SHAC also recommends implementing a comprehensive education program on food allergies for staff, students and parents including the ability to recognize signs and symptoms of a food allergy reaction. We suggest that the following elements be incorporated into the program:

All parents need to understand the risks of food allergies, that these students are entitled to special accommodations, and that everyone can play a part in making sure these students are not put at risk. Parents of students with food allergies need to understand the importance of a health plan for their child and how to work with school staff and the child's health care provider to establish an appropriate plan. A system-wide communication effort needs to be utilized to proactively educate parents, employees and students to the safety risks associated with food allergies and to explain the guidelines that schools should follow.

All students need to know the symptoms of a food allergy reaction and steps they should take to help a student who is experiencing a reaction. Bullying students with food allergies, such as by threatening exposure to an allergen, should not be tolerated.

The use of foods as part of the instructional program and for celebrations should be minimized, and should be totally avoided when a student with food allergies is enrolled in the class. Teachers may need guidance in how to substitute lessons that do not involve foods. Prior to implementing such guidelines, discussion with all parents to increase buy-in is recommended to make sure that the needs of all students are considered.

Tobacco-Free School System. SHAC reaffirms its recommendation from the 2009-2010 school year regarding the implementation of a tobacco-free school system policy. The current version of FCPS [Regulation 4423](#) states that "employees are prohibited from smoking or using tobacco products in schools, administrative offices, or facilities...and in the presence of students during the school day or on school buses." SHAC still recommends implementing a more comprehensive tobacco-free school system policy that would prohibit any use of tobacco products by students, staff, visitors or parents on school grounds or at school sponsored activities. This policy would include all tobacco

products such as smokeless tobacco and electronic cigarettes and would incorporate all FCPS facilities including community use of facilities.

While legislation to prohibit smoking by anyone on public elementary, intermediate and secondary school grounds (House Bill No.1545) was defeated during the 2011 legislative session, we strongly urge FCPS to adopt a tobacco free policy. The direct result of this will not only be the improved health of employees but will also provide a better example for our students, hopefully cutting down on the number of students who begin smoking during their adolescent (and earlier) years and putting into practice what is taught about tobacco products in the classroom. To assist with implementation of this policy SHAC recommends that FCPS provide to its staff members updated information and resources about low cost or no cost smoking cessation programs.

Increased Parental Communication. SHAC compliments the school staff on relaying the expectations and rules to students with regard to such issues as use of substances, involvement in bullying and other issues described in the Student's Rights and Responsibilities (SR&R) manual which is distributed to students and families each school year. SHAC wholeheartedly supports the efforts recently proposed by the Superintendent to change how schools communicate with parents regarding the SR&R manual and the discipline process for violations. We particularly advocate for the proposed parental workshops devoted entirely to behavior, consequences, and parent-school communications and cooperation. Some principals already provide programs for parents to ensure improved communication and mutual support on discipline, behavior, and mental health issues. The best of these programs should become the model for implementation in all schools. To ensure strong attendance, the program should provide some incentive for parent participation. We feel the best time for such a program would be prior to the beginning of every school year. Examples of incidents and their outcome should be presented and examples of how FCPS rules are enforced, and how FCPS communicates with parents on rules issues, should be included in the programs.

Farm to School Programs. SHAC continues to support the efforts of FCPS to provide nutritious meals. In particular, SHAC supports efforts to introduce the freshest food possible into students' diets and to teach students about the connection between their local lands and food, particularly as the 2009 Youth Risk Survey found that eating five fruits and vegetables a day decreased as students got older. The Virginia Farm to School programs promote the use of fresh, nutritious Virginia grown products offered in schools, for example, local produce in salad bars and incorporated into lunch menus. This initiative also promotes educational opportunities for schools and local farmers to work together. Educational components could include school gardens, farm field trips, healthy cooking classes and tastings of a variety of locally grown foods, keeping the constraints of those with food allergies in mind.

This school year, approximately \$300,000 of FCPS Food and Nutrition Services' (FNS) purchasing budget went to farms in Virginia and nearby states. FNS encourages school gardens and donates small amounts towards the purchase of seeds. The Energy Zone incorporates garden produce into its school menus. The Office of Safety and Security and the FCPS Environmental Education Manager also provides coordination and guidance to those interested in developing gardens to ensure that health regulations and educational goals are met.

Parents and others have developed school gardens at thirty-three schools. Oak Hill has been selected as one of 7 schools in the nation to participate in the teaching garden experience with the American Heart Association. The goal of the initiative is to help build healthy bodies and minds by educating students on how to grow, harvest and the value of good eating habits.

Additionally, the Department of Facilities and Transportation Services (FTS) has established a Schoolyard Stewardship Mini Grant (SSMG). The program is intended to provide resources to facilitate the implementation of projects that will engage students in activities related to environmental stewardship and encourage them to conserve and preserve the natural resources within their schoolyard and community at large. The mini grant provides up to \$3,000 in funding for projects per school. This year, FTS awarded fourteen schools with SSMGs totaling over \$36,000 dollars. Three schools have used their SSMG funding to start vegetable gardens.

SHAC recommends that the school board highlight the above efforts to the school and wider community, and support and encourage emerging and existing partnerships with parents and community members to successfully implement new school gardens.

Increased Physical Activity. Childhood obesity rates continue to rise nationwide. In light of recent proposed state legislation to require 150 minutes of physical education K-8 and the Governor of Virginia's directive that School Health Advisory Committees become an integral part of finding a solution to this issue. It is time for our school division to examine and review practices for providing students with the knowledge and skills to lead active, healthy lives, and explore with parents how this knowledge and skills can be reinforced at home.

Fairfax County Youth Survey data revealed that only one-third of students report being physically active for the recommended 60 minutes a day. SHAC recommends the following to address physical activity levels. Raise the current minimum of physical education time for elementary students to 90 minutes. Specify a minimum time for daily recess in School Board Regulation 5008 and specify that students cannot miss recess time due to failure to complete school assignments or for disciplinary reasons. Activity breaks are encouraged in the classroom setting. SHAC recommends required implementation of the health curriculum in elementary schools to address health literacy. These measures can help the division meet and/or exceed the 150 minutes that legislative efforts are trying to impose. More importantly, happy, healthy, fit, and active students are the right initiative for Fairfax County Public Schools.

Another way to address increased physical activity is through Safe Routes to School (SRTS), a program which encourages walking and cycling to school providing both physical and mental health benefits and is a program that should further be explored by FCPS. Students will arrive refreshed and strengthened by being outdoors and exercising while getting to school. Parental involvement is encouraged and parents can participate by leading "walking school buses" and heading up a group of bike riders. It is better for our environment to keep cars off the road, reduces overall traffic congestion in the county, and in particular reduces the safety hazard of heavy vehicle traffic at our "Kiss and Ride" entrances.

SHAC recommends that the school board fully embrace Safe Routes to School. This could include incorporating safe routes to school in the design of any new or renovated school construction; providing guidance to principals; and working with Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to reinstate school education officers. In addition, SHAC recommends devising incentives to reward schools

that reduce car traffic and increase foot and bicycle traffic to schools. We encourage FCPS to take advantage of the federal program that provides grants and technical assistance to address these issues (<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/>).

SHAC meetings are most productive when there is a full complement of members in attendance. Since the committee's work relies on the participation of all SHAC members, attendance at meetings is critical. Attached is the SHAC meeting attendance list for 2010-2011. Please take a look at the attendance of your representative when appointing members for the 2011-2012 school year. In particular, there has been no representation from Lee district for 2 years and Hunter Mill and Mount Vernon have been vacant for the last year. There is an at-large position open as well. The SHAC chair would like to acknowledge and thank the members of SHAC for their active participation in discussions during the 2010-2011 school year. Each member brought valuable conversation and information to committee discussions. SHAC would also like to thank the school board for appointing a student representative to the committee. The student perspective is invaluable in discussions on issues of student health. Finally, SHAC would like to thank the school board members for the opportunity and support to explore topics that affect the health and welfare of the students of FCPS

Fairfax County Public Schools School Health Advisory Committee

2010-2011 Membership List

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES	
Barbara Boardman, M.D.	Dranesville District
Steven Bunn, D.D.S.	At-Large - Raney
Ms. Elaine Casey	Sully District
Ms. Marie Reinsdorf	Mason District
Ms. Brenda Zanger Greene	At-Large - Hone
Thanh Do, M.D.	At-Large - Moon
TBD	Lee District
Ms. Laura Wheeler Poms (chair)	Braddock District
Ms. Monica Ten-Kate	Student Representative
Ms. Thérèse Tuley	Springfield District
Ms. Evelyn H. Turner	Providence District
TBD	Mount Vernon District
TBD	Hunter Mill District

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES	
Ms. Jill Christiansen (Associate Member)	Inova, Partnership for Healthier Kids
Ms. Kate Sadak, MD.	Med. Soc. of Northern Virginia
Ms. Pam Jones	City of Fairfax School Board
Mr. Kenton H. Pattie	Fairfax County Council of PTAs
Ms. Esther Walker	Fairfax County Health Department

SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES	
Ms. Donna Lentini (Associate Member)	DSS, Director, Operations and Strategic Planning
Ms. Elizabeth Donaldson (School Board Liaison)	DSS, SR, Health Specialist, Student Registration
Ms. Liz Payne (Associate Member)	DIS, Coordinator, Health and Physical Education
Ms. Penny McConnell, RD, FNS (Associate Member)	DFS, Director, Food and Nutrition Services
Mr. Douglass T. O'Neill (Associate Member)	DF&TS, Coordinator, Office of Safety & Security
Mr. Dave Tremaine	High School Principal's Association
Mr. Martin Marinoff	Elementary School Principal's Association

School Health Advisory Committee

2010 – 2011

Attendance

Member Name	District	Appointed By	9/15 Sept	10/20 Oct	11/17 Nov	1/19 Jan	2/16 Feb	3/16 Mar	4/13 Apr	5/18 May
Laura Poms	Braddock	Wilson	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Barbara Boardman	Dranesville	Strauss	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
TBD	Hunter Mill	Gibson								
TBD	Lee	Center								
Marie Reinsdorf	Mason	Evans	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
TBD	Mt. Vernon	Storck								
Evelyn Turner	Providence	Reed	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Therese Tuley	Springfield	Bradsher	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Elaine Casey	Sully	Smith	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Brenda Greene	At Large	Hone	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Thanh Do	At Large	Moon	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Steve Bunn	At Large	Raney	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Monica Ten-Kate (Appointed 1/2011)	Student		N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Esther Walker	FCHD		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Kenton Pattie	FFX Council of PTA's		Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Marty Marinoff	ES Principal Assoc.		N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Kate Sadak	Medical Society of NOVA		Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Dave Tremaine	HS Principal Assoc.		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Pam Jones	Fx. City School Board		Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y

Y = Attended

N = Absent

School Health Advisory Committee

2010 – 2011

Voting Record

Member Name	District	Appointed By	Date SB Approval	Eligible to Vote		Approve	Oppose	Abstain	Signature
				Yes	No				
Laura Poms	Braddock	Wilson	7/22/2010	X					
Barbara Boardman	Dranesville	Strauss	6/24/2010		X				
TBD	Hunter Mill	Gibson							
TBD	Lee	Center							
Marie Reinsdorf	Mason	Evans	6/24/2010	X					
TBD	Mt. Vernon	Storck							
Evelyn Turner	Providence	Reed	6/24/2010	X					
Therese Tuley	Springfield	Bradsher	6/24/2010	X					
Elaine Casey	Sully	Smith	6/24/2010	X					
Brenda Greene	At Large	Hone	6/24/2010	X					
Thanh Do	At Large	Moon	6/24/2010	X					
Steve Bunn	At Large	Raney	6/24/2010		X				
Monica Ten-Kate		Student	1/20/2011	X					
Esther Walker	FCHD		06/24/10	X					
Kenton Pattie	FFX Council of PTA's		6/24/2010	X					
Marty Marinoff	ES Principal Assoc.		06/24/10		X				
Kate Sadak	Med. Society of NOVA		06/24/10	X					
Dave Tremaine	HS Principal Assoc.		06/24/10	X					
Pam Jones	Fx. City School Board		06/24/10	X					