

**Fairfax County Public Schools  
School Health Advisory Committee  
2005 – 2006**

**Annual Report**

The School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) focused on several subjects during school year (SY) 2005-06. Several topics carried over from SY 2004-05 and several others were of mutual interest and concern to members of SHAC. The following report provides a review of our SY 2005-06 activities.

**Topics from SY 2004-05:**

**Life-Threatening Food Allergies**

- The 2004-05 SHAC Annual Report recommended that the School Board (SB) review the existing Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) policies and procedures pertaining to life-threatening food allergies.
- At the request of the SB, the Department of Special Services, in conjunction with the Fairfax County Health Department (FCHD) formed a Life-Threatening Allergy Committee.
- The committee developed roles and responsibilities checklists, a parent information flier, and content for the FCPS website available at <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/StudentServices/StudentRegistration/healthservices.htm>.
- The report of the Life-Threatening Allergy Committee was sent to the SB on November 21, 2005.

**Wellness Policy**

- Federal legislation passed in 2004 (Public Law 108-265) mandated all school districts receiving United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funding for school food programs develop a Wellness Policy by July 1, 2006 and that this policy, once in place, be reviewed and revised periodically. FCPS began their policy development in SY 2004-05.
- SHAC chairperson participated on the Wellness Policy Task Force. Status updates were presented at the monthly SHAC meetings.
- A draft of the FCPS Wellness Policy was presented at the March 2006 SHAC meeting with an opportunity for SHAC members to provide input.
- Regulations and guidelines with measurable goals will be developed by the task force to measure the effectiveness of the Wellness Policy.
- In order for the Wellness Policy to be effective, it is critical that there be a plan to implement and communicate the policy at all levels.
- SHAC fully endorses the FCPS Wellness Policy and believes it will provide a framework to promote student health and contribute to preventing and minimizing childhood obesity.
- At the March 2006 meeting, SHAC was made aware of a federally appointed committee working under the Institute of Medicine to develop a set of *Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools* (defined as foods available outside of reimbursable

school meals). Once these guidelines are submitted and evaluated at USDA, it is expected that school districts will be encouraged to use these guidelines.

### **SLEEP (Start Later for Excellence in Education Proposal)**

- During SY 2004-05, SHAC heard a presentation from Sandy Evans, Co-Founder, SLEEP. SHAC has continued to stay abreast of the activity on this proposal and continues to support the SB's evaluation process.
- Data and research show that this proposal provides a host of benefits, such as increased attendance rate, improved behavior and attitude, increased continuous enrollment, and contributes to a decrease in adolescent depression and need for medications.
- SHAC continues to support this proposal and hopes that the SB will support its implementation as soon as possible.

### **Hand Washing**

- During SY 2004-05, both FCPS and FCHD implemented hand-washing campaigns.
- At the October 2005 meeting, SHAC was brought up to date on the results of the efforts to educate students and staff about the importance of hand washing to control the spread of illnesses.
- FCHD observed a reduction in the number of Student Illness Monitoring System (SIMS) incidents that required follow-up in SY 2004-05 compared with the previous year.
- SHAC supports the continued education and promotion of hand washing.

### **Coordinated School Health Program**

- SHAC continues its commitment from previous years to the Coordinated School Health Program, which includes health services; health education; physical education; nutrition services; counseling, psychological and social services; school environment; staff wellness; and family and community involvement.
- Pimmit Hills Alternative High School sponsored another successful Health Care Fair, which provided a full day of activities and workshops focusing on wellness issues, including hosting a variety of health care providers and social service agencies available for student and staff learning.

### **New Topics for SY 2005-06:**

At the SHAC September 2005 meeting, members agreed to explore four topics. The following are the key findings and recommendations to the SB.

#### **FCPS Curriculum on Gang Prevention, Bullying and Self-esteem**

P.D. O'Keefe, Violence Prevention Specialist, and Elizabeth Payne, Coordinator, Health and Physical Education provided presentations.

- Key findings:
  - Handling bullies requires that every adult in the school community be involved to provide consistency in setting limits and implementing consequences.
  - Bullies present a safety issue for other students and can impede learning.

- Recommendations:
  - Develop a seminar, similar to the tobacco and/or drug and alcohol seminars, for students whose behavior does not respond to interventions at the school level.

**Status of Lead in the Water**

Doug O’Neil, Coordinator, Safety and Barbara Boardman, MD, pediatrician and SHAC member, provided presentations.

- Key findings:
  - Elevated blood lead levels are not as common in Northern Virginia as in some other areas due mainly to newer construction and limited use of lead based paint.
  - FCPS Office of Safety and Security responds to information and/or concerns from water authorities, schools, parents, and to suspected student illness. This office keeps abreast of the federal Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) lead standards and mandates concerning lead in the water.
  - Clifton ES has its own water source and the Office of Safety and Security works with the school to assure safety and maintains communication with the school community.
  - Virginia school entrance physical examinations require a lead screening for children 6 years of age and younger.
- Recommendations:
  - The Office of Safety and Security continue to monitor any changes in the federal EPA’s lead standards and mandates concerning lead in the water.
  - The Office of Safety and Security continue to foster relationships with the water utilities that supply water to FCPS and respond to FCPS community concerns regarding water issues.

**FCPS Physical Education Curriculum**

Liz Payne, Coordinator, Health and Physical Education and Richard Deivert, Education Specialist, Health and Physical Education provided presentations.

- Key findings:
  - Lack of physical space in schools is a concern when trying to increase the time for physical education and/or activity.
  - Active learning is included in the FCPS core curriculum to assist classroom teachers in their regular instruction.
  - Virginia Department of Education requires fitness testing for grades 4 through 10.
  - FCPS exceeds the minimum testing requirements and encourages on-going assessment.
  - Adaptations in fitness testing and physical education are made when appropriate due to injuries, illnesses and/or physical challenges.
  - Recess was discussed.
    - Concern exists about the implementation of recess including withdrawing it as a disciplinary strategy and/or using the time for students to complete class work.
    - There is a Virginia state administrative code that addresses elementary school recess (8VAC20-131-80): “The elementary school

shall provide...students with a daily recess during the regular school year as determined appropriate by the school.”

- FCPS does not currently have a policy or regulation that addresses recess.
- Recommendations:
  - In order to address stagnant and sedentary lifestyles that contribute to childhood obesity and to promote social skills as well as physical activity, SHAC recommends that schools provide daily recess for all elementary school students K-6.
  - Develop a FCPS regulation that specifically addresses elementary school recess and provides guidance for implementing the state administrative code in a consistent manner in all schools.

### **FCPS Athletic Training Program and Supplement Use**

Jon Almquist, Athletic Training Specialist provided the presentation.

- Key findings:
  - FCPS Athletic Training Program is designed to provide comprehensive, quality sports-injury care, including prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.
  - Athletic Training is an allied health care profession and all Certified Athletic Trainers (ATC) employed by FCPS hold certification by the National Athletic Training Association Board of Certification and a license with the Virginia Board of Medicine.
  - Each high school has two ATCs on staff.
  - The use of dietary supplements in the effort to enhance athletic performance or endurance by student athletes is a concern. Although the ATCs and athletic coaches discourage the use of these dietary supplements, some parents encourage their use. In fact, they sometimes request that doctors prescribe or recommend dietary supplements for their children. Two physicians on SHAC, a pediatrician and an internal medicine doctor, noted that they found this in their practices.
  - Dietary supplements and energy drinks are readily available to students in stores, on the internet, and at gyms, which makes it difficult to halt their use.
- Recommendations:
  - Support the FCPS Athletic Training Program’s continued involvement with the research aspect of sports-related injuries.
  - Consider addressing the use of “dietary supplements and energy drinks” in FCPS Regulation 2601, Student Responsibilities and Rights Booklet (SR&R).
  - Develop a FCPS policy addressing specific language prohibiting coaches and teachers from endorsing, supplying, recommending, etc. dietary supplements for ergogenic purposes.
  - Ensure that energy drink hybrids, such as Coca Cola’s JOLT, are not available in school vending machines. These are not considered “energy drinks”, but tend to contain the higher levels of caffeine within the soft drink market, and are marketed as a pseudo energy drink. Currently, Office of Risk Management has a list of banned energy drinks, but it does not address hybrids.

### **FCPS Vision, Mission and Beliefs**

- At the March 2006 meeting, the SB's Vision, Mission and Beliefs documents were provided to SHAC members and they were made aware of the process the SB is using to obtain information to enhance student achievement.
- A majority of SHAC members participated in a focus meeting May 15, 2006. Also, several SHAC members participated in district dialogue meetings.
- SHAC was pleased to participate in this process and hopes that the area of school health and wellness will be considered and integrated as the SB finalizes these documents.

In closing, SHAC would like to thank SB members for responding to our request last year to reexamine appointments to this committee. During the SY 2005-06, SHAC appointees have better represented their districts by attending more meetings. The student representative was not able to attend meetings because of other commitments, but he kept in touch via e-mail. Over the past several years, we have appreciated the commitment of the community representatives and the representative from the High School Principal's Association, Beverly Wilson. We hope that the Elementary School Principal's Association will be able to appoint a representative next year. The school perspective is very important to SHAC. If SB members can make their appointments or reappointments for the next two-year period as early as possible, it will ensure a full committee at the beginning of SY 2006-07. Current SHAC members are vitally committed to making a difference as they serve on this committee.

SHAC appointees want to highlight the dedication and regular attendance of both FCHD and FCPS staff. Their contributions to SHAC are valued and appreciated.

In keeping with our mandate, SHAC will continue to address important health related issues and concerns that foster the health and well-being of FCPS students and staff.

5/22/06