

School Health Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

DATE: April 24, 2019

Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the Fairfax County School Board's School Health Advisory Committee was called to order on April 24, 2019 at 7:07 PM by David Whiting, Chairman. The meeting was held in room 5500 of the FCPS Gatehouse Administration Center, 8115 Gatehouse Rd., Falls Church, Virginia 22042.

Members in Attendance:

A	Alvarez, Maria Cecilia			A	Nash, Diana	P	Sheipe, Theresa
P	Bartus, Camille	P	Johnson, Teresa	P	Payne, Liz	P	Smith, Ann
P	Chamberlain, Amber	P	McGee, Morgan	A	Payne, Phyllis	P	Stewart, Catherine
A	Durán, Francisco	P	McGuigan, Holly	P	Pekarsky, Stella	P	Stiller, Carol
P	Ende, Elizabeth	P	Michelback, Richard	A	Presson, Teresa	P	Thompson, Joe
A	Evans, Sandy	A	Milani, Kavian	P	Skurpski, Lea	A	Trouton, Lorraine
A	Hemmat, Joanna	A	Mumtaz, Hannan	P	Spanier, Holly	P	Whiting, David
P	Jacobs, Lori	P	Kate Garsson	P	Spears, Jennifer	A	Yo, Seung Je

P=Present A=Absent

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – Elizabeth Ende suggested that we amend the draft minutes to reflect that the wellness newsletter is posted on the FCPS Intranet instead of publicly available online. Catherine Stewart proposed that we approve the meeting minutes as corrected. It was seconded by Theresa Sheipe and passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment – One commenter came to speak on the topic of Juuling/vaping. Her son struggled with addictive use and lost access to social/extracurricular activities at school. She expressed concern with the county's handling of vaping/Juuling in schools. She was specifically concerned with the punitive consequences that kids experience when they are caught vaping/Juuling, as her son had a negative experience and found them to be extreme. She presented information about the harmful effects of vaping, and recommended that schools do more to support kids who are struggling with addiction. FCPS personnel were appreciative of her perspective and provided feedback that the disciplinary policy is being reviewed, and that the school system is doing its best to work as fast as it can to combat vaping/Juuling in schools.

4. Technology Presentation: Fairfax County residents and parents, Joe Clement and Matt Miles, provided a presentation about the negative health effects of technology overuse. Teens (ages 13-18) are spending an average of 9 hours per day using digital media outside of school. According to Common Sense Media, only 3% of that 9 hours is spent on creation activities. The rest is spent on various forms of entertainment media consumption. Students admit to spending only 30 minutes per week talking to their fathers, but they have spent 44 hours per week in front of screens. Screen exposure is starting at earlier and earlier ages, and screen use for children is pervasive in our culture. In one survey, 50% of teens self-reported being addicted to screens. Games and social media platforms are designed to be addictive, using persuasive design to "make players play forever." Multiple studies have shown that this technology overuse is causing atrophy of gray matter in the brain. There are also many negative effects of screen overuse on psychological well-being. On the other hand, in studies, students with low

screen use had similar health outcomes to those with zero screen use. Some screen use does seem to be okay. Helping kids use screens in moderation would help limit negative health effects of screen overuse. The presenters suggested that we as a community consider ways to support students who are using technology too much. One specific tip for parents is to tell their kids that tech companies are trying to manipulate them. Kids, especially teens, are motivated by the idea that something is being "done to them" and may be motivated to fight back by using screens less often.

The committee asked the presenters for policy recommendations based on their research. In response, the presenters recommended that technology implementation in schools be done in a way that acknowledges the current state of student technology use at home. Students are used to using technology as a toy, so they will need support to switch gears and use it for serious purposes at school. The presenters also suggested implementing intentional uses of technology, using technology in the classroom only when it is the best way to teach students a concept. Another policy recommendation was to make hard copy textbooks available to students who are struggling with screen overuse.

FCPS staff mentioned that they are developing a digital citizenship curriculum for both parents and students. They are trying to help students, parents, and teachers to understand the executive functions involved with using technology appropriately, and that student brains have often not yet developed the appropriate functions to be able to regulate their screen use themselves. They need to be taught to practice these skills. FCPS is trying to communicate this to the community via multiple methods.

5. Discussion of Topics for Review as a Result of this Meeting

David Whiting opened the floor for members of the committee to propose any recommendations for the committee as we wrap up the year and for the end of year report to the School Board.

- a. Lori Jacobs brought up the point that our students are below the national average for physical activity. She asked the committee to consider unstructured physical activity for middle school students to address this gap.
- b. Teresa Johnson mentioned that in our strategic plan, Caring Culture includes metrics for Nutrition, Exercise, and Sleep. She asked for involvement and partnership from the committee to help address these issues.
- c. Elizabeth Ende brought up that the categories of responses on the Wellness Reporting (e.g. Emerging, Transitioning, Embedded) is confusing. Could we use a different criteria to score? What are we doing to help the schools to involve the community in wellness committees? Some are interfacing with the PTA, but PTA members are not on the committee per the wellness survey. Teresa Johnson welcomed looking at the wellness committees next year as a committee.
- d. Betty Ende/David Whiting brought up the issue of Advanced Placement (AP) class limits. Sandy Evans has proposed this topic at a School Board forum. She is awaiting a report from FCPS in response to the forum topic.
- e. Health effects of screen time is currently in the wellness policy, but could be reviewed. Theresa Sheipe asked if families can actually get a hard copy textbook if

their student is struggling with screen addiction or parents want to opt out of screens.

- f. Mental health and stress
 - g. Amber Chamberlain brought up staffing ratios for social workers, counselors, and school psychologists. She advocated for more of those professionals in schools.
 - h. Carol Stiller brought up communication with parents. How can we reach diverse communities who may not be reading newsletters?
6. Assigning a new chair. David is taking nominations. We will vote at the next meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Meeting Notes Drafted by: Catherine Stewart