

School Health Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

DATE: February 21, 2018

Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the Fairfax County School Board's School Health Advisory Committee was called to order on February 21, 2018 at 7:03 pm by David Whiting, Chairman. The meeting was held in room 1600 of the FCPS Gatehouse Administration Center, 8115 Gatehouse Rd., Falls Church, Virginia 22042.

Members in Attendance:

P	Cecilia Alvarez	P	John, Elizabeth	P	O'Brien, Anne-Marie		
P	Bartus, Camille	P	Johnson, Teresa	P	Payne, Liz	A	Stiller, Carol
P	Chamberlain, Amber	P	McGee, Morgan	P	Payne, Phyllis	A	Sullivan, Leslie
A	Durán, Francisco	P	McGuigan, Holly	P	Presson, Teresa	P	Thompson, Joe
P	Ende, Elizabeth	P	Michelback, Richard	P	Skurpski, Lea	P	Trouton, Lorraine
A	Evans, Sandy	A	Milani, Kavian	P	Spanier, Holly		
P	Hemmat, Joanna	P	Mumtaz, Hannan	P	Spears, Jennifer	P	Whiting, David
		P	Mwila-Martial, Sandra	A	Stewart, Catherine	P	Yo, Seung Je

P=Present A=Absent

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

Hannan Mumtaz, made a motion to approve the minutes from January 17, 2018. Liz Payne seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

3. Public Comment: n/a

4. Lunchroom Update:

Richard Michelback reported that in an effort to reduce children's exposure to chemicals, as of February 2018, Policy SEH-18 (Cleaning Lunchroom Tables) has been modified to remove the use of a disinfectant cleaning solution. Richard talked to Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) about the proposed changes. FNS will clean cafeteria tables at the end of the day. The Fairfax County Health Department agreed that tables sanitized once a day with existing approved chemicals would be suitable.

Anne-Marie O'Brien requested that the updated policy include references to studies which validate the change. Richard cited FDA food code chapter 43.1. Elizabeth Ende requested that Richard reconsider the procedure which requires students to use a central bucket of water for cleaning the tables. Teresa Johnson offered to set up a principal group to identify alternative methods for cleaning up after student lunches. A request was made to include SHAC member, Holly McGuigan, on the principal group.

5. Presentation on the Youth Survey and Student Mental Health, Wellness and Stress Levels

Jenn Spears, DSS Specialist, Intervention and Prevention Services, began the discussion. She reported that for the last four years students have chosen mental health as a focus and did so again this year. She gave an overview of this year's youth survey and talked about student stress levels. She explained that how you think about stress goes a long way to how you handle it. Good stress allows you to be hyper-focused and give you a boost. It's not the same thing as chronic or traumatic stress which has negative effects. Jenn also reported she talked to FCPS staff about looking into Environmental Stressors (college, peer to peer, AP, etc.) and at which wellness activities can be done at schools to help reduce stress.

Dr. Dede Bailer, Office of Intervention and Prevention Services, presented information from the

2016-2017 Youth Survey. She reported that a lot of offices use their survey data, including some community service programs which use it for grants. The big takeaway is “Three to Succeed”. The survey shows that if a student has at least three assets, he/she is more successful. Assets come from schools, families and communities. They include: performing community service, high personal integrity, having adults to talk to, having parents available for help, and teachers recognizing a student’s good work.

Dr. Bailer reported that data also helps inform on how to build resiliency. She advised that it’s important that parents be available to their kids; that parents know where their kids are going; that kids have input into family decisions; and that family members are respectful to each other. She also talked about homework levels, showing a chart comparing how stressed a student feels compared to the number of hours of homework done each night. She reported that stress jumps for students reporting 3 versus 2 hours of homework a night.

SHAC committee members discussed a variety of alternatives for reducing homework levels (limit AP classes, only take 6 classes, etc.) Dr. Bailer recommends that further research should go into looking at homework levels to help identify suicide risk. Teresa Johnson circulated FCPS information showing how many APs a student took versus college outcomes (enroll in 4 yr., enroll in 2 yr., not enrolled at all).

Amber Chamberlain asked what SHAC will do about the subject of mental health. She asked if we could limit the overall amount of time that can be spent doing homework. She also said that since FCPS is one of the largest school systems, we should have some power to broker change on homework requirements. There was discussion about a nationwide trend that shows that adding stress is bad. There was discussion about limiting amount of homework versus limiting number of AP classes.

Anne-Marie O’Brien suggested school based wellness teams have discussions about homework levels. And, parents should be having a conversation with their kids about what the benefit is for each AP class. Phyllis Payne reported she asked former FCPS student representatives about their thoughts on the number of AP classes that can be taken. One suggested that APs be capped at 6 or 7 (total). Another reported he had taken 10 AP classes and enrolled at Princeton but only got college credit for one AP class. There was discussion that kids who need to use AP for college credit to reduce college costs, could lose out if the number of AP classes is restricted. Hannan Mumtaz reported that immigrant parents might have a different view on what kind of course load their child should take. Amber Chamberlain suggested that Myth Busting might be beneficial. It was recommended that SHAC gather information to find out what students are thinking about AP restrictions and homework levels.

Joe Thompson believes that the students who are taking the most AP classes are doing it by choice. He said principals worry most about students who are not taking any AP classes. There are kids who live in closets, are part of sex trafficking, etc. We need social workers to help these kids and more psychologists, nurse and social workers assigned to the schools.

A Wellness Committee will need to discuss this for elementary, middle and high school levels. Dr. Bailer reported that some elementary schools have a “no homework” policy. She suggested we could advertise best practices. Could we get data on what other school districts are doing? To further improve mental health in FCPS kids, we should run a county-wide program on bullying and suicide.

6. Questions, Comments or Additional Business from Committee Members:

Future Meeting Topics: March-Student Hunger/Food-Nutrition. Rodney Taylor will be invited to talk to SHAC about what can be done to help students who have food insecurity

Adjournment: 9pm

Meeting Handouts: n/a

Meeting Notes Drafted by: Elizabeth Ende