

School Health Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes November 16, 2022

Members of the public are welcome to attend in-person. Fairfax County and City residents may make public comment by submitting a video or audio testimony by email to lmskurpski@fcps.edu prior to the scheduled meeting.

Members in Attendance:

P=Present A=Absent

P	Boyd, Michelle	A	McLaughlin, Megan	P	Smalls, Saray	P	Yergin- Doniger, Ilana*
P	Cohen, Opal*	P	Mignano, Paul	P	Smith, Ann*		
P	Danner, Kara*	A	Nachnani, Sherry*	P	Smith, Kimberly*		
P	Demers, Bethany	P	Payne, Phyllis*	A	Spanier, Holly*		
A	Elhady, Merehan*	P	Rohmiller, Mary*	P	Spivack, Beth*		
P	Glenn, Adriana *	P	Schlink, Amanda	P	Steiner, Jen*		
P	Greer, Kim*	P	Silvia-Torma, Brenda*	P	Trouton, Lorraine		
A	Koubaroulis, Danielle*	P	Skurpski, Lea	A	Wilkie, Ann*		

Non-Committee Members in Attendance

Joe Clement			
Mathew Miles			

1. **Meeting Called to Order by SHAC Co-Chair:** Brenda Silvia-Torma, at: 7:06PM
2. **Approval of October Meeting Minutes:** Ilana Yergin-Doniger motioned to approve the October meeting summary and Opal Cohen seconded the motion. SHAC members approved the minutes.
3. **Public Comment:** None.
4. **FCPS Updates:**
 - Lea shared the additional responses to our questions about staff response to last year's SHAC Recommendations.
 - Listening session for the SR&R in January 12 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. You'll see an invite so you can attend it virtually. More information is forthcoming.
 - FCPS is updating their strategic plan and you may receive an invitation to be part of community feedback groups.
5. **Presentation re: 12 FCPS schools with highest Spring 2022 Covid Positivity Rates:** Discussion led by Ilana Yergin-Doniger
 - We are looking back at the schools that were hardest hit by COVID in the spring, during the period between spring break's end, and the last day of school.
 - Checked the data and identified 10 ES and 2 special purpose schools that were the hardest hit (i.e., the largest percentage of their school population got sick).
 - The goal is to work with FCPS Facilities to look for patterns within those 12

Updated 11/16/22

schools, to see if we can determine possible reasons for why Covid hit those school populations so hard. Facilities was helpful in gathering some initial data on those 12 schools, but then we hit a wall.

- Still trying to get CO2 readings and whether FCPS had received many reports for HVAC system repairs from these buildings. Our request was shifted to a FOIA process and Ilana received a cost for the FOIA response = \$500.00
- Lea Skurpski will follow up with Facilities. She noted that SHAC has had a delay in getting a representative from Facilities on SHAC this year.
- Lea will also follow-up with the FOIA office.

6. **Presentation about Screen Schooled: Two Veteran Teachers Expose How Technology Overuse is Making Our Kids Dumber (2018).** Presented by Joseph Clement and Matthew Miles, FCPS Teachers

- 30 years of teaching experience
- Not speaking for our employer (FCPS)
- Conclusion: FCPS needs to think about pulling back on the screentime during class time.

On average, 8- to 12-year-olds in the US use just under five hours' worth of entertainment screen media per day. Teens use an average of just under seven and a half hours' worth – not including time spent using screens for school or homework.

- Joe presented data and research about the impact of technology overuse on our children. The presentation covered the growing rates of teen depression and anxiety, suicide and suicidal ideation.
- We're in the midst of a natural kind of uncontrolled experiment on the next generation of children.
- Joe and Matt shared real-life examples that illustrate the research about entertainment media and socio-emotional health. The pull towards social media is strong because social connectedness is critical to adolescent development and social media is experienced by this generation as a measure of popularity and self-concept. "How many followers?" Students' self-concept is harmed. Even when mental health care providers and students have a pact to avoid social media, the student is pushed to join by FCPS clubs, activities, and teachers who are using Twitter and other social media to communicate and connect.
- **Sleep:** Blue light = daylight. The body suppresses melatonin. LEDs from modern screens produce even more blue light. Laptop suppresses melatonin by as much as 3 hours. The equivalent of jet lag from DC to LA.
- Joe uses 9 pm as his turn-in deadline instead of the default midnight.
- Evidence shows worse mental health outcomes when people use social media too much. People who reduce their social media use have better outcomes.
- Tech companies are pressing to "revolutionize education" but the principles they espouse are shown to be counterproductive to learning.
- Research on entertainment media and cognition shows gains in "multi-

switching” not multitasking (increases the time it takes to complete a task); increase in ADD syndromes; inattentional blindness; addiction; and periods of heightened arousal and stress. Things lost include:

- Focus.
 - Effortful processing (evaluation skills).
 - Executive function (pre-frontal cortex like a 75-year-old).
 - Emotional regulation.
 - Language development.
 - Reading comprehension.
 - Working memory; and
 - Mental down time.
- 50 percent of teens (2017) feel they are addicted to their mobile devices.
 - Persuasive design – companies are very good at keeping the kids playing forever—can’t walk away.
 - Brain development studies show that technology use of greater than 5 hours per day was consistent with neurological ‘pruning” of tracks to the prefrontal cortex, known for executive functioning and impulse control.
 - We need to return to hard copy textbooks.
 - Reading comprehension better with print than electronic.
 - Reading from print activates spatial and other sensory cues.
 - Better recall and comprehension than when you read the same text on screen.
 - Computer tech introduced into lower socio-economic homes created a statistically significant and persistent negative impact on student math and reading scores, which broadened the gap. Worse mental health outcomes, too.
 - Real-life examples of the challenges that tech use in schools poses for our teachers and children.
 - **Question to consider:** What will it take for us to pump the brakes on tech use in schools?
 - We know that the personal connections are one of the most effective ways to increase learning/student achievement. We’re seeing increased depression; anxiety; suicidal ideation; suicide; tech addiction; worse educational outcomes; reduced ability to focus and interact socially; reduced empathy and resilience; reduced ability to problem-solve and think critically.

Recommendations for Tech in School

- Banning cell phones in school:
 - is the equivalent of adding a week to the school year.
 - had a 6.4% improvement on test scores. Underachieving students increased by 14%
 - London School of Economics
- Younger children have shown an inability to translate skills learned virtually into real world ones.
- A closer relationship between teacher and student has been shown to reduce the achievement gap between lower achievers and higher achievers by 60%
 - Harvard School of Education
- The more schools invest in technology, the less likely children are to pay attention and learn
 - Dubbed the “Learning Paradox” by pediatric occupational therapist and biologist Cris Rowan (2010).

What can and should schools do?

THE SPECIFIC:

- Take homework offline
- Ban cellphones in all schools (except in cases of demonstrated need)
- Pull back from 1:1 (FCPSOn) – keep laptop carts available for all; provide take homes where necessary (and desired)
- Stop social media use in student-facing communications
- Provide for a low/no tech track through all schools. Just one classroom per grade level (or subject in MS/HS, where possible).
- Provide hard copy textbooks
- Eliminate e-Hallpass.

THE GENERAL:

- Reconsider what BEST practices actually means (use tech where it is BEST, and do not where it isn't)
- Train teachers and parents about the costs as well as benefits of device use
- Be sensitive to the fact that many students (and their parents) struggle with appropriate technology use.

7. Committee Q&A/Discussion re: Screen Schooled

- **Strategies for combating social isolation for students who don't use social media:**
 - Parents making a pact with other parents/families, so it becomes much easier
 - "Waiting until 8th" – although Joe notes middle school is very hard so no magic to 8th grade.
 - Plenty of kids who don't have social media – we need a way to bring them together. Ilana recommended an after-school club.
- **Does the new cell phone policy, "away for the day" rule, seem to be working?** It is not being implemented the way it is supposed to. Joe and Matt still see kids pulling out phones in class--it feels like whack a mole with 4 kids here, then 4 kids there, and continues throughout class. They must routinely interrupt their teaching to tell students to store their phones. They don't feel comfortable using a shoe hanging rack--what if it falls or what if kids take the wrong phone--the cost of replacing all those kids' phones would be a month's salary. They like the current policy, but it's not currently being implemented to match the policy.
- Joe and Matt spend most of their time talking with parent groups about student screen time. It's a societal problem and we need to collaborate to help students.
- Opal mentioned that her school has responsible cell phone use.
- Students are on their laptops and open a new tab away from the assignment.
- How should FCPS think about how to ensure positive technology?
Laptop cart makes it possible to use the technology when the teacher considers it to be useful rather than it being used constantly throughout the school day.
- Technology can be a great tool for certain lessons. There are gadgets, apps, etc. that are great tools to use to get across a concept or a skill, but it needs to be intentional. Teachers can/should plan to use technology to teach this ONE part of the lesson, to get across/meet a specific concept/skill. Targeted technology use rather than constant technology use. **INTENTIONAL USE.**

- Teachers need “intentional use.”
- One-to-one isn’t necessary. Teachers can use PowerPoint and “clips”. Side note: FCPS banned YouTube in the classroom.
- Too often when lessons go digital, students are isolated. Instructionalist said to use technology as much as possible/as often as possible. The silence was deafening. The kids were thankful.
- Great interview with the Surgeon General about loneliness as a public health problem <https://hiddenbrain.org/podcast/relationships-2-0-an-antidote-to-loneliness/>

8. **December Meeting Discussion and Possible Meeting Topics:** Possible meeting topics include updates from FCPS staff on:

- School Lunch
- Required Lockdown Video
- Instructional Services overview of the EdTech currently used in our schools
- FCPS Strategic Planning Process

Motion to have a December meeting: Brenda; Ilana 2nd – Motion Failed. We will not meet in December.

Question about the strategic plan. Lea will follow-up and send out additional information to the group. Student focus groups at school might also be possible – check the website.

9. **Adjournment:** 8:52 PM meeting adjourned.

Meeting Handouts: Minutes from October; Staff Response to SHAC Questions about the Staff Response to SHAC 2020-2022 Recommendations; Slides from Joe Clement and Matt Miles.

Meeting Notes Drafted by: Phyllis Payne