

## School Health Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes March 15, 2023

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](mailto:lmskurpski@fcps.edu) prior to the scheduled meeting.

### Members in Attendance:

**P=Present    A=Absent**

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

### Non-Committee Members in Attendance:

- Reid, Dr. Michelle
- Radesky, Dr. Jenny
- Stewart, Catherine
- Williams, Ericka

1. **Meeting Called to Order** by Ilana Yergin-Doniger, SHAC Co-Chair at 7:03 pm.
2. **Approval of February Meeting Minutes:** Motioned by Brenda Silvia-Torma and seconded by Ann Smith. SHAC voted to approve the minutes.
3. **Public Comment:** Public Comment by Catherine Stewart. Ms. Stewart advocated for more hands-on, face-to-face instruction in FCPS schools and less reliance on computers. One example she gave was that middle schoolers do a substantial amount of their Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) program online, rather than face to face without computers. She requested that FCPS reassess such online programs, and whether students could be better served offline. She noted that with the new Virginia Growth Assessment (VGA) (Fall and Winter) and Standards of Learning (SOLs) (Spring) exams, students are already undergoing substantial testing, and thus FCPS should consider discontinuing its iReady testing. Details regarding her requests are included in her comment, which is attached to these minutes (See attachment).
4. **SHAC Updates:**

Ilana Yergin-Doniger reported the following updates:

#### LIGHTSPEED

- During the SHAC/School Board June 2022 work session, Karl Frisch asked SHAC to look into Lightspeed. Specifically, he said to consider working with admin to understand

how widespread knowledge of lightspeed is, what the uptake has been, and whether there are barriers standing in the way of adoption. I sent some questions to Lea and she got them to the right people within IT.

- **Question 1:** What is the uptake?
- **Question 2:** Is there a reason that Lightspeed reports can't be easier to get? A great way would be to make it opt-out, rather than opt-in. Another way would be to allow people to just click "yes" within SIS or ParentVue or whatever it's called, to easily opt in.
- **Answer from IT:**
  - We currently have about 5,000 FCPS parents receiving Lightspeed Parent Reports.
  - We have explored both the opt-out option, as well as the ParentVUE integration. Some of the feedback we received from our early testers of the program indicated that it would be more prudent to allow parents to choose to be a part of the program, rather than receive emails that they did not sign up for. While we hope to eventually integrate the program with ParentVUE, the system integration would take a significant level of effort and would need to be prioritized among the other feature developments in that program. In the meantime, we continue to look for opportunities to promote the program to parents and simplify the process as much as we can.
- **Ilana's Recommendation:** To make the Lightspeed reports automatic, with parents able to opt out rather than opt in. Otherwise, the barriers to entry prevent people from adding another thing to their list and signing up, despite how widely it's been publicized.

### **WHO IS THE FCPS "DECIDER" REGARDING ED TECH**

- Another open item for me was a follow up question from our Jan SHAC meeting. Based on our discussion in that meeting, Mr. Kelley and Dr. Valentine are a filtration step in the process of bringing Ed Tech into FCPS classrooms. They make sure that it meets specified criteria, such as security, data collection, educational purposes, etc. But they were not the deciders regarding how, or how much, the ed tech gets used by students in classrooms. Additional questions include:
  - Are we able to get insight into who sets the guidelines/recommendations for Ed Tech/learning apps?
  - Is it a central FCPS curriculum team? Region teams? Principals? Those people in the school-based academic support for teacher planning? Grade level teams? Individual teachers?
- **Response from Mr. Kelley/Dr. Valentine:** Decisions about how much time students spend using technology are made at the classroom level. This especially important in regard to tools such as Google Apps for Education and Wixie, which is a creativity tool used by students to develop things such as animations and digital books that allow students to develop artifacts that show what they are learning. There are also tools in

our ecosystem that help students learn content. For some of the content specific applications, the vendor sometimes provides recommendations for how much the application should be used to have the biggest impact. These recommendations are shared with teachers for consideration on how much to use the application. These recommendations, however, are not requirements. Ultimately, however, decisions on how much time is spent using technology is determined at the classroom level.

- Ilana noted that just because we went 1:1 during Covid, it doesn't mean that it's inevitable that we stay that way. Howard County Public Schools was 1:1 during distance learning, but has since removed that status. In their public elementary schools, students don't have their own computers, and don't bring computers home. Anecdotally, she was informed by a family within the Howard County system that their fifth grader is only on a computer maybe 3x a week for 30 minutes each time. The computer is one from a cart, not "his" computer.

### **Topics brought to SHAC that we have passed or are passing up the chain to our school board liaison, Megan McLaughlin**

- New & mandatory elementary school lockdown videos are too frightening/traumatic for young children (The answer we got was that the video wasn't required by the state, but was crafted by FCPS)
- Students at various FCPS schools have reported that bathrooms are locked during the school day, due to public safety concerns including vaping, fights, and vandalism. However, this solution prevents students from using the bathroom and creates a situation where students have effectively no bathroom access for chunks of the school day.

#### **5. FCPS Updates:**

Lea Skurpski, Director of Operations and Strategic Planning at FCPS, reported:

- **Wellness Newsletter** was distributed in March 2023.
- **Wellness reporting window for principals opens Monday, March 20, 2023.** This data will be posted just after the end of school year. Wellness reports are created based on previous SHAC recommendations. Information is available on [FCPS Wellness Report webpage](#).

Bethany Demers, Educational Specialist for FCPS' Department of Special Services, reported:

- **Free telehealth counseling** for high school students starts April 10, 2023. To enroll, families should register on ParentVUE (<https://sisparent.fcps.edu>) and opt in for the service. Basic demographic information will be shared with Hazel Health, the 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider. Students will be provided with 6-10 free sessions and care coordination with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party social worker

James Jadallah, Manager, Employee Wellness Programs for Fairfax County Public Schools, reported:

- **Wellness Liaison reception and recognition** on April 14, 2023.
- New Program in May 2023 '**Refresh from Stress**' (flyer attached)

## 6. **Presentation by Dr. Jenny Radesky**

Dr. Radesky is a developmental behavioral pediatrician, and a professor at the University of Michigan Medical School. She heads a research team at The Radesky Lab, whose research includes evaluating children's digital environments, and families & digital media. Recently, Dr. Radesky was chosen to launch & co-lead a new American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Center of Excellence on Social Media & Youth Mental Health. Dr. Radesky is also a co-author of the AAP's current policy statements on media use by children and adolescents.

The Center of Excellence is funded by a 10 million dollar 5-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA).

According to their press release, *AAP to Launch New Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health*, the center's goals are to: The center's goals are to:

1. Improve pediatric mental wellbeing by reducing the risks and leveraging the benefits of social media.
2. Build the capacity of individuals who work with youth to mitigate social media's impact on mental wellbeing and promote healthy social media use, and
3. Synthesize and promote the evidence base and best practices for healthy social media use via communication, guidance, and other resources.

The job of AAP's Healthy Digital Ecosystem is to (1) listen to families; (2) partnering with experts and communities; and (3) use best practices to assess findings and make recommendations.

Dr. Radesky notes that technology adoption is so fast, it feels like whiplash. Technology is a new economic system trying to succeed financially quickly. For scientists, it is difficult to keep up with kids' use of technology, as they constantly switch to the latest app. Scientists have less time to review and create research-based interventions based on certain apps. There are also cultural 'Mommy Wars' between High-Tech and Low-Tech parents.

There is a generational divide about how teens are addicted to phones. Dr. Radesky wants to move away from an addiction narrative.

Dr. Radesky outlines the **AAP's initial draft thoughts on their Center of Excellence Framework** as follows:

1. **Center the child (not the technology):** Agency and autonomy in a digital context.
2. **Developmental Lens:** The relationship between social media and mental health does not start in adolescence. Instead, it develops from early childhood.
3. **Consider the context:** Social media/technology use does not occur in a vacuum. Social, family, and cultural contexts shape users too.
4. **Individual differences:** Children are wired differently, and their characteristics are shaped by social media/technology use.

- 5. Digital ecosystem design:** Most large platforms popular with kids are designed by adults, for adults. Platforms often are not designed around the child's needs or the unique way they see the world.

NOTE: Dr. Radesky presented these items in reverse order.

- 5. Digital Ecosystem Design:** Persuasive design and nudges, ad-based business models, monetization, data collection and algorithmic recommendations. Technology developers know that their programs are habit forming. Their designs are developed to engage the user longer by use of streaks.
  - **Digital Ecosystem Design Take-Away:** Rapidly evolved in ways to promote monetization and data collection; data collection and algorithms operate invisibly, so they can be difficult to understand.
  - **Digital Ecosystem Design Relevance to Schools:** Some Ed Tech products have been accused of manipulative design (for example: Prodigy). Dr. Radesky says we must understand why it is difficult for youth to disengage from technology and teach students about these manipulative mechanisms. Advocacy for child-centered design is a more effective, equitable way to improve youth outcomes.
- 4. Individual Differences:** Children vary in their innate and learned emotion regulations, distress tolerance, social skills/perspective-taking, sensory-seeking, and play preferences.
  - **Individual Differences Relevance for School:** Chromebook, gaming, YouTube access. Dr. Radesky hears from patients' parents that students are distracted by other tabs on laptops during class. Students need to develop other skill-building supports.
- 3. Consider the Context:** What other opportunities does the child have? What are the stressors in the family? How is media use meeting their needs versus undermining them? Poverty/digital divide—does the child have access to high-quality media or only free, ad-supported platforms?
  - **Parent Technology Use:** Tech use by guardians displaces parent/child conversation.
  - **Consider the Context Relevance in School:** How to support child, family, school, and community assets to build resilience.
- 2. Developmental Lens:** Positive, intentional relationships with technology starts in preschool/kindergarten. Schools should set norms for engaging with high-quality rather than distracting or persuasive content. Teach children emotional regulation and coping strategies that will be used throughout their lifetime. Minimize media use for calming/distracting children.  
**Developmental Lens Takeaways:**
  - Don't use devices as calming mechanisms.
  - Do not use just to keep students occupied.
  - Make sure laptops don't allow for much multitasking/tabs that can be distracting.
  - Dr. Radesky says there's no evidence for appropriate amount of screen time for children K-5; however, she says follow guidelines of 30 to 60 minutes per day.

- It's important to ask: "What is media/tech helping students with, and what is it displacing?"
    - E.g., One use of screentime is to watch a short video of a marble run, then the students build marble runs. Another use is they just watch marble runs, and don't make anything with their hands.
    - There is importance to skill-building in the real world/in-person, such as the SEL example given by the parent speaker at the beginning of the meeting.
1. **Center the Child (not the technology):** How do we get kids to develop agency? Developing digital citizenship and literacy skills. Challenge children to self-regulate use of phones, resist distractions/clickbait. Seek help from peers or adults when encountering problematic content.
- a. **Agency/Autonomy Support in Schools:** Implement Responsible Use Agreements. Use technical solutions to lessen distractions. Do experiments in the classroom to help students build insight into their relationship with phones.
  - b. **ED Tech Design Options:** Recognize digital designs that reduce versus increase student autonomy. Consider using platforms that aren't distracting or gimmicky with persuasive features.

Additional SHAC member notes from Dr. Radesky's talk (#1):

- c. Identify games that are using manipulation and are inappropriate for kids. Monetizing games using enticements and lures to play longer. Favorite game characters are the ones doing the nudging.
- d. Nudges are more impactful on kids with limited impulse control.
- e. What is media helping with AND what is it displacing?
- f. Use media as a launching point. Helping kids recognize what the apps are really focused on.
- g. Using media for distraction displaces them from being able to solve problems.
- h. How do you set kids up for success without having portals for fun things that distract them?
- i. Dark patterns in apps, like making it hard to locate the button to close out a program. Tricks to engage kids for longer, making them play longer to finish streaks.
- j. Kids are very susceptible. They want likes/hearts, coins, presents. Companies add external motivators to keep them playing longer than they normally would.
- k. Khan Academy for Kids is a good alternative for Prodigy
- l. Content creators are competing for kids attention. Recommendation grids/click bait.
- m. Advocating for more regulation. Kids should not be manipulated.
- n. Fair Play filed a suit against Prodigy math memberships, extra levels of manipulation.
- o. She and her group did a study on kids and parents. When kids act out, parent use their phones more...which then makes kids act out more. Bad cycle.
- p. Device-free dinner/Will Farrell with Common Sense Media-a funny way to suggest putting down phones at dinner.
- q. Phones displace ability to cope with boredom.
- r. What does it mean to raise an informed citizen?

Additional SHAC member notes from Dr. Radesky's talk (#2):

- s. Their Executive Director has kids in FCPS!
- t. Part of what schools/families can do is help teach kids not to use social media or screentime as a coping strategy for anxiety.
- u. There are behind the scenes changes that schools can make to their digital ecosystems to help make screentime safer for their students
  - 1. Ad-blockers can block age-inappropriate content
  - 2. They can turn off automatic search suggestions. (She showed us a screenshot of her son's search suggestions on his Ann Arbor public school computer, and they were awful!)
- v. Persuasive design is a problem in online apps.
  - 1. E.g., rewards in a game
- w. Schools can help children learn to be better digital consumers by helping them to understand what companies are trying to do, with, say manipulative design.
- x. In her practice, she sees kids having problems in school while having these highly tempting portals (i.e., computers) in front of them. It's hard for the kids to stay on task in school. This was the same thing that happened at home in distance learning; all the tabs open.
- y. She reviewed the presentation that was shared with SHAC at our Feb meeting. Building assets/giving kids purpose helps reduce media use.
- z. For elementary learners:
  - 1. It's not just whether we have tablets in the classroom, it's HOW they're used and what they're displacing.
  - 2. Tech should be used **intentionally** in classrooms, to support certain skills, rather than by default or to keep kids busy. Like in the Ed Tech Triangle.
  - 3. Keep Ed Tech focused on a single task, then end it, rather than allowing multi-tasking.

Q & A w/ Dr. Radesky:

1. **SHAC member Q:** Any research about homework turn-in time?

**Answer:** No research, but colleague asked middle and high school students and they don't like getting a notification overnight from Ed Tech programs. Recommends making notification settings more respectful hours. We can use Ed Tech settings to set norms.

2. **SHAC member Q:** What are your thoughts on EdTech programs in early elementary that try to incent students to work on them with things like making a penguin dance?

**Answer:** Temple University study framework of ed tech and extrinsic versus intrinsic rewards. Study asked if incentive support the overarching learning goal. If yes, that's okay. If deign is extraneous, like a side activity (she uses a sun dancing example), no. Dr. Radesky says determine whether the child sees the point of the game as learning or getting the item. That reveals whether the app is focused. Also, if an app is too focused on extrinsic rewards, one can ask a school system for evidence of whether there is evidence of that particular application increasing children's skill development. Do we have data on how learning apps are helping our kids?

Dr. Radesky mentioned that as their Center of Excellence continues to build out its work and approach, she would be interested in seeing if she could partner with FCPS. School Board member Megan McLaughlin also expressed excitement about working together.

7. **Committee Q&A/Discussion:** Dr. Michelle Reid, Fairfax County School Superintendent

- **Question/Concern:** Will FCPS consider offering parents an option to opt-out or limit the amount of education driven screentime/video sharing/social-media usage for their learner in light of the concerning data connecting screentime/social media addiction to student morale?
  - **Answer:** There is currently no opt-out.
- Middle school start times (Not discussed)
- I would love to hear about Dr. Reid's experiences with ed tech/computers in schools in her prior district, including any strengths and concerns from that experience.
  - **Answer:** In her previous district, they were 1:1 for all students, but many of the families had parents who worked at the local tech giants, and those parents were often very concerned and engaged about screen time and how computers were used. Her sense was that computers were used less there, and were used more as a specific tool than something more generally and frequently used.

8. **Adjournment:** Ilana Yergin-Doniger adjourned the meeting at 9:15pm.

**Meeting Handouts:**

- Employee Wellness Refresh from Stress! Flyer
- Public Comments by Catherine Stewart

**Meeting Notes Drafted by:** Jen Steiner

**Additional Information found online by Jen Steiner:**

- [7 reasons to say "no" to Prodigy - Fairplay \(fairplayforkids.org\)](https://www.fairplayforkids.org/)
- [Child protection nonprofit alleges 'manipulative' upselling with math game Prodigy \(nbcnews.com\)](https://www.nbcnews.com/health/child-protection-nonprofit-alleges-manipulative-upselling-math-game-prodigy-ncnc103486)
- [\(32\) Children are begging to learn math with this app. But what happens when games take over the classroom? | LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6678111111111111111)

SHAC will focus on learning more about the impact of technology use on student wellness, including physical and mental health, physical activity, social-emotional well-being, and sleep. We will seek to understand best practices in the use of educational technology in schools for various age groups and seek direct student and family feedback.



## Attachment A: Public Comment from Catherine Stewart

Hi my name is Catherine Stewart. I have two elementary school students and one middle school student in the Sully District. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you this evening. I am here tonight because I would like to advocate for more hands-on, face-to-face instruction in FCPS schools and less reliance on computers. Before the pandemic, FCPS Leadership promoted the use of computers and educational technology as a though they had no downsides, or at least that the benefits were so large that any downsides were negligible in comparison. I hope that COVID learning losses have taught us that we do lose tangible things with every new technology we implement.

For example, Lexia is a program that provides individualized phonics instruction and keeps kids quiet. But what do we lose in using it? We are losing the opportunity for the students to practice managing themselves and their behavior without the assistance of a screen. We are losing collaborative work time when students can ask each other questions and work together to solve problems.

Another example is online group projects. It certainly is handy that students are able to work together from home on projects at times that are convenient for each student. But what are we losing? In the old days, we had to get together in person, see the insides of each other's houses, gain perspective on how our classmates lived. Now, each student is alone in their own home, working "collaboratively" but in isolation.

This leads to one of my specific requests. I think that FCPS should completely reassess its SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) program in middle schools. Our students definitely need to learn those skills. The problem is that these classes involve watching videos, answering some questions about the videos, and taking a lot of online surveys. In one of these surveys, only roughly 35% of middle and high school students said they like going to school, and only about 40% of middle and high school students think that their fellow students treat others with respect. Those numbers indicate that our SEL program is not working, and quiet frankly, I'm not surprised. The middle school students I have talked to all complain that SEL lessons are boring and annoying. Kids learn collaboration by collaborating. They learn to respect their peers by gaining understanding of those peers. Videos are not going to teach these skills. And the online surveys just make the students feel like cogs in the wheel, one of many thousands of students in FCPS, just a number instead of a human being.

My second request is that now that the state of Virginia has required both a fall and winter growth assessment or VGA in addition to the spring SOLs, I ask that FCPS discontinue iReady testing. Why take two tests for every subject three times a year? All these tests are taking our students away from vital class time, and seem redundant to me. Our teachers know which of their students are struggling without some test telling them. And especially now that our students are accessing programs like ST Math and Lexia, that provide teachers additional data about student abilities, I don't see why the iReady tests are necessary or even helpful anymore.