

## School Health Advisory Committee September 20, 2023

Committee Members— Present	Committee Members— Absent	Associate Members— Present and Guest in Attendance	Associate Members Absent
Ayan Noor Robert Goldel Katie Moyer Mary Rogers Kirby Jen Steiner Kelly Fernandez Ilana Yergin-Doniger Brenda Silvia-Torma Kimberly Smith Kolette De La Cruz Catherine Stone	Ann Wilkie Mary Rohmiller Sherry Nachnani Elvira Anadolu Danielle Kaubaroulis Ann Smith Laura Jane Cohen—School Board Member	Dr. Terri Edmunds-Heard James Jadallah Carrie Reynolds Bethany Demers Amanda Schlink	Lea Skurpski Saray Smalls

### September 2023 SHAC Minutes

**FCPS updates**, provided by Dr. Terri Edmunds-Heard (on behalf of Lea Skurpski)

- 2022/2023 FCPS School Wellness Report is now available at: <https://www.fcps.edu/system/files/forms/2023-08/wellnessreport-22-23.pdf> ; Previous years' reports are archived on the website.
- FCPS wrote responses to SHAC's 2022/2023 Final Report. Responses will be provided to SHAC shortly.
- First wellness newsletter of SY 2022/2023 will go out tomorrow to all who subscribed. <https://www.fcps.edu/aggregator/sources/3>
- Bethany Demers shared that high school students will continue to have access to Hazel Health, a telehealth therapy, that will provide no cost services to high school students through June 2024. Hazel Health specializes in telehealth for K-12 populations/schools.
  - Flat fee for the number of students in the division.
  - FCPS received positive feedback from the clinicians who refer the students.
- September is suicide prevention month. All FCPS middle schools and high schools participate in suicide intervention screenings.
- **Wellness Challenge:** WalkTober. Staff can create a team.

- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) vendor added additional sessions. The EAP Sessions through our Guidance Resources vendor provides Confidential Emotional Support (for anxiety, depression, stress, grief, loss, and life adjustments, relationship/marital conflicts). As of July 1, 2023, our EAP vendor now provides up to six free sessions per issue per year for these types of life's challenges (previously, it was five free sessions per issue per year).
- Reminder about flu vaccination clinics.

**Election of SY23-24 Chair(s):** Delayed until the end of the SHAC meeting.

**Discussion of SY23-24 Committee Plan:** Committee members decide to divide into four breakout groups and review the Surgeon General’s Social Connection Advisory, available at: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>. The objective of the breakout groups is to review the loneliness epidemic document and identify key components. Prior to breakout session, group discussed:

- FCPS students are the change agents in school...empower them to understand the impact of screens on their lives.
- **Connections:** Family nights—tech free events; 4<sup>th</sup> grade tech free events, Boo hoo breakfast—create authentic connections, 6<sup>th</sup> graders family event celebrating
- Increase family awareness of cell phone/screen time impact on students.
- Incorporate project-based learning so that students collaboratively learn from each other. Incorporate outdoor space and nature while teaching.
- Create a balance between device use and policy.
- Review homework policy
- Structure school day around creativity.
- How to get the word out about device and connection issues? Create positive messages from the students by involving clubs and empowering students to be a part of the discussion.
- **Cultivate the culture of connection:** We focus often on building student connections. We need to connect community members and adults.
- Family events occur at elementary schools. Need to facilitate family events for everyone.
- Middle school clubs should build relationships between students and staff. Elementary school clubs are inconsistent across the district. Some schools have them and others do not.
  - Expand those elementary school clubs and natural engagement opportunities (field trips).
    - What are barriers?
- Health and Physical Education does focus on communication skills. Should be a required class (about teaching communication skills).

**Ideas for presenters:**

- Students could present about connection and screen time: What they need.
- Transition to middle schools

- Assigned homework?

### Breakout Group Summaries

**Group 1:** Kolette, Katie, Jen, Kimberly Smith, Kelly Fernandez, Brenda Silvia-Torma.

Discussion Ideas include:

- Are the students aware that they are victims? How would a 12-year-old child advocate for less screen time? They are digitally native from the womb.
- It's difficult for people to socialize because there are language barriers as well as cultural expectations for parental involvement in schools.
  - **Idea:** Establish parent/guardian-level connections to encourage cross-ethnic intracultural socialization. **Question:** What does that look like at school? Families don't come into events/birthday parties; not engaged. Reasons for disengagement may include lack of time (working multiple jobs), no childcare, lack of money to buy birthday presents, language barriers.
  - There are many cliques.
- Generate a list of ideas to meet the community needs. Create authentic opportunities to build bonds.
  - **Example:** Monthly family nights in all grade levels.
- Host International night at schools and encourage connections with the community and each other.
- There are great articles about the isolation of kids who are not on screens—these kids are lonely too.
- Fairfax Family Nights
- Physiological brain damage caused by screen time.
  - From November 2022's SHAC Meeting Notes: 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.
    - <https://scienceblog.cincinnatichildrens.org/screen-usage-linked-to-differences-in-brain-structure-in-young-children/>
- Involve students in decision making.
  - **Students are the change agents in the equation.**
  - Gold/Silver award for girl scouts
  - One elementary school's equity committee will have a student panel. FCPS need to know and have a firm understanding of how students are impacted
  - The students need to guide the discussion and FCPS needs to listen.
  - **Public Policy pushed by children is powerful!!**
- Host phone-free evening events for kids.

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**Group #2:** Bethany Demers, Carrie Reynolds, James Jadallah, Ilana Yergin-Doniger and Mary Rogers-Kirby.

Reform digital environments and support connectedness. Cultivate a culture of connection by building out our community partnerships.

- Build community connections.
- NCS
- Partner with smaller community organizations.
- Foster family events at all levels.
- Support connections as students transition to middle schools and high schools.
- FCPS already emphasizes SEL instruction and building relationships via Responsive Advisory Meetings and Morning Meeting.
- Focus on skill building related to relationship skills, communication, self-awareness and other skills that impact technology use would be helpful.
- Health and PE curriculum teaches communication skills:
  - “I” statements
  - Decision making
  - Healthy relationships
  - Healthy balance
  
- Middle school afterschool program
- Where are the elementary school clubs? These provide natural opportunities for engagement and there are inequities across the county.
- What are barriers to accessing outside clubs/resources at all grade levels?

**Questions:**

- How do we support students in finding a balance with technology use and face-to-face interactions?
- How can we better support students as they transition into middle school?

**Potential Presentations and Speakers:**

- Vivek Murthy
- Student presentation on connection and screen time
- Experiences and what they need
- Tammi Sisk
- Someone from Common Sense Media
- One of our own members of SHAC

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Group #3: Ayan, Robert, Catherine, Terri

#### Engage the community

- Use of school buildings to build community by opening them for community use.
- Greater outreach to community with gathering at the schools for activities
- Have parents come to school more, similar to what is happening in elementary schools
- Have parents and community member model limited use of electronics - messaging to parents
- regarding this issue/charge

#### Evaluate Homework policy

- Question was asked, how much are they expected to do? We reviewed the current guidance
- Less homework since students use computers during the day
- Need to find balance in the day for the students

#### Innovative teaching methods

- Discussed trying to flip classroom but it was noted that it has been tried and created uneven results. Some students took to it but others needed more direct instruction
- Explore other methods of teaching with less emphasis on electronic devices
- Use project based education
- Promote literacy and self-directed learning

#### Promote the use/integration of the environment

- Outdoor class time
- Use nature as a classroom itself
- Look at school construction to include outdoor space inside
- Recess in MS and HS
- More clubs/after school activities not involving technology

#### Engage students

- Students are influenced by other students, how can we leverage this?
  - Peers in classrooms can promote limited use
  - Increase in activities promoting connection in school/games

#### **Additional Comments:**

- Homework expectations
- Challenges in middle school
- How bold should we be to associate loneliness with screens?
- Family Engagement Survey: Easier to access?
- **Process for getting new questions onto surveys:** YRBS and FCHD work together to see what questions should be removed or added to the survey.

- Youth groups who are talking about this own epinephrine, they cannot use stock epi. They can only call 911. Brenda will follow up with Allergy & Asthma Network.

**Update to the Co-Chair Election:** Postpone this discussion until no later than the October SHAC meeting. Motion: Jen Steiner; Kelly seconded the motion. Motion passed by the majority.

**Adjournment:** Ilana motioned to adjourn, and Kolette seconded the motion. Unanimous consent. SHAC adjourned at 9:02pm.