

School Health Advisory Board

BRIEFING REPORT



JULY 2020



Arlington
Public
Schools



SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

The School Health Advisory Board (SHAB) assists the School Board and APS staff with the development of health policies in Arlington Public Schools and the evaluation of the status of school health, to include health education, the school environment, and health services as described in [Virginia law](#).

SHAB GOALS

- Improve students' health and ability to learn in all Arlington schools and programs
- Monitor and help mitigate high rates of chronic disease among APS students (in particular asthma, severe allergies, and obesity)
- Reduce absenteeism and lost instructional time due to illness
- Ensure sufficient physical activity, outdoor play, and nature connection for student wellness
- Demonstrate the importance of healthy eating as a foundation for good health
- Emphasize the need for adequate sleep for school success
- Recognize and address factors that affect socio-emotional well-being
- Ensure safe physical and emotional environments to learn and grow
- Ensure safe use of screens and personal electronic devices in school
- Promote the importance of staff wellness

SHAB LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS:

- Chair - parent volunteer
- Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning – APS
- Director of Student Services – APS
- Supervisor of Health, Physical and Driver Education and Athletics – APS
- Director of Food Services – APS
- DHS School Health Bureau Chief - Arlington County Public Health Division (ACPHD)
- School Health Public Health Nurse Supervisor – ACPHD
- 3 Workgroup Leaders (Environmental Health and Asthma, Screen Use in Schools, and Safety and Security) - parent volunteers

The leadership team meets bi-monthly, in the months between SHAB general meetings.

GENERAL MEMBERS:

Interested parents and community members can attend the open bi-monthly meetings. SHAB currently has 15 School Board appointed members and 50 additional general members and stakeholders that receive direct communications. SHAB is requesting School Board appointment of 4 additional members to serve 2-year terms (2020-22).

The work of SHAB is typically conducted in between meetings through workgroups:

1. Allergy and Anaphylaxis
2. Assessment and Best Practices
3. Environmental Health and Asthma
4. Nutrition and Physical Activity
5. Socio-Emotional Health
6. Screen Use in Schools
7. New – Safety and Security
8. Newly forming – Nature Connection

Website: apsshab.weebly.com/

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/apsshab/

HEALTH IN THE SCHOOLS

Currently more than 1 in 4 APS students have a chronic health condition, with asthma being the most common (2,600+) followed by food allergies (1,900+). Many of these students require lifesaving medications at school. Rates of both conditions have increased faster than the increase in student population in recent years. This current school year, APS students have visited the 34 clinics more than 155,000 times; 17,000 of this total (11%) was to receive daily or emergency medications. [Data submitted by the School Health Bureau of ACPHD and APS]

Prevention and a safe food environment are the most effective ways to prevent serious illness.

Infectious diseases occur throughout the year, but outbreaks are more common in the late fall and winter months. More than 8 outbreaks occurred last year in programs and in elementary, middle and high schools, most commonly caused by gastrointestinal pathogens such as norovirus or respiratory pathogens such as influenza. There have been no known cases of measles, pertussis, or other vaccine preventable diseases in APS in the last year. Because there is no vaccine for norovirus, and the vaccine for influenza provides only moderate protection, the importance of basic actions such as hand-washing, covering one's cough, not sharing food and liquids, and staying home when sick, remain critically important to slow down and control outbreaks.

With the closing of schools in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the School Health Bureau has been detailed to the Public Health Division's COVID Response Team. Staff are working 12-hour days, 7 days a week. Public Health Nurses, School Health Aides, and the leadership team, using Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and CDC recommended guidelines, are all actively working to stop the spread of Coronavirus. Staff are working in Case Investigation reaching out to do in depth interviews with newly diagnosed residents of Arlington, while our Active Monitoring and Risk Assessment teams are calling all their contacts. Staff are also visiting Arlington long term care facilities to do infection control and education.

2019-20 SHAB PROGRESS

UPDATES TO WELLNESS POLICY AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

In June 2017, SHAB developed a new [Wellness Policy](#) and [Wellness Policy Implementation Procedures](#) (PIP) in response to VDOE requirements for school districts that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. The Local Wellness Policy (LWP) needed to meet the newly expanded requirements outlined in the final rule of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. New provisions related to implementation, evaluation, and publicly reporting progress are intended to strengthen LWPs so they become useful tools in evaluating, establishing, and maintaining healthy school environments, and to provide transparency to the public on key areas that affect the nutrition environment in each school. The School Board adopted the new Wellness Policy on June 29, 2017. The Policy Implementation Procedures (PIP) were first adopted on July 27, 2017 and were updated on September 14, 2018 and November 18, 2019.

Activities this year approaching compliance with the Wellness Policy and PIP include:

1. Each school is required to form a Wellness Council, usually led by the school principal or assistant principal, who will have the authority and responsibility to report on the school's compliance and inform the school community about wellness activities. Wellness Councils should be broadly inclusive and include teachers of health and physical education, school nurses, counselors, food service staff, parents, students, and others. To date, APS has not required all schools to develop wellness councils. Previous delays cited an overload on administrators and a priority on suicide prevention and substance abuse prevention. The COVID-19 pandemic has further delayed implementation this year, but SHAB believes formation of these Wellness Councils could be an integral part of each individual school's return to school planning and ongoing assessment. Principals and their admin teams have worked together to complete their first and third year required wellness assessments without input from a formalized Wellness Council.
2. Schools recently completed their second standardized assessment instrument that is required every three years. APS is using the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program assessment instrument, which is based on the CDC's School Health Index. A Wellness Policy assessment team will review the individual school and aggregate results once they are made available on July 15, 2020 to assess compliance with the wellness policy and progress toward a culture of wellness.
3. Annual reports will be provided to the public and will include a description of each school's progress in meeting Wellness Policy goals, a summary of each school's local wellness events or activities, contact information for the leader(s) of the Wellness Policy assessment team, and information about how individuals and the public can get involved.

ACTION REQUESTED

1. School Board support is needed to ensure Wellness Councils will be formed at each school for the 2020-21 school year. Wellness Councils can also serve as knowledgeable resources for addressing school-specific COVID-19 matters.
2. Share results of school Wellness Assessments and wellness activities through APS communication channels to ensure compliance with the Federally mandated Wellness Policy.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

APS Food Services, the Healthy Communities Action Team (HCAT) and Real Food for Kids has partnered since 2018 on a program at Carlin Springs Elementary School. Fresh Food Explorers is a fun education program for Pre-K students and their families. Over eight weeks, students hold, smell, and taste a variety of vegetables and vegetable dishes offered in the cafeteria. Then staff meet with their families to share what students are learning and offer easy ways for caregivers to reinforce these lessons at home.

These partnerships have now expanded to serve the needs of students and families during the COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures. Families can apply for APS Free or Reduced Price Meals online at <https://www.myschoolapps.com/> or request a paper application be mailed by calling 703-228-6130. Applications are accepted throughout the school year. Families are encouraged to still submit Free/Reduced Meals applications in case additional Pandemic EBT assistance becomes available, to get reduced summer school tuition, and to get an accurate assessment of need which affects which schools can be meal distribution sites and other access to community support measures.

APS is providing free grab-n-go meals (lunch and breakfast) from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, for all children ages 2-18. Multiple days of meals are available for families when they pick up meals at the meal sites, but families no longer need to come to the meal sites daily. Meals are available at the following locations:

- Barcroft Elementary School — 625 S. Wakefield Street
- Barrett Elementary School — 4401 N Henderson Rd
- Campbell Elementary School — 737 S Carlin Springs Rd
- Dr. Charles R. Drew Elementary School — 3500 S. 23rd Street
- Glebe Elementary School — 1770 N. Glebe Rd
- Kenmore Middle School — 200 S. Carlin Springs Road
- Randolph Elementary School — 1306 S Quincy St
- Hoffman-Boston Elementary School — 1415 S. Queen Street
- Key Elementary School — 2300 Key Blvd.

Families can pick up meals at the site closest to them.

ALLERGY/ANAPHYLAXIS GUIDELINES DISSEMINATION

In the 2018-19 school year, 11 students/staff required epinephrine for anaphylaxis. In order to support schools and families and meet national guidelines, a workgroup of SHAB drafted food allergy guidelines incorporating best practices from the CDC and other local school districts. “Management and Support of Students with Severe Allergies in Arlington Public Schools” was released in September 2016 on the SHAB website. In 2018, APS decided to make the allergy guidelines formal APS guidelines, so the document was reviewed and edited by the legal department and SHAB leadership team. The document was reformatted and titled “Food Allergy Guidelines” and was republished in 2019: <https://apsshah.weebly.com/food-allergy-guidelines.html>

The guidelines are helping APS staff and parents negotiate adequate protections for students at risk of anaphylaxis. For example, Jamestown Elementary, where 13% of the school population is affected by food allergies, progressed from having several “nut-free classrooms” to having a no peanuts or tree nuts policy in all classrooms.

The guidelines require continued support and commitment from the School Board and staff for successful implementation. While many schools already follow some of the best practices for managing severe allergies, there is not a consistent, centralized approach to allergy management. Implementing the Food Allergy Guidelines provides a framework for all schools to follow best practices regarding allergy management. Especially important are:

- An increased emphasis on staff training. All staff should be trained in prevention, signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis, and emergency management, including the administration of epinephrine. It is important that school administrators take a lead role with this and partner with the Public Health Nurse to schedule adequate time at the beginning of the school year for this training.
- An emphasis on non-food treats for celebrations is a key allergy prevention measure as well as good health and wellness practice, now strongly encouraged by the Wellness Policy.
- Classroom teachers who have students with food allergies in their class should send a letter home to all parents requesting they not send in foods containing identified allergens for snacks or lunches.
- Encourage hand washing as the most effective way to eliminate allergens. Hand sanitizers do not eliminate allergens.
- Ensure proper cleaning of lunchroom tables according to established cleaning procedures.

ACTION REQUESTED

1. Translate the Food Allergy Guidelines into Spanish.
2. Print copies and distribute one per school, one copy for each Extended Day office, and one copy for each nurses’ office.
3. Ensure Food Allergy Guidelines are followed if COVID-19 return to school planning includes eating meals in classrooms instead of cafeterias.

HAND WASHING GUIDELINES IMPLEMENTATION

The SHAB Environmental Health and Asthma Subcommittee (EHAS) developed hand washing guidelines in 2016 with diverse stakeholder input and national best practice recommendations. These guidelines are included in the Wellness Policy and PIP and were promoted in 2019 through School Talk and School Health communications. Implementation challenges included: lack of awareness about the policy, inadequate number of sinks and time before and after lunch and recess to wash hands, and lack of buy-in among staff. A hand washing reminder in the school handbook did not mention when hand washing should happen. EHAS notes that for the policy to be followed, hand washing must be integrated intentionally into the school day. Principals need to include time for hand washing after recess, before meals, and after meals into their master schedules. The COVID-19 pandemic will also require frequent use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers in addition to frequent handwashing.

ACTION REQUESTED

1. Revise the APS handbook to include when hand washing should happen, and send messages to teachers, staff and parents with these guidelines 3 times per year, or at least during the COVID-19 pandemic and winter illness months.
2. Provide multiple examples for staff on how to teach about hand washing, and how to integrate hand washing throughout the busy school day.
3. All students should receive instruction on proper hand washing technique at least once each year from their school nurse or another qualified staff member.
4. School construction and remodeling efforts should include installation of trough sinks, particularly in or near cafeterias.

The SHAB website includes a page about the hand washing guidelines and evidence for hand washing to prevent disease and absenteeism in schools: <http://apsshab.weebly.com/hand-washing-policy.html>

PROMOTING HEALTHY EATING AND EXERCISE

APS Health and Physical Education (HPE) staff continued to provide meaningful and active lessons in both health and physical education to students while the COVID-19 stay at home order was in place. The APS HPE teachers have planned for purposeful and engaging lessons for the return to school plans that respect social distancing, provide personal fitness education and health knowledge.

School Health created a of healthy eating and physical activity best practices within APS in 2017, titled "A Practice-Based Health and Fitness Toolkit for Improving Educational Outcomes." Some of the activities advocated for and promoted by SHAB in the last year include:

- School gardens and garden-to-table lessons

- No food in classroom and non-food treats for celebrations policies
- Growing the participation rates for school breakfast
- Expanded recess (now minimum 30 minutes for elementary school)
- Movement breaks throughout the day and outdoor play
- Outdoor learning experiences
- Walk and Bike to School Days
- Kinesthetic classrooms: Wobble/fidgeting chairs, pedal desks or standup desks
- Mindfulness meditation and yoga
- School employee physical activity and farm to school participation to improve wellness and model healthy behaviors

The Toolkit can be accessed at: apsshab.weebly.com/uploads/3/1/1/8/31180127/health_and_fitness_toolkit_july2017.pdf

ASTHMA AND VEHICLE IDLING

Arlington air quality has gotten an "F" from the American Lung Association in recent years. Children are affected by air pollution more dramatically than adults. Breathing in ozone irritates and inflames the lungs. For the health of all children, and especially considering the rise in asthma rates noted above, the Environmental Health and Asthma Subcommittee (EHAS) has worked to raise awareness about the impact of vehicle idling on the environment and children's health and to create a reduction in vehicle idling, especially around schools.

EHAS community survey data reflects a significant concern about vehicle idling with over 50 percent of respondents observing cars idling at schools for at least three minutes frequently or daily. Also identified as problems are cars idling more than 20 minutes at a time around



school start and dismissal times, and school buses idling both on and off of school property. Additionally, there is concern about idling around youth activities at community centers and evening events at schools. Respondents largely support anti-idling signage and education campaigns. EHAS also supports funding toward replacement of old buses and retrofitting of buses older than 2007 to reduce their particulate matter emissions.

According to the Wellness Policy Implementation Procedures (PIP):

“Arlington Public Schools recognizes that outdoor air quality, including vehicle exhaust contributes to the health of staff and students. Arlington Public Schools will partner with Transportation Services, community groups, vendors, and parents/guardians/caregivers to ensure that automobile and bus idling times do not exceed applicable laws and regulations at school pick-up and drop off areas, in school parking lots, on school field trips, and at sporting events.”

Currently, in the absence of leadership from the County or from APS, further anti-idling efforts are beyond the scope of the EHAS Workgroup. EHAS continues to believe that idling is a health and safety issue that needs attention and resources beyond the scope of volunteer efforts. Additional support from APS Sustainability Liaisons would help. If they could all be asked to take on something at their schools, we might reach a critical mass.

Bus idling remains a problem that EHAS members report to Transportation with little response except when involving the Facilities Department, which has responded to some concerns about noxious emissions from buses with the directive to check on the vehicles.

EHAS understands APS does not want to invest in retrofitting vehicles with better emissions filters because of the eventual move to electric vehicles. That is still years away, however.

Personal vehicle idling also remains a problem that puts children and school staff at risk. EHAS leadership reached out to County officials toward collaboration on wider idling guidelines. Conversations were well received by Katie Cristol but lockdown protocols stalled expected Earth Day-related messages. EHAS was hoping the County could agree that promoting No Idling would be consistent with its other efforts and that the County would put resources into some kind of proclamation and awareness campaign.

If the County were to embark on a No Idling initiative -- even if only educational/awareness rather than anything with any legal teeth -- EHAS would be better positioned to carry that momentum over into the schools.

ACTION REQUESTED

1. Declare APS a No-Idle District and work with SHAB and local agencies to educate parents about the negative impact of idling on children’s health and the environment.
2. Promote zero tolerance for APS bus drivers violating the 5-minute idling limit.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Although only APS-provided cleaning materials are approved for use in APS schools and the new Wellness Policy and PIP stipulates scented products and air fresheners are not to be used in school, parents note that many teachers do use these scented products, which can trigger asthma and respiratory distress or cause other ill health symptoms, including headache, fatigue, skin irritation and nausea. The many negative health repercussions of scented products and other VOC-containing products are addressed in the articles compiled on the EHAS Indoor Air Quality Resources page: apsshaw.weebly.com/ehas---indoor-air-quality-resources.html. This year, APS Facilities collaborated with SHAB EHAS members to add an indoor air quality section to the Wellness PIP. We are grateful for the following guidance that was added to the PIP on November 18, 2019:

8. Arlington Public Schools recognizes that indoor air quality contributes to student and staff wellness and performance. The following steps are taken to ensure healthy indoor air quality:

- a. Products with synthetic fragrances, including, but not limited to, cleaning products and materials, air fresheners, hand soap and scented candles, often contain endocrine-disrupting phthalates and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) such as formaldehyde, petroleum distillates, limonene, esters and alcohols, exposure to which can increase the risk of asthma, trigger eye and respiratory tract irritation, and cause headaches, dizziness, and even memory impairment. Products with synthetic fragrances also often contain artificial dyes and colors, which may be carcinogenic and genotoxic, and may pose additional issues for those with chemical and environmental sensitivities.
 1. Plant Operations Services selects unscented, low VOC cleaning products free of artificial dyes and colors, as commercially available, for use by all custodians and employees in Arlington Public Schools facilities and on school buses. When unscented products are not available, Plant Operations Services selects the most effective cleaning product with the least scent.
 2. Arlington Public Schools employees may only use cleaning products and air fresheners that have been approved by Plant Operations Services.
 3. Teachers, administrators, staff, parents and visitors may neither bring products with synthetic fragrances and artificial dyes and colors into, nor use them in schools and facilities.
 4. Schools will discourage parent teacher associations from promoting products with synthetic fragrances and artificial dyes and colors in fundraisers.
- b. Schools will promote healthy indoor air quality by using low-odor school supplies, by locating machinery such as copiers, printers and laminating machines in well-ventilated areas away from areas commonly frequented by children, and by purchasing products and supplies that do not contain formaldehyde and harmful VOCs.

- c. To reduce the risk of mold growth, Maintenance Services and school staff shall operate Heating Ventilating and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems in permanent and relocatable schools and facilities to provide appropriate ventilation rates and humidity conditions.
- d. School staff shall take proactive steps to prevent mold growth in permanent and relocatable schools and facilities, and shall notify Maintenance Services immediately when concerned that mold may be present.
- e. Design and Construction and Maintenance Services shall collaborate to ensure that fresh air intakes in existing, new and relocatable schools and facilities are not located such that exhaust fumes from idling buses and other vehicles could enter ventilation systems.
- f. Maintenance Services shall test all existing, new and renovated facilities for radon in accordance with the requirements of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- g. To reduce air-borne allergens and minimize the presence of pests, school staff shall vacuum and clean regularly to reduce the presence of dust mites and food sources, and shall keep all food in sealed containers to make schools less appealing to cockroaches and other insects, and to mice and other rodents.

ACTION REQUESTED

1. Distribute information about the new indoor air quality guidance to educate parents and staff about the hazards of scented products, mold, radon, and indoor air allergens.
2. Ask Principals to remind teachers and custodial staff that plug-ins, candles, sprays and other air fresheners are not permitted in classrooms.

To learn more about EHAS's anti-idling and clean air work, visit <https://apsshav.weebly.com/clean-air-resources.html>

SCREEN USE IN SCHOOLS

SHAB members, particularly members of the Screen Use in Schools Subcommittee, worked tirelessly to advocate for and collaborate with other organizations from around Virginia to build awareness of the physical, mental, learning, and social effects of overuse and misuse of personal electronic devices in schools and homes. These efforts included local, state, and national-level collaboration with the following organizations:

- The Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth & Families
- The American Academy of Pediatrics, VA Chapter
- The Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax
- Parents Across America, Roanoke
- Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood
- Center for a Safer Wireless
- Common Sense Media

Virginia State Legislators passed House Bill 817 (sponsored by Arlington Delegate Patrick Hope) during the 2019

legislative session which requires the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health and medical professional societies, to develop and distribute health and safety best practice guidelines for the use of digital devices in public schools no later than the 2021-2022 school year. The bill was signed into law in early April 2020 and is the second such bill in the nation after Maryland. Maryland's recommendations and experience are chronicled in the blog: <http://www.screensandkids.us>.

APS Teaching and Learning proactively included a list of Health and Safety Guidelines in their distance learning packet that went home to all APS families in the spring during the early stages of the pandemic closures.

Evidence shows more than two hours of any screen use has diminishing returns for the user and physical, social, and learning implications, not limited to the practice of passivity, eye-damage and posture problems, and links to ADHD. Our technologies have changed, but our need for true connection has not. The SUS Subcommittee of SHAB is advocating for more presence when with one another. We are promoting time for active listening and less digital distractions. Phones down and heads up - at school, around town, and at home. SHAB recommends there be more reminders from APS to children and their parents to take body breaks and eye breaks, and limit screen use to mitigate the effects device use on human growth and development (see Appendix B - letter from the AAP, VA Chapter).

GENERAL USE OF SCREENS IN APS

Because real-life and multi-sensory experiences have been proven to be more meaningful than virtual learning experiences on electronic devices, screens should be used for specific purposes rather than as a total replacement for hands-on, project-based learning. Authentic books and hand-writing notes on paper have been proven to be more effective technology in reading processes and knowledge acquisition. Near screens and educational apps lack multi-sensory input and pose health risks, so screens should be implemented when other methods of meeting curricular objectives have been exhausted. Diverse modalities for learning should be offered, even when schools are required to implement distance learning.

Safe configurations for school-issued and home devices:

1. Place a blue light filter on screens.
2. Make sure the monitor is at eye level when seated in front of the screen.
3. Keep monitor at least 20 inches from eyes (adult's arm length).
4. Use a chair that can adjust in height to the child's sight.
5. Minimize reflections and screen glare by adjusting contrast and brightness settings and the light in the room (lamps, overhead, sunshine, etc.) to match the lighting on the screen. The screen and room lighting should be similar.
6. Ensure the feet are resting flat on the floor.
7. Keep track of time with a timer

8. Consider volume and the surrounding sounds so as to not block them out. Consider setting a volume limit.

The Screen Use in Schools subcommittee also submitted to APS a proposed "Away for the Day" cellphone policy (Appendix C) which would require cellular phones to be off and put away during the school day (especially during classes and lunch). Similar policies are already in place in APS elementary and middle schools, but the goal is to implement the policy in the high schools by fall 2020.

Healthy tech can happen when it's developmentally appropriate and used with discretion. EVERYSCHOOL is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering every school to embrace healthy, research-based educational technology: <https://everyschool.org/research>. APS should follow the science to ensure they are delivering the safest, most developmentally appropriate content through distance learning.

ACTION REQUESTED

1. Send periodic reminders from APS to students, families, and staff to take body breaks and eye breaks, and limit non-essential screen use (social media, TV, video games) to mitigate the deleterious effects of device use on human growth and development. Avoiding screen use at bedtime should also be advised to promote sleep hygiene and adequate sleep. This will be particularly important if school resumes in a distance learning format this fall.
2. Implement an Away for the Day Cellphone Policy in the high schools.
3. In-school instructional time should limit screen use and strive to find more socially engaging alternative ways to meet curricular objectives such as discussion groups and project-based learning.
4. Distance learning should include use of paper books, workbooks, textbooks, and other off-screen media whenever possible.

NEW: SAFETY AND SECURITY WORKGROUP

During the September 2019 SHAB meeting, members voted to form a Safety and Security Workgroup to address issues including:

1. Concussion protocols and academic accommodations
2. Pedestrian and biker safety
3. Weather and emergency protocols in sports
4. Training and use of AEDs for sudden cardiac emergencies
5. School lockdown drills and gun violence issues
6. Dating violence and sexual harassment (teacher training, prevention, social media influence, etc.)

The workgroup is chaired by Melody Kisor, MS, Wakefield High School parent.

NATURE CONNECTION WORKGROUP FORMING

To help mitigate the effects of isolation, disconnect, heavy screen use, and physical inactivity, SHAB has formed a Nature Connection workgroup to compile resources, brainstorm ideas, and promote best practices. Time spent connecting to and getting to know the 'beyond human world' during this time of health and social upheaval can provide important healing benefits for children and adults alike. The group will raise awareness of the plethora of ways Nature is there for our physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual growth, healing, balance, and wellbeing.

Why?

- Doctors in D.C., with affiliates in MD and VA, are prescribing time in Nature for emotional and physical healing. We want to help families know where to find their "Wild Places": <https://parkrxamerica.org/>
- Children need to come to know and love what they will be tasked to save. Research can be found at: <https://www.childrenandnature.org/>
- The opposite of addiction is connection. Isolation leads to depression. Best-selling author Johann Hari explains: <https://johannhari.com/>
- Kids are more likely to eat vegetables that they help to grow. Gardening can happen in small places and schoolyards. Free consultations are available to families in need through this local B-Corp: <https://www.facebook.com/SproutKitchenGardens/>

Nature Connection is a global movement with local ways to bloom where we are planted. School and community commitment to this effort can infuse a sense of purpose which can mitigate hopelessness and depression. We all seek to be part of something greater than ourselves, a natural part of our human condition. Getting connected and helping to find ways to green ourselves and our community is good for the general wellbeing of humans and the other creatures we share this habitat with.

OTHER ONGOING SHAB ACTIVITIES

- SHAB members regularly review and provide feedback on revisions to the Health Education and Family Life Education curricula.
- SHAB members continue to support the non-discrimination policy and PIP to protect the needs of transgender students.
- SHAB members reviewed and provided feedback on the Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policy and PIP.
- SHAB actively partners with the Arlington Partnership for Children Youth and Family (ACPYF) and the Healthy Communities Action Team (HCAT).
- SHAB frequently corresponds with the Advisory Committee on Instruction (ACI) and may become a member of ACI in the upcoming year.

OTHER ONGOING SHAB PRIORITIES

- Educate families about the importance of our students getting adequate sleep and advocate for school start times that mirror changing national standards.
- Maximize unstructured recess time and maximize movement during indoor recess.
- Educate others about the importance of movement throughout the day, including active hands-on lessons in the classroom, movement breaks between classroom activities, and outdoor learning opportunities.
- Ensure that APS is promoting healthy eating choices and not using unhealthy food - candy, soft drinks, etc. - as a reward.
- Support and monitor middle and high school efforts to curb vaping and substance abuse.
- Support Student Services efforts to address suicide, anxiety, stress and depression among students.
- Monitor the installation and materials used in artificial turf fields and playgrounds to reduce student athlete and childhood exposures to environmental contaminants.

SUMMARY OF SCHOOL BOARD/APS ACTION ITEMS

WELLNESS COUNCILS/WELLNESS POLICY COMPLIANCE

- School Board support is needed to ensure Wellness Councils will be formed at each school for the 2020-21 school year. Wellness Councils can also serve as knowledgeable resources for addressing school-specific COVID-19 matters.
- Share results of school Wellness Assessments and wellness activities through APS communication channels to ensure compliance with the Federally mandated Wellness Policy.

FOOD ALLERGY GUIDELINES

- Translate the Food Allergy Guidelines into Spanish.
- Print copies and distribute one per school, one copy for each Extended Day office, and one copy for each nurses' office.
- Ensure Food Allergy Guidelines are followed if COVID-19 return to school planning includes eating meals in classrooms instead of cafeterias.

HAND WASHING GUIDELINES

- Revise the APS handbook to include when hand washing should happen, and send messages to teachers, staff and parents with these guidelines 3 times per year, or at least during the COVID-19 pandemic and winter illness months.
- Provide multiple examples for staff on how to teach about hand washing, and how to integrate hand washing throughout the busy school day.

- All students should receive instruction on proper hand washing technique at least once each year from their school nurse or another qualified staff member.
- School construction and remodeling efforts should include installation of trough sinks, particularly in or near cafeterias.

AIR QUALITY - BUS AND AUTOMOBILE IDLING

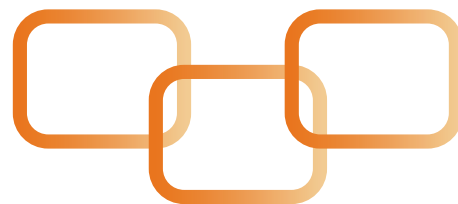
- Declare APS a No-Idle District and work with SHAB and other local agencies to educate parents about the negative impact of idling on children's health and the environment.
- Promote zero tolerance for APS bus drivers violating the 5-minute idling limit.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY

- Distribute information about the new indoor air quality guidance to educate parents and staff about the hazards of scented products, mold, radon, and indoor air allergens.
- Ask Principals to remind teachers and custodial staff that plug-ins, candles, sprays and other air fresheners are not permitted in classrooms.

SCREEN USE IN SCHOOLS

- Send periodic reminders from APS to students, families, and staff to take body breaks and eye breaks, and limit non-essential screen use (social media, TV, video games) to mitigate the deleterious effects of device use on human growth and development. Avoiding screen use at bedtime should also be advised to promote sleep hygiene and adequate sleep. This will be particularly important if school resumes in a distance learning format this fall.
- Implement an Away for the Day Policy in the high schools.
- In-school instructional time should limit screen use and strive to find more socially engaging alternative ways to meet curricular objectives such as discussion groups and project-based learning.
- Distance learning should include use of paper books, workbooks, textbooks, and other off-screen media whenever possible.



APPENDIX A: SHAB MEMBERS

SHAB LEADERSHIP TEAM (10)

Vera Cardinale, MPH	Chair, APS Parent (Arl.Tech and Williamsburg)
Bridget Loft, MEd	APS Asst. Superintendent
Laura Newton, PhD	Staff liaison, APS Employee
Sarah Bell, RN, BSN, MPH	Arlington County Employee
Karin Beecroft, RN, MSN	Arlington County Employee
Debbie DeFranco, MEd, ATC, CSCS	APS Employee
Amy Maclosky	APS Employee
Jessica Haney	APS Parent (Campbell and TJ)
Ann Marie Douglass	APS Parent (Kenmore and Wakefield)
Melody Kisor, MS	APS Parent (Wakefield)

SCHOOL BOARD APPOINTED MEMBERS FOR 2019-21 (12)

Michael Angeloni	Community Member
Katherine Arnold, JD	APS Parent or Legal Guardian
Mila Cahrssen	APS Parent or Legal Guardian
Susanna Crowder	APS Parent or Legal Guardian
Jessica Donze Black, RD, MPH	APS Parent or Legal Guardian
Nelly Evans, MPP	Community Member
Shannon Higgins, MPH	APS Parent or Legal Guardian
Maria Jacoby	APS Parent or Legal Guardian
Desiree Jaworski	APS Parent or Legal Guardian
Keirsten Kelly, RN, BSN	APS Parent or Legal Guardian
James Rives, MD	APS Parent or Legal Guardian

MEMBERS TO BE NEWLY APPOINTED BY SCHOOL BOARD FOR 2020-22 (4):

Kara Strazzella	APS Parent (Williamsburg)
Candice Lopez, MPA	APS Parent (Campbell); AC Employee
Zsuzsanna Jeney, MPH	APS Parent (McKinley)
Rasha Almahroos, JD	Community Member

APPENDIX B: AAP LETTER

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Virginia Chapter
21 Emerywood Parkway
Suite 200
Richmond, VA 23898
Phone: 804/643-6631
vappell@ramdocs.org

January 28, 2020

Honorable Speaker Filler-Corn and Members of the Virginia House of Delegates,

Re: Support for HB817 Public schools; use of digital devices

Virginia Chapter
Executive Committee

President
Sandy L. Chung, MD, FAAP

Executive Vice President/President Elect
Michael S. Martin, MD, FAAP

Secretary
Christina N. Powell, MD, FAAP

Immediate Past President
Timothy T. Bartle, MD, FAAP

Executive Director
Debra B. Chappell

Chapter Web Site
www.virginiapediatrics.org

The Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics respectfully submits our support in the protection of Virginia students from the unintended health consequences posed by classroom digital devices. We ask that HB817 Public Schools; use of digital devices is approved by the House of Delegates.

Research has shown that children suffer the ergonomic health impacts of digital device use differently and more seriously than do adults, since children are still growing and since they lack the ability to accurately identify or report their discomforts. The critical sleep needs of children have also been impacted by the use of digital devices at night, denying them the rest their bodies need to grow strong and healthy.

The Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics looks forward to providing its expertise in the development of best practices and guidelines that will protect Virginia children now and in the future. We stand ready to collaborate with other medical professionals, the Department of Education and the Department of Health to ensure that our children benefit from classroom technology, while using it safely.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandy Chung".

Sandy Chung, MD
President, VA Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics

cc: Delegates Hayes, Ayala, Roem, Hope, Delaney

APPENDIX C: AWAY FOR THE DAY PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY (DRAFT)

Prepared by APS School Health Advisory Board, Screen Use Subcommittee, December 2019

The Screen Use Subcommittee (SUS) of the School Health Advisory Board (SHAB) is recommending that Arlington Public Schools implement a personal electronic device “off and away for the day” policy for all students to minimize distractions and increase focus on academics. This policy would include cell phones, smart watches, non-school issued tablets and air pods. Headphones may only be used when requested and/or approved by a teacher for instructional purposes. Students receive school issued iPads or laptops to complete class assignments and homework, so there is no need for other devices at school for students to succeed.

Cell phone use during school hours is negatively affecting children both academically and emotionally according to current research¹. Many studies link cell phone use among school-aged kids to depression, anxiety, lowered executive function, shortened attention span, lower academic scores^{2,3,4}, and even suicide⁵.

School is a time to learn how to interact with each other and to develop good communication skills and interpersonal connections. Experts in childhood behavior believe it is very important for children to have eye-to-eye contact when talking to each other. This helps to create healthy social relationships. The constant distraction of playing games, being in chat groups, texting, photo taking, internet searches, and social media check-ins on cell phones is detrimental to the social dynamic of the school community^{6,7}.

This policy will enable students to be more mindful and engaged in class. Cell phones, even when not in use, distract students and teachers alike in the classroom when they buzz or ring. Studies have shown that it can take the brain up to 10 minutes after this distraction to refocus on the subject that is being taught⁸. Eliminating cell phones and other personal electronic devices during the school day will ensure that students are learning to their fullest potential. Schools across the country are implementing similar policies and have found the results to be very positive. Testing scores have improved, and students are happier and more engaged.

The “off and away for the day” policy will also mean that students will not be allowed to use cell phones on school buses during field trips or in extended day. Extended day will have a phone available for student use when necessary.

Cell phone use will be permitted on school buses after school with earbuds so they do not disturb other children. Children should not access or share inappropriate content. If a student does go to sites that contain content that is offensive and shows it to others on the bus the student and the parents/guardians will be notified.

Parents and students will still be able to contact each other during the day when needed. There are phones in every classroom so that the main office can contact the student if a parent calls, and the student can call the parent when they need to. The office and classroom phones will be available if other phone calls need to be made or received because of work, childcare, or other emergencies.

Exemptions to the policy will be made by the school administration for students with special circumstances. Students in this case must keep the cell phone out of sight and may not bring it out for any reason during the school day except to send or receive a text message or phone call, or use an approved app.

The recommended “off and away for the day” policy will be as follows:

There is to be no use of personal electronic devices once students enter school. All electronic devices brought to school must be turned off and stored in the student’s locker. In the event a locker is not available, the device must be turned off and stored in a backpack. The student is responsible for making sure no one else is able to open the locker. Arlington Public School administration is not responsible for the loss of any device brought to school by the student. It is important for students to never share their locker combination with another student. Students with special needs who cannot properly lock their locker may store their cell phone in an approved alternate location.

If a student chooses to use an electronic device, staff members will confiscate the device and bring it to the main office to be secured until the end of the school day. Consequences for unauthorized use of electronic devices are as follows:

- 1st time: Student may retrieve his/her device at the end of the school day from the main office with a reminder of this policy.
- 2nd time: Student may retrieve his/her device at the end of the school day from the main office with a reminder of this policy. An email will be sent home to the student’s parent/guardian as a courtesy notification.
- 3rd time: The student’s parent/guardian will need to pick up the device from the main office. Please note that after the second infraction, the device will only be released to the student’s parent/guardian.
- Subsequent infractions: The student’s parent/guardian will need to pick up the device from the main office, as well as have a conference with the student’s administrator. A consequence will be assigned.

Contact:

Vera Cardinale, SHAB Chair: vcardinale@gmail.com

Desiree Jaworski, SHAB member: Desandy4@verizon.net

1 <https://www.awayfortheday.org/research#research-emotional>

2 THE IMPACT OF MOBILE PHONE USAGE ON STUDENT LEARNING

Ref: Kuznekoff et al. (2013) Communication Education v. 62, 233-252 <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03634523.2013.767917>

3 NON-ACADEMIC INTERNET USE IN THE CLASSROOM IS NEGATIVELY RELATED TO CLASSROOM LEARNING REGARDLESS OF INTELLECTUAL ABILITY Ref:

Ravizza et al (2014), Computers & Education v.78, 109-114 <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131514001298>

4 EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF OFF-TASK MULTI-TASKING WITH TECHNOLOGY ON REAL-TIME CLASSROOM LEARNING. Ref: Wood et al. (2012) Computers & Education, 58(1), 365–374 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131511002077>

5 Jean M. Twenge, PhD. iGen. New York: Atria Books (an imprint of Simon & Schuster), 2017.

6 Decreases in Psychological Well-Being Among American Adolescents After 2012 and Links to Screen Time During the Rise of Smartphone Technology

Ref: Jean Twenge et al (2018) Emotion <http://psycnet.apa.org/record/2018-02758-001>

7 R. Dwyer, K. Kushlev, E. Dunn Smartphone use undermines enjoyment of face-to-face social interactions J. Exp. Soc. Psychol., 78 (2018), pp. 233-239

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0022103117301737>

8 The Distracting Effects of a Ringing Cell Phone: An Investigation of the Laboratory and the Classroom Setting; Jill T. Shelton, Emily M. Elliott, Sharon D.

Lynn, and Amanda L. Exner <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3018855/>