

MEMORANDUM

TO: APS School Board

FROM: School Health Advisory Board

DATE: April 6, 2022

SUBJECT: Final recommendations, 2021-2022 academic year

COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS: Dana Carr, MPH
James Vell Rives, MD

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Erin Wentzell

STAFF LIAISON: Debbie DeFranco, Supervisor for Health, Physical and Driver
Education and Athletics.

Recommendation (1): System-wide adaptation and implementation of the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) for Driver Education (2022) and Physical Education (2022).

Rationale for consideration: The Driver Education and Physical Education curricula underwent revision by the Virginia Department of Education. Our collaboration with and support of the Administration in rolling out new guidelines will help promote community ownership of the new SOL's.

Proposed methods: At the invitation of APS, the School Health Advisory Board (SHAB) has reviewed existing curriculum guidelines and compared them with the revised standards produced by the Virginia Department of Education. As SHAB has often done with other topics, we will compile and summarize community input from sources like APS Engage or from individual referrals to SHAB.

Budgetary Implications: None additional, provided that an ongoing dialogue/continuous improvement model for ACTL subcommittees is assumed in the current budgeting and expectations for School Board office staff and APS committee staff liaisons.

Strategic Plan Alignment: Supports core values of Excellence (meeting academic, social and emotional needs), Equity (providing all students information and tools for success and self-improvement), and Partnership (with families, community, and staff.)

Recommendation (2): System-wide implementation (or resumption) of the "Away for the Day" policy for student personal electronic devices as proposed in SHAB's 2020 year-end report, appendix C. <https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SHAB-briefing-2020-corrected.pdf>

Rationale for consideration: The "Away for the Day" strategy has been applied with success at some APS Middle Schools and generally has been well-received by parents and teachers. After having students' usual instruction and social interaction interrupted by the pandemic, along with increased reliance on and use of personal devices, there is continuing need to redirect students away from electronic distractions and back to live interaction.

Proposed methods: An Administrative mandate for this policy would support classroom teachers in implementing the policy by making it appear less like a matter of individual teacher discretion. SHAB can continue to monitor feedback about the strategy as it is continued at some schools and implemented at others.

Budgetary Implications: None additional. It is hoped that a system-wide policy will set student and community expectations, thus reducing staff time needed to apply the strategy as well as reduce time spent redirecting students from their devices to teaching and learning.

Strategic Plan Alignment: Supports core values of Integrity and Inclusivity (fostering direct person to person visual and verbal communication and participation that is available to persons of all means and backgrounds, and promoting a welcoming school environment) and Stewardship (by maximizing the unique benefits of in-person education and preparing students to be engaged citizens.)

Other areas being monitored:

1. Improving internal air quality (IAQ), particularly in older facilities. Since January 2022, SHAB has been collaborating with the Advisory Council on School Facilities and Capital Programs (FAC), in consultation with the APS Facilities Department, to make joint recommendations for feasible improvements in older APS facilities' IAQ over the next several years.
2. Pandemic mitigation strategies. Arlington SHAB collaborated with the Fairfax County School Health Advisory Council and the Alexandria City Public Schools Medical Consultant to issue a joint statement in January 2022 supporting continued mitigation strategies, including universal masking during the high community Covid-19 transmission and hospitalization rates occurring at the time of the statement, and now supporting ongoing consideration of the level of community disease transmission in employing optional mitigation strategies.
3. Family Life Education (FLE) SOL revisions, which require review by SHAB, were expected this academic year but have been postponed indefinitely by the Virginia Department of Education. SHAB will review any FLE SOL revision when it is issued and report to the School Board and administration.
4. PIP-1 (Wellness) adherence, including SHAB's prior vehicle idling recommendations.
5. Physical Education
6. Athletics
7. Nutrition
8. School nursing
9. Infection Control
10. Informal physical activity, exercise, obesity
11. County public health policy

Future recommendations under discussion:

1. Interdisciplinary general health/environmental impact (green) campaign incorporating arts, athletics, science, etc.
2. Recommendations regarding behavioral health, environmental issues, or other topics identified in cross-committee discussion (within ACTL or with other School Board Advisory Councils).

Though not listed in every item, all discussion and monitoring items will consider the impact of Covid-19, as well as the need for diversity, equity, and inclusion in all policy and practice. Topics may also extend beyond the school building, such as on buses and off-campus activities.