



900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 600
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
(785) 296-3203
www.ksde.org

Danny Zeck
District 1

Melanie Haas
District 2

Michelle Dombrosky
District 3

Ann E. Mah
District 4

Dr. Deena Horst
District 6

Dennis Hershberger
District 7

Betty J. Arnold
District 8

Jim Porter
District 9

DRAFT Minutes

Blue Ribbon Task Force on Student Screen Time September 19, 2024

The fifth meeting of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Student Screen Time began at 4:00 p.m. on September 19, 2024. The meeting was virtual.

Co-Chairs: Principal Brian Houghton and Student Ava Gustin.

Welcome from Commissioner Watson and Statement of Purpose

Develop guidance/recommendations, based in research, on:

- students' personal device use in school,
- screen time and mental health, and
- parental oversight of district-owned devices.

These recommendations will be presented to the State Board for consideration by November, with final action possible in December.

Welcome
00:01:24

Breakout Rooms Report from September 12th

Gabrielle Hull gave a summary of the previous week's breakout room discussions.

- A consistent campus wide bell-to-bell policy would be effective, with exceptions for students needing personal devices for medical or special circumstances.
(This would help take pressure off teachers having to police cell phones and stops there from being different rules in different classes.)
- Part of the guidance should also include recommendations for how to manage phones and device use during an emergency.
- Teachers, coaches, and staff should not communicate with students/families through social media.
- Working with families, having technology nights, educational events, is important to help children learn how to use phones in general so that they do not arrive at school sleep deprived.
- Teaching students why these policies are in place will help them understand why it is important. This will help them be more open to the change.

Breakout
Summary
from 9/12
00:03:50

- Policies could be recommended by joint agencies/institutions. This would strengthen public trust in the recommendations.
- It could be helpful to give guidance to teachers about having breaks from technology/computers during class.
- It might help districts to create guidance on policies that are age specific.

Research

Payton Lynn shared research on today's topic of parental oversight of students' district owned devices. She gave a broad overview of the issues.

Research
00:08:30

Schools have content filters. A study found 98% of schools use multiple approaches to filter content. 94% using filtering software, filtering out and blocking social media, online chats, video platforms, and online gaming.

The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) says schools must address:

- Access by minors to inappropriate content
- Safety security of minors when using email, chat rooms and other forms of electronic communications
- Unauthorized access and unlawful activities by minors online unauthorized
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors
- Restricting access for minors

In Kansas, there are various commercial device management programs, such as Mosyle, Jamf Pro, Jamf School, and GoGuardian, and content filters (filtering internet searches) are Cisco Umbrella, Lightspeed, and Securly.

Possible parental controls (at home) might include the ability to view their children's activity online, set time limits, block websites, and restrict app usage.

Panel

Principal Houghton welcomed the panelists and introduced them. He asked each to share their initial thoughts on tools and strategies that are available to assist in providing support to parents on students' school issued devices.

Panel
introduction
00:11:18

- Richard Culatta, CEO, International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
- Phil Elliot, Director of Technology, Spring Hill Schools USD 230
- Keith Kruger, CEO, Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)

Task Force members

Phil Elliot started his career as a high school chemistry/physics teacher, then went into the private sector, and now is back as director of technology at the Spring Hill Schools.

Elliot
00:12:04

The best and simplest controls are going to be the parents themselves. For instance, at home the device needs to be put away by the parents. He shared that at Spring Hill they have started using JamParent, a filtering, control tool on the iPad. They had been on a MacBook 1:1, and they switched to iPad with JamParent because it was easier to use the surveillance and control tools. JamParent adds the ability to set boundaries on apps and platforms and it has a setting for location. In Spring Hill, they have a filter that is used at school, and can be used at home also. Parents can have complete control over the device at home. These two systems, the school filter and JamParent, have been successful. Parents wanted the choice to use the school filter at home, or not to use it. They have that choice and have complete control of their children's devices.

Keith Kruger work for the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) , a national non-profit, professional association for school leaders who provide tech security. Their primary purpose is to make sure students can use technology in a safe environment. The Children's Internet Protection Act (passed in 2000) requires that schools that receive E-rate funds ,the major source of federal funding for technology in schools, must filter internet access to local standards. CoSN continually observes and adapts to recent technologies. Most classrooms in the U.S. are 1:1 environment, even in elementary schools. Digital learning is essential.

Kruger
00:14:43

CoSN has been encouraging Congress to compel social media companies to collaborate with schools to protect students. They promote legislation that balances innovation with student protection. CoSN fundamentally believes parental involvement is central to protecting kids from harm, and they contribute input to local school policy development. *Acceptable Use* policies, a process where parents and students sign off on an agreement of how the device will be used, are often used at the beginning of the year.

There are concerns around children's screen time, but direct family access to school device settings can be problematic. Security is the number one concern from technology leaders. School districts are often targeted by cybercriminals. This is the main concern with having many people having access to device settings and security. Screentime should be an educational tool. Efforts need to be made so parents understand the security settings and boundaries that can be set on personal devices.

Screentime is important to student's learning, and for some students it is the primary source of education. Policies need to be careful not to be too strict. CoSN believes in a balance between online and in person teaching methods. Screentime should not replace

key learning methods such as play, creative expression and the arts. The 21st century learning environment has been transformed by the potential technology offers. Every child must learn to be a responsible digital citizen and have the tools to use technology in healthy ways. Parents must be at the center of this process and understand their role.

Culatta
00:23:57

Richard Culatta, CEO, International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), appreciates the previous speaker and the perspective of CoSN. The focus of ISTE is the human side of technology. Technology is used to teach subjects in a better way but also it is about preparing students to be good future leaders and learners in a digital world. In the debate about tech or no tech, there is a tendency to be binary and to either ban devices or not to ban. It does not help to have polarized conversations. The focus must be on what is happening with the devices, how the technology is being used. The technology itself is not the problem. The challenge is to use technology well.

Mr. Culatta stated that he would like to take the word “screentime” out of the discussion. He would replace it with the term “screen value” to make clear that there are digital activities that have excellent value and there are activities that have no value. We need to teach kids “some things have value, and some things don’t.”

It is important to set healthy conditions for tech use. Many schools are having a knee jerk reaction and just banning all devices and screens. It is tempting to simplify the situation and just take everything away, but strict banning policies make the problem worse. Students need to be taught HOW to use technology. They will need to know how to use technology effectively as they move into their future lives.

It is appropriate, however, to take a technology pause. It is important to learn how to set boundaries; how to assess quality use from a waste of time. There are schools that have healthy tech use. These schools have *Acceptable Use* policies that are age appropriate and teach children and young people how to use technology, when to use it, and how to become great digital citizens at school and beyond school. If the policies are threatening to a child, they will not ask for help if they find themselves in a problematic situation. We need to make it clear that adults are present to help students navigate the digital world. Trust needs to be built with the students. Technology can be used in healthy and meaningful ways. How we set the norms and conditions to use technology in quality ways is a far more important question than the binary decision to ban or not to ban.

Discussion with Panelists

Melanie Haas asked about *bring your own device (BYOD)* policies. Mr. Kruger answered that few school districts are using this policy. Most schools provide a standardized device. It is challenging for the teacher if students have diverse types of devices. Schools that can move from *Acceptable Use* policies to *Responsible Use* policies. Mr. Culatta added that for equity purposes if there is a district device, BYOD can be an add on, especially at the end of high

Discussion
with task
force
00:30:19

school. Students need to learn how to use their own devices at work, in college. Mr. Elliot noted that there are opportunities for students to use their own devices, but it is a challenge for the teacher if the devices are different. If there is a district operated device, that can operate as a backup. Teachers need to focus on instruction and not be tech support. Security is always a challenge with outside devices. Students can use their own devices for one project, etc.

Tawna Hall commented that her concern as a teacher in the classroom is the time wasted policing. Teachers spend a great deal of time policing devices. Management is exhausting and it takes away from teaching. Also, there is great research that shows having students use paper and pencil is important and enhances learning.

Mr. Culatta answered that it is best to set practices and norms at the school level so there is a consistent expectation in every classroom and the teachers are not responsible for setting and enforcing a particular policy. Mrs. Hall agreed that when there are inconsistencies it creates tension between teachers, and between teachers and students. She feels there are much fewer consequences for not following the practices/norms. There need to be serious consequences for violating policy. Mr. Culatta stated that is called tech whiplash, when between classes there are different practices in each classroom. What fixes that is comprehensive school wide conventions and norms that are set up. It is important that the kids participate in setting those conventions. When students violate these agreements that can be a teaching moment. Mr. Kruger asked if these management issues are on district owned devices or personal devices like cell phones? Mrs. Hall responded that almost all the policing is focused on personal devices. Her experience is that because of the underdeveloped frontal lobe of the average teenager, if "it" beeps or lights up, "it" must be addressed. District devices are locked down and cannot be used to look at many quality websites.

Erica Sheets asked about the big picture goal of this task force. In reference to screen time value, who sets that? Brian Houghton answered that the main purpose is to address the use of student personal devices in school, mental health, and parent oversight of district devices. For the first six weeks the task force is gathering facts, looking at what is happening in schools and nationally. Mr. Culatta believes value needs to be a discussion. He offered the ISTE supports technology use that sparks curiosity and helps learners make sense of the world around them. If the tech use at home is dysfunctional, no limits, no discussion about norms, then that behavior rolls into schools. Schools can provide guidance to parents. They can offer suggestions for home norms. For instance, phones do not belong with kids as they sleep. Having a charging station out of kid's bedrooms. Autoplay can be turned off on all video platforms. These are examples of simple tips. Mr. Kruger pointed out that cell phones can be very distracting in schools and are a big issue nationally, but there is the issue of safety. Many parents want their kids to have cell phones in case of emergency.

Katie Allen asked about parental control outside of the school network. Mr. Elliot explained ParentJam is a way for parents to have control over what their child has access to. Mr. Kruger shared there are many resources for parents.

Amy Warren added that on parental controls, she is not an IT specialist and feels a lot of pressure. She does not know where to start. Mr. Kruger answered that districts need to take student privacy seriously. There is an array of best practices that school districts need to be following. Mr. Culatta agreed that it feels very overwhelming if it is all or nothing. Approach these decisions slowly, take one decision at a time, and look at balance. Work with your children, looking together at how apps work, how they make money, whether they are worth our time or not.

Breakout Room Discussion

- 1. Should there be recommendations regarding parental oversight of district devices, and if so, what are the most effective ways for schools to increase parental access to district-owned devices?*

The notetakers will compile the suggestions and main points from the breakout room discussions and present some of those back to the whole group at the beginning of the next meeting.

Principal Houghton thanked the group and reminded everyone that the next meeting is September 26, at 4:00 – 5:30.