

**THE SENECA VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ADDITIONAL SAFEGUARDS FOR INTERNET**  
**AND TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN**

**WHEREAS**, children's brains are not fully developed and therefore decision making regarding safe technologies cannot be fully realized. Further, “adolescents are highly sensitive to acceptance and rejection through social media, and that their heightened emotional sensitivity and protracted development of reflective processing and cognitive control may make them specifically reactive to emotion-arousing media.”<sup>i</sup>

**WHEREAS**, studies have raised significant concern about the possible detrimental effects social media use is having on adolescents’ mental health.

- Research suggests that young people who are heavy users of social media - spending more than two hours per day on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram - are more likely to report poor mental health, including psychological distress (symptoms of anxiety and depression).<sup>ii</sup>
- Research suggests using social media for more than two hours per day has also been independently associated with poor self-rating of mental health, increased levels of psychological distress and suicidal ideation. <sup>iii</sup>
- Research suggests one in five young people say they wake up during the night to check messages on social media, leading them to be three times more likely to feel constantly tired at school than their classmates who don’t use social media during the night <sup>iv</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, in 2016, Common Sense Media (a non-profit organization that promotes safe technology and media for children) published the results of a study of teens and technology use.<sup>v</sup> The report finds that:

- 50 percent of teens ‘feel addicted’ to mobile devices and 59 percent of their parents agree that their kids are addicted.
- 78 percent of teens check their devices at least hourly.
- 72 percent of teens feel the need to immediately respond to texts, messages and other notifications.
- Multitasking (togglng between multiple screens and people) impairs a child’s ability to learn and work effectively;

**WHEREAS**, in 2019, Common Sense Media published the results of another study to further explore how young people are engaging with media. More than 1,600 U.S. 8-to18-year-olds participated in the survey<sup>vi</sup>. The results indicate:

- By age 11, 53% of kids have their own smartphone, and by age 12 more than 69% of kids have their own smartphone.
- Tweens (8-12 years old) use an average of 4 hours, 44 minutes of entertainment screen media per day (not including time spent using screens for school or homework).
- Teens (13-18 years old) use an average of 7 hours, 22 minutes of entertainment screen media per day (not including time spent using screens for school or homework).
- Among 8–12-year-olds who own a mobile device, 50% say their parents use an app or

other tool to monitor what they do on the device.

- Among 13–18-year-olds who own a mobile device, 26% say their parents use an app or other tool to monitor what they do on the device;

**WHEREAS**, from March 7 through April 10, 2018, the Pew Research Center conducted a survey<sup>vii</sup> entitled “How Teens and Parents Navigate Screen Time and Device Distractions,” finding the following:

- 95% of U.S. teens (ages 13-17) say they have access to a smartphone.
- 43% of teens say they often use their phone to avoid interacting with people.
- 54% of teens worry they spend too much time on their phone.
- 56% of teens associate the absence of their phone with at least one of three emotions: loneliness, being upset, or feeling anxious.
- 45% of teens feel addicted to their smartphone devices.
- 60% of teens admit that smartphone addiction is a real and a serious problem.
- 60% of teens would rather spend time online with friends than in real life.
- 72% of parents say their teen is often or sometimes distracted by their phone.
- 65% of parents say they worry about their teen spending too much time in front of screens;

**WHEREAS**, the Pew Research Center published a recent study entitled *Teens, Social Media and Technology* (2022)<sup>viii</sup> with the following highlighted findings:

- There has been an uptick in daily teen internet users, from 92% in 2014-15 to 97% today.
- Teens that admit they are online “almost constantly” has roughly doubled since 2014-15 (46% now and 24% then);

**WHEREAS**, according to the National Library of Medicine<sup>ix</sup> (2019):

- Cell phone usage badly affects the mental health of adolescents that can be manifested in anxiety, depression, and anger.
- By the age of 13, 65% of pre-teenagers had a phone;

**WHEREAS**, the number of youth who say they watch videos online “every day” has more than doubled, going from 24% to 56% among 8- to 12-year-olds, and from 34% to 69% among 13- to 18-year-olds. The amount of time they spend watching videos online has gone from about a half-hour a day to an hour a day on average<sup>x</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, cell phones can also be a distraction during an emergency event. A ringing or vibrating cell phone may present additional safety issues to the child and/or school employee during a crisis. In addition, heavy cell phone activity during a critical incident could jam first responders’ line of communication<sup>xi</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the Seneca Valley School Board of Directors has established a policy entitled Responsible Use of Personal Technology Resources (Policy #237) in which cell phone usage in our schools has been guided and directed;

**WHEREAS**, having a phone reduces, impairs attention and subsequent memory during lectures; Noticeably being distracted by text messages further reduces learning; Self-reported nomophobia (a psychological condition when people have a fear of being detached from mobile phone

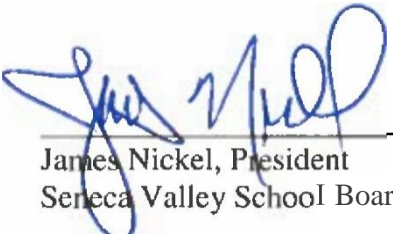
connectivity) reduces learning; All effects of cellphones are most pronounced 10–15 min into the lecture<sup>xii</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic occurred at a time of global digitalization, characterized by quick connection of people and information anywhere in the world. This led children, as well as adults, to spend more time at home and with significant use of technological devices<sup>xiii</sup>;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Seneca Valley School Board of Directors that:

1. The Board of Directors supports the expansion of legislation, regulations and/or other local measures concerning marketing of dangerous technology applications (A/K/A apps) to children and or teenagers and the viewing of free and easily accessible pornography by companies;
2. The Board of Directors supports legislation for social media platforms to cooperate with school officials who identify violations of law (ie. threats to schools or others, copyright infringements of school logos or trademarks) and or their own platform policies and community standards;
3. The Board of Directors supports legislation requiring technology companies who own dating apps or stranger meeting apps to put additional safeguards in place to verify user age and/or to detect false age accounts;
4. The Board of Directors shall continue to educate youth, parents, District faculty and staff, and local officials on the various dangers of unfiltered access on personal technology devices used by children and or teenagers;
5. The Board of Directors shall continue to develop, implement and enforce school policies regarding the appropriate use of personal technology.

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED**, that this resolution be spread upon the official minutes of the Seneca Valley School Board of Directors for October 10, 2022, and that a copy be presented to Dr. Tracy Vitale for distribution to staff members of the Seneca Valley School District, other members of the Seneca Valley School District educational community.



James Nickel, President  
Seneca Valley School Board of Directors

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- <sup>i</sup> Crone, E.A., Konijn, E.A. Media use and brain development during adolescence. *Nat Commun* **9**, 588 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-018-03126-x>
- <sup>ii</sup> Sampasa-Kanyinga, Hugues, and Rosamund F. Lewis. “Frequent Use of Social Networking Sites Is Associated with Poor Psychological Functioning Among Children and Adolescents.” *Cyberpsychology, behavior and social networking* **18.7** (2015): 38–385.
- <sup>iii</sup> Sampasa-Kanyinga, Hugues, and Rosamund F. Lewis. “Frequent Use of Social Networking Sites Is Associated with Poor Psychological Functioning Among Children and Adolescents.” *Cyberpsychology, behavior and social networking* **18.7** (2015): 38–385.
- <sup>iv</sup> Power, Sally, Chris Taylor, and Kim Horton. “Sleepless in School? The Social Dimensions of Young People’s Bedtime Rest and Routines.” *Journal of youth studies* **20.8** (2017): 945–958.
- <sup>v</sup> (2016). *New Report Finds Teens Feel Addicted to Their Phones, Causing Tension at Home*. Common Sense Media. <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/press-releases/new-report-finds-teens-feel-addicted-to-their-phones-causing-tension-at-home>
- <sup>vi</sup> (2019). *The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tween and Teens*. Common Sense Media. <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/2019-census-8-to-18-key-findings-updated.pdf>
- <sup>vii</sup> Jiang, J. (2016, August 22). *How Teens and Parents Navigate Screen Time and Device Distractions*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved October 4, 2022, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/08/22/how-teens-and-parents-navigate-screen-time-and-device-distractions/>
- <sup>viii</sup> Vogels, E. A., Gelles-Watnick, R., & Massarat, N. (2022). *Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2022/08/10/teens-social-media-and-technology-2022/>
- <sup>ix</sup> The National Center for Biotechnology Information. The EXCLI Journal, EXCLI J, v.18; 2019
- <sup>x</sup> *Survey: Number of kids watching online videos soars*. (2021, April 20). AP NEWS. <https://apnews.com/article/business-technology-online-video-media-us-news-6d2694d32a7d44bf9619172d26c674da>
- <sup>xi</sup> Blair Thompson, Joseph P. Mazer, Holly J. Payne, Angela M. Jerome, E. Gail Kirby & William Pfohl (2017) Social Media and Active Shooter Events: A School Crisis Communication Challenge, Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, **18:1**, 8-17, DOI: [10.1080/17459435.2016.1247111](https://doi.org/10.1080/17459435.2016.1247111)
- <sup>xii</sup> Bhattacharya S, Bashar MA, Srivastava A, Singh A. NOMOPHOBIA: NO MOBILE PHONE PHOBIA. *J Family Med Prim Care*. 2019 Apr;**8**(4):1297-1300. doi: 10.4103/jfmpc.jfmpc\_71\_19. PMID: 31143710; PMCID: PMC6510111.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Serra, G., Lo Scalzo, L., Giuffrè, M. *et al.* Smartphone use and addiction during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic: cohort study on 184 Italian children and adolescents. *Ital J Pediatr* **47**, 150 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13052-021-01102-8>