

Stonington Public Schools Convocation Ceremony

August 27, 2024

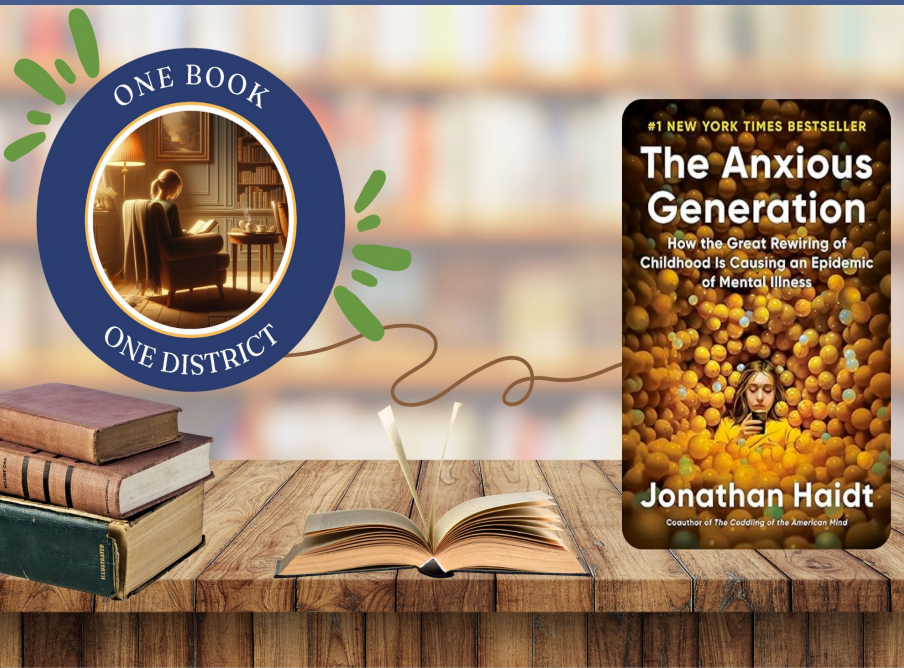


Welcome Back!

Big Happenings for 2024-2025...

- Successful relocation of SMS and DO
- Dynamic new leadership at WVSS and SMS
- Media Playground at DMS & WVSS
- Unstructured play offering at SMS
- Upgraded Esports lab at SHS
- Expanded partnerships with Home Builders Institute
- One Book, One District

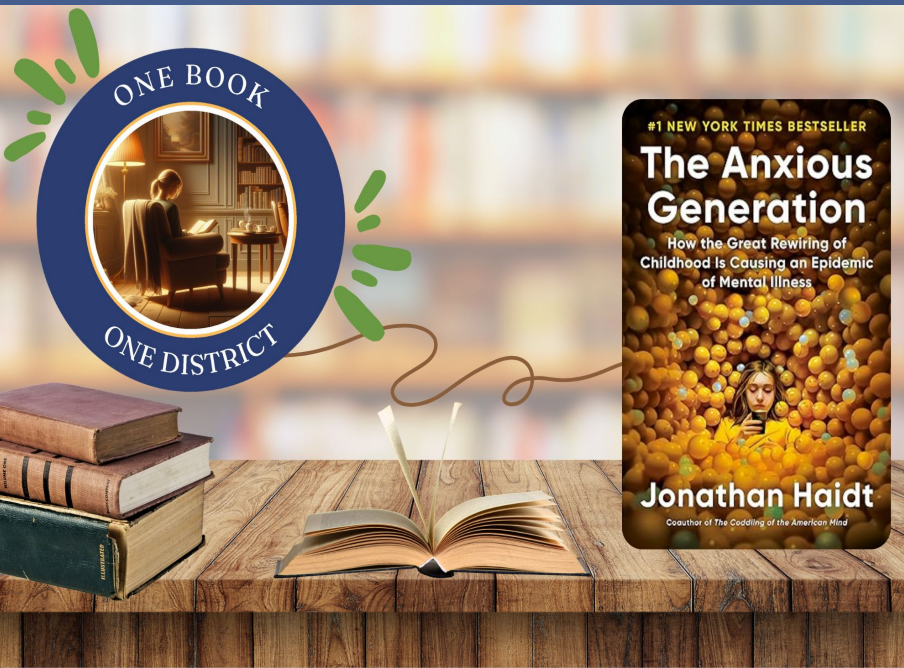




April -August 2024

- UCONN Research-Part 3
- BOE vote
- Release of The Anxious Generation
- Kick Off Event-SMS
- Wait Until 8th Pledge
- One Book, One District

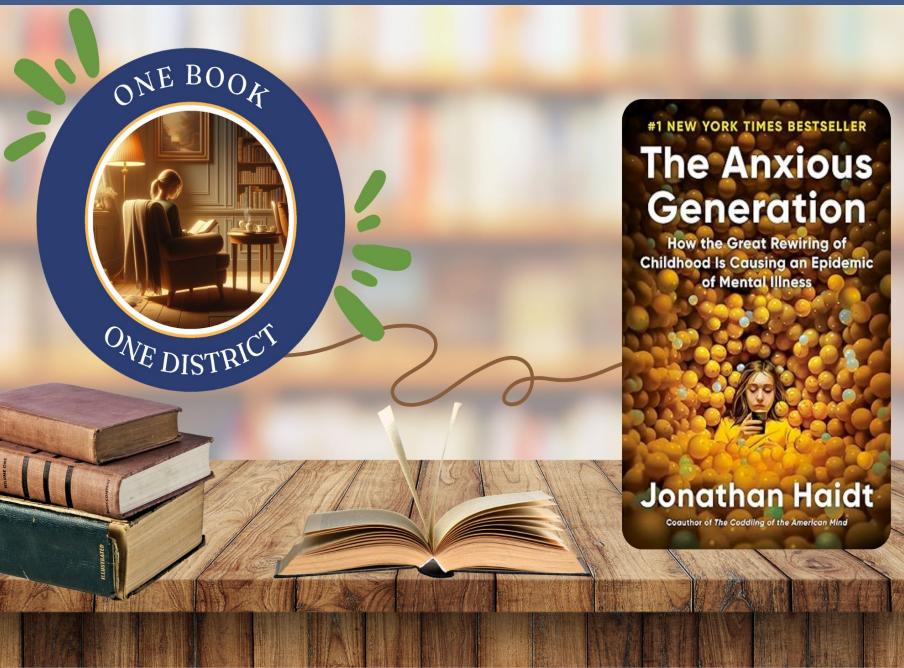




Smartphones & Social Media...

- Profoundly influence how adolescents communicate and engage with the world
- Social media platforms are designed to re-engage
- Families and educators are not to blame, we learned together
- Collective action is needed to curb the mental health epidemic





Historical Timeline

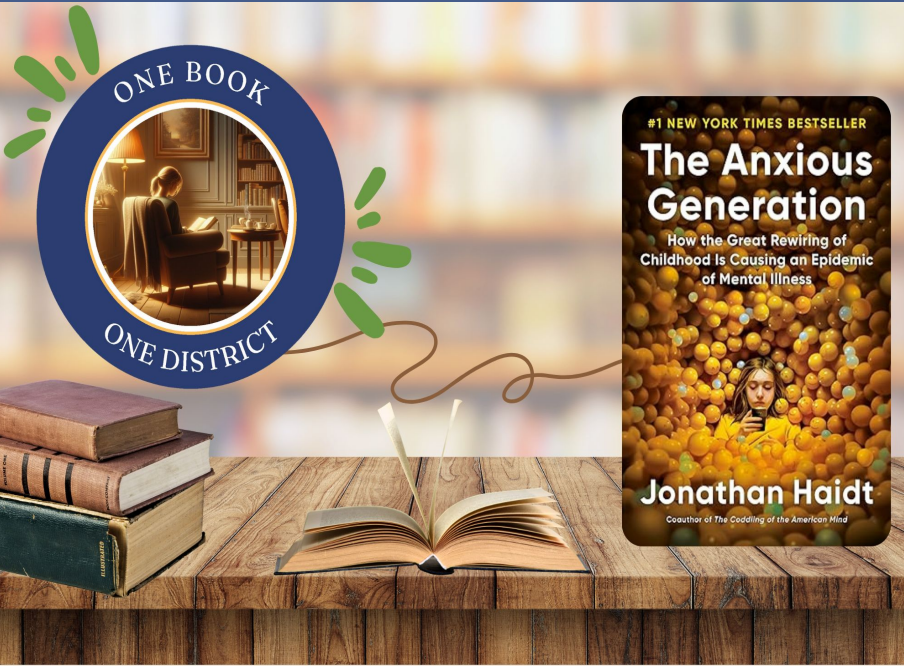
Early 2000's pre-teen and adolescent mental health relatively stable

2007-Smartphones become available, social media apps follow

2012-Begins the dramatic rise in preteen and adolescent mental health issues



Smartphones and Social Media



- Rise in childhood and adolescent mental health issues
- Decline of play-based childhoods, replaced by phone-based childhoods
- Trend of overprotecting children in the real world & under-protecting them in the virtual/online world
- Increase in sleep deprivation, attention fragmentation, social-isolation and addiction



Teens Who Get Less Than 7 Hours of Sleep

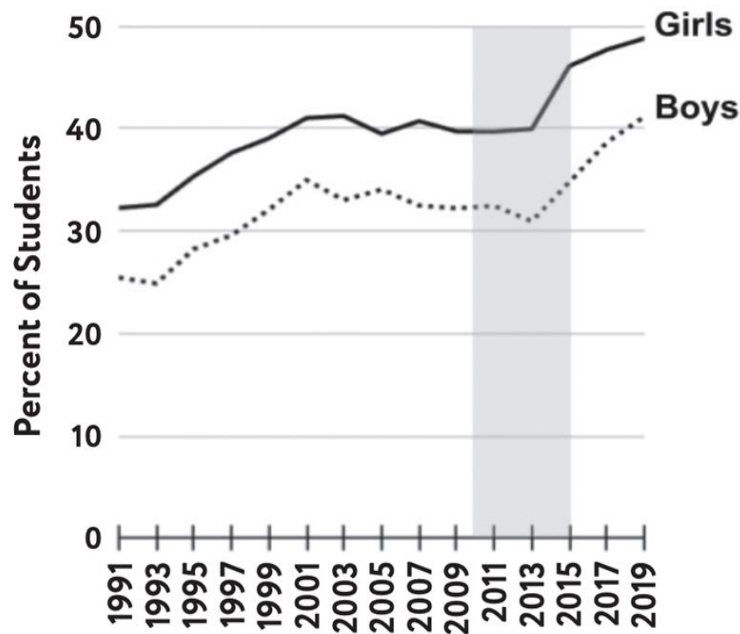
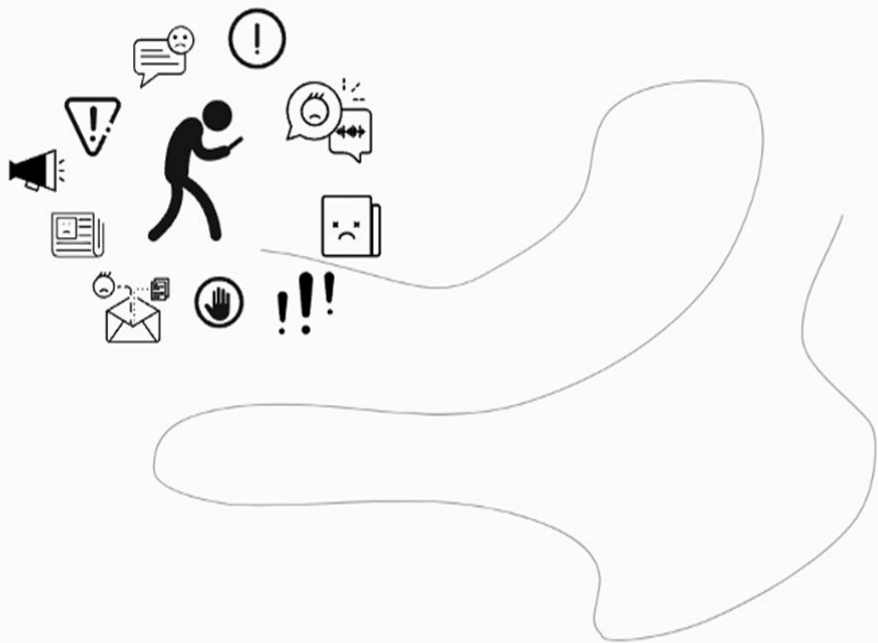


Figure 5.2. Percent of U.S. students (8th, 10th, and 12th grade) who get less than seven hours of sleep on most nights. (Source: Monitoring the Future.)³³

Thinking with a smartphone



Thinking without a smartphone



Distraction versus clarity -- the effect of smartphones on information overload and attention fragmentation

Major Depression Among Teens

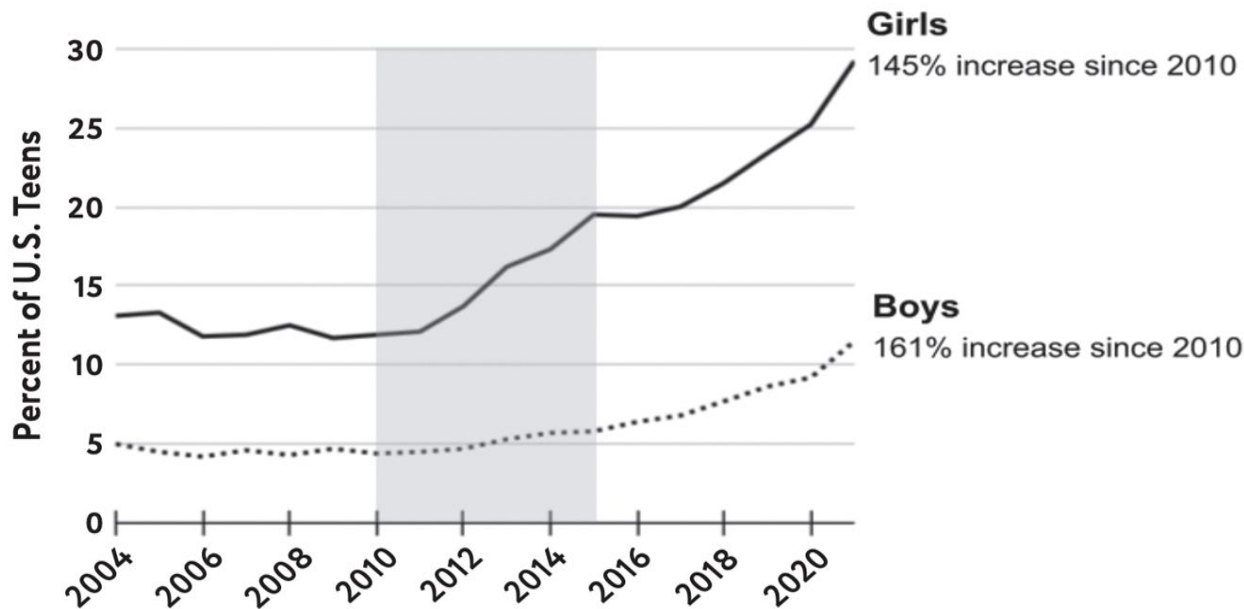


Figure 1.1. Percent of U.S. teens (ages 12–17) who had at least one major depressive episode in the past year, by self-report based on a symptom checklist. This was figure 7.1 in *The Coddling of the American Mind*, now updated with data beyond 2016. (Source: U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health.)³

Often Feel Lonely

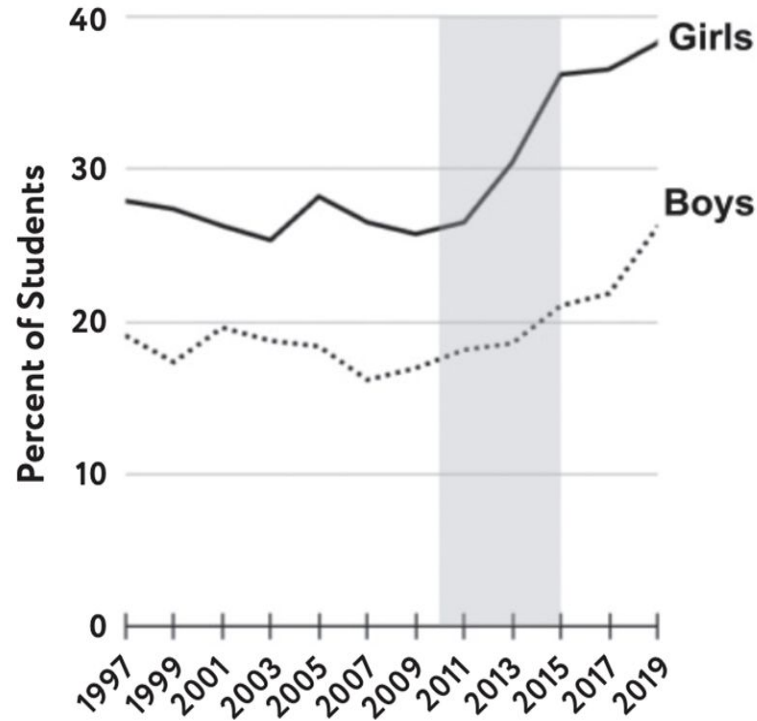
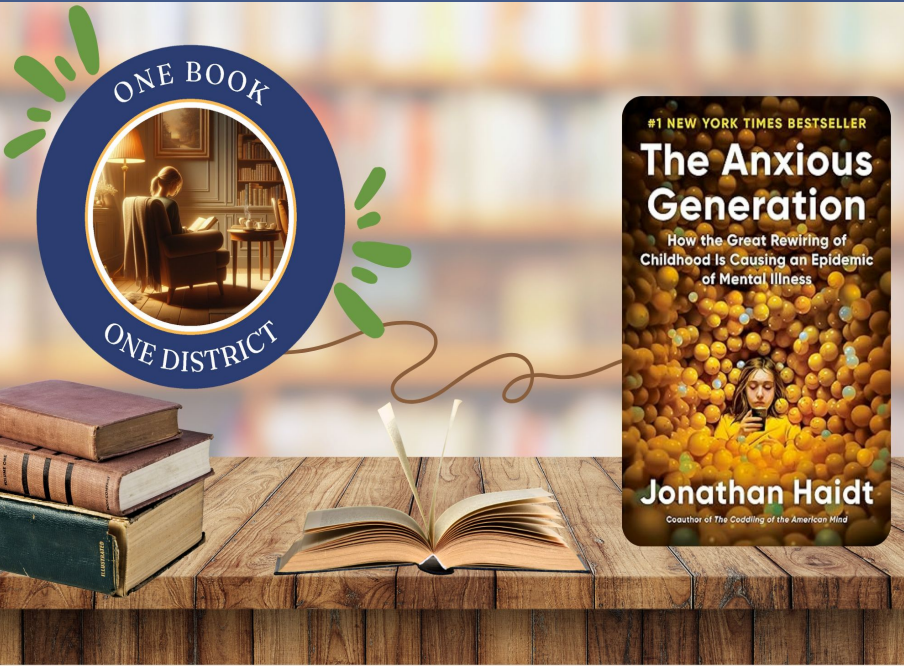


Figure 6.7. Percent of U.S. students (8th, 10th, and 12th grade) who agreed or mostly agreed with the statement “A lot of times I feel lonely.” (Source: Monitoring the Future.)

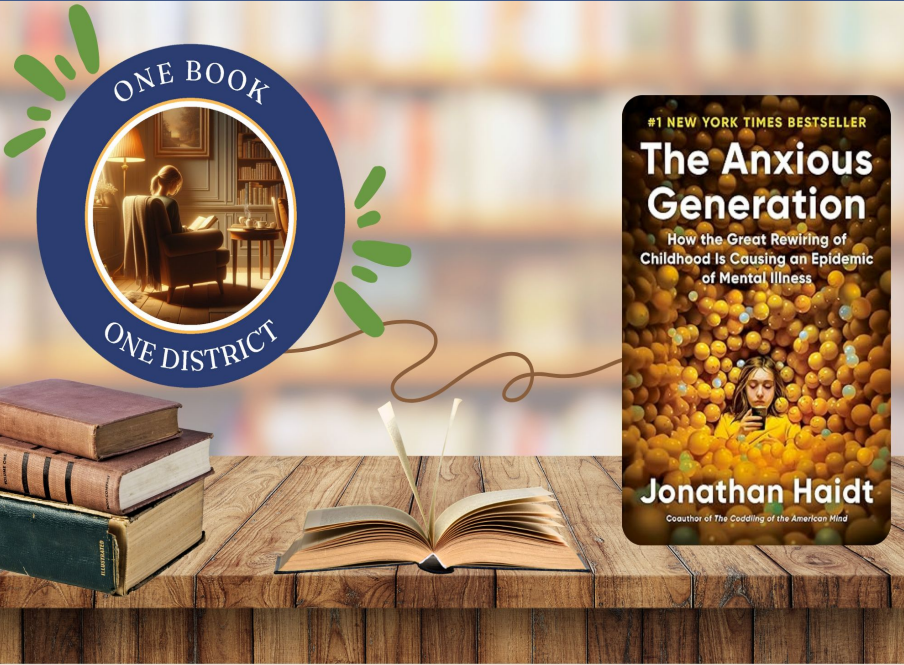
Addiction



- Social Media addiction attributes to the dopamine-inducing social environments
- Studies show a constant stream of retweets, likes, and shares cause the brain's reward area to trigger the same type chemical reaction as cocaine
- Neuroscientists have compared social media interaction to a syringe of dopamine being injected into the system



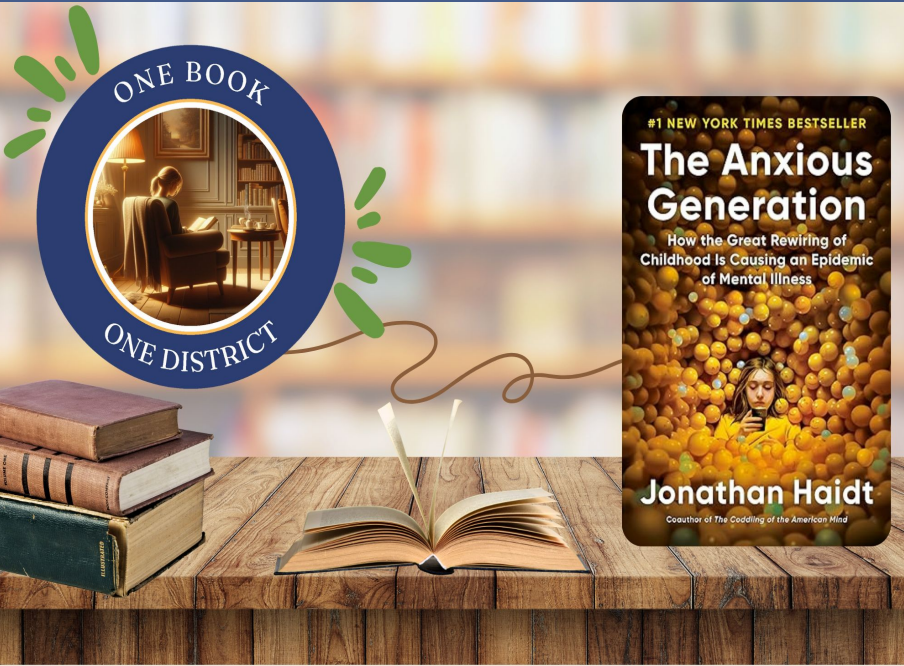
What Can the Community Do?



- Model the habits we want to see in children
- Wait until 8th
- Utilize parental controls
- Collect phones at night
- Monitor apps and interactions
- No social media before age 16
- Promote phone-free schools
- Provide unstructured play



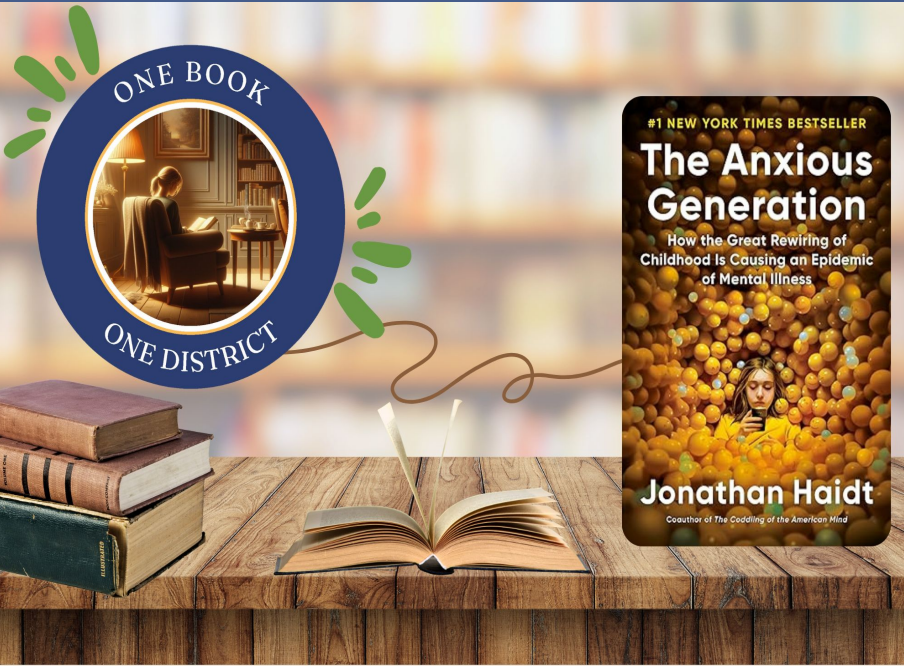
What Can SPS Do?



- Elevate the conversation about the mental health epidemic
- Partner with neighboring districts
- Collaborate with businesses and community agencies to promote **“Heads up, Stonington! Less screen time, more connection”**

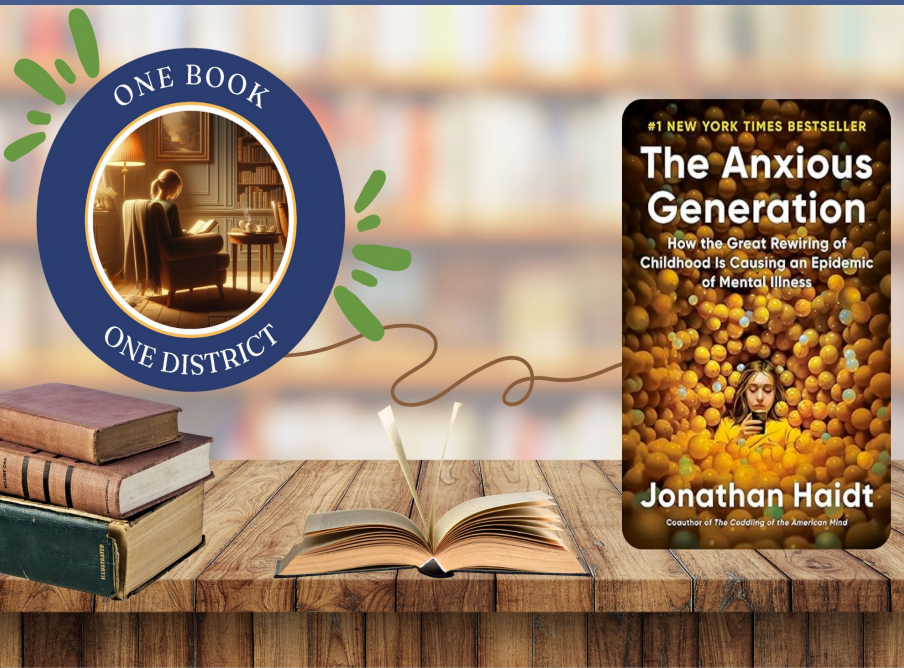


What Can SPS Do?



- Support play-based learning opportunities
- Model the behavior we expect of the students
- Keep cell phones out of the classrooms
- Encourage families and one another to “begin anywhere” in stepping back from social media and time on smartphones





To Learn More...

Visit our “One Book, One District” webpage.

Join the existing group of teachers, parents, and administrators already engage in the conversation.



From Stonington
Board of Education
and Leadership
Team...

Thank you and Make
it a Great Year!

