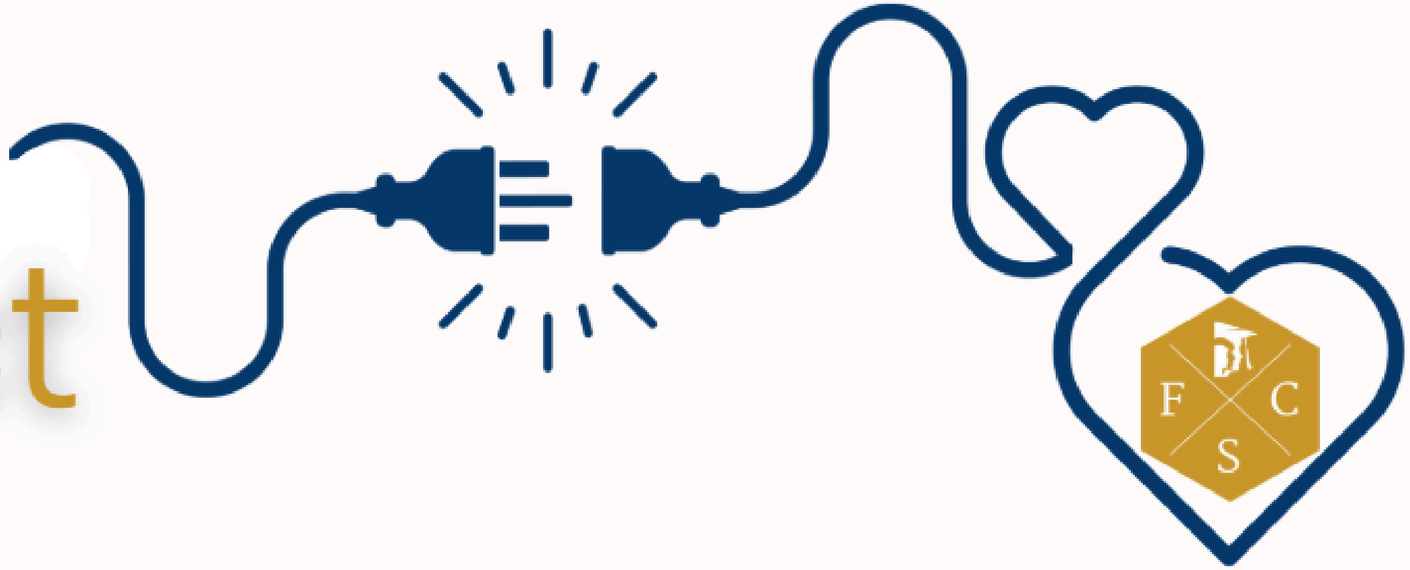
Disconnect to Reconnect



Town Hall

April 14, 2025

FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

01. OUR PURPOSE

02. THE PRESSING “WHY”

03. OUR FCS REALITY

04. BENCHMARKING FOR INNOVATION

05. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

OUR PURPOSE

FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027



GOAL AREAS

THE LEARNER EXPERIENCE

- Increase student achievement and growth
- Increase student engagement
- Develop and sustain consistent assessment and grading practices

STAFF RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT

- Acquire and retain excellent staff
- Build and develop individual staff capacity

CULTURE, CLIMATE, & COMMUNITY

- Increase meaningful home, school, and community partnerships
- Work collaboratively with all people to promote inclusivity, school pride, & belonging

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Foster healthy digital interactions
- Expand access to mental health resources and strategies
- Promote respect, wellness, and balance for staff and students

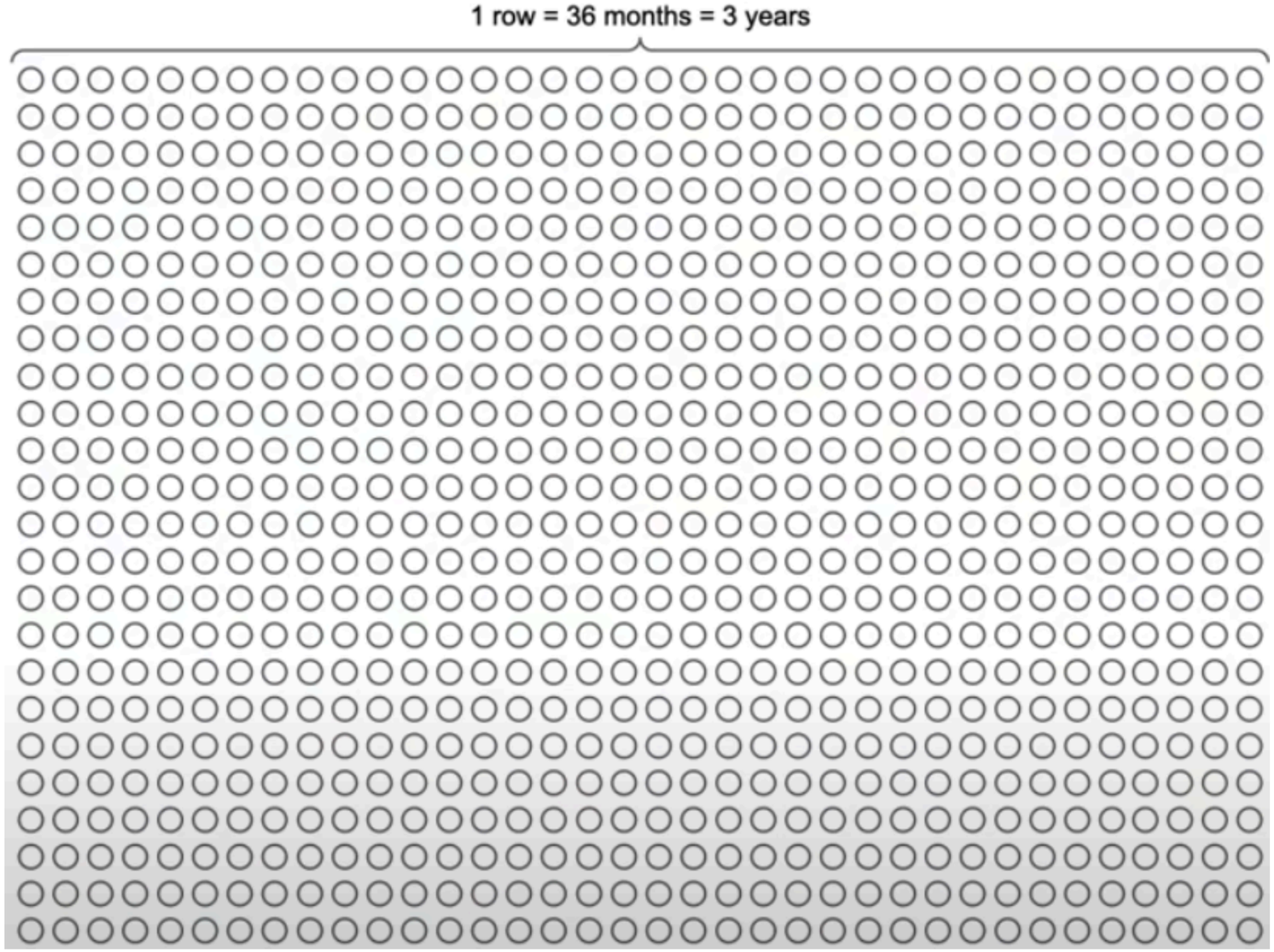
OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- Plan and adapt for growth
- Manage financial resources
- Plan and allocate resources

THE BATTLE FOR OUR TIME:
EXPOSING THE COSTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

An 18 year old's remaining time in months

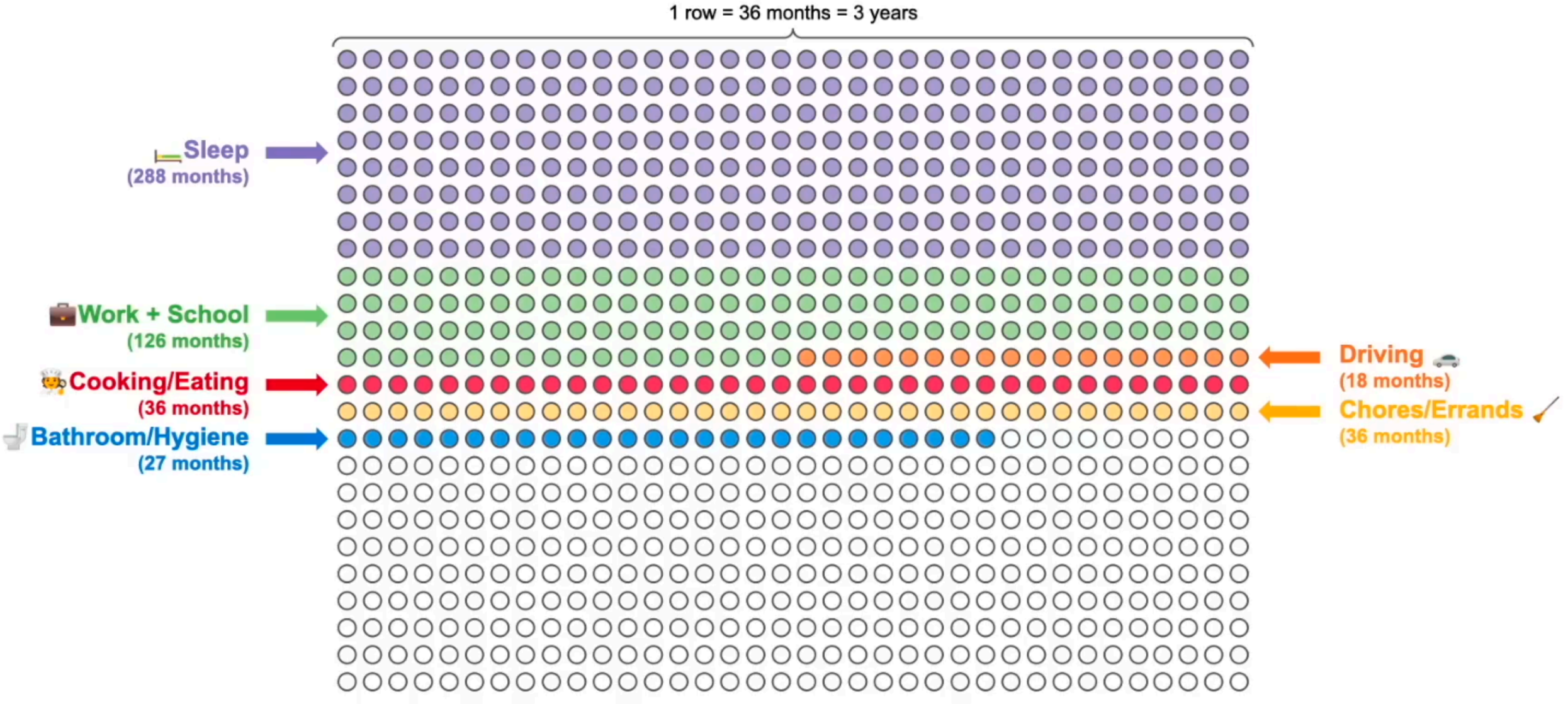
(Assuming 90 year life expectancy)



Ted Talk: Dino Ambrosi

An 18 year old's remaining time in months

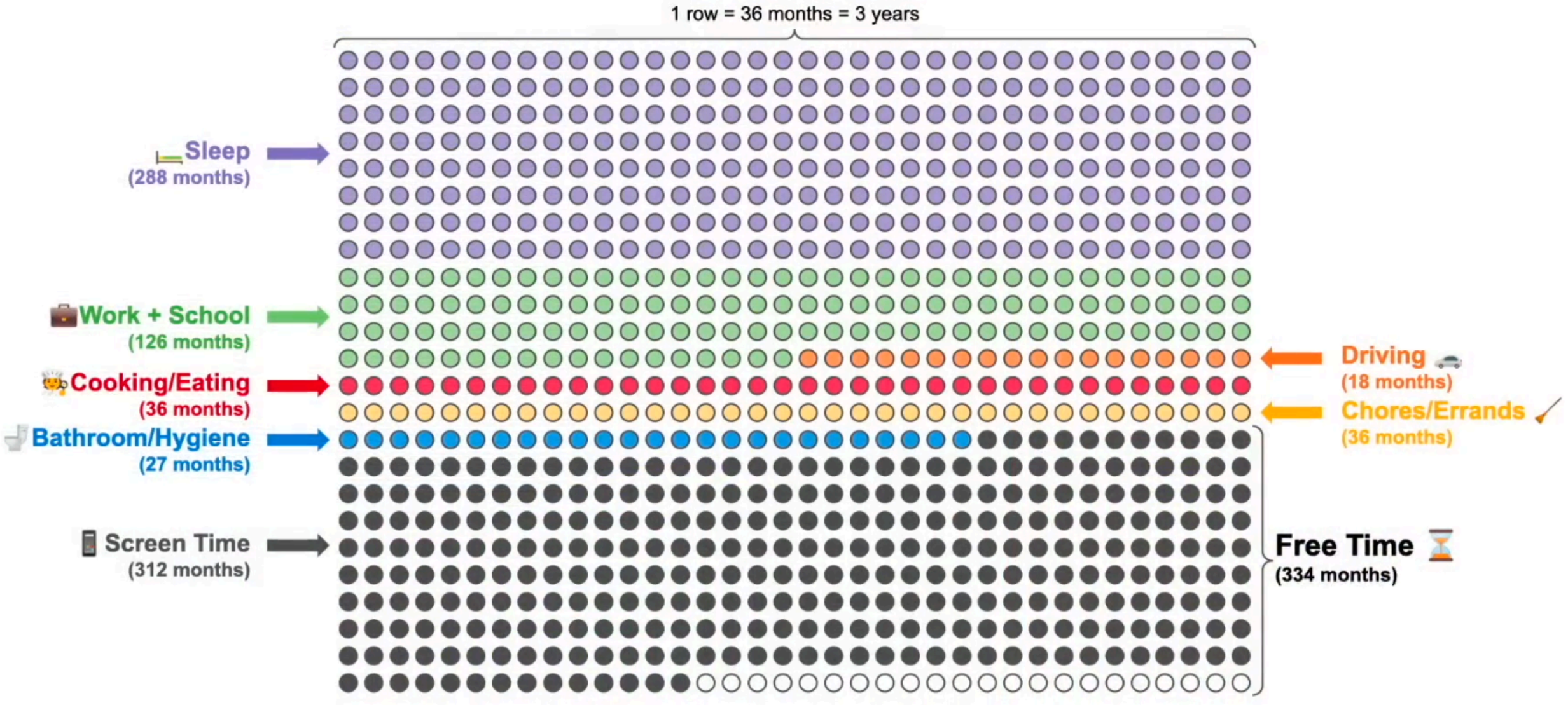
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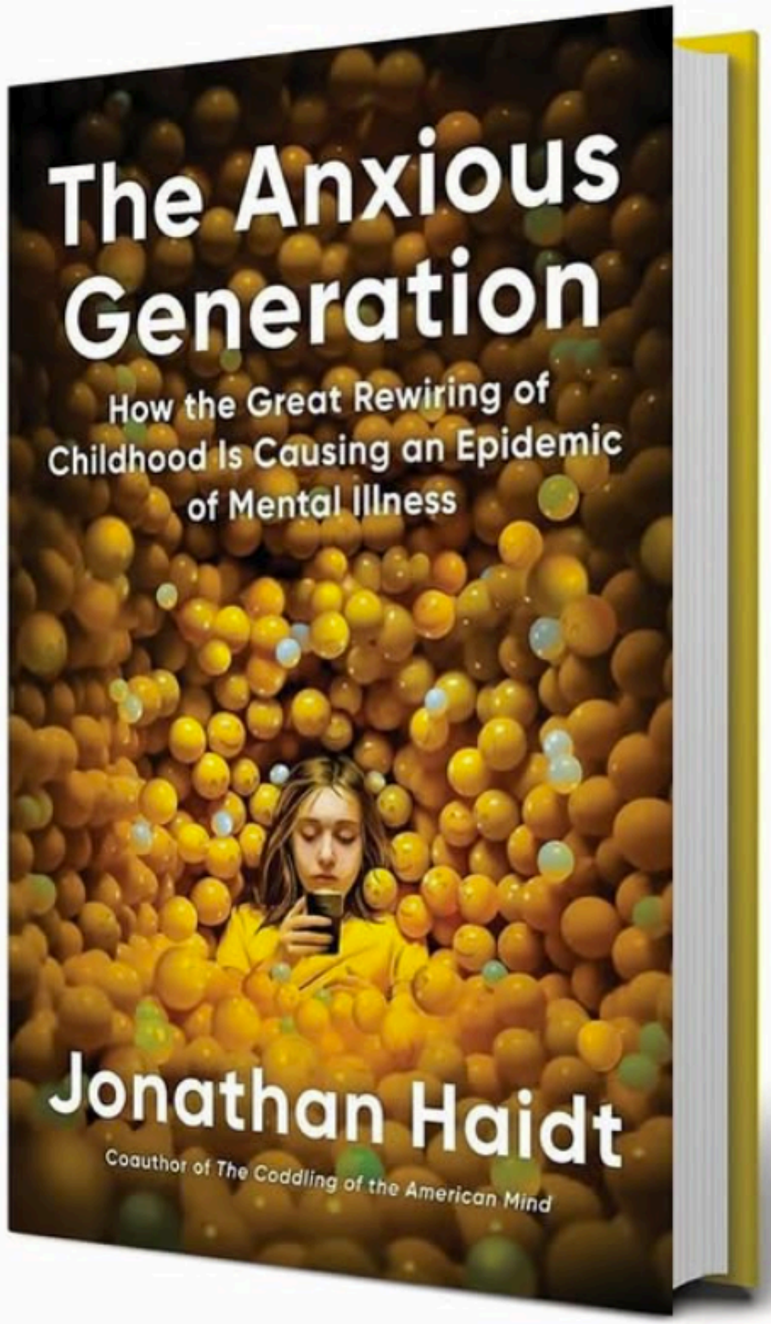
Ted Talk: Dino Ambrosi

An 18 year old's remaining time in months

(Assuming 90 year life expectancy)



Ted Talk: Dino Ambrosi



"This is the great irony of social media: the more you immerse yourself in it, the more lonely and depressed you become."

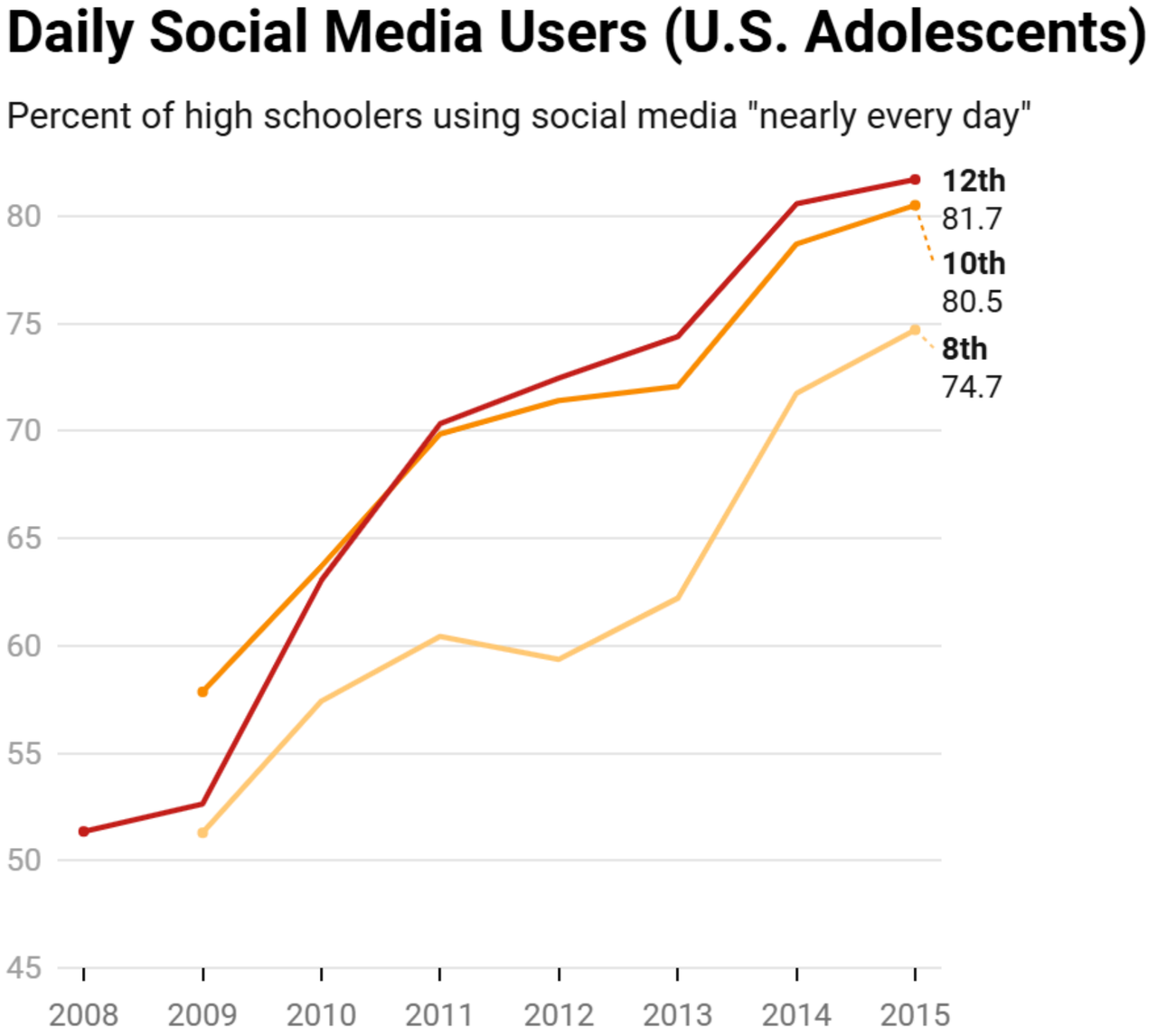
- **Jonathan Haidt, The Anxious Generation**

FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

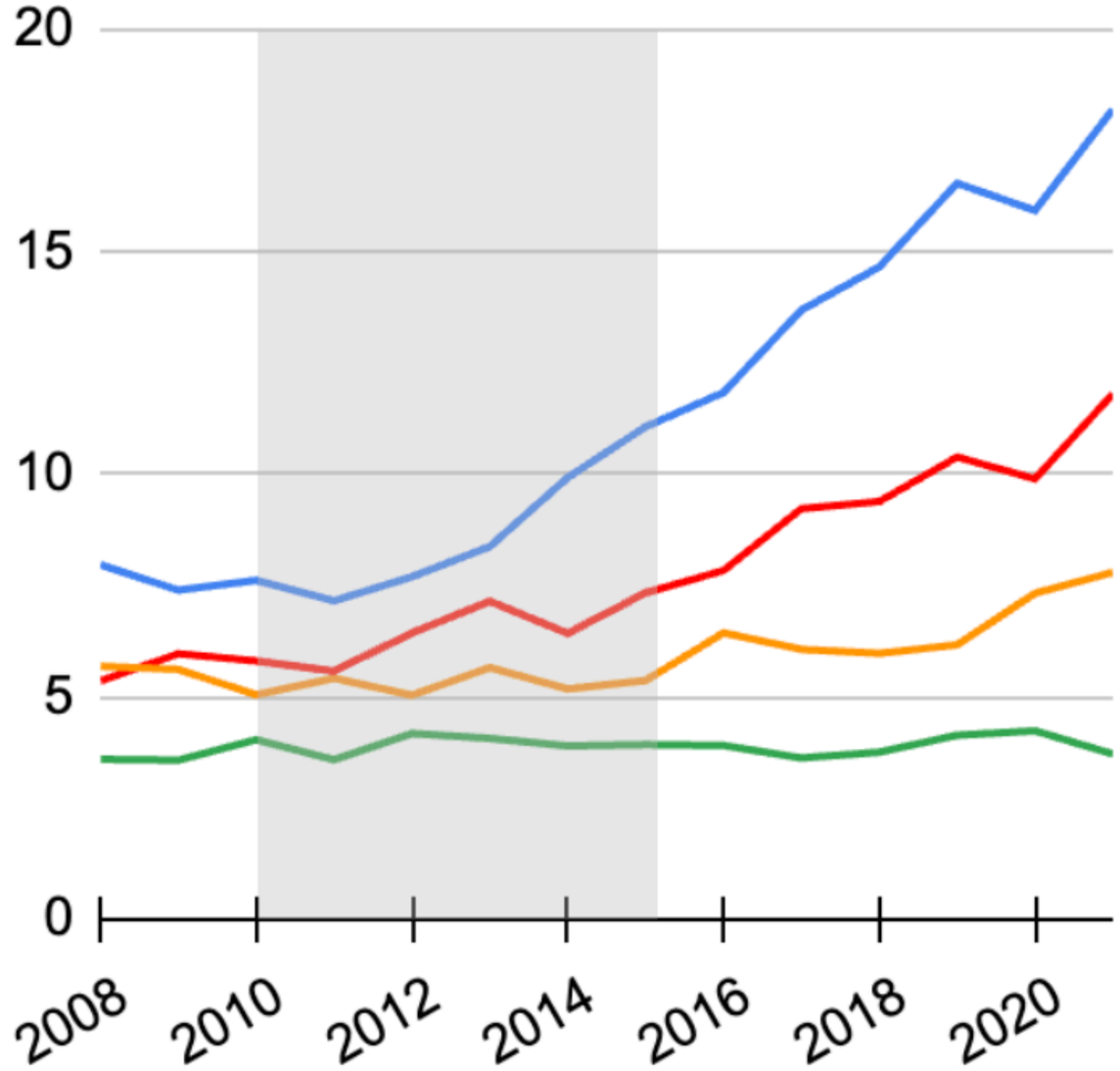
RISE OF DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

- *Screen Time has increased while face-to-face interactions declined significantly over the past 15 years*
- *Many adolescents check accounts multiple times per hour*
- *Studies have associated heavy social media use with increased feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety*

“WE ARE OVERPROTECTING OUR CHILDREN IN THE REAL WORLD WHILE UNDER-PROTECTING THEM ONLINE.”



Percent U.S. Anxiety Prevalence



Ages 18-25
139% increase since 2010

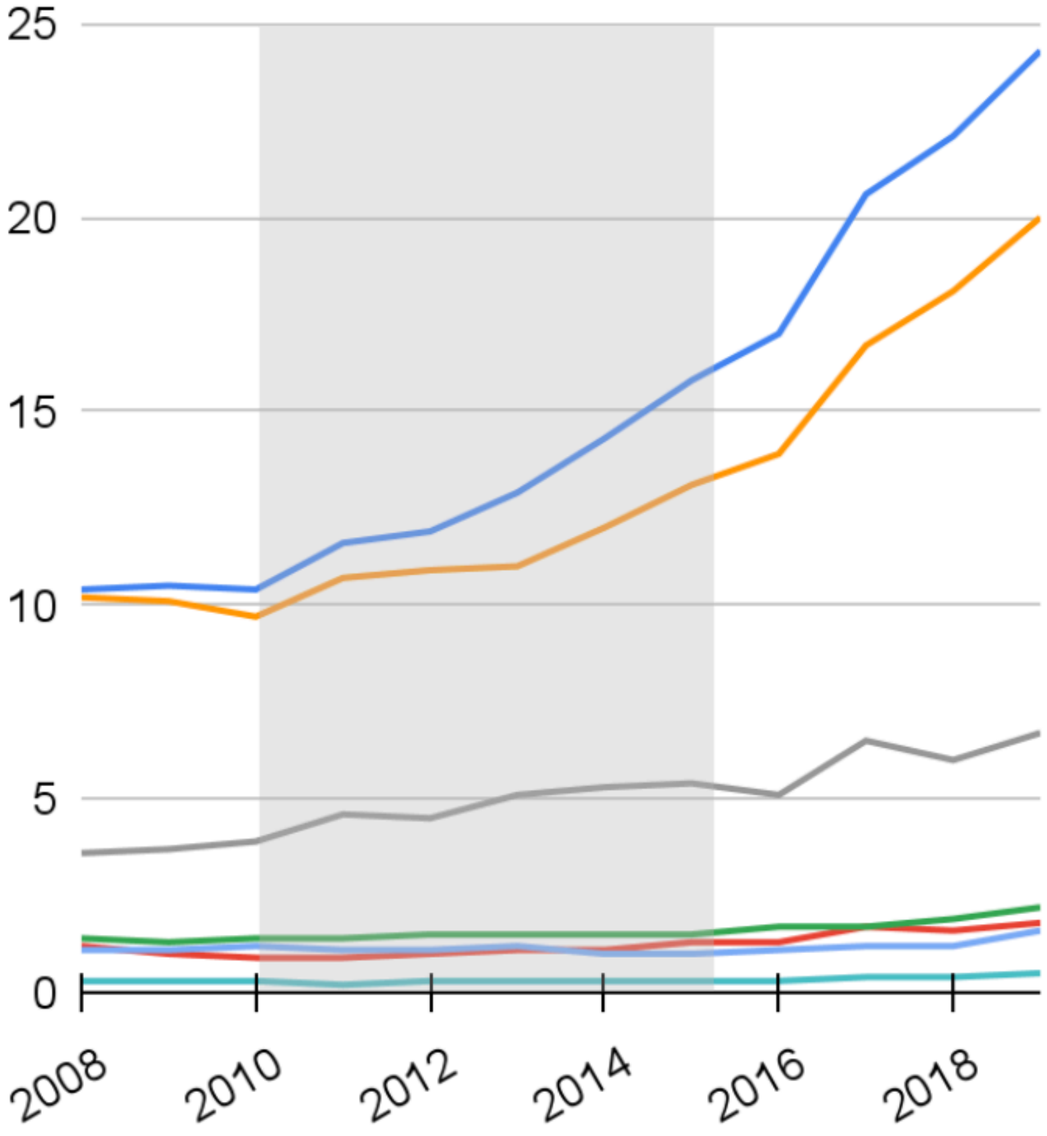
Ages 26-34
103% increase since 2010

Ages 35-49
52% increase since 2010

Ages 50+
8% decrease since 2010

SOURCE: U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Percent of U.S. Undergraduates Diagnosed with a Mental Illness



Anxiety
134% increase since 2010

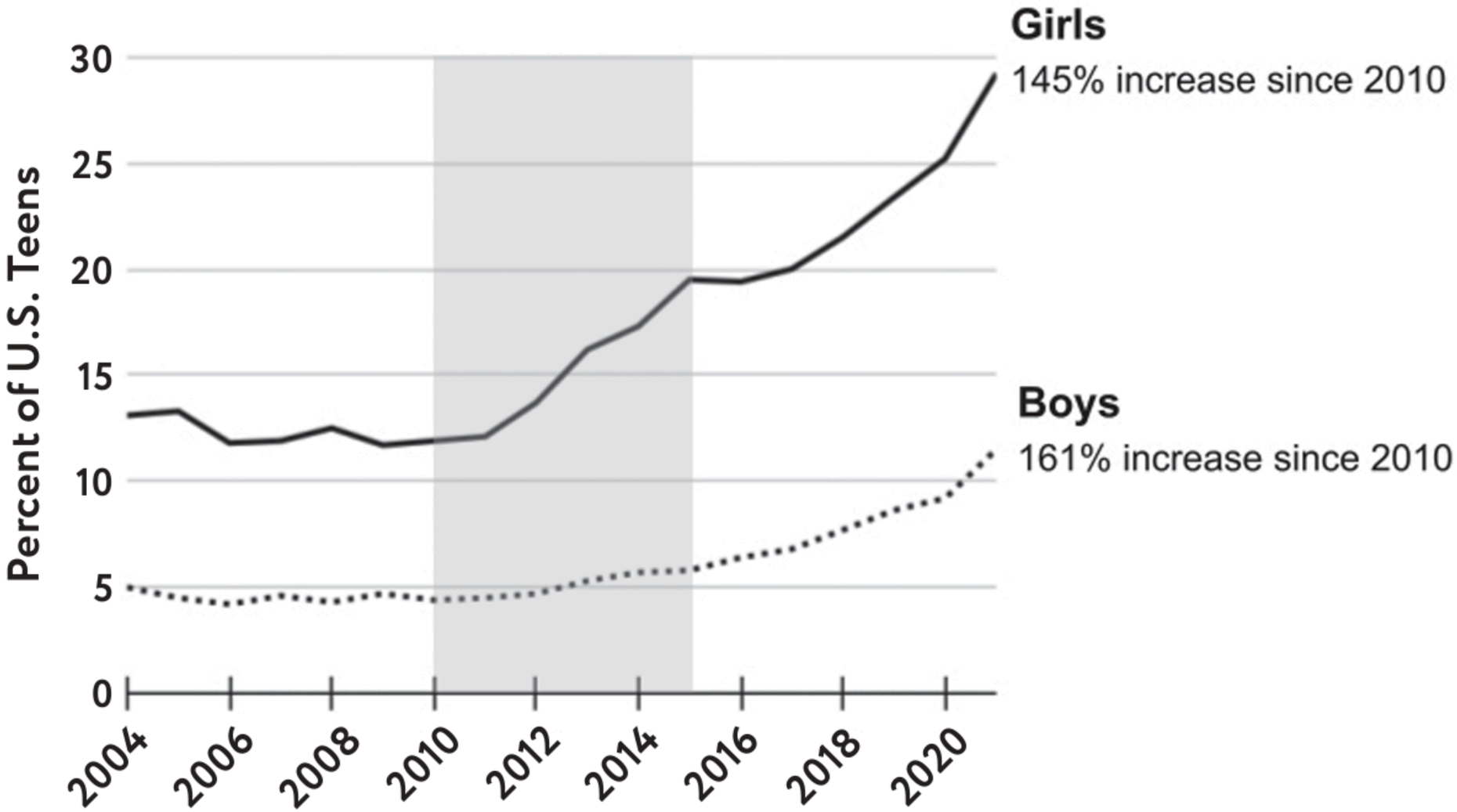
Depression
106% increase since 2010

ADHD
72% increase since 2010

Bipolar (57% increase since 2010)
Anorexia (100% increase since 2010)
Substance Abuse or Addiction (33% increase since 2010)
Schizophrenia (67% increase since 2010)

SOURCE: American College Health Association (ACHA-NCHA II)

Major Depression Among Teens



72%

High School Teachers report cellphones are a major distraction in the classroom.

The Mere Presence of a Cell Phone May be Distracting

Students wrote down **62% more information** during class when not using their phones.

The Impact of Mobile Phone Usage on Student Learning

Teens use their phone daily, picking up their phones

51 times per day on average.

Pick up amounts ranged from

2 to 498 times per day.

Teens self-report that they spend an average of



on their phones.

American Psychological Association

Academic achievement has **suffered in the last decade**

as measured by the precipitous drop in the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) scores beginning in 2012

National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP)

Depression is also on the rise

145% for girls

161% for boys

since 2010.

Anxious Generation Figure 1.1

There was a steep reduction of bullying

46% in girls

43% in boys

after smartphone bans.

Smartphone Bans, Student Outcomes and Mental Health

The rate of **suicide** has increased

167% **for girls**

91% **for boys**

since 2010.

Anxious Generation Figure 1.5

Each additional hour of total screen time **increases the odds of suicidal behaviors.**

Science Direct

GEORGIA HB340

“DISTRACTION-FREE EDUCATION ACT”

To enact the "Distraction-Free Education Act"; to require local school systems and public schools to enact policies and procedures for use of personal electronic devices at school and school sponsored events by students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

By January 1, 2026 each local school system and public school shall adopt policies and procedures that at a minimum:

- **Prohibit bell-to-bell access to personal electronic devices by students in K-8th grade**
- Establish appropriate methods for storing students’ personal electronic devices, including but not limited to, a student’s locker, a locked pouch, or a designated place in the classroom
- Establish a clear procedure for off-site events or activities including all school-sponsored events and field trips, daily transportation, athletic and extracurricular events
- Establish clear communication protocols that:
  - Facilitate emergency communication
  - Require parents/guardians who need to communicate with their student during the school day to contact the school directly
  - Provide any student found in violation of such policies progressive consequences

House Approved
Senate Approved
Governor Kemp

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK ENGAGEMENT



















FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK SURVEY

- 3,671 respondents to date
- Strong support for restricting or limiting cell phone use during the academic school day
- Some questions addressed contacting child during school day
- Recommendations for a balanced approach



FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

THE SOCIAL DILEMMA:
THE MENTAL HEALTH DILEMMA

FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

THE PRESSING NEED

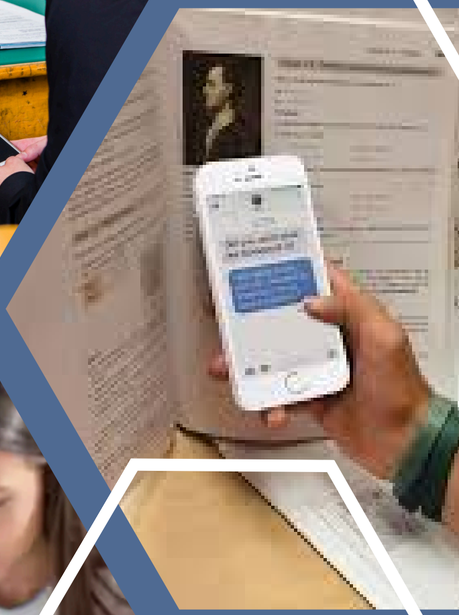
AND ALIGNMENT TO OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

The Learner Experience

Increase student achievement and growth
Increase student engagement

Authentic learning requires focus, but cell phones create **constant distractions** that prevent deep thinking and meaningful engagement. When students are **preoccupied with their devices**, they miss opportunities to collaborate, problem-solve, and absorb new concepts.





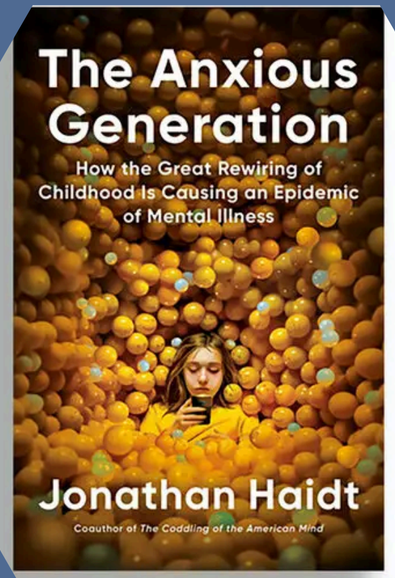


THE PRESSING NEED

AND ALIGNMENT TO OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Social & Emotional Health

Foster healthy digital interactions
Promote respect, wellness, and balance for staff and students







As leaders, we have a moral obligation to create conditions for our students to thrive. **Cell phones fuel anxiety and depression by isolating students** and exposing them to constant social pressures. Instead of building real connections and emotional resilience, they become trapped in comparison, distraction, and stress.

Most schools claim to ban phones, but in reality, this often just limits use during individual class periods. **Truly enforcing a bell-to-bell, seven-hour phone-free environment has been proven to reduce stress, anxiety, and distractions while enhancing focus, engagement, and overall well-being**.

OUR STUDENTS



FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

FCS DATA

Suicidal Ideations

414 (23/24) - **455** YTD

118 ES, 177 MS, 160 HS



Student Advocacy Specialists

2111 Students Served -27% at Tier 2, 13 % at Tier 3

School Social Workers & Mental Health Services

669 Mental Health Referrals & **887** Attendance Referrals



Mental Health Nurse Visits

1621 Visits for Anxiety & **824** Visits for Mental Health

Mental Health Hospital Homebound

45 out of 134 Students are on HHB for Mental Health Diagnoses

FCS TRIBUNAL DATA

Ratio of Tribunals to Student Population

2012-2013 School Year

1 : 293

2022-2023 School Year

1 : 176

STUDENT SUPPORT & SCHOOL SAFETY

What are the proactive ways we ensure students are safe and supported?



FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

BENCHMARKING FOR INNOVATION

What does this look like *in practice*?

FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

DISTRACTION-FREE EDUCATION

- Cultivate a focused, **distraction-free classroom** where **students are fully present in their learning**.
- Empower teachers to **teach without the constant challenge** of managing cell phone use.
- Shift students' attention from screens to **meaningful, in-person engagement** and discussions.
- **Reduce the negative impact of social media**, including cyberbullying and online drama, that can follow students into and throughout the school day.
- Encourage **authentic social connections** by fostering face-to-face interactions during unstructured time.
- **Alleviate stress and anxiety** by eliminating constant social media notifications and the pressure to stay digitally connected.

BENCHMARKING

Virginia (Statewide)

- On July 9, 2024, Governor Youngkin issued Executive Order 33 (“EO33”) establishing cell phone-free education in public schools to promote the health and safety of Virginia’s K-12 students.
- The Virginia Department of Education is advising the commonwealth's K-12 public schools to adopt a "bell-to-bell" cell phone policy, meaning that phones are off throughout the school day — including during lunch and in between classes.

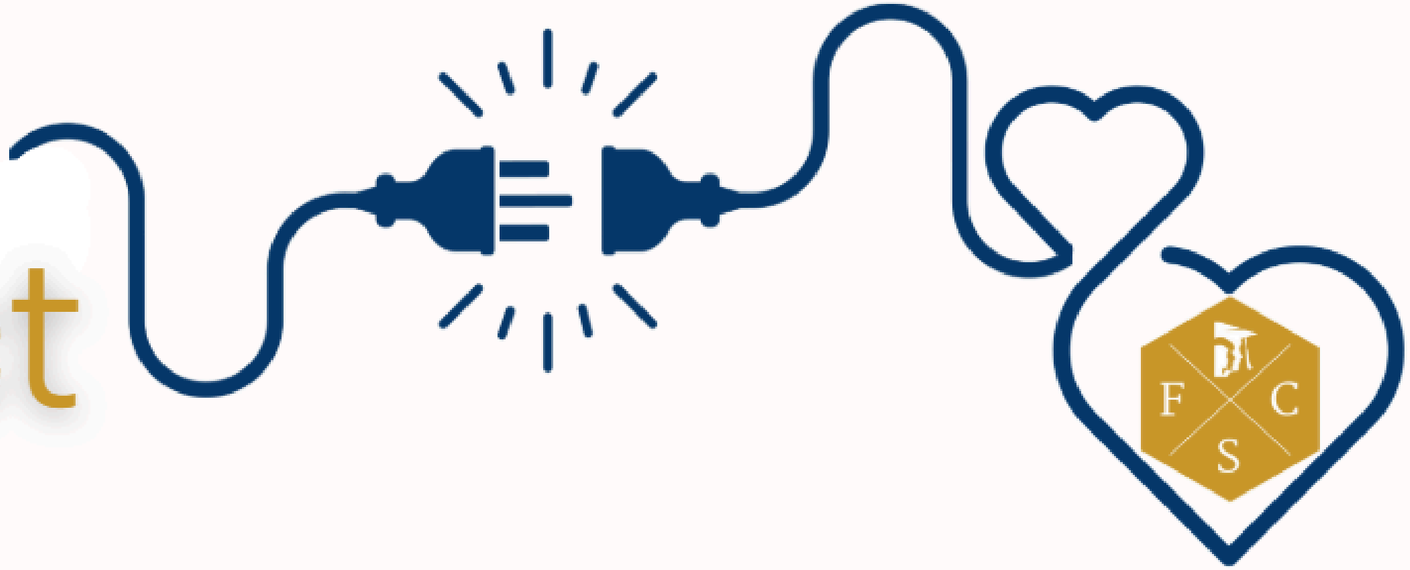
Buford City Schools (GA)

- Cell phones, watches, air pods, and other communication devices shall not be seen, used, or heard in the school building or at car rider. Devices should be turned off and placed in book bags before entering the school building.
- Devices may be retrieved at the end of the day and turned on once the student is on the bus or in the car leaving campus.

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)

- On February 18, 2025, LAUSD implemented a cellphone ban, requiring students to turn off and store devices, including smartwatches and earbuds, during school hours, with exceptions for emergencies, health reasons, or educational plans.
- 2nd Largest District in the Nation
  - 429,000 students
  - Over 1,000 schools

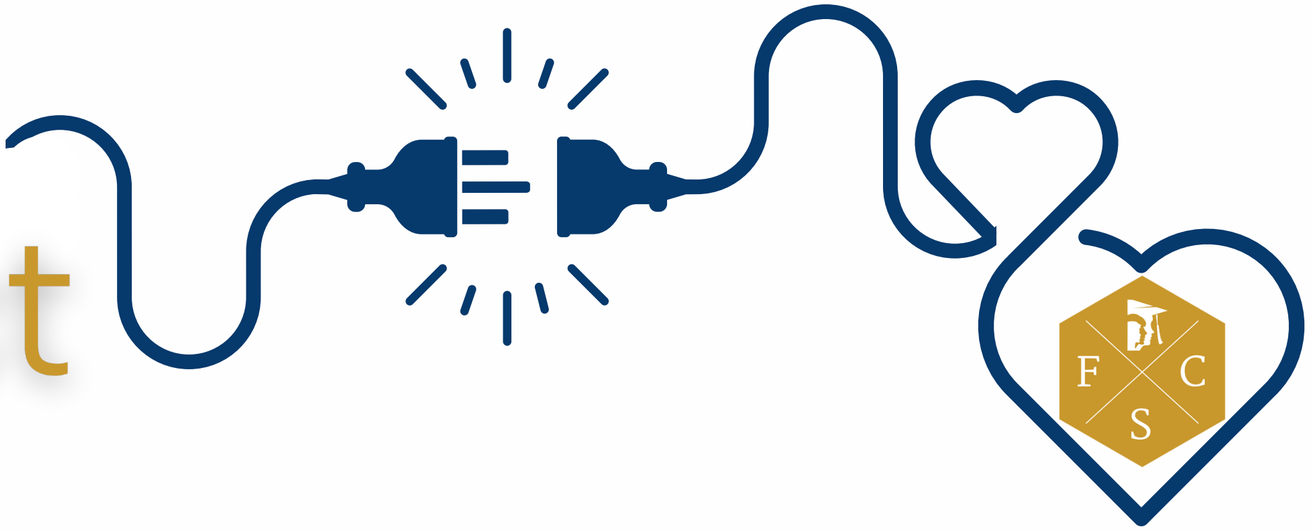
Disconnect to Reconnect



Town Hall

FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

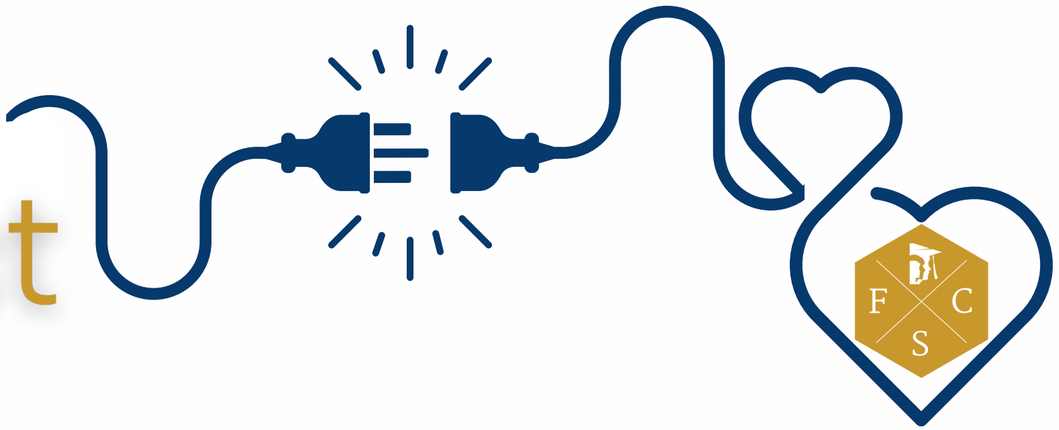
Disconnect
to
Reconnect



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

When your name is called, please go to the nearest microphone. Each speaker will have up to two minutes. You may also write your comments on the cards and place them in the baskets as you depart.

Disconnect to Reconnect



Thank you for joining us!

If you have additional comments or questions, please write on your card and place them in the baskets as you leave.

You may also take your card home and use the QR code to submit additional comments.

FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS