Coffee with the Principal
SWES - November 7, 2025
"Overview of Screen Time at SWES"

Coffee with the Principal

Time to connect with other parents and learn more about our school and plans for the year!

SWES Community Room (evening events are zoom only) at 8:25am unless noted differently

Every Other Friday:
- September 18
- October 4 & 18
- November 1
- November 14 at 6:30pm
- December 6
- January 10 & 24
- February 12 at 5:30pm
- February 21
- March 7 & 21
- April 11 at 6:30pm
- Aoril 25
- May 9 & 23

Our Guiding Principles for Technology Use

- Screens are used **intentionally** to support learning goals.

- Technology should **enhance** engagement and understanding—not be "busy work."

- Developmentally appropriate use: limited, purposeful, and guided by teachers.

- Balance between **digital and real-world experiences** (writing by hand, collaboration, outdoor play).

- We show very short movies and videos for FUN on a limited basis

Digital Citizenship at SWSD

South Whidbey Schools promotes digital citizenship through its commitment to teaching responsible, ethical, and safe use of technology to enhance student learning and develop 21st-century skills. The district uses tools like Securly for web filtering and monitoring, and provides resources like the Safer Schools Together Parent Guide to help families guide their children in online safety and responsible digital behavior. This approach includes educating students on internet safety, cyberbullying prevention, and the long-term impacts of their digital identity.

Key aspects of South Whidbey Schools' Digital Citizenship program

- **Responsible and ethical use**: The district's policies are built on the principle of promoting responsible, ethical, and safe use of technology by all students.
- **Enhancing learning:** The program aims to use technology to support and enhance teaching and learning, with the goal of reducing the achievement gap and developing crucial 21st-century skills.
- **Internet safety and monitoring**: To help ensure safety, the district uses tools like Securly, which monitors student web activity, documents, and emails for signs of bullying, violence, or self-harm.

State OSPI Overview of Digital Media Resources for Schools & Educators:
https://ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/school-technology/media-literacy-digital-citizenship

Academic Screen Time: Core Curriculum Tools

AMPLIFY - SWSD ADOPTED LITERACY CURRICULUM:

- **Amplify Reading:** adaptive, interactive lessons that target literacy standards and are a component of our adopted Amplify Curriculum.
the core literacy program by Amplify the emphasis is on **explicit instruction, teacher-led modeling, hands-on and offline activities**, not just students clicking on screens. For example the "Specially Designed Instruction" guide for Amplify's literacy program notes that while the digital component can support independent, personalized instruction, the teacher should use visuals, interaction, and scaffolded instruction.

- For the digital intervention piece Boost Reading (by Amplify) the recommendation is **30+ minutes per week** in independent digital practice to have measurable benefit

Screen-Based *i-Ready* Learning in Elementary School

- **Personalized learning pathways:** i-Ready adjusts in real time to each student's responses, ensuring that every child receives instruction and practice at their current level—whether they need foundational support or enrichment.

- **Data-driven insight for teachers:** The program provides detailed, immediate data on student progress, allowing teachers to target small-group instruction and interventions more effectively than through observation alone.

- **Engagement through interactive learning:** High-quality, gamified elements keep students engaged and motivated, helping sustain focus on key reading and math skills that might otherwise feel repetitive.

- **Efficient use of limited instructional time:** Screen-based lessons provide individualized practice and feedback simultaneously for all students, freeing teachers to offer personal guidance to those who need it most.

Supplemental Learning Tools We Use

- **IXL:** skill-building and reinforcement; used selectively to support classroom instruction.

- **Epic:** classroom reading choice and motivation; not used for extended screen time.

- **Mystery Science:** inquiry-based, high-interest lessons that include hands-on follow-up activities. Whole class, teacher led

- Others (if applicable): Typing Club, BrainPop, etc.—emphasize educational intent and teacher guidance.

Screens Beyond Academics: Special Events and Occasional Use

- Occasional use for celebrations, rainy-day recess, or school-wide events (e.g., educational film, virtual field trip).

- Kept **minimal and purposeful.**

- Always monitored, age-appropriate, and in community settings—not independent entertainment.

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- STEM program does have a rotation that is screen based. Families can opt out of that specific rotation - e-mail Mrs. Ploof at cploof@sw.wednet.edu

Healthy Screen Habits at Home

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends:

  - Consistent limits on screen time.

  - No devices at mealtimes or bedtime.

  - Co-viewing or co-playing when possible—parents engage alongside children.

- Encourage **creative and active** screen use (coding, storytelling, making) vs. passive watching.

- Suggest using **Family Media Plans** (AAP online tool) - https://www.healthychildren.org/English/fmp/Pages/MediaPlan.aspx

Partnering with Families for Digital Balance

- We teach digital citizenship and self-regulation at school—families can reinforce at home.

- Encourage open conversations about screen time and online choices.

- Below are some resources for families to support managing screen time, e.g.:

Child Mind Institute – *"How to Set Limits on Screen Time"*
https://childmind.org/article/how-to-set-limits-on-screen-time/?utm

Child Screen Time Toolkit:
https://sph.uth.edu/research/centers/dell/child-health-toolkits/child-screen-time-toolkit?utm

WHAT DOES "SCREEN TIME" MEAN FOR K-12 STUDENTS?

Screen Time: A broad (but widely used) term to describe time spent in front of digital media. "Screen time" can refer to the use of televisions, video game consoles, computers, tablets, and any other device that uses a digital screen. The versions of "screen time" that affect K-12 spaces are outlined below.

Educational Technology (EdTech)

EdTech (i.e. technology used in the classroom) is designed to support, not replace, high-quality teaching.

These technologies may be used to personalize student learning, drive engagement, build important workforce skills, and give ALL learners access to important content.

K-12 educators are trained to use EdTech with thought and balance as part of their overall structure for teaching and learning.

Cell Phones/Social Media

43% of Tweens (Ages 8-12) and around **90%** of Teens (Ages 13-18) in the United States have their own cell phone. (*Common Sense Media, 2023*)

YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram are the most popular apps for teenagers with smart phones. (*Pew Research Center, 2023*)

Smart phone applications, specifically social media, have an incentive to engage users regularly and for long periods of time.

Entertainment

Platforms that use a screen (video game systems, televisions, desktop computers, etc.) are used by children before they get their first cell phone.

80% of households with children have some form of tablet computer; **64%** of households WITHOUT children have a tablet computer (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2021*)

Much like EdTech, screen-based entertainment can be positive and relaxing if it is used thoughtfully and with **balance.**