

Protecting the value of Human-to-Human Interactions in EP Schools- Policy Consideration: likely an E.L. under Treatment of Students

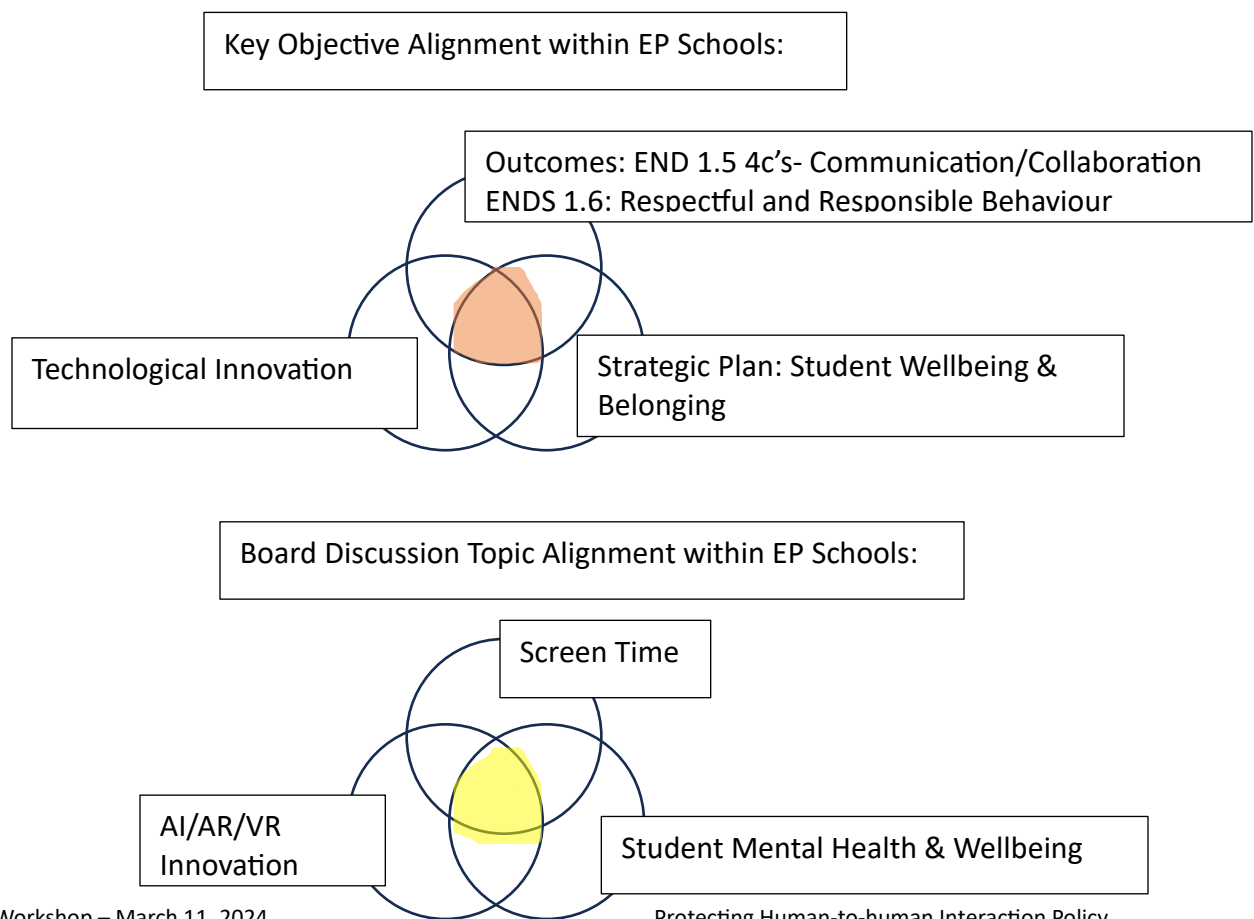
Executive Summary:

It is not inevitable that EPS will maintain optimal human-to-human interactions unless we decide as a Board/District that it is a core value to be protected.

We have the opportunity to be intentional about our use and deployment of technology (Ipads, Macs, AR/VR, AI, etc.) to optimize educational outcomes, manage costs, and support student emotional development while protecting the value human-to-human interaction.

Technological innovation will challenge the alignment and intersection of critical district objectives and cost/efficiency tradeoffs in the future. Now is the time to be clear and intentional on the value of Human-to-Human interaction. This will allow the district to prepare and school board to be proactive in our governance responsibilities.

This policy document is designed to bring together three areas of recent board discussions and focus into a unified approach that values the importance of relationships and connectiveness. This policy is not designed to prescribe how the administration implements the policy- only on the value the board places on this area moving forward into alignment with EP School student objectives.



How did we get here:

Earlier in the year, the BDC surveyed the board on topics that they wanted to investigate. The board's top 3 areas were:

- Screen time
- Mental Health
- AI

The board instructed the BDC to investigate the top 2 because AI was being covered in a separate management presentation (scheduled for 2/2024). We have assembled a response on screen time that actually incorporates information that relates to all three.

What is the Problem and Why consider a Policy?

Problem: Technology user friendliness will become even more prevalent with the rise of AI/AR/VR and the growth of on-line schools, resulting in increased screen disintermediation of social development, relationships, and community connectiveness due to intentional and unintentional digital exposure.

Problem: As technology becomes ever more efficient and effective, the marginal cost to deploy AR/VR/AI will provide significant cost benefits versus the potential loss of human-to-human connectiveness. These natural cost pressures could/will incent school districts to sub-optimally utilize technology at the expense of human-to-human relationships, interactions, and connectiveness.

Problem: The reduction in human-to-human interactions and non-intentional screen time disrupts the social and emotional development of our children and can lead to negative outcomes including: impulsive behavior, classroom disruptions, depression, loneliness, addiction, and non-educational usage (i.e. games) during the school day. All these factors can negatively impact our strategic goals and ENDs outcomes.

Statement: Some on the school board believe this is an important area of concern today and will increasingly be an area of concern/opportunity over the next decade as technology becomes more imbedded in our lives. We believe the school districts that are proactive and intentional in this area will create the runway needed to prepare for these coming changes. This prioritization and differentiation could/will distinguish EP Schools amongst neighboring districts- allowing EPS students and staff to thrive and achieve extraordinary educational outcomes.

Current District Direction/Guidance:

The district has established and recently updated a white paper/policy guidance on 10/12/2023 that outlines the following key points:

- Differentiation of passive vs active engagement with screens

- Current studies on the topic (NIH, Mayo, etc.)
- The importance of oversight, taking breaks, bodily movement and activity oversight
- Use of technological resources using the following framework:
 - o Partnership
 - o Responsiveness
 - o Rigor
 - o Authenticity

Link to Whitepaper

- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1n3JF9dKjNXDo5XZP5OfZ6_wzECGwRgUIYofmpkJR8U4/edit

Why the white paper requires additional School Board action:

Although the white paper guidance is an excellent first step in defining the screen time challenges facing our students and staff, the policy does not define the rapidly changing dynamic associated with technology disintermediation of human-to-human relationships through screens. Further, it does not connect back to School Board policy to ensure alignment with objectives, measurement/oversight, or resourcing from the school board.

Objective of New Policy:

Provide the EP School district administration clear policy direction on the value of human-to-human interaction, including the intentional use of screen time to optimize educational outcomes while minimizing the hazards of excessive screen time, and protecting the benefits that are derived from human-to-human interactions.

Intention of the policy:

To allow the board to perform its governance responsibilities to set objectives (what), allocate resourcing, and **evaluate/measure** the district towards this goal: Policy, as written in the **positive:**

The superintendent will ensure a balanced and intentional use of human and computer-based classroom interactions to:

1. optimize student educational outcomes,
2. value human-to-human interactions in support of district objectives/ENDS
3. support emotional and relationship development and communication development between students and staff
4. minimize non-educational use of district devices,
5. support student well-being and mental health
6. provide parental transparency/choice over individual child digital usage,

A draft policy consideration: Written in the form of an Executive Limitation:

2.0 Treatment of students:

The superintendent shall not allow an environment where the value of human-to-human interaction is not evaluated, valued, and protected when developing/implementing:

technological solutions, technology use standards (including screen time), instructional design and professional development, and classroom instruction.

Policy Considerations- Measurement

- Codifies the human-to-human value in EPS policy- provides SB governance authority
- Provides baseline and foundation for growth and space for creativity/innovation

Policy Considerations- Strategic Pillar Alignment:

- Supports: Authentic learning
- Supports: Student and Staff Well-being
- Supports Belonging

Policy Consideration: Alignment with ENDS Policies:

- Directly supports 4C's
- Third Grade Reading (Fluency CMBR)
- Responsible/Respectful behavior
- Overall Educational outcomes

Policy Consideration: Reinforces the importance of student and staff relationships:

- Recognizes the value provide by our supportive, caring, engaging teachers.
- Provides opportunity to maximize relationships development between teachers and students.
- Creates defied space/policy value for student relationship development.

Policy Consideration: Community Feedback:

- Recognizes the value of student engagement, activity, and interaction (vs static screen engagement)- more support for clubs/sports and physical activity
- Maintaining student connectiveness helps student and staff mental health, which has been a significant concern across the community.
- Reinforces the importance of 4C development.

How to Support Board/Admin consideration of this policy:

- Provided board with extensive consolidated research on topic (Email Packet of research)
- Presentation by Administration on existing policies, procedures, and measurement of risks/rewards to allow existing efforts to align with policy including what metrics they can provide to the board currently and potentially in the future
- External Speaker to provide additional info/expert advice

What this policy Is Not:

- Does not prescribe how much or what type of screen time is optimal
- Does not define the how, to implement, not focused on the Means but the END
- Does not require the perfect answer/approach today
- Reactionary to recent events- policy is very forward looking