

What Schools Owe Our Kids: Digital Wellbeing as a Public Health Imperative

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San Mateo County

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Intro: Dr. Suki Reddy

About Me

Professional

Psychiatrist in private practice, San Mateo County

Personal

Parent (SMFCSD)

Clinical Focus

Adults (18-65) - anxiety, mood, attention, family dynamics.

District Context

~10k K-8 students, highly diverse.

Dual Project Contributions

FALL 2025 – PRESENT

Local School Reform

Advocating for screen time policies & EdTech evaluation (*Intentional Tech movement*).

CMA Collaboration

Resolution for SNAP-Ed reinstatement with SMMA.

The Adoption & Impact of EdTech: A Public Health Crisis

The Issue: Rapid Adoption

- **1-to-1 Expansion:** ESSER funding made 1:1 device models universal post-COVID.
- **Concerning Evidence:** Pre-pandemic data from OECD and UNESCO already raised alarms.
- **Equity Backfire:** Policy unintendedly harmed the most vulnerable children.
- **ESSER Paradox (\$190B):**
 - Heavy focus on hardware vs. human supports.
 - Tech contracts persist while counselors are cut.

Core Question: Help or harm?

Clinical Impact

Public Health: Dysregulation, Depression, Anxiety, impaired learning, attention, cognitive processing (executive Function)

Parental Burden: Guilt and family conflict navigating structural device dependence.

Key Stakeholders

- School Boards & Principals • Teachers & Counselors
- PTAs & Parent Coalitions • Public Health & Medical Assoc.
- Students

The Work So Far

Initial Steps

- **Engagement:** Asked middle school basic questions on screen time and learning outcomes; Built a district-wide parent WhatsApp group; Consulted with students, teachers, counselors, PTAs, Common Sense Media, My Digital Tat2, Schools Beyond Screens, etc.
- **Advocacy:** Spoke at, attended school board meetings March - June 2026; Met with school principals, Public Health, Medical Association
- **Action:** Created a petition with 9 policy asks; Collected signatures district-wide
- **Visibility:** Launched "Intentional Tech in Schools" social media; Circulated flyers (digital and paper)
- **Communication:** Direct, collaborative emails to superintendent and trustees with petition attached; Meeting with Superintendent on 6/12

The Asks: To establish enforceable, grade-level screen time limits; reduce 1:1 device programs; restrict non-educational content; protect device-free time; give parents transparency and opt-out rights; teach digital wellness; increase offline learning; and rigorously vet EdTech contracts.

The Work So Far: Challenges & Successes

Challenges

- Communicating urgency without appearing alarmist or extremist.
- Engaging stakeholders without becoming adversarial.
- Overcoming barriers to petition signing; preventing volunteer burnout.

Successes

- Strong parent community growth and direct school board contact. (*Meeting with superintendent June 12th*)
- High impact from the petition and growing social media presence.
- National conversation is expanding, bolstering local efforts.

Keep the Conversation Going



INTENTIONAL TECH IN SCHOOLS

Scan to Sign the Petition



bit.ly/3R3vQiN

Join our community petition for formal screen time policies.

3 Quick Ways to Help

1. Sign the Petition

Scan the QR code or visit the link to join our community effort for screen time policies.

2. Share this Flyer

Help us spread the word! Share this call to action with other parents and teachers.

3. Connect with Us

facebook Intentional Tech for Schools

email smfcsd@intentionaltechinschools.com

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

— Margaret Wheatley

CMA Draft Resolution: Reinstatement of SNAP-Ed

Protecting Preventive Nutrition and Public Health Infrastructure to Support Community Health and Physician Workforce Capacity

What is SNAP-Ed?

- Federal Nutrition Assistance & Obesity Prevention Grant Program.
- Largest nutrition education program in the U.S.
- Implemented in CA as **CalFresh Healthy Living**.
- Promotes healthy living and nutrition for low-resourced Californians.
- Includes interactive classes and policy interventions for community change.

The Issue

- **H.R. 1** eliminated federal SNAP-Ed funding.
- California faces a loss of **~\$132M annually**.
- CalFresh Healthy Living program is scheduled to end by **June 30, 2026**.

The Resolution

- Restore federal SNAP-Ed funding.
- Recognize nutrition education as a prevention essential for physician workforce capacity.
- Advocate at both state and federal levels.

Thank you



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