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Resolution #8 (SY25-26)

Resolution to Establish Developmentally Appropriate Screen Time Limits, Data Transparency, and Student Privacy Protections in New York City Public Schools

Approved by a vote of _ Yes, _ No, and _ Absent on DATE

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. John Ricottone - | 7. Fabiola Mendieta-Cuapio - |
| 2. Elizabeth Chan - | 8. Tamara Stern- |
| 3. Wenming Chen - | 9. Kelly Clancy - |
| 4. Na Lin - | 10. Ken Li - |
| 5. Meifang (Junmi) Chen - | 11. Alina Lewis - |
| 6. Steven Mahoney - | 12. Kevin Zhao - |

Sponsors: Elizabeth Chan, Kelly Clancy, Alina Lewis, John Ricottone

Co-sponsors: Tamara Stern, Fabiola Mendieta-Cuapio, Na Lin

WHEREAS, Community Education Council District 20 (CEC20) is charged under New York State Education Law to represent the interests, well-being, and educational outcomes of students and families in South Brooklyn. Parents, students and teachers have raised significant concerns about the amount of screen time students are exposed to and the potential introduction of AI platforms into our classrooms; and

WHEREAS, the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) serves under one million students whose cognitive, social, and emotional development must be supported through evidence-based, developmentally appropriate educational practices; and

WHEREAS, NYCDOE students and educators regularly utilize digital tools during the school day to access instructional platforms, individualized interventions, assessments, communication systems, and digital content, including but not limited to i-Ready, Google Classroom, Zoom, and YouTube; and

WHEREAS, emerging national policy trends demonstrate growing concern regarding excessive screen exposure in schools and the need for clear, developmentally grounded limits; and

WHEREAS, research in neuroscience and education, including the work of [Dr. Jared Cooney Horvath](#), demonstrates that learning is strengthened through active, social, and hands-on engagement, and cautions that passive or excessive screen-based instruction may reduce retention, attention, and deep learning³; and

WHEREAS, a growing body of developmental and public health research links excessive screen exposure in children and adolescents to increased anxiety, depression, sleep disruption, and diminished executive functioning, particularly during critical periods of brain development; and

WHEREAS, the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) recommends that for school-aged children, screen use should be consistent with a family media plan that prioritizes adequate sleep (8–12 hours depending on age), at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity, and limits on entertainment screen time, emphasizing that digital media should not displace essential developmental activities such as sleep, physical play, in-person interaction, and learning; and

WHEREAS, recent legal challenges, including litigation related to the use of the i-Ready platform, have raised concerns regarding student [data privacy, surveillance, and the collection of sensitive educational data without adequate transparency or safeguards](#); and

WHEREAS, a [2026 audit by the New York State Comptroller](#) found that New York City Public Schools does not consistently follow all laws and regulations regarding the privacy and security of student data, and identified significant weaknesses in oversight, transparency, and technical safeguards protecting student information; and

WHEREAS, the audit further found that NYCDOE maintains vast amounts of sensitive student data, including millions of records within centralized systems, yet lacks sufficient controls, full alignment with national cybersecurity standards, and consistent compliance across schools and systems; and

WHEREAS, these findings are especially concerning in light of the widespread use of multiple digital instructional platforms across NYCDOE schools, which increase the volume of student data collected and shared, often without clear, accessible, or disaggregated reporting to families, educators, or policymakers; and

WHEREAS, the expansion of screen-based instruction and EdTech platforms—without corresponding transparency, safeguards, and oversight—creates compounded risks related to student privacy, data security, and the commercialization or misuse of student information; and

WHEREAS, New York City public schools significantly expanded digital device use during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, often without consistent systemwide standards governing appropriate instructional use, privacy protections, or developmental limits; and

WHEREAS, families, educators, and students across District 20 and New York City have raised concerns about the overreliance on screens replacing direct instruction, independent reading, social interaction, and play-based learning; and

WHEREAS, District 20 passed a resolution calling for a moratorium on AI in December 2025, which has not been put into effect;

WHEREAS, equity in education requires not only access to technology but also protection from overexposure, algorithmic bias, data privacy risks, and the erosion of critical thinking associated with excessive reliance on digital platforms; and

WHEREAS, the [Los Angeles Unified School District \(LAUSD\)](#) adopted a 2026 resolution establishing grade-level screen time limits, restricting device use during non-instructional time, and limiting or prohibiting device use for early elementary students, signaling a major shift toward safeguarding student well-being and academic engagement; and

WHEREAS, statewide action in [Iowa reflects bipartisan recognition of the need to rebalance technology use in schools](#), including legislation requiring school districts to restrict student use of personal electronic devices during instructional time and proposals to limit elementary school screen exposure to approximately one hour per day; and

WHEREAS, these policies across both large urban districts and statewide systems reflect a growing national movement to ensure that technology in schools remains a supportive tool rather than a dominant mode of instruction; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Education Council District 20 calls upon the New York City Department of Education to develop and implement a systemwide Screen Time Policy that:

1. Prioritizes High-Quality Instruction that:

- **Establishes Developmentally Appropriate Limits** - based on recommendations from the American Association of Pediatrics and [American Psychological Association](#)
- Requires that digital tools be used only when they:
 - Demonstrably enhance learning outcomes
 - Do not replace direct teacher instruction, discussion, or independent thinking
- Encourages **paper-based, experiential, and collaborative learning models**

3. Strengthens Data Privacy Protections

- Conducts a comprehensive audit of all educational technology platforms used in NYCDOE schools, including which platforms, for which purposes, how data is stored and used for what purposes, and make these available to parents
- Establishes stronger safeguards to ensure:
 - Minimal data collection
 - Transparency with and for families
 - Compliance with federal and state student privacy laws

4. Restricts Harmful and Non-Educational Use

- Limits access to non-instructional digital content (including social media and entertainment platforms) on DOE-issued devices during school hours

5. Supports Educators and Schools

- Provides funding and professional development to:
 - Reduce overreliance on digital platforms
 - Expand access to non-digital instructional materials
 - Support culturally responsive sustaining education (CRSE), human-centered pedagogical practices, play-based curricula

6. Ensures Equity and Accessibility

- Maintains full access to assistive technology for students with IEPs and 504 Plans
- Ensures implementation does not exacerbate inequities across schools or districts

7. Engages Families and Communities

- Requires transparency with families regarding student screen use
- Provides mechanisms for families to request reduced screen exposure
- Engages:
 - Community Education Councils
 - Students and families
 - Educators and school leaders

8. Establishes Accountability and Oversight

- Requires annual reporting on:
 - Student screen time usage
 - Academic and wellness outcomes
 - Policy implementation across schools

9. Restores Paper-Based Assessment Options

- Calls on the NYCDOE and the New York State Education Department to:
 - Immediately provide **paper-based options for all New York State standardized assessments**, particularly in elementary and middle school grades
 - Conduct a full review of the reliability, equity, and developmental appropriateness of digital testing platforms
 - Ensure that no student is disadvantaged due to technological failures, access issues, or interface-related challenges

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that CEC20 calls upon the New York City Council, New York State Education Department, and public health agencies to collaborate with NYCDOE to align policies on student well-being, digital learning, data privacy, and equitable assessment practices; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CEC20 calls on the superintendent to put into effect the moratorium on AI in schools in District 20; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution affirms that technology must serve as a tool to support, **not replace**, teaching, relationships, and human development, and that NYC Public Schools must lead in creating healthy, balanced, and developmentally appropriate learning environments for all students.

Appendix: Screen time Recommendations from APA

- **Early Childhood: Pre-K – Grade 1**
 - *No routine individual device use*
 - Exceptions only for:
 - IEP/504 accommodations
 - Short, teacher-led instructional activities
 - Emphasize:
 - Play-based learning
 - Language development
 - Hands-on activities

Policy Recommendation:

- Maximum: **0–15 minutes/day (only if necessary)**
- No independent screen use

- **Elementary School: Grades 2–5**
 - Prioritize foundational learning:
 - Literacy
 - Numeracy
 - Social development

Policy Recommendation:

- Maximum: **60 minutes/day total screen time**
- Of that:
 - No more than **30 minutes passive use** (video, viewing)
- Require:
 - Teacher-guided use
 - Clear instructional purpose

Additional protections:

- No screen use during:
 - Recess
 - Lunch
 - Transitions

- **Middle School: Grades 6–8**

- High-risk period for:
 - Anxiety
- Social comparison
- digital dependency

Policy Recommendation:

- Maximum: **90 minutes/day total screen time**
- Require:
 - Structured, purposeful use
 - Reduced passive consumption
- Prohibit:
 - Student-led access to YouTube/social media during school
- Digital literacy instruction:
 - Algorithm awareness
 - Media literacy
 - Mental health awareness

- **High School: Grades 9–12**

- Recognizes:
 - Academic tech needs
 - Increasing independence

Policy Recommendation:

- Maximum: **120 minutes/day total instructional screen time**
- Strong emphasis on:
 - Active learning
 - Creation (writing, coding, analysis)
- Limit:
 - Passive viewing
 - Non-instructional digital activity