

Mental Health
School Health Advisory Council
December 2025





@FBISD_SHAC



FBISD SHAC 2024-2025 December 3rd, 2025 Meeting Agenda

Theme: Mental Health

#YouAreNotAlone

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| | | (Time: 12:00 - 12:05pm) |
| I. | Welcome– Catalina Flores-Rau, SHAC Chair
A. Mindful Moment- Allison Thummel | 5 min |
| | | (Time: 12:05-12:45pm) |
| II. | Presentations

A. The Power of Connection, Suicide Prevention
- Dr. Erin Forbes, Wellness, Health & Prevention Specialist, Hope Squad
B. Adolescent Brains & the Impacts of Sleep and Gaming
- Dr. Ronald J. Swatzyna, PhD, Director/Chief Scientist of Neurophysiology Research at Houston Neuroscience Brain Center | 20 min
20 min |
| | | (Time: 12:45-1:20pm) |
| III. | Administration

A. Brain Break – Shannon Nash, Wellness, Health & Prevention Specialist
B. Vote on Minutes from the September SHAC Meeting - Derek Craig, SHAC Secretary
C. Board Membership Review – Catalina Flores-Rau, SHAC Chair
D. Legislative Review – Sumita Ghosh, PhD, JD, Advocacy Advisor to the SHAC
E. Past & Upcoming Events- Shannon Nash, Wellness, Health & Prevention Specialist | 5 min
5 min
5 min
10 min
10 min |
| | | (Time: 1:20-1:30 pm) |
| IV. | Meeting in Closed Session
Subcommittees Convened | |
| V. | Meeting Closure- Catalina Flores-Rau, SHAC Chair | |

Mindful Moment



Allison Thummel, Ex Officio Chair



The Power of Connection

Dr. Erin Forbes



Let's talk

National statistics



21 years of Hope Squad



Why it works



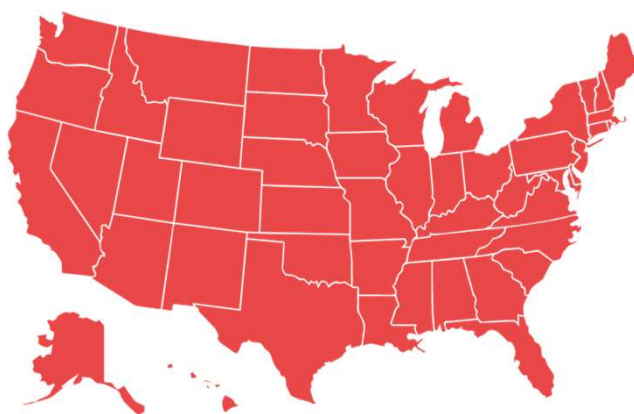
How it works





National statistics

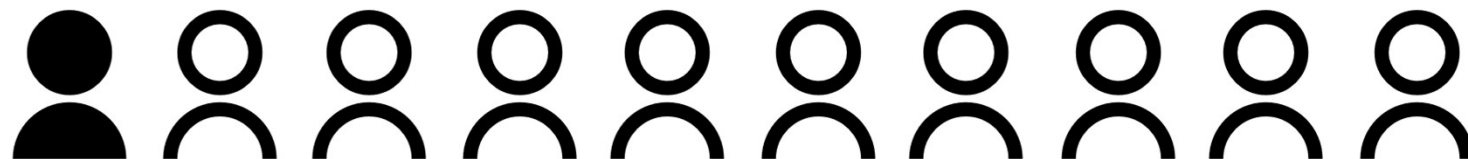
In 2023, suicide was the
**second leading cause of
death** for people ages 10–34.



SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control. Facts about suicide. Available at www.CDC.gov/suicide.

1 in 10

high school students reported
attempting suicide in 2023.

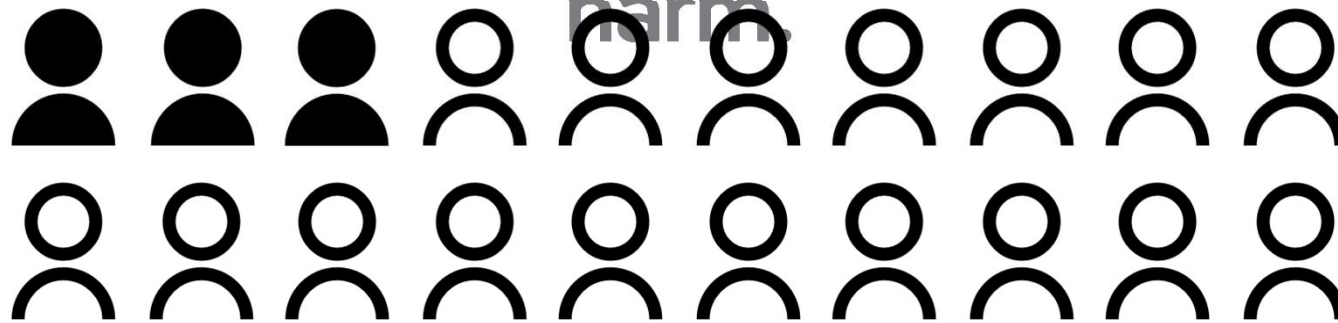


SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Questionnaire. Available at www.CDC.gov/yrebs.

3 out of 20

preadolescents experience suicidal thoughts, and school psychologists estimate 6.5% of children under 13 engage in self-

harm.



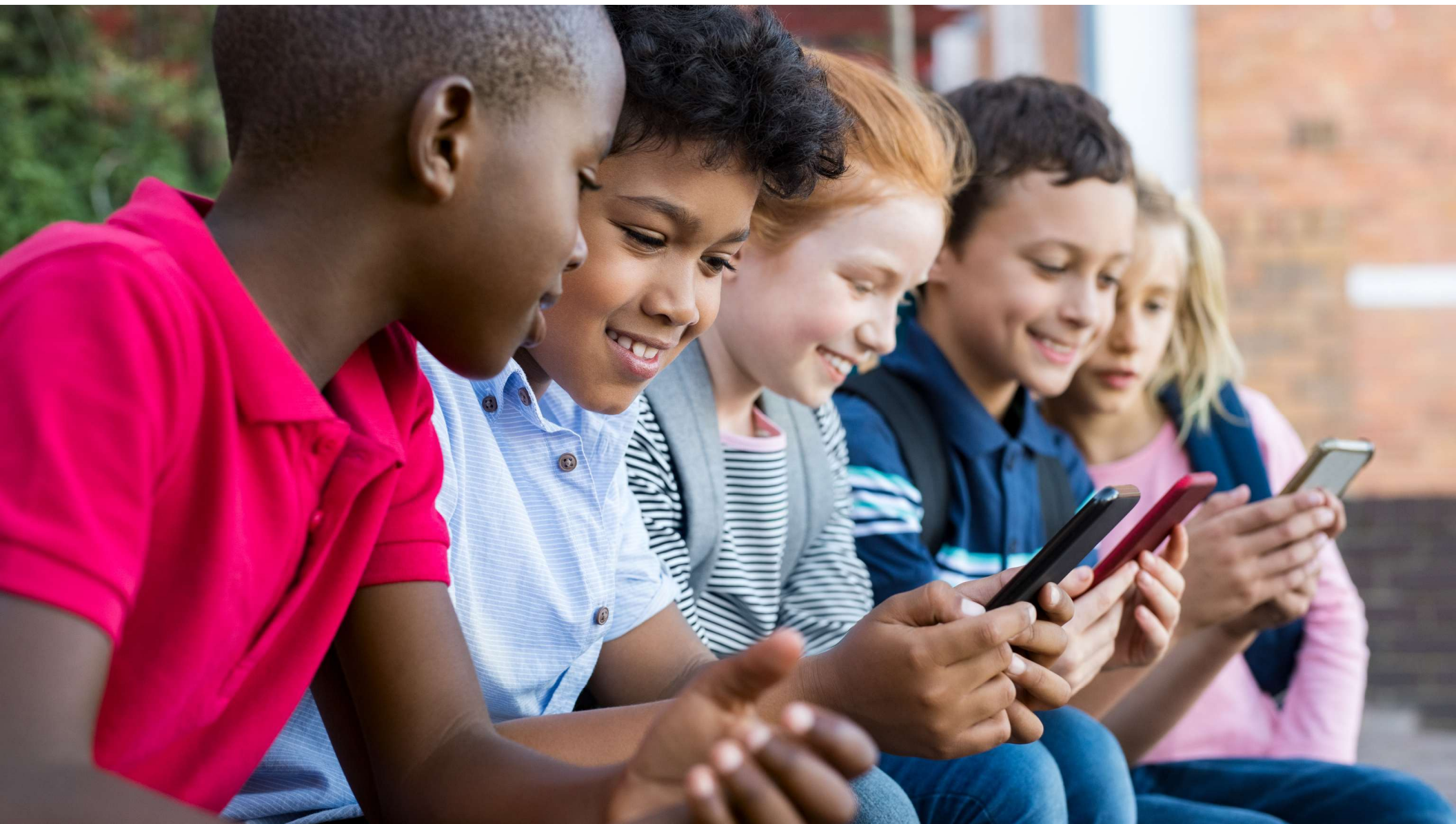
SOURCE: Pan, B. A., Guan, K., Tang, S., Zhang, Y., Li, Z., & Lin, X. (2023). Prevalence of self-injurious thoughts and behaviors among preadolescent children: A meta-analysis. // Townsend, E., Gage, S., Armstrong, M., & Grenyer, B. F. S. (2022). Understanding self-harm in children under 13: A survey of school psychologists.

40%

of high school students reported **persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness** over the previous 12 months.



SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Questionnaire. Available at www.CDC.gov/yrebs.





21 years of Hope Squad

The first Hope Squad

1985-1997

1-2 youth suicides every year

For 12 years, Provo City School District, which served more than 16,000 students, faced a devastating pattern of youth suicides including elementary students. Principal Dr. Greg Hudnall **decided to take action and find a way to stop it.**

1998

Numbers reduced, but suicide persisted

Dr. Hudnall helped **unite a task force that included schools, mental health agencies, and community organizations** across the county who would provide suicide prevention training and crisis response to schools.

2003-2004

0 suicides for 9 consecutive years

The first Squad was formed where students **identified a group of kind, trustworthy peers who were then trained** to recognize warning signs and connect struggling peers to adults. The results that followed were undeniable.

And more than 20 years later....Hope Squad is still going strong.

1,250,000

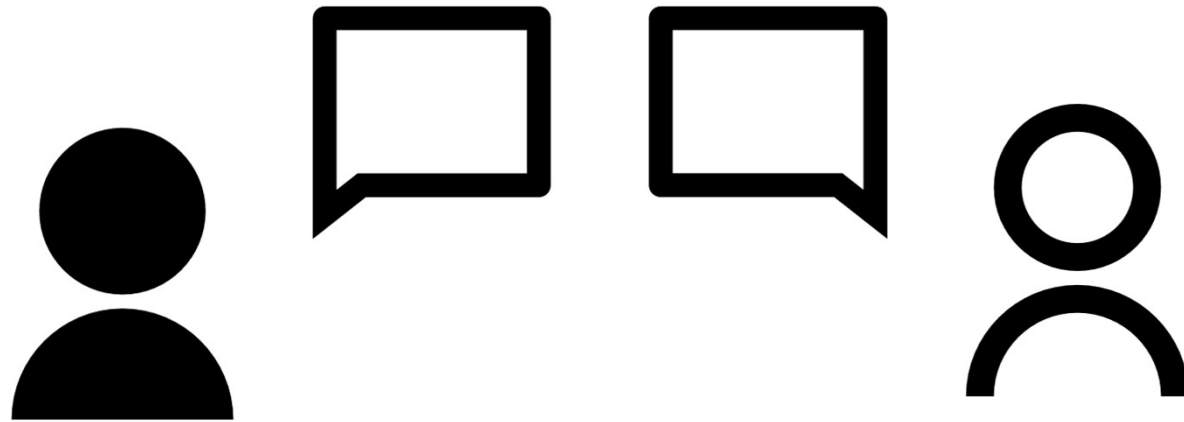
students were **impacted by Hope Squad**
across the U.S. in 2023–2024.



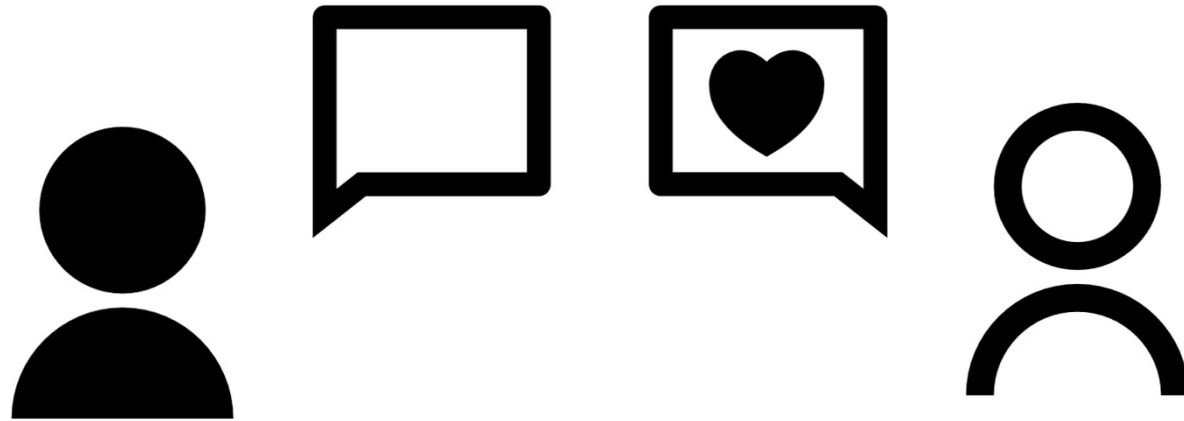


Why it works

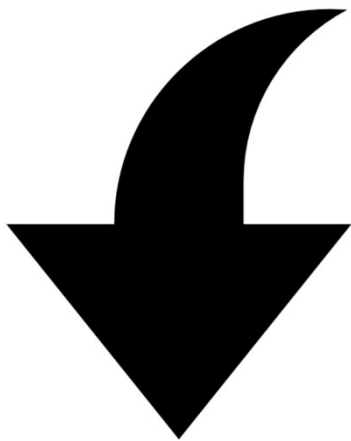
Research shows that students are
more likely to confide in a peer
rather than in an adult.



What if we could use the
power of peer-to-peer connection
to support struggling students?



When **youth feel connected to school**, they are:

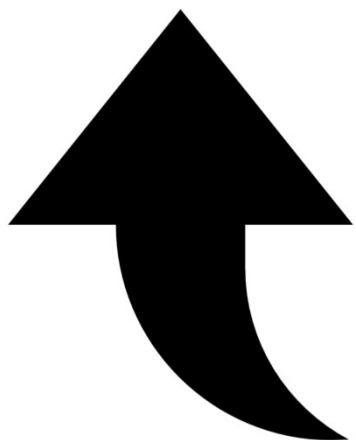


Less likely to experience:

- Thoughts of suicide
- Poor mental health
- Sexual health risks
- Substance use
- Violence

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control

When **youth feel connected to school**, they are:



More likely to:

- Engage in positive health behaviors (physical activity, healthy eating)
- Have higher grades, higher test scores, and better attendance
- Graduate high school

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control

Hope Squads have an **overwhelmingly positive impact** on their schools.

97%

of Advisors agree Hope Squad promotes mental health and suicide **awareness**.

100%

of Administrators agree Hope Squad contributes to a **safe school environment**.

98%

of Advisors reported that Members know how and **where to get help** for struggling peers.

SOURCE: 2024-2025 Hope Squad Program Evaluation



How it works

Program overview



Hope Squad is a group of students (Members) nominated by their peers, **empowered to lead**, and supported by trained adults (Advisors).

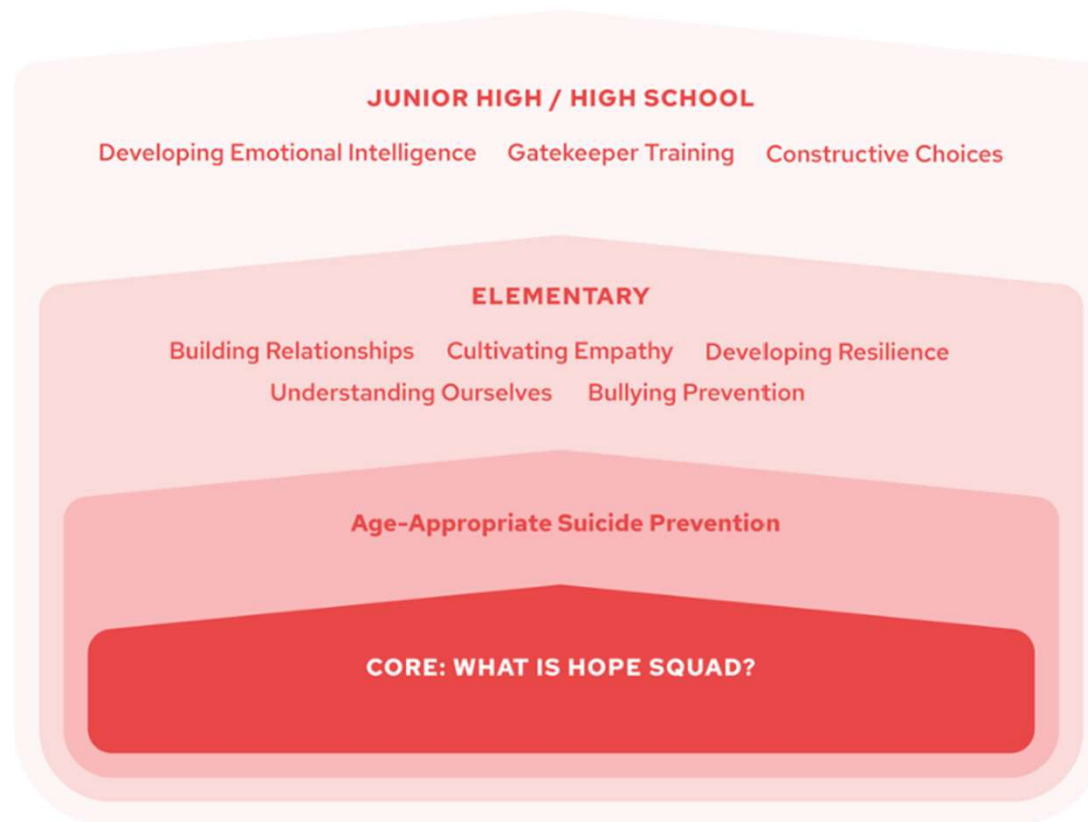


Members meet regularly with Advisors for training and support including how to spot warning signs and **ways to connect struggling peers to help and hope**.



Ultimately, Squads engage and educate the community ensuring **mental wellness becomes a part of everyday life** in the classroom and beyond.

Our learning objectives



Hope Squad thrives with community support

Successful
Squads have:

Involved
principal,
faculty, and
staff



Supportive
and informed
parents

Dedicated
Advisors



Continual
improvement
through
program
evaluation



Partnership
with mental
health +
community
agencies

Committed
Members



“

Some say it takes a village to raise a child, and we believe it takes an entire community to save one.

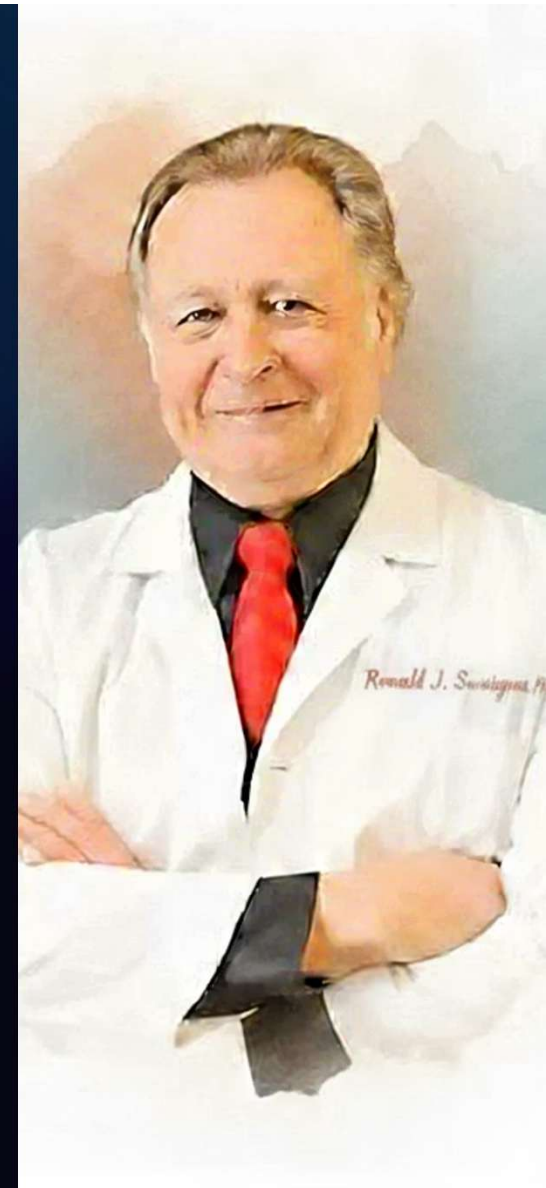
**Dr. Greg Hudnall,
Founder
Hope Squad**

Overstimulated: The Neurocognitive Toll of Excessive Screen Use

Presenter: Ronald J. Swatzyna, PhD, LCSW, BCB, BCN, Clinical
Neuroscientist

Affiliation: Houston Neuroscience Brain Center | Clinical
NeuroAnalytics

Event: Fort Bend ISD – SHAC Meeting | December 3



Objectives

By the end of this session, you will:



Understand how screens affect child and adolescent brain development



Recognize key signs of screen-related sleep and behavioral issues



Learn practical tools for families and schools to mitigate harm

Clinical Case Vignette

Case: 15-year-old male, 6+ hrs/day gaming

Symptoms: Academic decline, irritability, reversed sleep cycle

Imaging: ↓ Frontal lobe activity post-screen use



Key Statistics



Screen Time: Teens avg 7.7 hrs/day (Common Sense Media, 2021)



Addiction: 4–10% meet clinical threshold (APA, *DSM-5*)



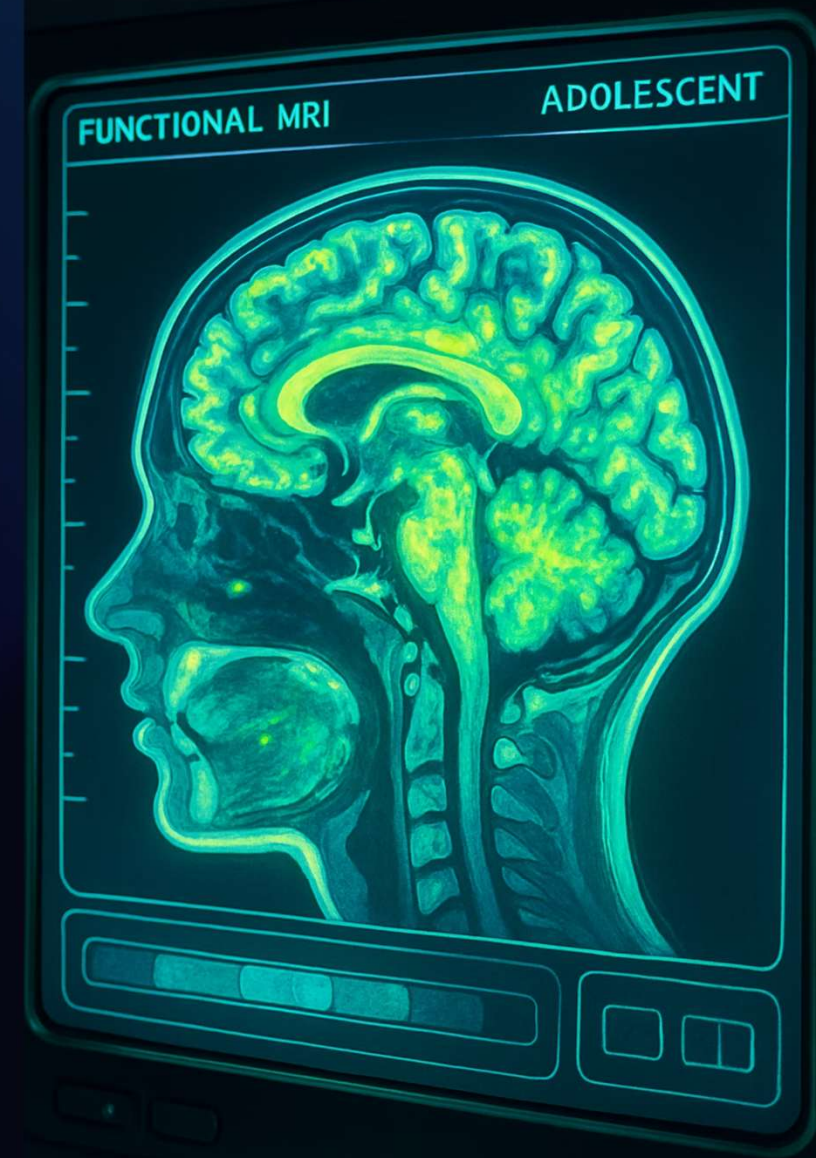
Sleep: 2x poorer sleep in >2hr users (Carter et al., 2016, *JAMA Pediatr*)



Academics: ↓ REM = ↓ GPA, focus (Hale & Guan, 2015, *Sleep Health*)

The Brain on Screens

- Dopaminergic system activated by games/notifications
- ↓ Frontal lobe perfusion = ↓ impulse control & focus
- Mimics ADHD-like profiles



Gaming and Emotional Dysregulation

- Boys: ↑ dopamine release → increased risk of addiction
- Symptoms: Anger when interrupted
- Withdrawal signs: Anxiety during device restriction

Source: Swatzyna & Barr (2019)



Sleep Disruption and Academic Cost



Concussion Note

"Screens post-concussion delay recovery by overstimulating the visual cortex."

- **Limit screen use in first 48–72 hrs post-head trauma**

Source: AAP Return-to-Learn Guidelines (2018)



Warning Signs of Screen Overuse



**Irritability when
restricted**



**Fatigue or refusal to
sleep**



**Secrecy around device
usage**



**Academic or social
withdrawal**

Tools for Parents



Screen curfews: No devices 1 hr before bed



Detox weekends: 24–48 hrs digital reset



Control apps: Bark, Qustodio, Circle



Reward system: Earn screen time via chores or activity

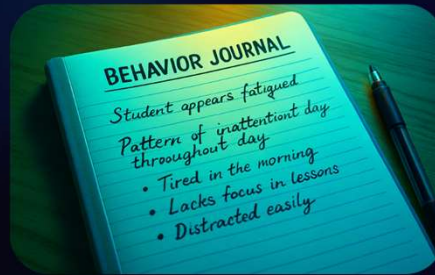


Blue light filters: Glasses or screen settings

Tools for Teachers



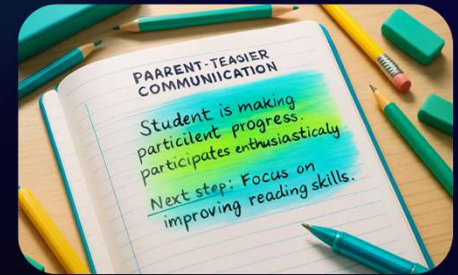
Tech Timeout logs:
Track student screen
usage vs. productivity



Behavior journals: Note
fatigue, inattention
patterns



Device-free spaces:
Library, wellness room,
reading corners



Parent-teacher screen
diaries: Shared
home/school tool

When to Refer



**Severe behavioral
withdrawal**



**Co-morbid
ADHD/anxiety
symptoms**



**Major academic or sleep
decline**



**Contact: Pediatric
psychologist or child
neurologist**

Summary and Handout QR



**Chronic screen exposure alters
brain and behavior**



**Sleep and learning suffer with
overuse**

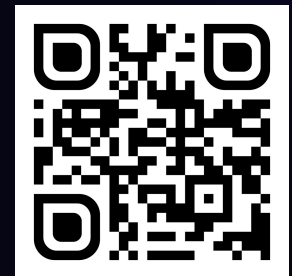


**Tools + boundaries =
neuroprotection**

Summary



Handout



Thank You


Contact Information

Dr. Ronald J. Swatzyna, PhD, LCSW, BCN, BCB

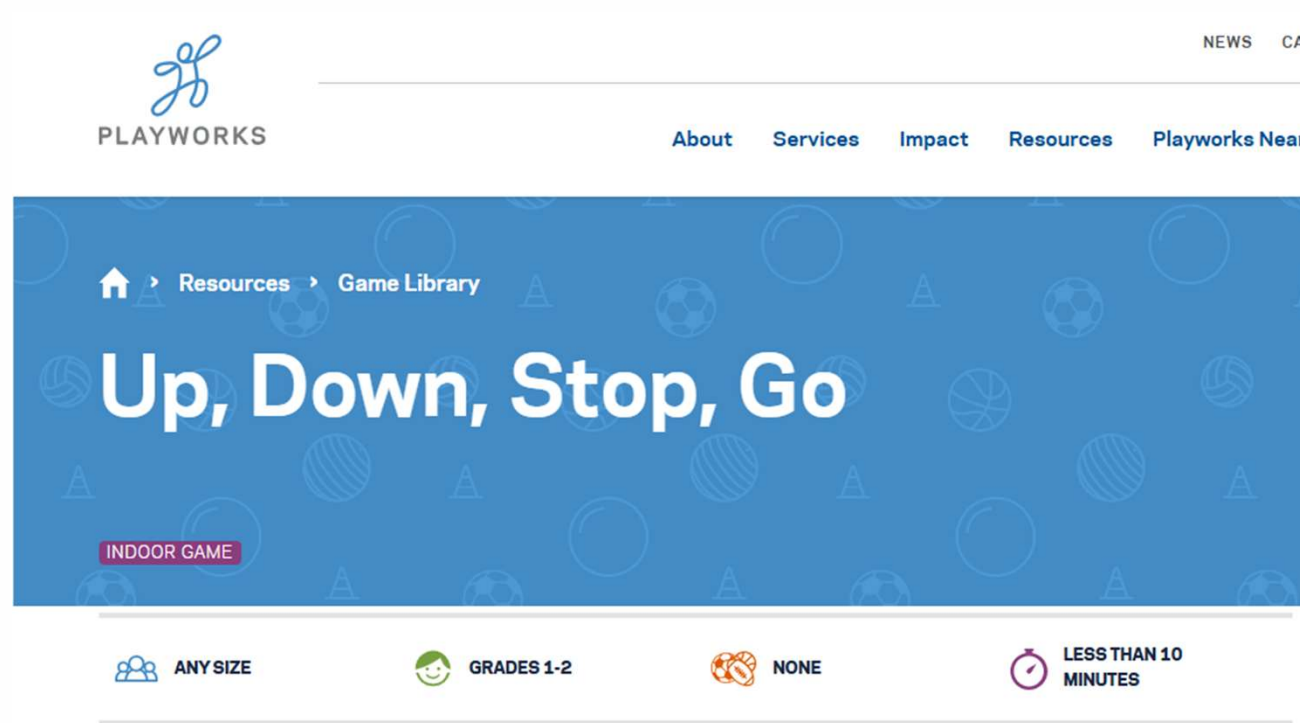
Director, Houston Neuroscience Brain Center

 **drron@hnbraincenter.com**

 **www.hnbraincenter.com**

 **832-207-6990**

Brain Break



Goal: To develop students' concentration and listening skills.



Meeting Minutes



Board Membership Review



- Exec Team for 2026-2027
 - Contact me if you are interested in being on the Exec Team!
- Subcommittees:
 - Make sure you submitted your Membership Pledge
 - Try to embed yourselves into Campus Wellness Committees

Legislative Review

New Advisory Role: Sumita Ghosh

- Help SHAC to understand
 - What is written in the laws.
 - What is coming soon.
- Upcoming Meetings
 - Will provide a 5-10 review each meeting.



**Whole Child Health District Initiatives & Events
2025-26**

November 2025

American Diabetes Month

Holiday Meals Week 11/17-11/21

December 2025

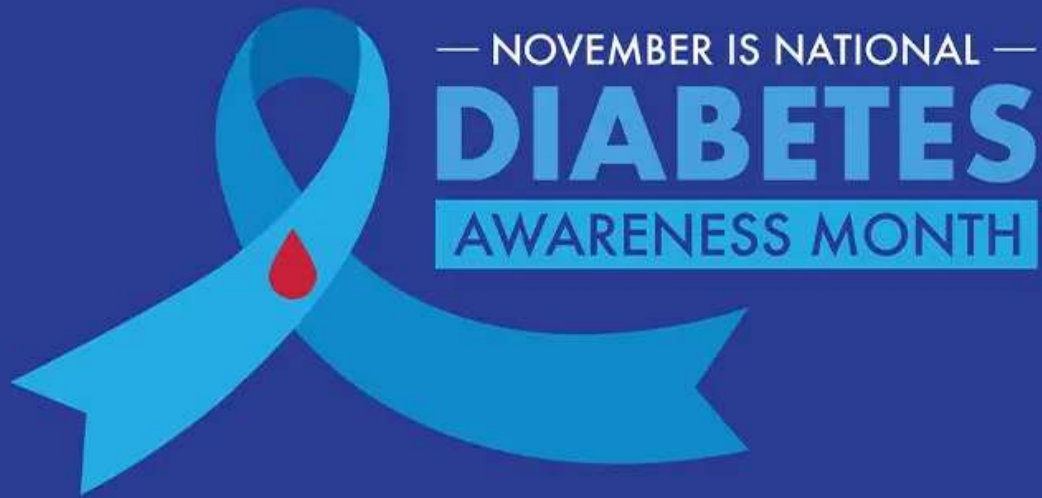
Texas Handwashing Awareness Week 12/1-12/6

FEBRUARY 2026

National Wear Red Day – Friday, 2/6

National School Counseling Week 2/1-2/7

One Week to Save a Life 2/23-2/27





JOIN US AT YOUR STUDENT'S CAMPUS FOR

MEALS

Holiday

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13

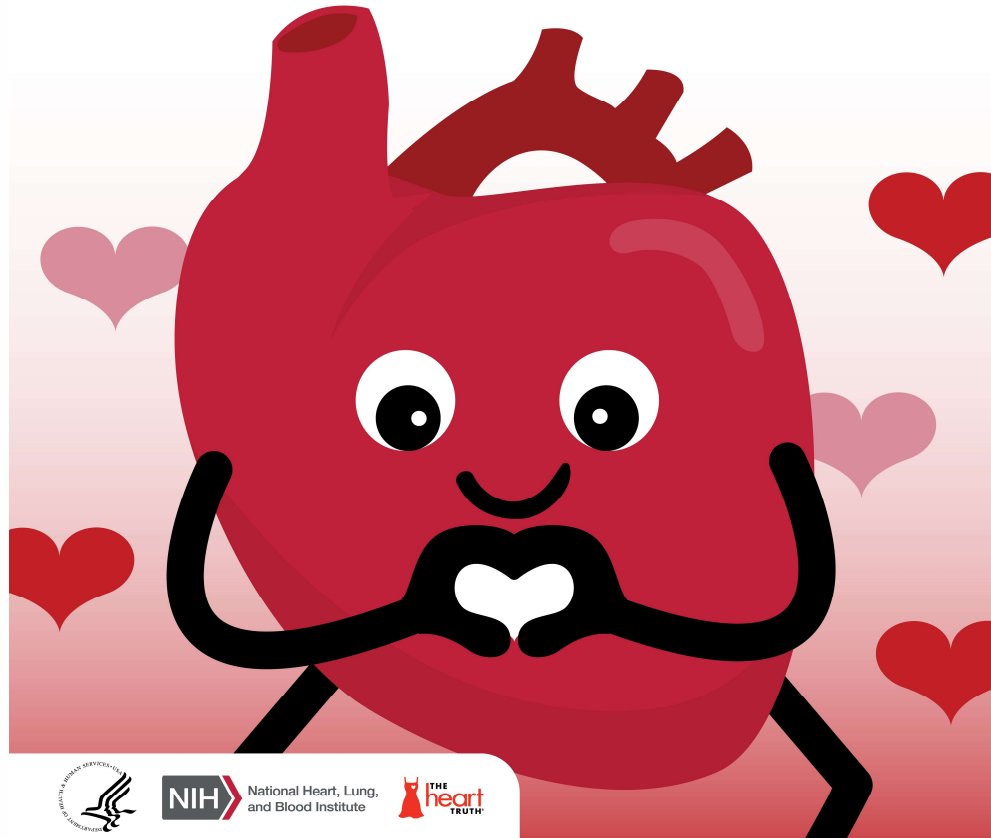


National Handwashing Awareness & Influenza Vaccination



National Wear Red Day February 6, 2026

National **Wear Red Day**®



NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

FEB. 2-6
2026



AMERICAN
SCHOOL
COUNSELOR
ASSOCIATION

**School Counselors
Amplify Student Success**



One Week to Save a Life

February 23-27, 2026



Coming Soon:
December Sound
Bite

FBISD Sound Bites

Fall 2025 Release Dates

Fort Bend ISD's Whole Child Health Bullying Prevention Campaign empowers students, families, and staff to recognize, prevent, and respond to bullying in all its forms.

Through education, awareness, and community action, we're building a culture of kindness, respect, and inclusion to ensure every student feels safe and supported.



October 1

Bullying Prevention Kickoff

Kick off Bullying Prevention Month with Fort Bend ISD's Whole Child Health Campaign, promoting kindness, respect, and unity across our schools. Tune in to learn how we can all take action.



November 13

Understanding Bullying, Peer Conflict, & Harassment

This sound bite explains the differences between peer conflict, bullying, and harassment as part of FBISD's Whole Child Health Campaign. Learn how to recognize and address these behaviors to help every student feel safe and supported.



October 22

Unity Day

This sound bite celebrates Unity Day, FBISD's stand against bullying and support for kindness, courage, and inclusion. Hear how students and staff are wearing orange to create a safe, welcoming space for all.



December 10

Respecting Yourself and Others

This sound bite from FBISD's Whole Child Health Campaign encourages students to respect themselves and others by recognizing verbal, social, and physical bullying. Learn how each type affects students and how we can work together to build safer, more respectful schools.



Scan for
more
resources

Whole Child Health Initiative

#YouAreNotAlone



District Student Wellness COALITION Think Tank Recap

- The District Student Wellness COALITION held their annual Think Tank Showcase on November 19, 2025, in the FBISD Board Room.
- High school students from across the district identified health challenges that affect them and their peers.
- Innovative solutions were presented to judges from United Healthcare, UHealth, and Walmart.
- Winning proposals received \$2,500 in grant funding from United Healthcare.



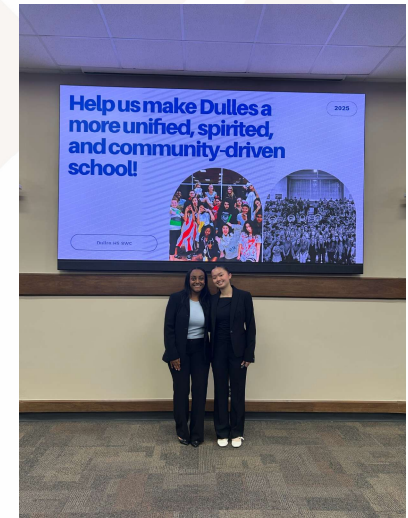
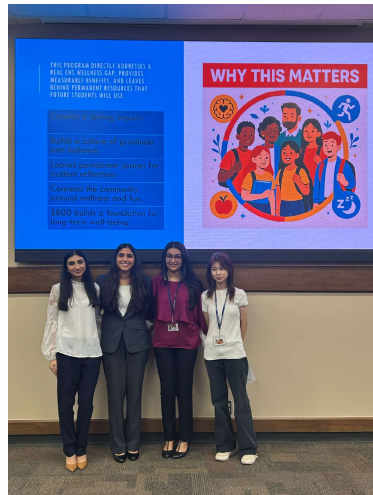
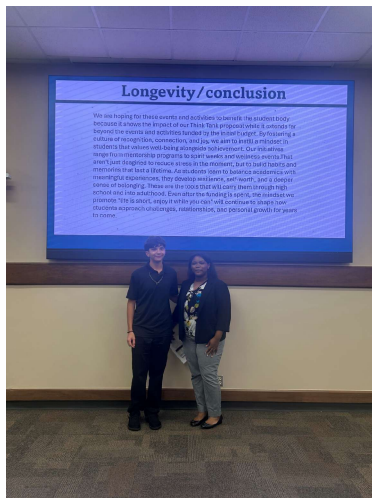
District Student Wellness COALITION

Think Tank Recap

- Austin High School was named the Overall Wellness Champion and awarded \$500.
- The event emphasized ongoing partnerships with United Healthcare, UTHHealth, and Walmart to support student wellness initiatives.



District Student Wellness COALITION Think Tank Recap



Crawford, Clements, Hightower, Travis, and Dulles High Schools each received \$400.

District Student Wellness COALITION Think Tank Recap



Ridge Point, Elkins, Bush and Kempner High School COALITION Members

The background of the slide features a light beige color with a pattern of thin, wavy vertical lines. Overlaid on these lines are several larger, semi-transparent geometric shapes, including rectangles and parallelograms, in a slightly darker shade of beige. These shapes are arranged in a way that they appear to be floating or layered over the wavy lines.

Meeting in Closed Session: Subcommittees Convene

Announcements

Next SHAC Meeting: February 11, 2025

WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD



12:00 pm -1:30 pm

Fort Bend ISD

Administration Building: Board Room

Shared Dreams Program



Shared Dreams is part of Fort Bend ISD's Collaborative Communities to support students in need. With help from generous donors and volunteers, we provide short-term assistance to registered students identified by campus staff.

