FORUM TOPIC REQUEST

Each Board Member may request two forum topics per meeting; **use this form for one topic.**

TOPIC: Board Support for Wait Until 8th Initiative

Time Sensitive ☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**

Desired Date/Time Frame and Reason: When board meeting scheduling allows

BOARD MEMBER NAME: Ryan McElveen | **Date Submitted: 03/23/2026**

1. **Specify topic's relation to Student Achievement Goal, Operational Expectation, or policy:**

   Strategic Plan Goal 2: Safe, Supported, Included, and Empowered: Goal 2: Safe, Supported, Included, and Empowered: Prioritizes mental/physical health, attendance, positive school climate, and student voice.

2. **Objective of the topic/conversation:**

   I advocate that the FCPS School Board be a national leader in publicly and practically empowering system leadership and staff to support and communicate the "Wait Until 8th" initiative as a community norm—aligned with existing FCPS phone policy—so families who want to delay smartphones until after 8th grade can do so together, reducing social pressure and improving student learning, behavior, and well-being.

   Seeking a clear Board stance that supports system leadership and staff in sharing this pledge and resources with families, without mandating personal technology decisions will:

   - Affirm that while smartphone ownership is a family decision, its impacts show up at school (attention, sleep, behavior, conflict, cyberbullying, mental health, and instructional disruption) and affect the broader community.
   - Highlight the growing evidence that early and excessive smartphone use is associated with harm to youth development, including increased anxiety, depression, loneliness, addiction-like behaviors, and exposure to inappropriate or dangerous content. This has been emphasized by the Surgeon General's Advisory, which uses the best available science to shed light on major public health challenges and recommends delaying social media, typically accessed via smart phones, until after middle school.
   - Establish that schools are uniquely positioned to shape healthier norms by providing consistent messaging and encouragement, making it easier for families to delay smartphones without their child feeling isolated.
   - Build a shared commitment to a healthier school culture that strengthens focus, improves classroom behavior, increases academic performance, focus sleep quality, supports social-emotional growth, reduces screen time, and restores time for offline relationships and development.

3. Desired outcome: _____

   a) ☐ Forum discussion only
   c) ☐ Refer to committee for recommendation
   e) ☒ Other
   b) ☐ more information/report from staff
   d) ☐ Refer to a work session

Other: Develop a resolution for Board support at a regular business meeting