

Fayette County Public Schools  
District Safety Advisory Council  
Social Media  
03.22.18  
Meeting Notes

Subject matter experts this evening were Heather Eppley, Academy Coach and Jaiven Smith, Information Technology Academy and Senior Class President, both of Bryan Station High School, Tyson Carroll, Detective and Heather Harer, Vice President of Social Sentinel.

Upon asking students to describe their relationship with Social Media, Jaiven reports them saying "It is Life." When asked why, they said that they enjoyed being in the know, it gives them a voice, gives them access to experts, 24/7 accessibility and because they would otherwise suffer from FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Nationally, teens are using Instagram and Snapchat far more than Facebook, Twitter or other platforms, but the trends are constantly evolving. Also, 91 % of teens are using more than one platform for texting, which makes monitoring that much more difficult for parents. Teens have become so accustomed to using social media to communicate, which allows for editing, premeditating and deleting text, that they are ill-prepared for face to face communication. Studies show that if young people spend more than 2 hours on social media, there is a marked increase in:

- Mental health issues like anxiety and depression
- Poor sleep quality
- Body image issues
- Cyber Bullying
- FOMO

Because students are hyper connected, they are never alone. They assume everyone is hyper connected, therefore they feel ignored when posts aren't acknowledged.

Detective Carroll addressed the three main dangers of social media:

- **Cyber bullying**
- **Sex crimes**
- **School violence**

Cyber bullying is a message which could cause, physical harm, intimidation, humiliation or embarrassment. It is a misdemeanor. Typically, the bully obtains harmful data/images, sends to victim, and threatens to post. Catfishing is when the bully assumes an alternative identity to trick or entrap the victim. Worst possible outcome is suicide. He cited Megan Meier, a 13-year-old girl who committed suicide after being catfished by the parents of an estranged friend posing as someone else.

Detective Carroll warned about the dangers of child pornography, which typically follows the pattern: Production, Distribution, and Extortion. If while on a group text thread, one youth tells another to take a nude picture of themselves, that is considered child pornography production. Next step is usually “I want more pics (or else...)” or “I want an actual sex act (or else...)” This is punishable even when pictures are exchanged between two consensual teens because the pictures don’t usually stop at the one person. They are typically distributed further.

School violence on social media includes videos of fights. When someone wants to send out a school threat, they have instant exposure to their peer group with social media, better than a billboard. He also noted that after extreme cases of school violence, it is not uncommon for the victims to have some level of fame on social media.

Heather Hare worked as a K-12 counselor prior to joining the Social Sentinel, which is a threat alert company that partners with schools and social media platforms and uses advanced algorithms to listen to threats online and inform the school. These threats can happen to anyone, anywhere and anytime. She said this type of monitoring is like looking for needles in a digital haystack. Social media is the world’s largest spoken language. Social Sentinel uses only public data to monitor (not Big Brother).

She said it is not enough to rely only on “See Something, Say Something.” The wrong people are intercepting the messages and not properly reporting them. 12 to 22 year olds are not reporting. Early detection is key. They try to catch problems while they are a spark, not a fire. She used an example of a pharmacy employee who was stealing and selling Adderall on social media and nobody was reporting it.

#### COUNCIL Q & A/COMMENTS

Are there current efforts in place with using ads on social media about the dangerous effects of it? ~like the Surgeon General’s warning on cigarettes

No. The directed audience is really the parents. They need to be educated and active on the platforms their children are using.

How do we reach students effectively about the dangers?

Jaiven: We simply don’t want to listen to adults.

Shelly: Like Sex Education, the school can teach them what it is, but the parents must teach the morals involved. Pregnancy happens the same way it always has, but these platforms are always changing.

Martin: Volume of incidents has increased in the last 2 months; masking IP addresses, ghost accounts. Social Media companies make money keeping their clients (youth) happy by protecting their identity. Obtaining search warrants is a lengthy process, and the new cases keep coming in piling on.

\*Early Intervention & Early Preservation key to building a case

\*When people make school threats, they WANT them to be heard. They don’t go from 0-60. They plant seeds along the way.

Lisa: We see school threats go viral. Why do youth believe them and pass them on without reporting them?

Javen A: We don't like to talk to authorities. We prefer to keep to ourselves. We are fascinated by them.

\*We try to educate parents about SM with seminars like Family University and through PTA, but the parent audience that shows up is not usually the targeted audience.

\*This generation has a strong opposition to being labeled a "snitch."

\*Could we use a youth to adult mentoring strategy? (Possible Actionable?)

\*Could we use youth to create a clever, creative, deliverable and receivable message about the dangers? (Teen to teen)

Is there a way for parents to find ghost accounts?

Jaiven: No.

\*We need to teach good digital citizenship for people of all ages.

Barry: What would prevent you from reporting to tip line?

Javen: When one goes down, many go down. We don't want to be a snitch.

\*If you tag something as inappropriate, obtain a screenshot first or tell law enforcement BEFORE you tag. Once the platform removes it, it's very difficult to prove.