



RE: Sherwood iPad Registration

From: Joe Sawyer <jsawyer@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us>

To: Rashmi Pitre

Sent: Friday, August 10, 2012

Subject: Re: Sherwood iPad Registration

Dear Rashmi & Subramaniam,

Thank you for meeting with me on July 20 to discuss your concerns regarding WiFi and our iPad program at Sherwood Middle School.

As we discussed, I have done the following since that time:

- I watched the online video of the panel discussion at Columbia University
- I conducted further research
- I spoke with our Director of Technology

After further research and reflection, I have not changed my conclusion that there is no convincing evidence that WiFi signals pose a health issue in our schools. I also considered your suggestions that we take precautionary measures such as turning devices/WiFi off when not in use, ensuring that devices are not on students' laps for extended periods of time, etc. Given that I can find no recommendations from international or national health organizations or from hospitals regarding such precautionary measures, I do not think this is necessary.

I recognize that you disagree and wish for us to take a precautionary approach (as some schools and institutions have in other countries) because no one can guarantee 100% safety. As I indicated in our meeting, I believe the health of our students and staff is our top priority, and my own daughter is a student at Sherwood who will participate in the iPad program, so I would be inclined to take precautions if a significant risk were present. It seems clear to me that the scientific and health community, based on the weight of the evidence from thousands of studies, does not see WiFi use as a threat to health, and as such our schools will continue to utilize WiFi to connect wireless devices and computers to the Internet. As I expressed to you in our meeting, students will not be utilizing the devices all day long, but even if they were the level of RF exposure would still be within established guidelines.

I do appreciate your bringing your concerns to my attention. While my answer is not what you wanted, I hope you feel that you were listened to and that I took the time to look into your concerns.

Respectfully,

Joe Sawyer

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Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Shrewsbury Public Schools

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On Jul 13, 2012, at 3:35 PM, Rashmi Pitre wrote:

Thanks for your response Dr. Sawyer.

We would like to meet with you next week. Please let us know what days/times work for you.

regards

Rashmi and Subramaniam

From: Joe Sawyer <jsawyer@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us>

To: Rashmi Pitre

Cc: Mary Beth Banios <mbanios@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us>; Jonathan Green <jgreen@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us>; Jane Lizotte <jlizotte@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us>; Kimberlee Cantin <kcantin@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us>

Sent: Tuesday, July 10, 2012

Subject: Re: Sherwood iPad Registration

Dear Rashmi & Subramaniam,

Thank you for your inquiry.

I reviewed the links you sent; I did not have time to watch the video but I read the articles. It was interesting to me that in the newspaper article it indicated that the recommendation by the Council of Europe was made in direct contradiction to the World Health Organization and the Health Protection Agency recommendations based on studies. I did some quick searches and found the links below, which indicate that WiFi exposure is much less than cell phone or FM radio exposure and that there is no evidence indicating health issues caused by WiFi. I also am aware that world class hospitals here in Massachusetts have many WiFi connections running constantly, which I doubt would be the case if the scientific and health community was concerned about WiFi causing health problems. Our schools have had wireless environments for many years at this point, and we will continue with this given that the leading scientific health organizations in the world do not agree with those you cite. For ease of reference, I have copied the conclusion of the HPA study from this past April after the links below.

I will be happy to meet with you if you wish to discuss further -- please let me know if you wish to make an appointment and my assistant, Kim, will contact you. I will be at a conference the rest of this week, so next week will be the soonest I could meet if our schedules have mutual availability.

Respectfully,

Joe Sawyer

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Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools Shrewsbury Public Schools [100 Maple Avenue Shrewsbury, MA 01545](mailto:100%20Maple%20Avenue%20Shrewsbury%2C%20MA%2001545) 508-841-8400 Fax 508-841-8490 schools.shrewsbury-ma.gov

Links:

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs304/en/index.html>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/6677051.stm>

http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1317133827077

Conclusions

The quantity, and in general quality, of research published on the potential health effects of RF field exposure has increased substantially since AGNIR last reviewed this subject. Population exposure to RF fields has

become more widespread and heterogeneous. There are still limitations to the published research that preclude a definitive judgement, but the evidence considered overall has not demonstrated any adverse health effects of RF field exposure below internationally accepted guideline levels. There are possible effects on EEG patterns, but these have not been conclusively established, and it is unclear whether such effects would have any health consequences. There is increasing evidence that RF field exposure below guideline levels does not cause symptoms and cannot be detected by people, even by those who consider themselves sensitive to RF fields. The limited available data on other non-cancer outcomes show no effects of RF field exposure. The accumulating evidence on cancer risks, notably in relation to mobile phone use, is not definitive, but overall is increasingly in the direction of no material effect of exposure. There are few data, however, on risks beyond 15 years from first exposure.

In summary, although a substantial amount of research has been conducted in this area, there is no convincing evidence that RF field exposure below guideline levels causes health effects in adults or children.

On Jun 27, 2012, at 12:43 PM, Rashmi Pitre wrote:

Hello,

We are parents of a 5th grader(6th grade in fall) and we are seriously concerned about this program - not for any of the reasons discussed on your website but because of the constant and uncontrolled exposure of young kids and staff to Wi-Fi. There have been several health studies in this area by experts - I have cited some of these below.. Several schools in Canada for example are banning use of Wi-Fi on school campuses. The council of Europe with 47 member states has passed a resolution calling on governments to "take all reasonable measures to reduce exposure to electromagnetic fields" from mobile phones and similar devices, including the ban in schools. New RF study reports have come out recently questioning if the current allowed exposure limits even make sense since health risks are associated with much lower exposure numbers.

My husband and I are computer engineers and working in this field for over 20 years and yet our home is "wired" not "wireless". Unfortunately, we have no control over what our children get exposed to in a school setting. Based on the recommendations in your FAQ, families are being encouraged to install Wi-Fi at homes to get the kids to complete their homework. We understand that wireless is a big convenience. However, it shouldn't take precedence over the health and safety of the children and staff. Children, especially have been identified as being more sensitive to the adverse effects of this.

It is not very easy to make a case for this since the health effects are slow and long term. However, with more and more data being available on this, we don't think it should be ignored. I would like to request you to please take a few minutes to look at the few links and presentations below especially the second one which has a lot of supporting scientific data. We would like to request a meeting with you following this to talk about our concerns.

<http://www.naturetech.com.au/emr-issues/wireless-lan-a-dect-dangers/29-wifi-in-schools-proven-to-be-dangerous.html>

<http://vimeo.com/8521392>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/mobile-phones/8514380/Ban-mobile-phones-and-wireless-networks-in-schools-say-European-leaders.html>

<http://www.heartmdinstitute.com/wireless-safety/why-get-wired-schools>

thanks and regards
Rashmi and Subramaniam Aiylam

From: SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS <email@blackboardconnect.com>

To: [Rashmi Pitre](#)

Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2012

Subject: Sherwood iPad Registration

A message from SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 19, 2012

Dear Incoming Fifth & Sixth Grade Families,

As promised, we have now activated the enrollment process for iPad options for next year. I am asking that you log in to your PowerSchool Parent Portal at <https://ps.shrewsbury.k12.ma.us/public/> **by June 29** in order to make a choice and sign up for an iPad orientation/pick up session. The Parent Portal is the same place where you registered for the bus; if you have difficulties accessing the portal, please send a message to powerschoolaccounts@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us.

Please note the following information:

1) We are asking that all of next year's Sherwood students attend one of the iPad orientation sessions in late August with a parent/legal guardian, no matter which option you choose (including the school only option). We recommend that siblings not attend these sessions so that you and your child can focus on the orientation information.

2) At the orientation sessions, those choosing the take home option will set up and receive their iPads. Those choosing the bring your own option need to bring the iPad to be set up in our management system, while those choosing the school only option will set up the device they will use at school. Set up will include learning about expectations for use, creating a student email account and a student Apple ID, enrolling in the app management system, and receiving information on effective management of the device at home.

3) Orientation sessions will be in two-hour blocks, but we only expect the process to last one hour or less. Please plan on arriving any time during the first hour of the two-hour session.

Dates and times will be:

August 22, 23, & 24 -- three sessions each day: 7:30am-9:30am, 11:30am-1:30pm, and 4:00pm-6:00pm

August 25 (Saturday) -- three sessions: 9:00am-11:00am, 11:00am-1:00pm, and 1:00pm-3:00pm

We will provide information later this summer for families who are away during these dates regarding alternate arrangements.

4) If you are selecting the take home or bring your own options, payment of the fee will be due at the orientation session in August.

5) If you have questions about the iPad program or your options, please review our iPad program information on our web site at <http://tinyurl.com/spsipad> (Some additional information has been added to this page, including more detailed data regarding our pilot program this year.)

6) For further questions, please contact Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent, at mbanios@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us or Jon Green, Director of Technology, at jgreen@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us

It will be extremely helpful to us if you register your choice of options and for an orientation session as soon as possible, and prior to June 29. Thanks so much for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Joe Sawyer
Superintendent of Schools