

**Virtual Curriculum and Achievement Subcommittee Report
Thursday, May 7, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA**

Called for the purpose of receiving updates from the administration on two topics: the district's approach to student screen time and the status of advanced learning programming.

Subcommittee Members Present: Member Hudson (Co-Chair), Vice Chair Dube (Co-Chair)

Other Members Present: Member Jaikumar, Chair Weinstein

Also Present: Jaime Frost, Principal of Tobin Montessori; Dr. Heather Francis, Executive Director of Academics, Sarah Blout Rosenberg; Instructional Technology Specialist

Co-Chair Hudson started the meeting at 4:30 p.m. by confirming the call of the meeting and welcomed the group.

Co-Chair Hudson opened the floor for public comment. Given the time constraints, each speaker was allotted three minutes. The following caregiver and community member, Nina Mitchell shared the following sentiments:

- Discussed the need for greater flexibility in middle school advanced learning opportunities, particularly in math and world languages, and encouraged the district to consider more adaptable scheduling models similar to those used at CRLS
- Emphasized that students with advanced learning needs should have opportunities for acceleration and differentiated instruction without barriers related to scheduling logistics

Co-Chair Dube turned the meeting over to Dr. Heather Francis who provided a presentation on an Update of Screen Time Usage which can be found on this [website](#).

During the presentation, Dr. Francis shared the following highlights regarding screen time usage:

- Purpose and scope of the screen time usage study, including understanding how, when, and why screens are used across CPS classrooms
- Data collection methods, including Chromebook usage data, classroom observations, student focus groups, teacher surveys, and principal input sessions
- Analysis of instructional vs. non-instructional screen use across grade levels, with emphasis that not all screen time is equal
- Emerging findings related to high-quality screen use, variation across classrooms, non-screen instructional time, and family requests for greater transparency and guidance
- Draft recommendations focused on clearer district expectations, educator support, protecting non-screen learning time, streamlining digital tools, and strengthening family partnerships
- Next steps, including completion of the analysis and presentation of the full report to the School Committee on May 19, 2026

Co-Chair Hudson opened the floor for questions and input from the committee. **Co-Chair Hudson** asked for examples of non-instructional screen use and how to communicate this effectively.

Dr. Francis discussed findings from the district's screen time study, noting that screen usage generally increased by grade level and that most usage in elementary grades was instructional in nature. She emphasized the importance of distinguishing between passive and active screen use and ensuring technology use remains purposeful, standards-aligned, and developmentally appropriate. Principal Jamie Frost discussed how technology usage differs within Montessori classrooms and emphasized the importance of school-based communication with families regarding expectations for screen use. Sarah Blout Rosenberg discussed the role of instructional technology specialists in supporting appropriate technology use, monitoring student activity, and helping educators establish consistent technology expectations across schools. She highlighted school-based "TechSpectations" guidelines used with students and families and discussed collaboration with ICTS to address inappropriate website access and improve digital safety practices.

Dr. Francis then presented an update regarding advanced learning programming and implementation efforts following policy changes adopted during the previous school year which can be found on this [website](#).

Highlights of the advanced learning presentation include:

- Use of multiple measures, including i-Ready, MCAS, educator recommendations, and caregiver input, to identify students for advanced learning supports
- Expansion of advanced learning opportunities in mathematics through enrichment activities, Math Olympiad, Beast Academy, Art of Problem-Solving resources, and personalized learning supports
- Midyear data indicating positive student growth among identified advanced learners
- Ongoing family engagement efforts, including caregiver webinars and partnerships with C.A.L.A. Plans to continue refining identification practices, strengthening partnerships, and building educator capacity to support advanced learners

Co-Chair Hudson asked about the variability in implementation across schools and classrooms. Dr. Francis and Principal Frost discussed the importance of teacher capacity and the need for sustainable and manageable interventions. The group emphasized the need for clear communication and support for teachers to effectively implement advanced learning programs. Dr. Francis outlined plans for the next year, including extending identification to grades K-2 and exploring partnerships with external organizations. The group discussed the importance of sharing successful instructional practices across schools, including elements of the Montessori model such as student independence and differentiated learning approaches. Discussion emphasized the need to support advanced learners with varying levels of academic and social-emotional needs, including students requiring tier three supports.

Chair Weinstein highlighted the need to support educators in effectively differentiating instruction across the district. He acknowledged that while some schools are doing well, there is room for improvement in consistency. **Chair Weinstein** emphasized the importance of addressing advanced learning needs as a tier one commitment and noted that some students may need multiple types of supports and opportunities.

Co-Chair Hudson concluded the meeting by thanking the team. The meeting concluded at 6:00 p.m.