

## **BOARD AGENDA ITEM**

October 27, 2026

### **SUBJECT:**

School-Based Mental Health Update

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

This update is intended to keep the Board informed of the status of school-based mental health opportunities available to students and families.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:**

The Division of Operations and Student Services has evaluated the plan and finds it to be consistent with district goals.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and accept the status update as presented.

### **PREPARED BY:**

Tim Yarborough  
Carl White  
Sharon Donovan



# AIKEN COUNTY

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Mental Health Provider Update



# Current Partnership

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## Aiken Barnwell Mental Health

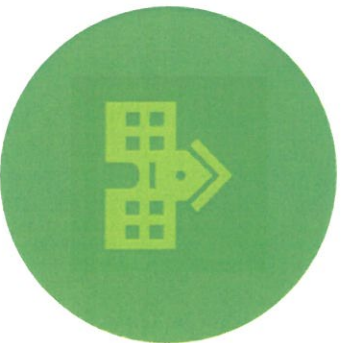
Long-standing local  
partners

Contracted for 17  
counselors with 8  
currently in schools

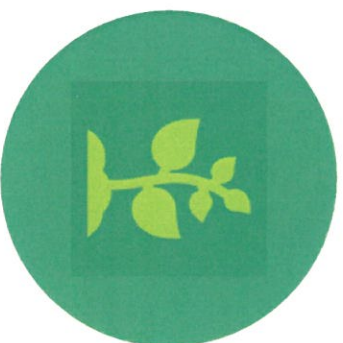
Maintain caseloads  
of 25-60 students  
per counselor

# Opportunities for Growth

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Need coverage for all  
schools



Build a sustainable  
model that can grow  
with district needs



Need to expand to a  
second partner who  
will recruit additional  
counselors

# Stepping Stones

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## **Request for Information:**

Our panel reviewed three providers and unanimously selected The Stepping Stones Group.

## **Selection considerations included:**

- No cost to ACPSD
- Experience providing school-based mental health services
- Ability to customize recruitment to ACPSD schools
- Provide in-person services on school campuses
- Coordinate all insurance, billing, and intake forms with parents
- Collaborate with school staff and families
- Oversight of licensure and qualifications of mental health professionals

# Service Areas

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## **Initial recommended service areas:**

Busbee Elementary, A.L. Corbett Middle School, Wagener-Salley High School  
Ridge Spring Monetta Elementary/Middle/High

## **Expansion approach:**

New Ellenton and Jackson schools are a possible expansion area.

ABMH currently serves Jackson Middle and Silver Bluff High School.

Goal to keep one provider in each school within the same feeder pattern.

ABMH will continue to serve Aiken, North Augusta and Midland Valley area schools.

# Timeline

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**October 16:** Finalize and execute contract with Stepping Stones

**October 19–23:** Meet with principals and school counselors to identify school needs and recruitment priorities.

**October 26–December 4:** Recruitment and onboarding period, including:

- Background checks and credential/licensure verification
- Provider onboarding and required training
- Establishing school/provider communication processes
- Gathering initial student referrals from schools

**Early December:** Official launch

**January–February 2027:** Assess initial implementation, referrals, and school feedback; identify opportunities for expansion into additional schools.



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