

# Update on Mental Health & Social Emotional Supports in Schools

Presented to the ACPS School Board: July 16th, 2026

Presented by:

Dr. Kecia Lipscomb

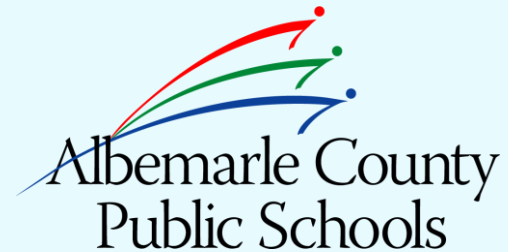
Prepared by:

Dr. Kecia Lipscomb

Dr. Russell Rusty Carlock

Danelle Livingston

Cabell Guy



# Strategic Plan: Learning for All

## VISION

Our learners are engaged in authentic, challenging, and relevant learning experiences, becoming lifelong contributors and leaders in our dynamic and diverse society.

## MISSION

Working together as a team, we will end the predictive value of race, class, gender, and special capacities for our children's success through high-quality teaching and learning for all. We seek to build relationships with families and communities to ensure that every student succeeds.

**We will know every student.**

## VALUES

Equity  
Excellence  
Family and Community  
Wellness

## GOALS



Thriving Students



Affirming and Empowering Communities



Equitable, Transformative Resources

# Agenda

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# History of Social Emotional Learning Counselor/Coach

In 2024 staff who held the position of SEL Coach or SEL Counselor were notified that by 2028 staff must acquire the necessary credentials to become a certified Mental Health Support Specialist. Staff have been given four years to fulfill the credential requirements for the position. Staff who do not meet the requirements for the Mental Health Support Specialist position by 2028, will receive reduction in force notification with the timeline for licensed employees during the 2027 -2028 school year.

# QUALIFICATIONS

|                    | School Counselor                                                             | Mental Health Support (MHSS)                                                                        | Social Emotional Learning Coach/Counselor                |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Degree             | Master's Degree in School Counseling                                         | Master's degree in social work, Counseling, Psychology, Human Services, or a closely related field. | Bachelor's degree, or related experience.                |
| License/Credential | Licensure in the State of Virginia with an endorsement in School Counseling. | Licensure or certification as required by the state of Virginia for the assigned discipline.        | Qualified Mental Health Professional Certification (VDH) |

# Current Data

**As a result of current staff obtaining their credentials to obtain a licensed role of Mental Health Support Specialist, we currently have 21 licensed Mental Health Support Specialists in 24 of our schools.**

| Level      | MHSS (Licensed) | SEL (Credentialed) |
|------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Elementary | 9               | 1                  |
| Middle     | 5               | N/A                |
| High       | 7               | 1                  |

- The 2 Centers currently do not have the position but have a full time School Counselor.
- We currently have 1 MHSS or 6 SEL staff that are working toward their licensing.

# School Support Roles & Title Change

- School Counselor
- Mental Health Support Specialist
- Student Support Liaison - formerly SEL Coach

# **Delineation of Duties, Boundaries & Documentation**

# SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Va. Code § 22.1-291.1:1.

## Academic & Career Scope



- Coordinates the developmental program targeting the entire student population. Directs academic pathways, career navigation, and universal social-emotional growth.
- Leads systemic Tier 1 advisory curriculum development.
- Conducts brief, solution-focused coping interventions.
- Manages standard student scheduling and parent consultations.

## Boundary Compliance



- Ensures that regular student check-ins strictly conform to ACPS 1:1 guidelines.
- **Space Visibility:** Meets in open-door or window-uncovered administrative spaces.
- **Written Notice:** Communicates with parent/guardian in writing prior to non-emergency 1:1 sessions.
- Maintains notes and documentation in Branching Minds.

# MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

In collaboration with the School Counselor and school staff, their focus is on targeted Tier 2 and Tier 3 therapeutic and psychological interventions.

- **Clinical Competency:** Specializes in managing chronic behavioral, and developmental difficulties (e.g. trauma, anxiety).
- **Legitimate Health-related Reason:** Authorized for clinical 1:1 interactions to address medical-emotional welfare.
- **Safety Spaces:** Meet in secure, private, yet physically observable designated spaces.
- *All sessions must be fully logged in Branching Minds and accessible to administrators or designee.*

# School Support Liaisons – *formerly SEL*

## Tier 1 Support

- Greet students during morning arrival and build positive connections.
- Check in with small groups of students who have attendance or behavioral goals.
- Assist teachers with classroom transitions and positive behavior reinforcement.
- Supervise common areas and promote respectful interactions.
- Help facilitate restorative conversations between students.
- Contact families regarding attendance or school events as directed.
- Organize student recognition activities and assist with school wide events.
- Document in Branching Minds student interactions and communicate with counselors or administrators.

## Isolation Prevention

- Maintains strict compliance by avoiding unnecessary individual private contact with students.
- **Non-Clinical Scope:** SSL do not assess or diagnose clinical distress.
- **Group-First Direct Action:** Works in highly collaborative or visible classroom settings. 1:1 interactions are rare and must be documented.

# DELINEATION MATRIX

|                        | School Counselor                                                                            | Mental Health Support (MHSS)                          | School Support Liaison                                  |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Primary Tier</b>    | Tier 1(Universal)& Tier 2                                                                   | Tier 2 & Tier 3(Intensive)                            | Tier 1(Systemic / Core classroom)                       |
| <b>Core Scope</b>      | Academic, social, career pathing, short development                                         | Therapeutic clinical support, trauma, crisis          | Supporting teachers/staff/students, behavioral modeling |
| <b>1:1 Interaction</b> | Career, academic, social, check-ins                                                         | Mental Health-Related Reason                          | Extremely Rare / Work-group context                     |
| <b>Approved Space</b>  | Open-door / window-uncovered office                                                         | Designated health / clinic /classroom or office space | Classroom / office or observed environment              |
| <b>Tracking Needed</b> | <b>Session log,notes, meetings, attachments, other related documents. – BRANCHING MINDS</b> |                                                       |                                                         |

# DOCUMENTATION - BRANCHING MINDS

- All three roles will record interactions with students in Branching Minds. Branching minds will automatically record the date of the meeting (s). Staff will record the purpose of the meeting (s), notes from the meeting (s), who attended the meeting (s), they can add supporting documents, log family communication, types of services provided, and it includes instructional information to include assessments, progress and next steps for students.

# **Supervision of Duties & Standard Operating Procedures**

# SUPERVISION

## Division Supervision

The Coordinator of Counseling & Wellness will train, conduct learning walks and supervise the work of MHSS & SSL staff. Monthly monitoring of Branching Minds.

## Division Supervision

Superintendent will review documentation quarterly.

## Building Supervision

The Building Principal will monitor log entries in Branching Minds weekly, manage safe physical meeting spaces, and handle first-level compliance reviews.

## Division Supervision

Executive Director will review audits of logs, feedback from learning walks, and training plans to ensure monthly compliance and oversight of staff.

# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES



## Visual Proximity

Every individual meeting must occur in spaces easily observable from halls. Keep doors physically open or windows uncovered.



## Notification

Inform all parents/guardians of the services provided and the parameters under which any one-on-one meetings take place.



## Rigorous Logging

Each interaction which will be documented in Branching Minds.

# Questions/Discussion

