**Meeting Notes**
**Superintendent's Health Advisory Council**
**Monday, October 27, 2025**
**6:00 pm to 7:00 pm**

**Welcome and introductions** **Dr. Kim Moore**

**Review of minutes from last meeting** **Dawn MacAdams**

**Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Students** **Abby Cobb, Matt Sherman**

In partnership with our Learning Support Services (LSS), Richland Two added Stepping Stones to our already established partnership with Columbia Area Mental Health (CAMH) in providing direct, school-based mental health services to students during the school day. We have grown from serving 12 schools last year to 27 schools this year with school-based mental health services. There are now seven therapists from CAMH serving our middle schools, high schools, and our Behavior Support Programs (BSP), and three therapists from Stepping Stones providing direct services to Medicaid-eligible students in nine Title 1 elementary schools.

Lightspeed Alert is Richland Two's AI-assisted, early detection tool for monitoring student online activity for signs of self-harm, violence, and bullying was activated about six weeks ago. These procedures are in line with district protocols, including Suicide Prevention, Behavior Threat Assessment & Management (BTAM), Bullying and Harassment, and Mandated Reporting. We have established procedures for immediate notification of district administrators and district safety 24/7 for high-level threats, and a referral to administrators and LSS teams for follow-up the next school day for low or medium-level threats.

Dr. Greenhouse questioned how to notify the schools about a student's mental health concern in the office. The suggestion was made for the office nurse to reach out to the school nurse, who can then work with the school's LSS team to refer the student for school-based services, Family Intervention Services, etc. We also discussed the crisis units that come to the student's location for assessment and potential court-ordered emergency evaluation.

**Chronic Absenteeism Update** **Abby Cobb**

A student is considered chronically absent when they miss 10% of the school year, which is just 18 school days. Richland Two had an overall chronic absenteeism rate of 16.76 % for 2024-2025, down from 18.93% for 2023-2024. These small but steady decreases are more sustainable as we change the culture of school attendance.

**Food Insecurity** **Abby Cobb, Dr. Kim Moore, Dr. Debbie Greenhouse**

Richland Two has a 64% poverty index. With the federal government shutdown, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are set to expire on October 31, 2025. Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Benefits will continue in November 2025.

There is growing concern about student access to food. With the long Thanksgiving Break coming in a few short weeks, students will be out of school for 10 days and without the support of school meals. Richland Two currently has 25 schools where all students receive free breakfast and lunch. Richland Two is working on a plan to accept donations and distribute food.

In addition to Harvest Hope, the United Way, and the SC DSS Access map, Dr. Greenhouse mentioned findhealth.org as another resource to assist families with all types of needs.

**Immunizations** **Dawn MacAdams**

This year, we have a decrease in the number of students without an immunization on the 45th day after school starts. We went from 1622 students last year to 1026 students this year. This comes at a cost of an increase in the number of students with a Religious Exemption. There were 452 Religious Exemptions last year and 619 students this year. This comes in the midst of vaccine hesitancy and the access to the Religious Exemption online with the Department of Public Health. Parents no longer need to go to the health department, learn about vaccine-preventable illnesses, and obtain a Religious Exemption.

Dr. Greenhouse suggested educating parents that if their child has a Religious Exemption and is exposed to a case of Measles, their child will be quarantined/ excluded from school for 21 days post-exposure. If the student returns to school and is re-exposed, the student will be quarantined for another 21 days. This will also have an impact on the parents' ability to go to work. There are also exclusion requirements for exposure to Varicella (chicken pox) and Whooping cough (pertussis).

Access to vaccines can be a barrier, with appointment times with the health department being 6-8 weeks out. Lillian Hill with Publix Pharmacy said they can vaccinate children ages 3- 15 with a prescription, and those over 16 without a prescription.

**Health Services** **Dawn MacAdams**

Our health rooms remain busy with nearly 13,000 students seen and returned to class in August and September alone. This does not include the 633 students sent home ill or injured, or the 15 EMS/ emergent calls. Last year, close to 93,000 students were seen in the health room and sent back to class, 6600 students were sent home ill or injured, and 100 students were sent for emergent care by EMS or parent transport.

**Cleanliness of Bathrooms** **Student Representatives, Dr. Moore, Will Anderson, Group**

High school student representatives from Ridge View High, Blythewood High, and Westwood High each shared concerns about the condition of the restrooms in their schools. They recognize the efforts of district custodial staff in working to keep the restrooms clean, but shortly after they are cleaned, students go in and "trash" them. The students are concerned about the graffiti on the walls, stall doors, and soap dispensers being tampered with and destroyed, with one student stating a toilet had been ripped from the wall.

Students were encouraged to take their concerns and ideas of improvement back to their principal and administrative team, but we are available if they still feel unsuccessful in having their voice heard. Suggestions were made for the student council to develop an "adopt a restroom" or other ideas to increase student pride and care of the school. Dr. Moore mentioned that while she was a principal, students adopted a restroom and decorated it with paint and different sayings on the walls. Over time, student pride and care of the restrooms increased.

We discussed handwashing as a means to stop the transmission of illness, but it is in fact the friction developed when washing your hands that cleans them, not the soap alone. Friction from rubbing your hands together lifts dirt, grease, and microbes from the skin's surface, while soap acts as a surfactant to help trap and wash away these contaminants with running water.

**Closing Remarks** **Dr. Kim Moore**

**Respectfully Submitted**
**Dawn MacAdams, MSN, RN, NCSN**