



Feb. 9, 2026

Subject: School-Based Mental Health Clinicians/Opposition to Proposed Cuts

Dear Members of the Hanover County School Board,

On behalf of the members of Hanover County NAACP, I am writing to urge you to reconsider the Hanover County Public Schools' proposed budget and the planned reduction in school-based mental health clinicians. Under the current proposal, staffing would drop from seven clinicians serving all middle and high schools to just three countywide. This would severely diminish a service that has shown documented benefits for our students.

Hanover's in-school clinician-led mental health program was spotlighted as a great success in the Jan. 25, 2026, *Here In Hanover* e-newsletter. The piece included the measurable positive outcomes that prove the need for this program as it exists now.

Between August 2023 and September 2024:

- **250 students were referred to CSB clinicians for short-term counseling, and 195 of those students transitioned to ongoing support in the community.**
 - There were **over 33,000 student interactions** with the program — including calming room visits, classroom lessons, lunchtime engagement, and clinician support in elementary through high schools.
 - **3,350 students received classroom lessons on signs of suicide and depression, and 4,133 faculty members completed the same training.**
- These figures show not just utilization but meaningful engagement that builds awareness and coping skills our students need.

Our standard school counselors are essential, but they are not trained or resourced to provide the clinical therapeutic services these clinicians do. CSB clinicians remove access barriers by being on-site and available when students need help most. Their presence directly supports suicide prevention, boosts attendance, and improves academic engagement.

Maintaining funding for school-based clinicians isn't just fiscally responsible — it's an investment in the well-being, safety, and future success of Hanover's students. As part of our mission, The Hanover County NAACP has long advocated for and supported accessible mental health services, especially those in our public schools. We ask that HCPS find a way to keep this important program funded and robustly staffed for the benefit of all HCPS students.

Thank you for your work and your consideration.

Sincerely,
Ms. Patricia Hunter-Jordan

President, Hanover NAACP

