



SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS

&

SAFE CENTERS

DeKalb County School District

February 2026 Board Presentation

School-Based Health Centers

A National Movement Since 1967

1967: The Beginning

Dr. Phil Porter created the first SBHC in Cambridge, MA while serving as Chief of Pediatrics at Cambridge Hospital and faculty at Harvard Medical School.

Nationwide Growth

Since 1994, comprehensive SBHCs have increased 5-fold. Today, 3,900 SBHCs serve students across the nation.

The Mission

Initially developed to increase healthcare access for adolescents facing financial barriers, confidentiality concerns, and limited parental involvement. Elementary SBHCs emerged as early intervention became recognized as key to preventing problems at higher grade levels.



Georgia's SBHC Pioneers

Dr. George Brumley & Dr. Veda Johnson

1994

Whitefoord Elementary

Georgia's first SBHC under Dr. Brumley (retired Chair of Pediatrics, Emory) and Dr. Johnson (Assistant Professor, Emory)

1999

Coan Middle School Health Center

For 14 years, these were Georgia's only two SBHCs

Key Accomplishments

- ✓ Increased access to physical, mental & dental care
- ✓ Higher immunization rates
- ✓ Improved attendance & performance
- ✓ Better outcomes for chronic illnesses
- ✓ Greater parental involvement
- ✓ Stronger community support



Core Tenets of SBHCs

School Integration

Located in schools or on school grounds, becoming an integral part of the educational environment

Comprehensive Services

Address physical and behavioral health needs through a full range of clinical services

Multidisciplinary Teams

Nurse practitioners, nurses, physician assistants, social workers, and physicians working together

Qualified Providers

Clinical services delivered through hospitals, health departments, or medical practices

Parental Consent

Written consent required from parents for students to receive services

Community Oversight

Advisory board with community representatives, parents, and youth providing guidance

Ultimate Goal: Address physical, mental, and social needs to maximize academic performance

DeKalb County SBHCs

Progress & Timeline

2018

Agreement between DeKalb County School District and Emory University for 6 SBHCs under Dr. Veda Johnson's leadership

2

CURRENTLY OPEN

Doraville United Elementary
McNair Discovery Learning Academy

2

OPENING OCT 2026

Stephenson Elementary
Oakview Elementary

4

OPENING OCT 2027

Four additional
elementary sites

6

IN DEVELOPMENT

Modular units
awaiting permits

Medical Sponsors: MedCura and Southside Medical



DeKalb County SBHCs

MedCura Data

August 2023-December 2025

Data from McNair Discovery Learning Academy and Doraville United Elementary

334

ASTHMA

McNair Discovery Learning Academy
August 2024-December 2025

185

ASTHMA

Doraville United Elementary
August 2023-December 2025

80

INFLUENZA

McNair Discovery Learning Academy
November 2024-December 2025

96

INFLUENZA

Doraville United Elementary
January 2024-December 2025

Medical Sponsors: MedCura and Southside Medical



Doraville United SBHC

Utilization Trends 2024-2025

265

Peak Month

September
2025

2,675

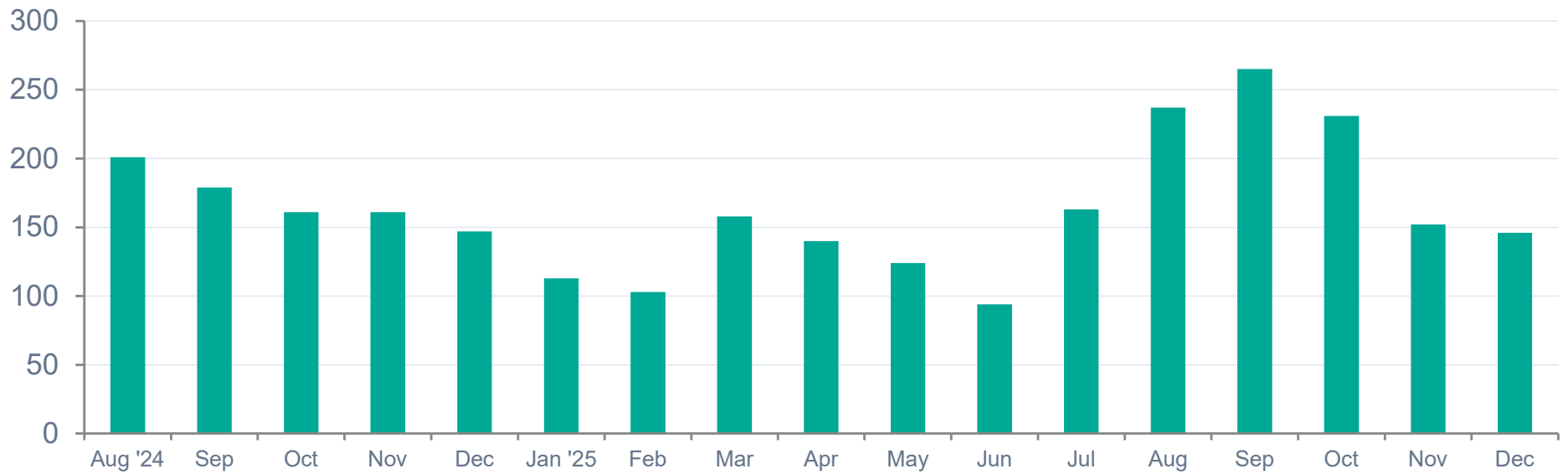
Total Encounters

17-month
period

157

Average/Month

Consistent use



Higher utilization at school year start, with natural decreases during breaks and testing periods

Doraville United School Based Health Center



McNair DLA SBHC

Utilization Trends 2024-2025

237

Peak Month

August 2025

2,067

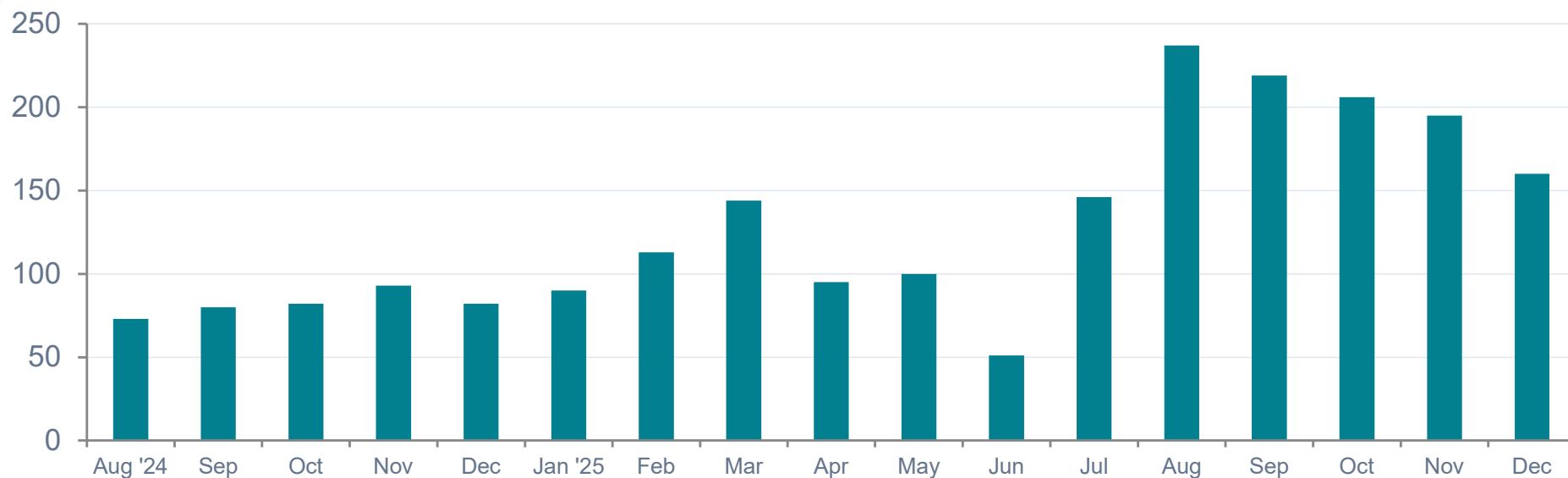
Total Encounters

17-month period

122

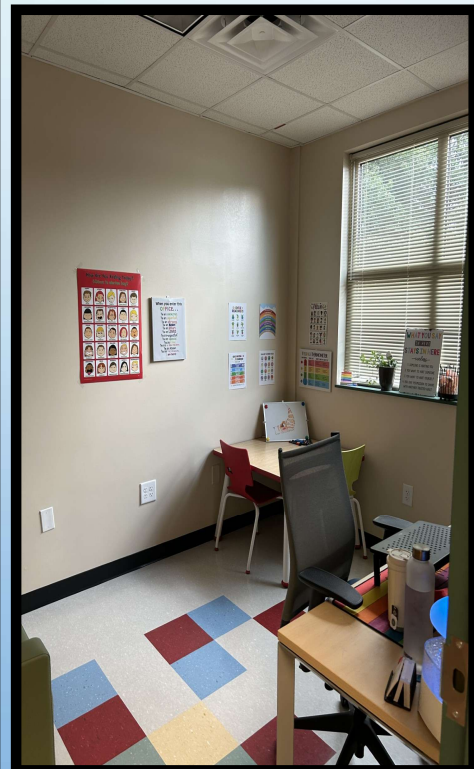
Average/Month

Steady growth



Utilization increased steadily as awareness grew, with peaks at school year start and allergy season

MCNAIR DLA SCHOOL BASED HEALTH CENTER





STUDENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT (SAFE) CENTERS

The Division of Wrap Around Services

SAFE Centers in Action

<https://youtu.be/P6ZLJpwCFMY>



What Are SAFE Centers?

The SAFE Centers are a collaboration of school services and community partnerships designed to equip our students academically, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally to be better scholars and productive citizens.

Two Core Service Areas

Family Support Services

- Kindness Closet (food, clothes, toiletries, school supplies)
- Wellness checks for students and families
- Family support for safety and stability
- Support group for teen parents

Social & Emotional Wellness

- Mental and emotional health counseling
- Discipline support through restorative practices
- Substance abuse/vaping and drug prevention
- Mentorship programs
- Life skills groups for student growth



SAFE Center Locations

8 High Schools Currently Serving Students

Cross Keys High School

McNair High School

Redan High School

Stone Mountain High School

Martin Luther King Jr. High School

Lithonia High School

Stephenson High School

Towers High School





Mental Health & Child Welfare

Referral Data Comparison

| Reason | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 (S1) |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Emotional/Mental Health | 1,461 | 1,351 | 1,486 | 1,023 |
| Suicidal Ideation | 690 | 611 | 563 | 294 |
| Abuse/Neglect | 909 | 894 | 857 | 387 |
| Homeless | 1,127 | 1,214 | 1,394 | 778 |
| Foster Care | 218 | 166 | 116 | 67 |
| Pregnancy | 66 | 51 | 47 | 28 |

Data reflects ongoing commitment to student mental health and family welfare support



SAFE Center Impact

2024-2025 Full Year Data

4,824

Student Contacts

2,640

Food Distribution Families

713

Food Pantry Visits

387

Parent Conferences

251

Hygiene Visits

171

Clothing Assistance

5,640

TOTAL INTERVENTIONS



SAFE Center Impact

2025-2026 Semester 1 Data

4,824

Student Contacts

2,640

Families at Food Distribution

713

Food Pantry Visits

387

Parent/Guardian Conferences

251

Hygiene Visits

182

Staff Conferences

171

Clothing Assistance

145

Partner Conferences

109

Mental Health Referrals

97

Student Groups

11

Parent Groups



Student Ambassador Program

Student Leadership & Peer Support

Student ambassadors are student leaders who represent the SAFE Center to students, families, staff, and visitors. They assist with tours, events, recruitment, community service, and maintain year-round knowledge of SAFE Center programs and services.

Qualities of Excellent Ambassadors

- ✓ Leadership abilities and capabilities
- ✓ Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- ✓ Enthusiastic, friendly, and approachable personality
- ✓ Punctual, flexible, and reliable
- ✓ Well presented with empathy and good judgment
- ✓ Good academic standing and time-management skills



Community Partnerships

Collaborative Network Supporting Students

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Girls Inc. of Greater Atlanta | Atlanta Vision Lions | Easton Banks (EBLLC) Project GRAPE | The Georgia Lions Lighthouse |
| SOC Integrated Services | Chris 180 | Pathways Transition Program | Positive Growth |
| Hazel Health | SKIP - Save Kids of Incarcerated Parents | Kate's Club | Atlanta Community Food Bank |
| AREACH | Desires to Change | Hope Hustlers | UCHAMP |
| Progress Place | Mimi's Yoga Kids | AFHK - The Blank Foundation | CARON |



Strategic Plan Alignment

Goal Area 5: Mental Health and Wellness

SAFE Centers directly align with Strategic Plan Goal Area 5 through comprehensive programming and coordinated wraparound services

Mental Health Partnership

Collaboration with mental health providers to deliver school-based services

Relationship Support

Addressing interpersonal relationships and social-emotional development

Substance Prevention

Vaping cessation and drug prevention programming

Basic Needs

Food, hygiene products, and school supplies to maintain student dignity

Ensuring students are supported, connected, and ready to learn

Challenges & Needs

Areas for Growth and Support

Funding

Sustained financial resources needed to maintain and expand services across all centers

Mental Health Capacity

Increased staffing and provider partnerships to meet growing student mental health needs

Space Limitations

Physical space constraints in some locations limit service delivery and programming

Data Platforms

Enhanced data systems to track outcomes, measure impact, and improve service coordination



Goals for 2026-2027

Building on Success

1

Expansion of Centers

Increase SAFE Center presence to serve more students and families across the district

2

Strengthen Ambassador Training

Enhanced development programs for student leaders to better represent and support centers

3

Increase Peer-Led Participation

Expand student-driven programming and peer support initiatives

4

Increase Partnerships

Develop new community and organizational relationships to broaden service offerings

5

Increase Awareness

Districtwide communication campaign to ensure all stakeholders know about SAFE Centers





Thank You

For Your Continued Support

Together, we are strengthening community partnerships and providing coordinated wraparound services that help our students feel supported, connected, and ready to learn.

Division of Wrap Around Services