

2025-27 State Budget Request

Prevention & Early Intervention Programs

Sustainable School-Based Mental Health Grants

Long-term sustainability of school mental health services depends on a permanent, continual commitment of state resources and parity insurance coverage.

Bipartisan support for school mental health grants over the past five legislative sessions has been critical to laying the foundation for school mental health. The last state budget provided funding for all school districts, but for some districts, it was significantly less than they had received through the previous school mental health grant program—and not enough to sustain programming. We know that school mental health works best when a student referred for individual therapy is able to access it quickly and conveniently at school.

Providing sustainable funding for school-based mental health and requiring changes to insurance coverage will result in more equitable access to services in Wisconsin.

What We Need to Grow School-Based Mental Health



Provide sustainable funding to every district based on student enrollment.

- Categorical aid enables schools to build on foundational community collaborations and provide for sustainable mental health programs in every district across the state.
- Providing funding through schools ensures that we reach all students and enables schools to work with families and the community to identify key partners.

Setting a floor of **\$100,000** per school district will ensure resources are sufficient to build and sustain a school mental health infrastructure.

In the absence of state budget action, school mental health grants will default to 2021-23 funding levels: **less than \$12 per student.**



Mandate insurance coverage for school-based mental health services and therapists-in-training.

- Across the board, schools identify lack of sufficient insurance coverage as a barrier to students accessing mental health services.
- Barriers include high deductibles, prior authorizations, and restricted networks that fail to include sufficient mental health providers. Insurance networks that don't recognize therapists in-training (QTTs) keep students from accessing services at their schools.

Medicaid reimburses for QTTs, but many **commercial insurance providers do not.**

Nearly **two-thirds of Wisconsin children** rely on employer-sponsored commercial health care.