

Support for All Students: Student Services Staff in K-12 Schools

All students have the option to meet with school counselors, psychologists, social workers and nurses in individual or group counseling sessions. Mental health services in the schools address barriers to access and promote good outcomes.^{1,2} Wisconsin does not collect statewide data on the number of sessions provided by the 4,455 student services staff.³

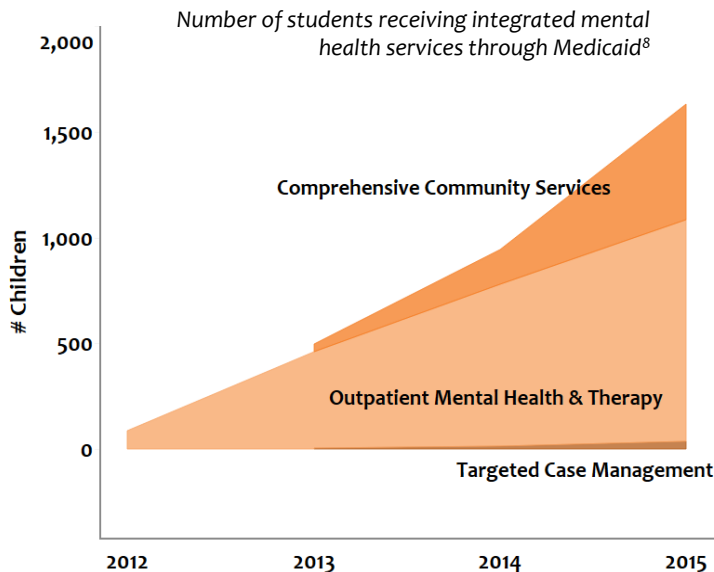
Additional activities promoting positive mental health:

- [Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports](#)
- [Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment \(S-BIRT\)](#)
- [Trauma Sensitive Practices](#)

Staff	Activities ⁴	WI Ratio ⁵	Ideal Ratio ⁶
School Counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide counseling • Provide academic/career planning • Consult with teachers/school staff 	458:1	250:1
School Psychologists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer psychological assessments • Support diverse learning/emotional needs • Implement school-wide mental health policies/practices 	979:1	600:1
School Nurses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect families with community resources • Partner on treatment plans and assist in addressing mental health challenges 	1,832:1	750:1
School Social Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for students and families • Provide counseling • Consult with teachers/school staff 	1,561:1	250:1

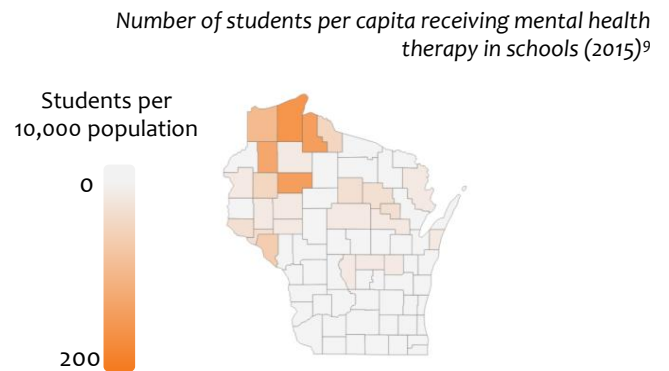
Counseling and Supports

Medicaid pays for many services delivered by community providers in the school setting.⁷



In the 2015/16 school year, Medicaid changed regulations related to mental health clinics and independent clinicians providing outpatient mental health services in schools resulting in enhanced school/mental health clinic collaborations.

Three times as many students were served by community providers integrated into schools in 2015 compared to two years earlier.



Not included in data: Students with private insurance or mental health services funded by philanthropies and foundations.

Key Findings

- School counselors, school nurses and school social workers are underrepresented in Wisconsin schools.
- Statewide school-based mental health services are not tracked.
- Three times as many students were served by community providers integrated into schools in 2015 compared to two years earlier.
- School-based mental health makes up a small percentage (<5%) of outpatient therapy and many counties have no schools offering these services (see Fact Sheet: Outpatient Mental Health Service Data for Children on Medicaid).

Mental Health Services in Schools (page 2)

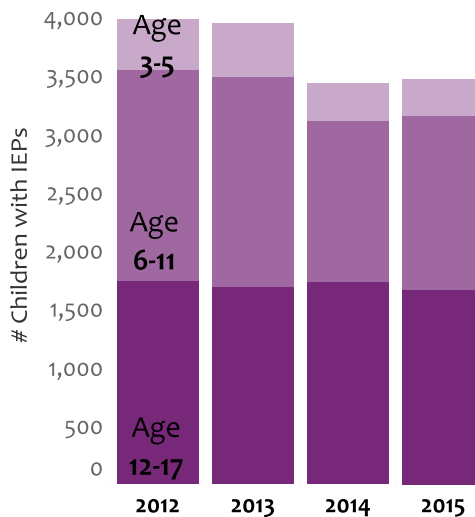
Medicaid-Funded School-Based Services¹⁰

Medicaid pays for assessment and counseling specifically for children with Individualized Education Plan (IEPs). Services are jointly paid for by federal Medicaid (60%) with the school or district paying the state Medicaid portion (40%), [unlike other services where state funds are used](#). Wisconsin pays \$340,000 on average per year for these school-based services, a figure that has decreased since 2012.

A few school districts regularly use this funding mechanism, but most do not. The number of children receiving Medicaid reimbursed IEP services decreased from 2012 to 2015. Additional training for staff and school leadership could increase schools' ability to use these funds to increase access to services.

★ **Good News!** School based mental health received \$6 million for school mental health initiatives funding in the 2018-2019 Wisconsin budget. ★

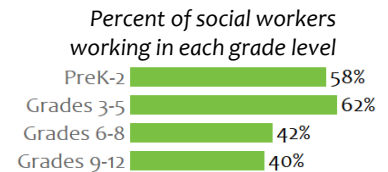
Number of children receiving Medicaid-reimbursed mental health IEP services by year¹¹



School Social Workers and Children's Mental Health¹²

A 2016 Wisconsin survey of 555 school social workers showed:

- School social workers identify mental health as their top responsibility.
- 27% have specialties in mental health or clinical practice.
- Over half of school social workers spend <30% of their time on special education, other time is spent addressing students' victimization, attendance issues, family challenges, juvenile justice, etc.
- Social workers are distributed across all grades and many report working at multiple grade levels (see below).



Family and Youth Voice¹³

While some parents and caregivers appreciate the convenience of mental health services in schools, others worry that school-based services will prevent them from being involved in planning and treatment. Some parents express frustration knowing that some schools offer mental health services while their children's schools do not.

References

1. Committee on School Health. (2004). School-based mental health services. *Pediatrics*, 113(6), 1839-1845.
2. Wolters Kluwer Health. (2017). *Mental health programs in schools: Growing body of evidence supports effectiveness*. ScienceDaily. Retrieved from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/08/1708170810173331.htm.
3. WI Department of Public Instruction. (2016). *Schools at a Glance*. Madison, WI. Retrieved 11/7/2017 from <https://dpi.wi.gov/wisedash/about-data/staff>.
4. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (2017). *School Social Work Roles*. Received from DPI 10/31/2017. All providers fulfil many duties, some of which are not listed here. More information found at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/pupil-services>.
5. WI Department of Public Instruction. (2016). *Staff by Ethnicity and Gender Report Statewide* [Data file]. Retrieved 11/7/2017 from dpi.wi.gov.
6. Bush, Kathryn. (2014). *School Based Mental Health Services: A Wisconsin Update*. Presentation for the Wisconsin Children and Youth Committee, 10/2/2014. Madison, WI.
7. Wisconsin Department of Health Services. (2012-2015). *Medicaid claims spending* [Data file]. Received 3/1/2017 from the Division of Medicaid Services.
8. IBID. Includes outpatient mental health therapy in the location "School". "Comprehensive Community Services" is a program for individuals needing ongoing mental health or substance use services. "Targeted Case Management" provides funding for services that assist in gaining access to services, including assessment and development of a care plan.
9. IBID
10. IBID. Medicaid pays for procedure code T1024, modifiers U1-U8, "School-based services: Assessment, IEP, and psychological services" for children with an IEP.
11. IBID
12. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (2016). *Longitudinal analysis of school social work practice in Wisconsin: Wisconsin school social worker survey – 1998-2016*. Madison, WI.
13. Children's Mental Health Collective Impact Parent and Youth Partners. For more information visit <https://children.wi.gov>.