



For Immediate  
Release:  
July 17, 2019



## School-Based Mental Health Grant will expand District services

*One in six. One in six students are receiving mental health services. And we anticipate that percentage to grow to one in five.*

In July 2018, we were one of 64 school districts and consortiums selected to share \$3.25 million in state grant funding to provide school-based mental health services. Because of that funding, the School District of Altoona was able to fill a Mental Health Coordinator position last September. We have also been able to see a significant reduction in the referral wait time for mental-health-services, an increase in the number of partner clinics and school based therapists (from three to five and three to seven, respectively), and at the primary level - discipline referrals have decreased significantly.

With the need for services continuing to grow, we are grateful to again be among the Wisconsin school districts receiving \$75,000, the maximum amount awarded in mental health grant funding for each of the 2019/20 and 2020/21 school years.

Student services director, Alan McCutcheon said, "This grant funding will allow us to increase our coordinator's role from about ten hours per week to around 30 hours per week, resulting in a greater capacity to integrate new clinics and therapists to our system and open up the availability of community mental health providers within our schools. It will also expand our ability to provide direct mental health services through district personnel, helping to cover students who are uninsured or underinsured. In short, we anticipate an increase in available services with a decrease in the time to coordinate these services for students."

"Investing in our children's mental health needs has become a must in today's world. Our school system is a key partner in helping each child grow and prosper to become successful adults. This grant will allow us to establish even deeper partnerships with providers to help reduce the expansive barriers associated with adolescent mental health. Our goal is to be a resource to our families, by helping them navigate the red tape and insurance issues associated with receiving mental health services for their children, right here at school. Watching a loved one suffer with mental health challenges is hard enough, we hope to make getting help just a little bit easier," said Dan Peggs, Superintendent.

Joyce Orth, Communications Coordinator  
School District of Altoona,  
[jorth@altoona.k12.wi.us](mailto:jorth@altoona.k12.wi.us) · 715-839-6032