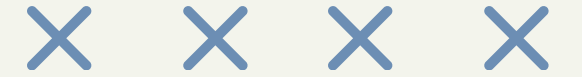




Mental Health in West Branch Schools

Camryn Adams, Joey Wroble, Liam
Halawith, Bella Will, T Natvig



ISSUE STATEMENT



Iowa youth face challenges

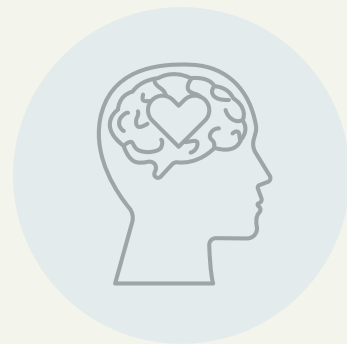
17% of Iowa youth 12-17 had **at least one major depressive** episode in the last year

14% of Iowa youth 12-17 were grappling with severe depression

Source: Iowa Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights



ISSUE STATEMENT



Iowa youth face challenges

17% of Iowa youth 12-17 had at least one major depressive episode in the last year

14% of Iowa youth 12-17 were grappling with severe depression



Challenging mental health stigma

Some of the **largest issues West Branch faces** with student mental health are the **stigma associated with** mental health and the **effective delivery of school-based counseling**



ISSUE STATEMENT



Iowa youth face challenges

17% of Iowa youth 12-17 had at least one major depressive episode in the last year

14% of Iowa youth 12-17 were grappling with severe depression



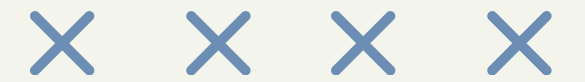
Challenging mental health stigma

Some of the **largest issues West Branch faces** with student mental health are the **stigma associated with** mental health and the **effective delivery of school-based counseling**



Awareness, accessibility, and data

The goal of this project is to make the mental health service **delivery more accessible**, raise mental health **awareness for parents**, and **streamline data collection**



DATA SUMMARY



Mental Health Crisis

- **In 2021 it was reported that 26%-36% of Iowa Youth in grades 6, 8, and 11** reported feeling “so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks”
- **13.5% of Iowa youth** were grappling with major depression in 2022

Sources: Iowa Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2021 Iowa Youth Survey, and Harvard University.



DATA SUMMARY



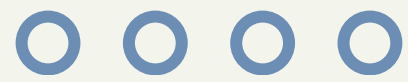
Mental Health Crisis

- In 2021 it was reported that 26%-36% of Iowa Youth in grades 6, 8, and 11 reported feeling “so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks” 13.5% of Iowa youth were grappling with major depression in 2022



Shortage of Professionals

- Iowa ratio: **8 psychologists per 100,000 youth**



DATA SUMMARY



Mental Health Crisis

- In 2021 it was reported that 26%-36% of Iowa Youth in grades 6, 8, and 11 reported feeling “so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks”13.5% of Iowa youth were grappling with major depression in 2022



Shortage of Professionals

- Iowa ratio: 8 psychologists per 100,000 youth



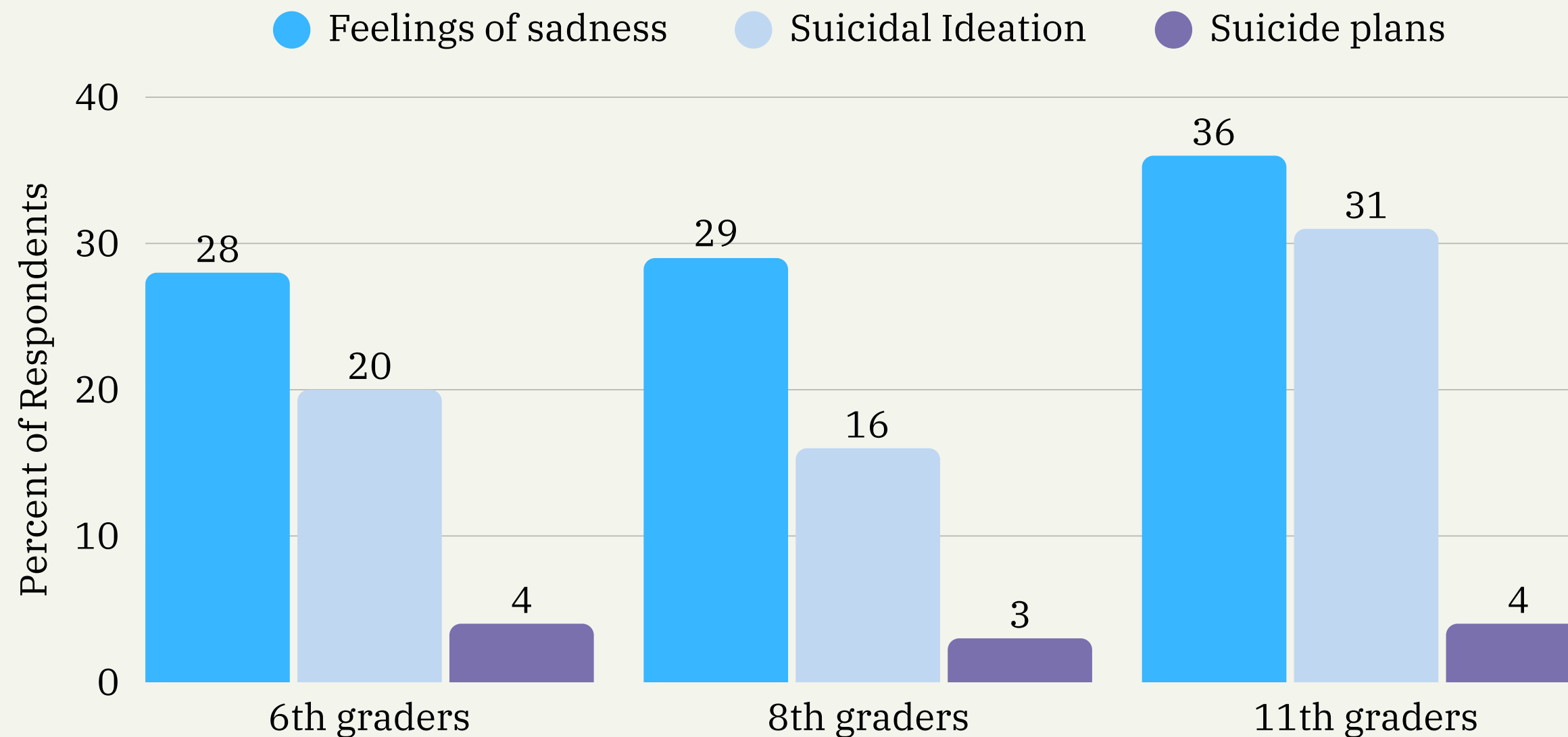
Parental Awareness

- **40% of teens report** wanting more **meaningful outreach** from **parents**
- **56% of kids** are more likely to **reach out to their friends than their parents for support**

Sources: Iowa Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2021 Iowa Youth Survey, and Harvard University.

What Mental Health Looks Like in West Branch

High rates of students reporting feelings of sadness emphasize the need for a mental health focus. However, West Branch trended with state averages.



Source: 2021 Youth Survey findings

BEST PRACTICES

1

Chicago Public Schools Services Resource Guide

Providers all within the Chicagoland area and community services offered by Northwestern and Loyola
Comprehensive list of resources families can utilize at their own expense

BEST PRACTICES

1

Chicago Public Schools Services Resource Guide

Providers all within the Chicagoland area and community services offered by Northwestern and Loyola
Comprehensive list of resources families can utilize at their own expense

2

Surveying students on mental health

The Iowa City Community School District administers surveys 2-3x a year

Parent permission obtained during registration

gleans insights into student mindsets, approaches to learning, and school experiences

BEST PRACTICES

1

Chicago Public Schools Services Resource Guide

Providers all within the Chicagoland area and community services offered by Northwestern and Loyola
Comprehensive list of resources families can utilize at their own expense

2

Surveying students on mental health

The Iowa City Community School District administers surveys 2-3x a year
Parent permission obtained during registration
gleans insights into student mindsets, approaches to learning, and school experiences

3

Iowa City Community School District Brochures

Guidance counselors at ICCSD have brochures that provide mental well-being info
Brochures were used as a template for our deliverables to ensure compliance with state law

STUDENT PREVENTION, ACCESS CONNECTION and ENGAGEMENT (SPACE)

SPACE Services Include:

Student Advocacy, Conflict Resolution,
Mediation, Help with Bullying/Cyberbullying,
and Problem Solving

When should I visit the SPACE?

I want help navigating a tough situation
I need a safe place to go to feel supported
I need a quick break to cool down.
I feel stressed
I need a break and a place to process

The NESTT

Navigating Emotions/Stress Through Training

The NESTT will serve as a single area where students can go to access mental health support services, work with staff to build skills and strategies, access technologies to mitigate missed classroom time.

When should I visit the NESTT?

I feel anxious
I feel stressed
I need a break and a place to process

COME SEE US! SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Matt Bauman - A - D

bauman.matt@iowacityschools.org

Mary Peterson - E - K

peterson.mary@iowacityschools.org

Maureen Beran - L - Q

beran.maureen@iowacityschools.org

Ben Fraga - R-Z

fraga.ben@iowacityschools.org

<https://www.iowacityschools.org/domain/5319>

ENGAGEMENT and INTERVENTION STRATEGISTS

Doug Hammill

hammill.doug@iowacityschools.org

Brennan Swayzer

swayzer.brennan@iowacityschools.org

STUDENT FAMILY ADVOCATES

Shevonna Norris

norris.shevonna@iowacityschools.org



STUDENT SERVICES

We're here to support you.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1A

Distribute Informational Document- Medicaid Coverage & Delivery of Services



Signing up for Medicaid

- Income Eligibility guidelines for families
- Link to form to check if you are eligible
- HHS Contact Center at 1-855-889-7985

ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES WITH MEDICAID & HAWKI

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS & FAMILIES IN THE WEST BRANCH COMMUNITY

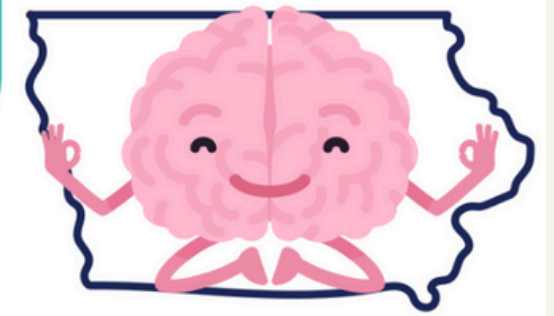
Do You Qualify for Medicaid or Hawki?

In Iowa, children qualify for Medicaid or Hawki (Iowa's Children Health Insurance Program) if they are within 133% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

This income range fully includes students eligible for:

- Free Lunch ($\leq 130\%$ FPL)
- Reduced lunch ($\leq 185\%$ FPL)
 - (Most children qualifying for school meal support will also qualify for Medicaid/Hawki)

In West Branch, 14.8% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, meaning many are likely also eligible for Medicaid covered mental health services.



CHECK YOUR ELIGIBILITY

Families can Easily determine eligibility online through Iowa HHS:

[HHSERVICES.IOWA.GOV/APSPSP/SSP.PORTAL](https://hhservices.iowa.gov/APSPSP/SSP.PORTAL)



POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1A

Distribute Informational Document- Medicaid Coverage & Delivery of Services



Signing up for Medicaid

- Income Eligibility guidelines for families
- Link to form to check if you are eligible
- HHS Contact Center at 1-855-889-7985



Services covered by Medicaid

- Outpatient, Inpatient, and Crisis Services
- Telehealth counseling

WHAT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DO MEDICAID & HAWKI COVER?

Outpatient Services

- Individual or Group counseling
- Psychiatric evaluations
- Medication management

Inpatient Services

- Coverage for mental health and substance use related treatment

Crisis Services

- Immediate assistance for urgent mental health needs
- Emergency referrals and follow up care

Substance Use Treatment

- Preventing, counseling, and recovery support
- Alcohol, tobacco, and drug related treatment services

Habilitation Services

- Helps develop coping, social, and daily living skills

Telehealth

- Find virtual therapy fully covered by Medicaid



POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1A

Distribute Informational Document- Medicaid Coverage & Delivery of Services



Signing up for Medicaid

- Income Eligibility guidelines for families
- Link to form to check if you are eligible
- HHS Contact Center at 1-855-889-7985



Services covered by Medicaid

- Outpatient, Inpatient, and Crisis Services
- Telehealth counseling



Professionals in your area

- List of 5 possible professionals in the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City area
- Links website to find even more providers

LOCAL PROVIDERS WHO ACCEPT MEDICAID

Virtual Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners / Mental- Health Prescribers

- Darnelle Scott, APRN
- Tosin Aileru, APRN,
PMHNP-BC
- Tricia Gabriel, PMHNP

Therapists Serving Iowa City & Cedar Rapids

- Sojourner Psychotherapy
PLC (Iowa City)
- Dr. Ashley Nicole Tropet
(Cedar Rapids)

OTHER ONLINE PROVIDER SEARCH TOOLS

- mymind.health
- psychologytoday.com/us



POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1B

Utilize a resource guide through services at the University of Iowa

Scanlan Center for School Mental Health

- \$2.25 million grant for expanding services
- Delivered professional development for 11,000+ K-12 educators/school staff and 1,400+ counseling sessions

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1B

Utilize a resource guide through services at the University of Iowa

Scanlan Center for School Mental Health

- \$2.25 million grant for expanding services
- Delivered professional development for 11,000+ K-12 educators/school staff and 1,400+ counseling sessions

The Rural Psychology Collaborative

- Provide services to underinsured and underserved communities
- Individual and group counseling
- Career services and workshops

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1B

Utilize a resource guide through services at the University of Iowa

Scanlan Center for School Mental Health

- \$2.25 million grant for expanding services
- Delivered professional development for 11,000+ K-12 educators/school staff and 1,400+ counseling sessions

The Rural Psychology Collaborative

- Provide services to underinsured and underserved communities
- Individual and group counseling
- Career services and workshops

Post-Crisis PAUSE room

- Debriefing and support for school-based crisis teams following a crisis event for K-12
- Needs to be requested by a school administrator, school mental health provider, or the AEA



Scanlan Center for School Mental Health

POST-CRISIS SERVICES

The Scanlan Center for School Mental Health aims to positively impact school mental health and well-being across Iowa and beyond through professional development, research, training, and clinical services.

The **Scanlan Center for School Mental Health Clinic** provides post-crisis support following the initial crisis stabilization period.



Post-Crisis PAUSE Room

- Our clinicians provide post-crisis support for K-12 students and school staff following a crisis event.





Individual/Group Support

- Our clinicians provide individual and group support on-site and by telehealth.





Crisis Team Support

- We offer peer debriefing and support for school-based crisis teams following a crisis event.



Post-crisis services must be requested by a school administrator, school mental health provider, or the AEA. For more information, email scsmh-clinic@uiowa.edu.

scsmh.education.uiowa.edu/clinical-services



500 Blank Honors Center,
Iowa City, Iowa, 52242



scsmh-clinic@uiowa.edu



Phone: 319-467-4526
Fax: 319-467-0431

The Scanlan Center for School Mental Health Clinic is not a 24/7 crisis service. If this is an emergency or someone is in imminent danger, please call 911 or 988.

The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination in employment, educational programs, and activities on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy (including disability and related conditions), disability, genetic information, status as a U.S. citizen, service in the U.S. military, sexual orientation, or associational preferences. The university also affirms its commitment to providing equal opportunities and equal access to university facilities. For additional information on nondiscrimination policies, contact the Senior Director, Q200A at 320.8003.



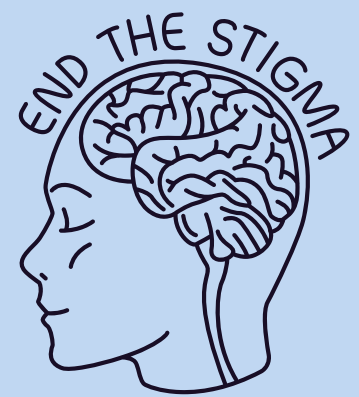
Source: Scanlan Center for Mental Health

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 2

Distribute educational brochures for parents and students on mental well-being



Promoting general mental wellness



Encouraging conversation on mental health



Easily accessible and digestible

Support Builds Strength



Miranda Schwickerath

High School Counselor



mschwickerath@
west-branch.k12.ia.us

319.643.7216

Taking care to self-care

40% of teens report wanting **more meaningful outreach** from parents

High schoolers face academic pressure, social changes, and big decisions about their future, making it essential to take care of their mental health. When teens build healthy coping skills and feel supported at home, they're better able to manage stress, stay focused, and speak up when they need help. Parent involvement—listening, encouraging, and helping connect teens with resources—creates a safe, steady foundation that strengthens students' overall well-being and sets them up for long-term success.



Services we offer



Talking with me!



School Based Counseling



Connecting Families with Resources

Mental Health Resources



Sources: National Institutes of Health

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 3

Administer Student Wellness Survey to Grades 6–12



Follow Iowa City School District's survey distribution model

- 2x/year: October and post spring break
- Survey open for ~three weeks

Sources: Iowa City Community School District, Panorama Education

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 3

Administer Student Wellness Survey to Grades 6–12



Follow Iowa City School District's survey distribution model

- 2x/year: October and post spring break
- Survey open for ~three weeks



Administer a survey to students through Panorama Education

- “If you were upset when you came into class, how concerned would your teachers be?”
- “When you are at school, how much do you feel like you belong?”

Sources: Iowa City Community School District, Panorama Education

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 3

Administer Student Wellness Survey to Grades 6–12



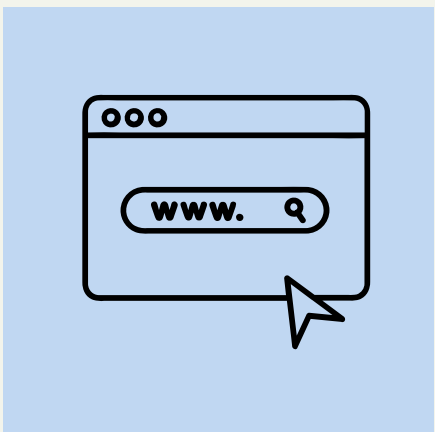
Follow Iowa City School District's survey distribution model

- 2x/year: October and post spring break
- Survey open for ~three weeks



Administer a survey to students through Panorama Education

- “If you were upset when you came into class, how concerned would your teachers be?”
- “When you are at school, how much do you feel like you belong?”



Receive parental approval during school registration


- Requires active consent
- Parents need access to survey questions

Sources: Iowa City Community School District, Panorama Education

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 3

Administer Student Wellness Survey

<https://www.panoramaed.com/products/surveys>



Positive Feelings

How frequently students feel positive emotions.

Grades 6-12

Question	Response Options
<i>During the past week, how often did you feel _____ ?</i>	
excited	Almost neverOnce in a whileSometimesFrequentlyAlmost always
happy	Almost neverOnce in a whileSometimesFrequentlyAlmost always
loved	Almost neverOnce in a whileSometimesFrequentlyAlmost always
safe	Almost neverOnce in a whileSometimesFrequentlyAlmost always
hopeful	Almost neverOnce in a whileSometimesFrequentlyAlmost always

WORKS CITED

Quorum. “NAMI’s Advocacy Headquarters.” Nami.quorum.us, 2021, nami.quorum.us/mhpolicystats/.

Weissbourd, Richard, Milena Batanova, Mary Laski, Joseph McIntyre, Eric Torres, and Nick Balisciano, with Shanae Irving, Sawsan Eskander, and Kiran Bhai. Caring for the Caregivers: The Critical Link Between Parent and Teen Mental Health. June 2023. Making Caring Common, Harvard Graduate School of Education, www.mcc.gse.harvard.edu/reports/caring-for-the-caregivers.

Brown, Charles, and N’Daisha K. Carrington. “Increasing Access to School-Based Mental Health Services for Youth Subsequent to the COVID-19 Pandemic.” Health Affairs Scholar, vol. 3, no. 4, 5 Apr. 2025, qxaf073, Oxford University Press on behalf of Project HOPE, <https://improvedoi.org/10.1093/haschl/qxaf073>. PMCimprove, PMC12013806, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12013806/>.

Access to Mental and Behavioral Health Care for Students in K-12 Schools. www.usccr.gov/files/2025-04/ia-sac-report_access-to-mental-and-behavioral-health-in-k-12-schools.pdf. Accessed 10 Nov. 2025.

Access to Mental and Behavioral Health Care for Students in K-12 Schools. www.usccr.gov/files/2025-04/ia-sac-report_access-to-mental-and-behavioral-health-in-k-12-schools.pdf. Accessed 10 Nov. 2025.

2021 Iowa Youth Survey https://publications.iowa.gov/46682/1/2021_IYS_MHReport_Final_03_01_2022_0.pdf

Salemink, Joanne. “Mental Health, Funding Top BOE Concerns.” West Branch Times, 7 Aug. 2024, <https://westbranchtimes.com/article.php?id=20984>

Scanlan Center for School Mental Health. “Clinical Services.” The University of Iowa, <https://scsmh.education.uiowa.edu/clinical-services>. Accessed 11 Nov. 2025.

Guide, Resource. “Chicago Services Resource Guide | Guía de Recursos Y Servicios de Chicago.” Google Docs, 2019, docs.google.com/document/d/19vxQ6Sy1xordBPuJkGoF1Mb-qXoh71TNgw8IG_CZsQM/edit?tab=t.0. Accessed 3 Dec. 2025.

Scanlan Center for School Mental Health. Scanlan Center for School Mental Health. Accessed December 3, 2025. <https://scsmh.education.uiowa.edu/>.

Iowa’s News Now Staff. “University of Iowa Receives Grant to Expand Youth Mental Health Services.” CBS2Iowa, November 14, 2023.

<https://cbs2iowa.com/news/local/university-of-iowa-receives-grant-to-expand-youth-mental-health-services>.

Iowa City Community School District, Grades 6-12 Survey 25/26, <https://www.iowacityschools.org/our-district/departments/student-family-supports/student-surveys/grades-6-12-survey-25-26>

Panorama Education, Panorama Student Survey User Guide, <https://www.panoramaed.com/products/surveys/student-survey>