

May 31, 2023

**Mental Health Awareness Month**  
by Rep. Dave Considine (D-Baraboo)



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In 2022, the Office of Children’s Mental Health found that one-third of Wisconsin children experience sadness and hopelessness every day. This is a 10-percent increase since 2012. Even more worrying, about 25% of Wisconsin children reported self-harm. As a parent and grandparent, I do not take these statistics lightly. We must take action.

In early January, Governor Evers declared 2023 as the Year of Mental Health. In his budget proposal, Governor Evers called for unprecedented investments in mental health programs in Wisconsin schools. With these investments, our state’s teaching staff would have been equipped with the tools necessary to help their students.

However, in the first week of May, the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) removed 545 items from Governor Evers’ budget. These items included every single school-based mental health program. I am disappointed in the JFC’s disregard for the problems facing our children. This inaction is unacceptable.

Middle school and high school years can be very tough for our children. During this time, they are trying to understand what the world is, who they are, and who they want to be. That process is not easy for anyone, let alone a child. Without mental health programs to help guide them through these tough times, our children will continue to struggle, and lives will be lost.

As a member of the Assembly Committees on Education and Mental Health & Substance Abuse Prevention, I will continue to advocate for expanded mental health programs in our state’s schools. Our school staff require it, our families demand it, and our children deserve it.