

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

It's necessary, of course, for schools to teach the basics: English, math, science and social studies, for example. And it's great if schools can also teach classes such as computer programming, drama or sociology.

But there is so much more to education than those classes.

There will always be teachers who can work magic with students. But educators have recognized that there are serious issues today that are affecting students.

A recent article about the importance of helping young people with mental health issues made me proud of some of the things we're doing in Pickaway County.

At Logan Elm, the school has partnered with Hopewell Health Centers to provide school-based behavioral health services to students, said Marsha Waidelich, Student & Support Services director and preschool coordinator.

"Several years ago we became more aware that outside issues were influencing kids," Marsha said. "We became aware that more and more students are coming to school with issues that are out of our control."

The district started offering services from Hopewell in one elementary school the first year and now, eight years later, counseling, case management and psychiatric services are available district-wide.

In the United States, key findings in a report released in 2013 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/childrensmental-health/features/kf-childrens-mental-health-report.html) were that children ages 3 to 17 had:

- ADHD (6.8%)
- Behavioral or conduct problems (3.5%)
- Anxiety (3.0%)
- Depression (2.1%)
- Autism spectrum disorders (1.1%)
- Tourette syndrome (0.2%) (among children ages 6–17 years)



Feb. 22, 2019



Marsha Waidelich, Student and Support Services director at Logan Elm, says a partnership with Hopewell Health Centers is benefiting students in the district.

Jennifer Murphy, Hopewell's school-based program coordinator who is based at Logan Elm, said at any given moment each of her 16 case-workers are working with 30-40 students, which signifies that the program is reaching students and helping them.

Marsha said the benefits are apparent in the district.

"Kids aren't missing school for medical visits and it's building a stronger connection between families and Hopewell," Marsha said.

Jennifer said that she is proud to be a part of a program that is "giving hope to students we've worked with and their families."

Marsha said teachers and counselors can make referrals to Hopewell, who then contacts a parent.

It's important that our schools are providing resources to assist with mental health issues. Unless a student is ready to learn, the best teachers in the world will have little impact.

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