Our nation’s schools need social workers now more than ever.

School social workers help children overcome life’s challenges to succeed in school and they help schools deal with issues of violence and bullying. Social workers also give teachers and parents the skills to better communicate and bond with children of all ages.

Our nation is currently grappling with rising suicide rates. As a social worker who works with children, I have seen a rising epidemic of anxiety and depression beginning at earlier and earlier ages. Social workers in schools can help address these issues and have the benefit of being in a setting where children spend so much of their time.

School social workers are trained to understand risk factors and warning signs of violent behaviors. They are knowledgeable in classroom management, behavior intervention and research-based discipline policy development. They can assist school personnel in identifying concerning behaviors of students and developing supportive intervention plans that can increase a connection with school and decrease incidents of school violence.

The sad reality is that no school in Ohio is meeting the National Association of Social Workers’ recommendation that there be at least one social worker per 250 students. I urge readers to find out more about social workers in their local schools, support them, and urge their boards of education to make sure there are enough social workers to meet students’ needs.

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