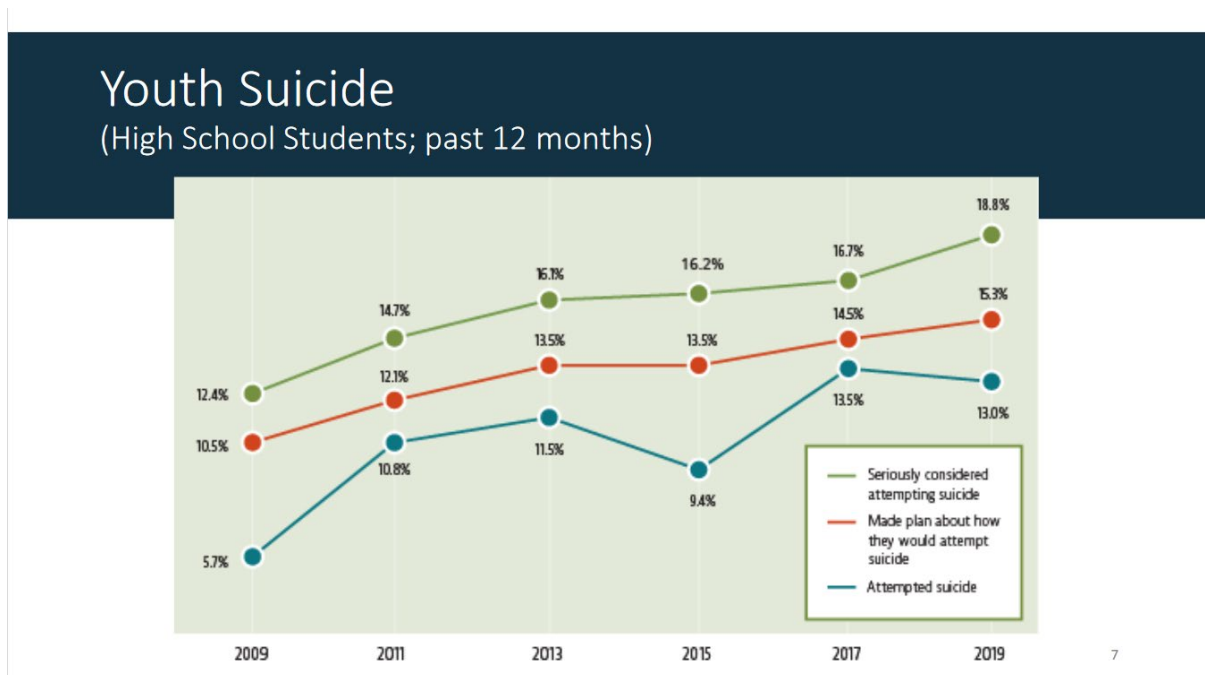


**Testimony**  
**Engrossed Senate Bill 2311 - Department of Human Services**  
**Education Committee**  
**Representative Owens, Chairman**

March 3, 2021

Chairman Owens and members of the Education Committee, I am Pamela Sagness Behavioral Health Division Director for the Department of Human Services (Department). I appear today in support of engrossed Senate Bill 2311.

Committee members should have received the new 2021 ND Behavioral Health Data Book. This publication includes curated data from ND relating to behavioral health. As you will see, youth mental health continues to be an area of significant need. The data included below shows a concerning upward trend for high school students in the state.



Efforts related to school behavioral health have been advancing in recent years. The Department appreciates the collaboration we have experienced from partners in education as we work to improve the state's behavioral health system to better meet the needs of students and families.



# Behavioral Health and Education

Prevention and Early Intervention Pilot	Behavioral Health School Grant Program	Behavioral Health Resource Support (B-HERO)
<p><i>The ND 66th Legislative Assembly passed Senate Bill 2012 appropriating \$300,000 to the Department of Human Services for the purpose of establishing a children's prevention and early intervention behavioral health services pilot project in the school system; including services to children suffering from the effects of behavioral health issues.</i></p> <p>October 2018 - Pilot project to Simle Middle School in Bismarck.</p> <p>October 2020 – Pilot project expansion awarded to Dunseith Public School (tribal) and Barnes County North Public School (rural).</p>	<p><i>The ND 66th Legislative Assembly passed Senate Bill 2012 appropriating \$1,500,000 to the Department of Human Services for the purpose of providing behavioral health services and support grants to school districts to address student behavioral health needs.</i></p> <p>25 schools utilized ND State Medicaid reimbursement during the previous school year and are eligible for funding.</p> <p>8 grant applications have been received (1/11/2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 awarded (4 schools)</li> <li>• 3 in review</li> </ul>	<p><i>The ND 66th Legislative Assembly passed Senate Bill 2149 which established the requirement for each school within a district to designate an individual as a behavioral health resource coordinator and Senate Bill 2313 which established the requirement for DHS to provide resources to behavioral health resource coordinators.</i></p> <p>The Central Regional Education Association (CREA) was awarded the contract (through a Request for Proposal) to provide resources, information, and support to school behavioral health resource coordinators at each school in North Dakota, collaborating with the Behavioral Health Division.</p>

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We look forward to continued collaboration and are willing to assist to ensure behavioral health best practices are identified and services are available for those in need. This concludes my testimony and I am available to answer any questions.