

**From:** Fitzsimmons, Katie <katie.fitzsimmons@ndus.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 27, 2023 11:14 AM  
**To:** Bosch, Glenn D.; NDLA, H NAT  
**Cc:** Porter, Todd K.; Anderson, Dick D.; Conmy, Liz; Dockter, Jason D.; Hagert, Jared; Heinert, Patrick D.; Ista, Zachary M.; Kasper, Jim M.; Marschall, Andrew; Novak, Anna; Olson, Jeremy; Roers Jones, Shannon; Ruby, Matthew; Johnson, Lisa  
**Subject:** Follow-up data on HB 1404  
**Attachments:** HB 1404 NDUS DNP HENR Jan 2023.pdf

Good morning Representative Bosch, Chair Porter, Vice Chair Anderson, and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

Yesterday, Representative Bosch asked for more data related to suicide and NDUS students. I hope this is helpful.

In surveys conducted in 2018 and 2020 for all NDUS students, we asked about self-injurious thoughts and behaviors. These surveys also asked about substance misuse with alcohol tobacco, and other drugs; mental health; and sexual assault. We will be rotating a similar survey on a three-year basis moving forward, instead of every two years. That survey will happen this coming fall (October 2023), with data available in the spring of 2024.

	2018	2020
Suicidal thoughts	22.8%	25.4%
Suicidal plan	6.0%	8.8%
Suicide attempt	2.0%	2.9%

Compared to the [2021 YRBS \(Youth Risk and Behavior Survey\)](#) completed for ND high school students (page 7 of the linked report):

	2021 YRBS
Suicidal thoughts/contemplation	18.6%
Suicidal plan	14.8%
Suicide attempt	6.1%

You can see the serious action steps toward suicide diminish as students age. In a way, college can be a protective factor, but also, one could argue that the students that struggle with mental health and stability in high school do not go onto college. Regardless, this also plays into the discussion we had about brain development; as we age, we develop better neuropathways from the brain stem to the frontal lobe, which helps regulate impulse control and more complex thoughts that help us see past the here and now. A student in crisis at the age of 20 versus the age of 14 is more able to say, "I want to kill myself now because I am so hopeless and everything sucks... but I know things will get better." And once that 20-year old turns 25 and 30 on up, that thought process is even more fortified and more likely.

As far as how these numbers compare to the general population; I don't have direct information for comparison. You can visit the [CDC's website for suicide data](#), which includes points such as (I added a comparison to the current population of 331.9 million in the US):

- 1 death by suicide every 11 minutes in the US

- 12.2 million Americans seriously thought about suicide (3%)
- 3.2 million made a suicide plan (1%)
- 1.2 million attempted suicide (.36%)

Thank you for your time and consideration; I hope you each have a restful and rejuvenating weekend!

-Katie Fitzsimmons

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