

MURC Data Snapshot

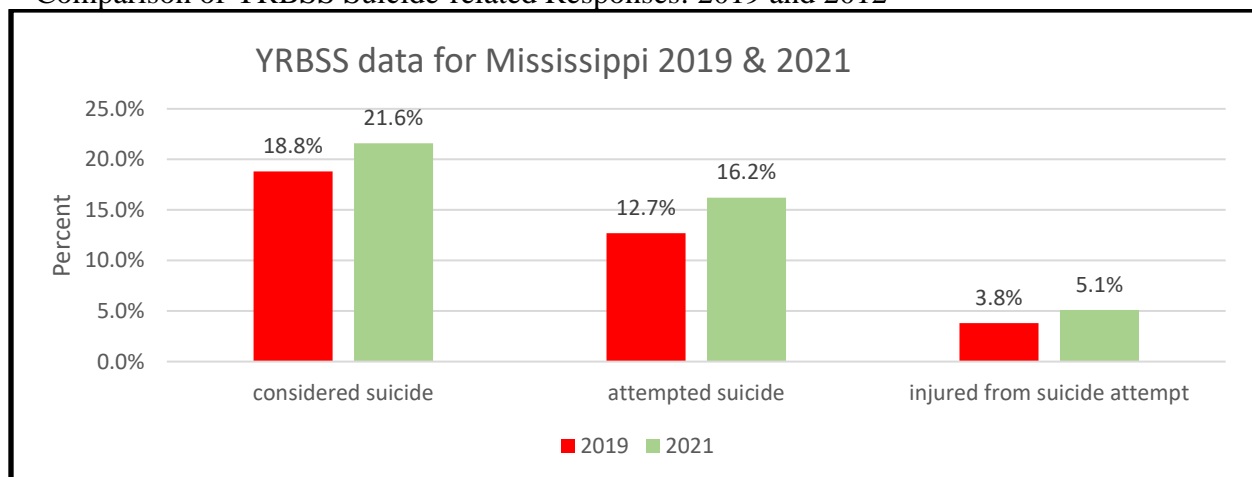
Possible Linkage Between COVID-19 and Mississippi Public School Students' YRBSS Survey Suicide Responses

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Background

During the spring of 2020, many schools closed nation-wide to reduce the spread of the COVID-19. Several researchers found evidence the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the mental health status of some public school students (Cowie, 2021; Ethier, 2022). Below is data obtained from a survey administered by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention's *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System* (YRBSS). That survey tracks the behaviors of high school students grades nine through twelve (YRBSS, 2023). This data snapshot examines a possible link between increased YRBSS suicide-related responses for Mississippi students and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Comparison of YRBSS Suicide-related Responses: 2019 and 2012



A review of the above data indicates there was an increased in suicide-related responses of MS public school students completing the survey in 2019 and 2021. To definitively answer the question of whether the COVID-19 pandemic directly caused that increase requires additional research. The above data findings serve as a potential warning sign that additional attention and resources are possibly needed to address the increase identified in the survey responses.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at: www.cdc.gov/yrbs. Accessed December 17, 2023.

Cowie, Helen. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health and well-being of children and young people. *Children and Society*. 2021 Jan; 35(1): 62–74.

Ethier, Kathleen, Jones, Sherry. Mental Health, Suicidality, and Connectedness Among High School Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *MMWR Suppl* 2022;71(Suppl-3):16–21. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.su7103a3>. April 1, 2022.