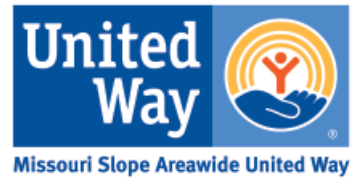


2011 Childhood Needs Assessment of Bismarck and Mandan, North Dakota



MAY 2012

Prepared for
Missouri Slope Areawide United Way
by the Center for Social Research at NDSU



NDSU NORTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY

PREFACE

This report, *2011 Childhood Needs Assessment of Bismarck and Mandan, North Dakota*, was prepared on behalf of the Missouri Slope Areawide (MSA) United Way by the Center for Social Research at NDSU. This report is available on the MSA United Way website at <http://www.msaunitedway.org/>.

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The MSA United Way would like to thank the following for their support of this process and for assistance in conducting this needs assessment for the communities of Bismarck and Mandan:

Bismarck Public Schools

Mandan Public Schools

MSA United Way Partner Agencies

MSA United Way Community Impact Committee

MSA United Way Board of Directors



Missouri Slope Areawide United Way

STATEMENT FROM THE MSA UNITED WAY DIRECTOR

Dear Community Members:

We are pleased to share the Missouri Slope Areawide (MSA) United Way's *2011 Childhood Needs Assessment of Bismarck and Mandan, North Dakota* which contains information and data obtained from our community. The purpose of commissioning this report was to provide an assessment of youth in Bismarck and Mandan and give context as we develop our first Community Impact Initiatives.

The intent of our future Initiatives is to help address the root causes of some of our community's most pressing issues. This moves MSA United Way beyond our traditional role of fundraiser to one of a community problem solver that emphasizes long-term, measurable change. To provide focus to our Initiative decisions, it was essential to first listen to our donors, partner agencies, and community. Out of this dialogue came the Board of Directors' decision to commission the Search Institute and North Dakota State University (NDSU) to complete a survey and report using the Search Institute's Asset Framework.

Since MSA United Way seeks to fund initiatives that are preventive in nature, focusing on youth was a natural place to start. The Asset Framework highlights internal and external qualities that youth possess, which can be seen as building blocks of healthy development. Studies consistently show that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk behaviors and the more likely they are to thrive. Research also points to the importance of building community capacity to support youth in their development, which makes our role as United Way vitally important. By providing the young people in our community, regardless of social or economic status, the essential tools needed to succeed, we can greatly reduce the future demand for services. Reducing future demand on our homeless shelters, food banks, addiction facilities, and criminal justice system provides our donors with the greatest return on today's investment.

The following report provides a meaningful foundation to help us determine how we can best support our youth and community. We will use it as a guide in our initiative-selection process. We chose to make the report public so that others in the region, particularly our partner agencies, might use it to assist their programs and endeavors, too. Above all, we seek to promote and foster collaboration in our community.

In addition to our new Impact Initiatives, we remain committed to providing a safety net for our community by supporting programs and services that meet the critical daily needs of individuals and families. We are fortunate to have many wonderful, effective partner agencies caring for our aging population, assisting people with disabilities, and providing emergency relief. We look forward to a continued relationship with these agencies.

Finally, we want to extend a very special thank you to the Search Institute and NDSU for their work; the MSA United Way Board of Directors for its vision; Bismarck and Mandan Public Schools for their support; our Partner Agencies for their dedication; and our Community Impact Committee, that propelled and oversaw the process at every stage. We also express many thanks to the youth of Bismarck-Mandan and their parents. We all have a stake in creating viable solutions to build a community that thrives. Please visit msaunitedway.org to see how you can become involved as we Live United.

Sincerely,



Jena M. Gullo
Executive Director
MSA United Way



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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report was to provide a childhood needs assessment of Bismarck and Mandan, North Dakota, in order to provide context for the Missouri Slope Areawide United Way (MSA) and their strategic planning process.

Approach to the Needs Assessment

An important component of our approach to this needs assessment was to select a theoretical framework that addresses the causal link between education and behavior or outcomes. In other words, from a community's perspective, how do you identify what needs should be satisfied in order to impact the desired behavior or outcomes?

Drawing upon the developmental literature, we used asset development as our guiding framework. Assets are both internal and external and can be viewed as a combination of skill sets and supportive environment. Internal assets are those positive experiences and qualities that help influence the choices people make in their actions and behaviors as caring and responsible individuals. Similarly, external assets are the supportive components of the community, family, or networks that create a nurturing environment that cultivates the positive experiences of the individual. The key to this conceptual approach is that needs must be viewed from both the individual and support system's perspective.

After providing demographic context, we provided an overview of the developmental assets held by students in Bismarck and Mandan public schools. Then, we organized the remainder of the report from the perspective of stages of educational development: a) school readiness, b) in-school success, and c) school achievement.

The concept of education offers an important organizational framework for organizing the elements of the needs assessment. Education is an essential element to improving both long-term health and economic conditions. The research literature is unambiguous in demonstrating that improving health conditions within a community is directly linked to education. Similarly, the causal link to improved income among individuals or families within a community is education.

Asset Development

MSA United Way contracted with the Search Institute to generate a rich database that explores asset development among children in the Bismarck and Mandan public school districts. Data were collected from students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 from November 2011 through January 2012 (i.e., fall/winter 2011). As noted earlier, assets are useful in framing what activities are needed to best improve desired outcomes. Since activities can be easily linked to service providers, we felt this approach would be most useful to the MSA United Way in their deliberations regarding selection of priorities.

The Search Institute's Developmental Asset Framework consists of 40 assets categorized into two main groups (i.e., internal and external) each containing 20 assets. The 20 assets within these two broad groups are further refined into four sectors. The 20 external assets are clustered into four main groups representing 1) support, 2) empowerment, 3) boundaries and expectations, and 4) constructive use of time. Similarly, the 20 internal assets are clustered into four main groups representing 1) commitment to learning, 2) positive values, 3) social competencies, and 4) positive identity. These sectors are viewed as positive experiences and qualities that help influence the choices young people make in their development to adulthood as caring and responsible individuals.

Stages of Educational Developmental

School readiness centers on what issues most impact how well prepared a person is to enter the educational system. In this analysis, we addressed the assessment from the perspective of both the parent and the child. For example, we identified indicators representing health, education, and income issues that impact parents and their ability to prepare their child for school. Similarly, we addressed corresponding indicators from the child's perspective with regard to what most influences their ability to be fully prepared for school, including environmental conditions in which students find themselves such as homelessness, foster care, poverty, or abusive situations.

In-school success was our second main stage of analysis. Our emphasis in this section was on indicators that most influenced student's performance in school. These indicators included special education as well as a range of risky behaviors of students.

Our last stage of analysis was on formal measures of school achievement. Here we centered our attention on fairly common indicators of success such as proficiency scores, attendance and graduation rates, and educational attainment.

We selected our indicators based on national research from Child Trends (see <http://www.childtrends.org/>), a leading organization that specializes in monitoring the health and well-being of children. The value of using this source was that it provided scientific context regarding why each indicator is important for a child's success. In addition, indicators were selected based on their availability at focused levels of geography, since the Bismarck-Mandan metro area was our primary focus.

Data Methodology

Data sources are noted with each figure, with the exception of the section reporting asset development data, which all come from the February 2012 Search Institute report for the MSA United Way. The choice of geography for each indicator is a reflection of the lowest level of geography available from the data source. Data for the Bismarck-Mandan metro area (i.e., Burleigh and Morton counties) are provided where possible, with data from Burleigh and Morton counties offered separately for context as well as data for the state and the United States, where available or applicable.

Data about risky behaviors come from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey; county-specific data are not readily available due to small sample sizes, thus data for Planning Region VII are offered. When Bismarck and Mandan public school district data are presented, data for the other school districts in Burleigh and Morton counties are also presented for context.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results from our needs assessment highlight major themes that should be considered in order to improve the well-being of children and families in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area (i.e., Burleigh and Morton counties). The first theme focuses on strategically improving asset development for children and youth. Since assets are both internal and external, the desired change will require both individual (i.e., youth and parents/guardians) and environmental (e.g., organizational, community) changes. A focus on building assets at the youngest ages is key, along with stemming the drop in asset levels that occurs as youth progress through high school. Gender differences in asset levels also offer an opportunity to focus efforts. The second theme centers on improving self-sufficiency among families. This is a structural issue and requires improvements or enhancements in services or safety nets that assist individuals/families in need. The third theme focuses on safe environments, which is also a structural issue and requires strong services and safety nets for individuals and families. The final theme focuses on building on successes.

Youth Asset Development

The fall/winter 2011 Search Institute asset profile of students in Bismarck and Mandan public schools explores risk-taking and thriving behaviors. The 24 risky behaviors that were included in the Search Institute's youth survey ranged from alcohol, tobacco, and drug use to sexual intercourse, anti-social behavior, various forms of violence, truancy, gambling, eating disorders, depression, and suicide attempts. One can easily extend this causal relationship into adulthood. The eight thriving behaviors included in the study ranged from success in school, helping others, and valuing diversity to healthy eating and resisting danger.

The Search Institute's data indicate a direct correlation between assets and lower risk-taking behavior and higher thriving behavior. Youth in 6th-12th grades with 10 or fewer assets engaged in eight times as many risky behaviors, on average, as youth with 31 or more assets. The data indicate that with every increase of 10 assets, on average, youth will cut in half the number of risky behaviors in which they engage.

A similar correlation was found between assets and thriving behavior. Youth in 6th-12th grades with 10 or fewer assets engaged in less than half as many thriving behaviors, on average, as their counterparts with 31 or more assets. What is key from the analysis is that increasing the number of assets a young person holds, both internal and external, reduces risky behavior and increases the likelihood of positive outcomes in general.

Consideration should be given to strategically selecting categories of assets on which to focus. The data indicate that the greatest need for asset improvement among students in Bismarck and Mandan public schools is in the area of external assets, especially in the categories of Support and Empowerment.

For nearly every external asset, there is a systematic decline in the proportion of youth with the asset by grade; 8 of the 20 assets drop by more than 30 percentage points from 6th to 12th grade. Within the Support category, for example, parent involvement in schooling (asset #6) declined by 39 percentage points from 6th to 12th grade. On average, 56 percent of students in 6th grade indicated their parents were actively involved in helping them succeed in school; however, by 12th grade only 17 percent of students reported this asset. Similarly, within the Boundaries & Expectations category, high expectations (asset #16) declined by 38 percentage points. On average, 81 percent of students in 6th grade reported that parents and teachers encouraged them to do well; however, by 12th grade that proportion had dropped to 43 percent.

In general, of the 20 external assets explored in the study, the majority of students in 6th grade indicated having at least 16 of the 20 assets. In contrast, by the 12th grade, the majority of students only had 4 of the 20 external assets. Given the strong correlation between increased assets and thriving behavior and, conversely, avoidance of risky behavior, it seems clear that external asset development should be given significant attention.

The difference by grade level among the internal asset development areas is less pronounced, though still present (only 2 of 20 assets drop by more than 30 percentage points from 6th to 12th grade). In general, of the 20 internal assets explored in the study, the majority of students in grade 6 indicated having at least 15 of the 20 assets. By the 12th grade, the majority of students had 10 of the 20 external assets.

One notable area of concern among internal assets is the Social Competencies category, which contains very important values and competencies that appear lacking by many students across all grade levels. The majority of students lack the important assets of planning and decision making (asset #32) and cultural competence (asset #34). The other notable internal asset that deserves attention is believing it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs (asset #31) in the Positive Values category; the data indicate a decline of 60 percentage points from 6th to 12th grade for this asset.

Gender differences are more pronounced in internal asset development. Notably higher levels of female than male students in 6th-12th grades hold 17 of the 20 assets. Females have at least 5 percentage point higher levels for all of the items in the Positive Values and the Social Competencies categories of internal assets; for skills relating to interpersonal competence (asset #33), the difference is 32 percentage points.

Although this analysis specifically focuses on grades 6, 8, 10, and 12, the impact of youth competencies for success in adulthood should be obvious. Attention needs to be given to increasing the skill sets of children and youth while simultaneously expanding the supportive components of the community, family, and networks that create and cultivate a positive environment in order to promote long-term success.

Self-Sufficiency

Economic self-sufficiency is a critical element in the long-term success of individuals and families in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area. This needs assessment uncovered several economic indicators that demonstrate areas of concern with regard to self-sufficiency and deserve attention.

The first is the proportion of unmarried women giving birth to children who have at most a high school degree, especially in Burleigh County, where the proportion reaches more than two in three. These women and their children face much larger challenges to success given this circumstance. In addition, approximately 1 in 16 births is to a teenager, the vast majority of whom are unmarried and are at high risk of experiencing challenges in economic self-sufficiency.

Poverty levels among children remain a concern. While better than the state averages overall, the child poverty rate in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area has risen while the child poverty rate statewide has remained relatively unchanged. In the metro area, 11.4 percent of all children and 15.9 percent of children ages 0 to 5 live in poverty. The rate among young children jumps to 45.2 percent for those living with a single parent, most of whom are single mothers. The rate among young American Indian children in the metro area is especially alarming, at 83.7 percent.

Enrollment in SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program), a reflection of food insecurity, has also been increasing in the metro area, reflecting state trends. One in five children in the metro area received SNAP benefits in 2010.

Safe Environments

In the Bismarck-Mandan metro area, the proportion of mothers with young children in the labor force grew over the past decade, reaching 83.5 percent in 2010. This proportion is higher than the state average, which is among the highest in the nation. Currently, licensed child care in the metro area can meet only 42 percent of the potential demand. This is a concern for parents who need to ensure a safe (and affordable) environment for their children while they are at work.

The number of children in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area who are being reported as suspected victims of child abuse and neglect is up from a decade ago. The proportion of all children that are suspected victims in the metro area (5.2 percent) is higher than the state average. Nearly 1 in 5 of these children was determined to require immediate services.

Another important trend worth mentioning is that the proportion of children ages 0 to 17 impacted by domestic violence from 2002 to 2010 in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area doubled (from 2.4 percent to 4.9 percent).

A final indicator that highlights the need for attention to self-sufficiency as well as safe environments is homelessness. In the 2010-2011 school year, Bismarck and Mandan public school districts reported 437 homeless school-aged children. The economic challenges for these children and their parents deserve special attention.

Building on Successes

Some of the risky behaviors and other indicators discussed in this needs assessment show positive or stable trend lines. For example, rates of binge drinking among high school students are down substantially from 2001 (although still 1 in 4 students). Tobacco use is also down among high school students since 2001 (although still nearly 1 in 4 students). Rates of sexual activity have remained fairly stable over the past decade (at approximately 2 in 5 students who have ever had sex). These are successes that should be celebrated and maintained.

The youth still engaging in these risky behaviors, however, likely have lower levels of assets. Thus, the asset development data provide insight into how to continue to seek improvements, even among risky behaviors that are seeing overall improvement or stability. The power of the asset development framework is that risk-taking behaviors decline as the cumulative number of assets increases.

CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

Developmental Assets Framework

In an effort to assess the health and well-being of children and youth, the Search Institute has developed a framework of developmental assets (see <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets>). The Developmental Assets Framework consists of 40 positive experiences and qualities that help influence the choices that children and youth make that can help them become caring, responsible adults. The Search Institute has found that the more assets children and youth have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors and the more likely they are to thrive.

In fall/winter 2011, the Missouri Slope Areawide United Way contracted with the Search Institute to administer a generalizable study of public school students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 in Bismarck and Mandan, North Dakota, to determine the level of assets students reported having in each grade. The results focused on two types of assets: external and internal.

- **External** assets are positive developmental experiences that surround youth with support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and opportunities for constructive use of time. When provided by many different formal and informal systems in a community, they stimulate and nurture positive development in youth.
- **Internal** assets are a young person's own commitments, values, and competencies. They are grouped into categories of commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. Similar to the external assets, community is also important for the development of these internal assets.

The 40 external and internal assets for adolescents (i.e., children ages 12 to 18, approximating adolescents in grades 6 through 12) are listed and defined in Table 4.

For reference, the same 40 developmental assets with age-appropriate definitions are available in Table 1 for early childhood (i.e., young children ages 3 to 5), Table 2 for kindergarten through 3rd grade (i.e., children ages 5 to 9), and Table 3 for middle childhood (i.e., children ages 8 to 12).

Please note: All of the data for this section were obtained from the Search Institute report *Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth, Bismarck and Mandan Public Schools* which was prepared for the Missouri Slope Areawide United Way in February 2012.

Table 1. The 40 Developmental Assets for Early Childhood (ages 3-5), as Defined by the Search Institute

Note: The Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of health development that help young children grow up healthy, caring, and responsible (see <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists>).

External	Support	1. Family support —Parent(s) and/or primary caregiver(s) provide the child with high levels of consistent and predictable love, physical care, and positive attention in ways that are responsive to the child’s individuality.
		2. Positive family communication —Parent(s) and/or primary caregiver(s) express themselves positively and respectfully, engaging young children in conversations that invite their input.
		3. Other adult relationships —With the family’s support, the child experiences consistent, caring relationships with adults outside the family.
		4. Caring neighborhood —The child’s network of relationships includes neighbors who provide emotional support and a sense of belonging.
		5. Caring climate in child-care and educational settings —Caregivers and teachers create environments that are nurturing, accepting, encouraging, and secure.
		6. Parent involvement in child-care and education —Parent(s), caregivers, and teachers together create a consistent and supportive approach to fostering the child’s successful growth.
	Empowerment	7. Community cherishes and values young children —Children are welcomed and included throughout community life.
		8. Children seen as resources —The community demonstrates that children are valuable resources by investing in a child-rearing system of family support and high-quality activities and resources to meet children’s physical, social, and emotional needs.
		9. Service to others —The child has opportunities to perform simple but meaningful and caring actions for others.
		10. Safety —Parent(s), caregivers, teachers, neighbors, and the community take action to ensure children’s health and safety.
	Boundaries & Expectations	11. Family boundaries —The family provides consistent supervision for the child and maintains reasonable guidelines for behavior that the child can understand and achieve.
		12. Boundaries in child-care and educational settings —Caregivers and educators use positive approaches to discipline and natural consequences to encourage self-regulation and acceptable behaviors.
		13. Neighborhood boundaries —Neighbors encourage the child in positive, acceptable behavior, as well as intervene in negative behavior, in a supportive, nonthreatening way.
		14. Adult role models —Parent(s), caregivers, and other adults model self-control, social skills, engagement in learning, and healthy lifestyles.
		15. Positive peer relationships —Parent(s) and caregivers seek to provide opportunities for the child to interact positively with other children.
		16. Positive expectations —Parent(s), caregivers, and teachers encourage and support the child in behaving appropriately, undertaking challenging tasks, and performing activities to the best of her or his abilities.
	Constructive Use of Time	17. Play and creative activities —The child has daily opportunities to play in ways that allow self-expression, physical activity, and interaction with others.
		18. Out-of-home and community programs —The child experiences well-designed programs led by competent, caring adults in well-maintained settings.
		19. Religious community —The child participates in age-appropriate religious activities and caring relationships that nurture her or his spiritual development.
		20. Time at home —The child spends most of her or his time at home participating in family activities and playing constructively, with parent(s) guiding TV and electronic game use.
Internal	Commitment to Learning	21. Motivation to mastery —The child responds to new experiences with curiosity and energy, resulting in the pleasure of mastering new learning skills.
		22. Engagement in learning experiences —The child fully participates in a variety of activities that offer opportunities for learning.
		23. Home-program connection —The child experiences security, consistency, and connections between home and out-of-home care programs and learning activities.
		24. Bonding to programs —The child forms meaningful connections with out-of-home care and educational programs.
	Positive Values	25. Early literacy —The child enjoys a variety of pre-reading activities, including adults reading to her or him daily, looking at and handling books, playing with a variety of media, and showing interest in pictures, letters, and numbers.
		26. Caring —The child begins to show empathy, understanding, and awareness of others’ feelings.
		27. Equality and social justice —The child begins to show concern for people who are excluded from play and other activities or not treated fairly because they are different.
		28. Integrity —The child begins to express her or his views appropriately and to stand up for a growing sense of what is fair and right.
		29. Honesty —The child begins to understand the difference between truth and lies, and is truthful to the extent of her or his understanding.
		30. Responsibility —The child begins to follow through on simple tasks to take care of her- or himself and to help others.
		31. Self-regulation —The child increasingly can identify, regulate, and control her or his behaviors in healthy ways, using adult support constructively in particularly stressful situations.
	Social Competencies	32. Planning and decision making —The child begins to plan for the immediate future, choosing from among several options and trying to solve problems.
		33. Interpersonal skills —The child cooperates, shares, plays harmoniously, and comforts others in distress.
		34. Cultural awareness and sensitivity —The child begins to learn about her or his own cultural identity and to show acceptance of people who are racially, physically, culturally, or ethnically different from her or him.
		35. Resistance skills —The child begins to sense danger accurately, to seek help from trusted adults, and to resist pressure from peers to participate in unacceptable or risky behavior.
		36. Peaceful conflict resolution —the child begins to compromise and resolve conflicts without using physical aggression or hurtful language.
	Positive Identity	37. Personal power —The child can make choices that give a sense of having some influence over things that happen in her or his life.
		38. Self-esteem —The child likes her- or himself and has a growing sense of being valued by others.
		39. Sense of purpose —The child anticipates new opportunities, experiences, and milestones in growing up.
		40. Positive view of personal future —The child finds the world interesting and enjoyable, and feels that he or she has a positive place in it.

Table 2. The 40 Developmental Assets for Grades K-3 (ages 5-9), as Defined by the Search Institute

Note: The Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of health development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible (see <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists>).

External	Support	1. Family support —Family continues to be a consistent provider of love and support for the child’s unique physical and emotional needs.
		2. Positive family communication —Parent(s) and child communicate openly, respectfully, and frequently, with child receiving praise for her or his efforts and accomplishments.
		3. Other adult relationships —Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s), with the child sometimes experiencing relationships with a nonparent adult.
		4. Caring neighborhood —Parent(s) and child experience friendly neighbors who affirm and support the child’s growth and sense of belonging.
		5. Caring school climate —Child experiences warm, welcoming relationships with teachers, caregivers, and peers at school.
		6. Parent involvement in schooling —Parent(s) talk about the importance of education and are actively involved in the child’s school success.
	Empowerment	7. Community values children —Children are welcomed and included throughout community life.
		8. Children as resources —Child contributes to family decisions and has opportunities to participate in positive community events.
		9. Service to others —Child has opportunities to serve in the community with adult support and approval.
		10. Safety —Parents and community adults ensure the child’s safety while keeping in mind her or his increasing independence.
	Boundaries & Expectations	11. Family boundaries —The family maintains supervision of the child, has reasonable guidelines for behavior, and always knows where the child is.
		12. School boundaries —Schools have clear, consistent rules and consequences and use a positive approach to discipline.
		13. Neighborhood boundaries —Neighbors and friends’ parents help monitor the child’s behavior and provide feedback to the parents.
		14. Adult role models —Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior and encourage the child to follow these examples.
		15. Positive peer influence —Parent(s) monitor the child’s friends and encourage spending time with those who set good examples.
		16. High expectations —Parent(s), teachers, and other influential adults encourage the child to do her or his best in all tasks and celebrate their successes.
Constructive Use of Time	17. Creative activities —Child participates weekly in music, dance, or other form of artistic expression outside of school.	
	18. Child programs —Child participates weekly in at least one sport, club, or organization within the school or community.	
	19. Religious community —Child participates in age-appropriate religious activities and caring relationships that nurture her or his spiritual development.	
	20. Time at home —Child spends time at home playing and doing positive activities with the family.	
Internal	Commitment to Learning	21. Achievement motivation —Child is encouraged to remain curious and demonstrates an interest in doing well at school.
		22. Learning engagement —Child is enthused about learning and enjoys going to school.
		23. Homework —With appropriate parental support, child completes assigned homework.
		24. Bonding to school —Child is encouraged to have and feels a sense of belonging at school.
	Positive Values	25. Reading for pleasure —Child listens to and/or reads books outside of school daily.
		26. Caring —Parent(s) help child grow in empathy, understanding, and helping others.
		27. Equality and social justice —Parent(s) encourage child to be concerned about rules and being fair to everyone.
		28. Integrity —Parent(s) help child develop her or his own sense of right and wrong behavior.
		29. Honesty —Parent(s) encourage child’s development in recognizing and telling the truth.
		30. Responsibility —Parent(s) encourage child to accept and take responsibility for her or his actions at school and at home.
		31. Self-regulation —Parent(s) encourage child’s growth in regulating her or his own emotions and behaviors and in understanding the importance of healthy habits and choices.
	Social Competencies	32. Planning and decision making —Parent(s) help child think through and plan school and play activities.
		33. Interpersonal competence —Child cares about and is affected by other people’s feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself.
		34. Cultural competence —Child continues to learn about her or his own cultural identity and is encouraged to interact positively with children of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.
		35. Resistance skills —Child is learning to recognize risky or dangerous situations and is able to seek help from trusted adults.
		36. Peaceful conflict resolution —Child continues learning to resolve conflicts without hitting, throwing a tantrum, or using hurtful language.
Positive Identity	37. Personal power —Child has a growing sense of having influence over some of the things that happen in her or his life.	
	38. Self-esteem —Child likes her- or himself and feels valued by others.	
	39. Sense of purpose —Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.	
	40. Positive view of personal future —Child has a growing curiosity about the world and finding her or his place in it.	

Table 3. The 40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood (ages 8-12), as Defined by the Search Institute

Note: The Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of health development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible (see <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists>).

External	Support	1. Family support —Family life provides high levels of love and support.
		2. Positive family communication —Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).
		3. Other adult relationships —Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).
		4. Caring neighborhood —Child experiences caring neighbors.
		5. Caring school climate —Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging environment.
		6. Parent involvement in schooling —Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.
	Empowerment	7. Community values youth —Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.
		8. Children as resources —Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.
		9. Service to others —Child has opportunities to help others in the community.
		10. Safety —Child feels safe at home, at school, and in his or her neighborhood.
	Boundaries & Expectations	11. Family boundaries —Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child’s whereabouts.
		12. School boundaries —School provides clear rules and consequences.
		13. Neighborhood boundaries —Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child’s behavior.
		14. Adult role models —Parent(s) and other adults in the child’s family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior.
		15. Positive peer influence —Child’s closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.
		16. High expectations —Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.
	Constructive Use of Time	17. Creative activities —Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.
		18. Child programs —Child participates two or more times per week in cocurricular school activities or structured community programs for children.
		19. Religious community —Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.
		20. Time at home —Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.
Internal	Commitment to Learning	21. Achievement motivation —Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.
		22. Learning engagement —Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.
		23. Homework —Child usually hands in homework on time.
		24. Bonding to school —Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.
		25. Reading for pleasure —Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.
	Positive Values	26. Caring —Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.
		27. Equality and social justice —Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.
		28. Integrity —Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one’s beliefs.
		29. Honesty —Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.
		30. Responsibility —Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.
		31. Healthy lifestyle —Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.
	Social Competencies	32. Planning and decision making —Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.
		33. Interpersonal competence —Child cares about and is affected by other people’s feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm herself or himself.
		34. Cultural competence —Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.
		35. Resistance skills —Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.
		36. Peaceful conflict resolution —Child seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
	Positive Identity	37. Personal power —Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.
		38. Self-esteem —Child likes and is proud to be the person that he or she is.
		39. Sense of purpose —Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.
		40. Positive view of personal future —Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Table 4. The 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents (ages 12-18), as Defined by the Search Institute

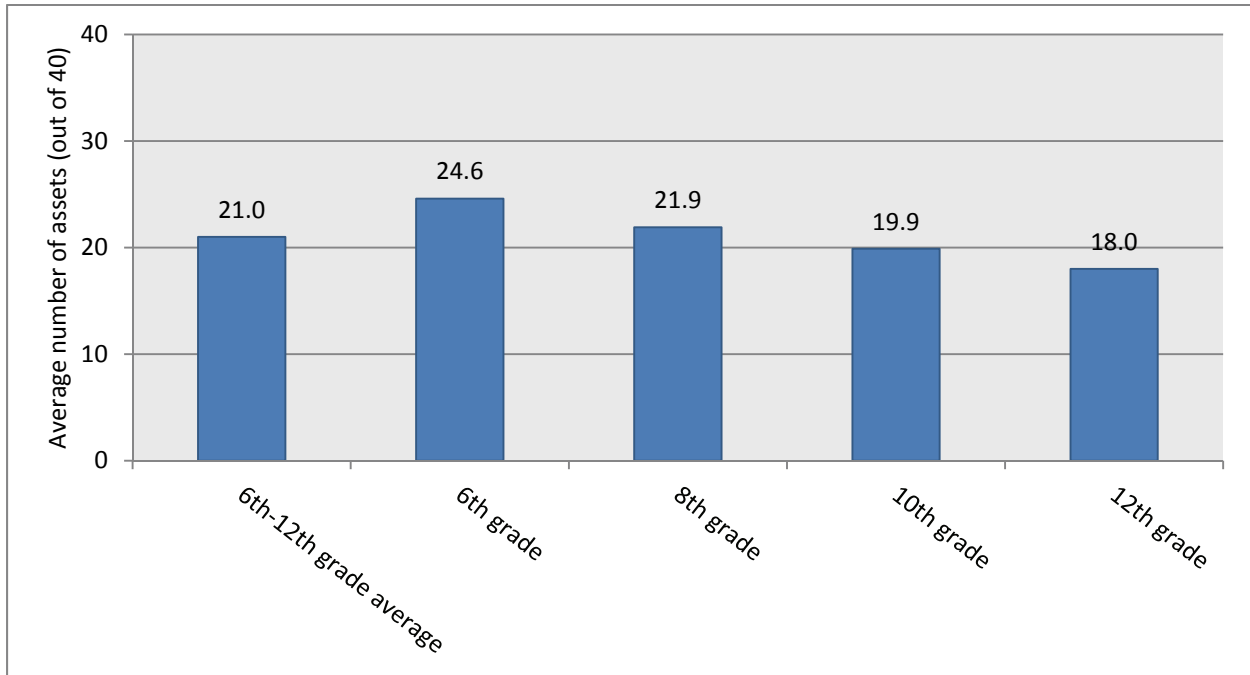
Note: The Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of health development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible (see <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists>).

External	Support	1. Family support —Family life provides high levels of love and support.
		2. Positive family communication —Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
		3. Other adult relationships —Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
		4. Caring neighborhood —Young person experiences caring neighbors.
		5. Caring school climate —School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
		6. Parent involvement in schooling —Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.
	Empowerment	7. Community values youth —Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
		8. Youth as resources —Young people are given useful roles in the community.
		9. Service to others —Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
		10. Safety —Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.
	Boundaries & Expectations	11. Family boundaries —Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person’s whereabouts.
		12. School boundaries —School provides clear rules and consequences.
		13. Neighborhood boundaries —Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior.
		14. Adult role models —Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
		15. Positive peer influence —Young person’s best friends model responsible behavior.
		16. High expectations —Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.
Constructive Use of Time	17. Creative activities —Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.	
	18. Youth programs —Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.	
	19. Religious community —Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.	
	20. Time at home —Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week.	
Internal	Commitment to Learning	21. Achievement motivation —Young person is motivated to do well in school.
		22. School engagement —Young person is actively engaged in learning.
		23. Homework —Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
		24. Bonding to school —Young person cares about her or his school.
		25. Reading for pleasure —Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
	Positive Values	26. Caring —Young person places high value on helping other people.
		27. Equality and social justice —Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
		28. Integrity —Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
		29. Honesty —Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”
		30. Responsibility —Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
		31. Restraint —Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
	Social Competencies	32. Planning and decision making —Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
		33. Interpersonal competence —Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
		34. Cultural competence —Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
		35. Resistance skills —Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
		36. Peaceful conflict resolution —Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
	Positive Identity	37. Personal power —Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
		38. Self-esteem —Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
		39. Sense of purpose —Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”
		40. Positive view of personal future —Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Overall Asset Levels

Results from the Search Institute study indicate that, on average, adolescents attending Bismarck and Mandan public schools have 21.0 out of 40 assets. The number of assets children hold declines as the child ages. For example, 6th grade public school students in Bismarck and Mandan have, on average, 24.6 assets compared to an average of 18.0 assets among 12th graders.

Figure 1. Average Number of Assets (Out of 40) that 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan Reported Having, by Grade: Fall/Winter 2011

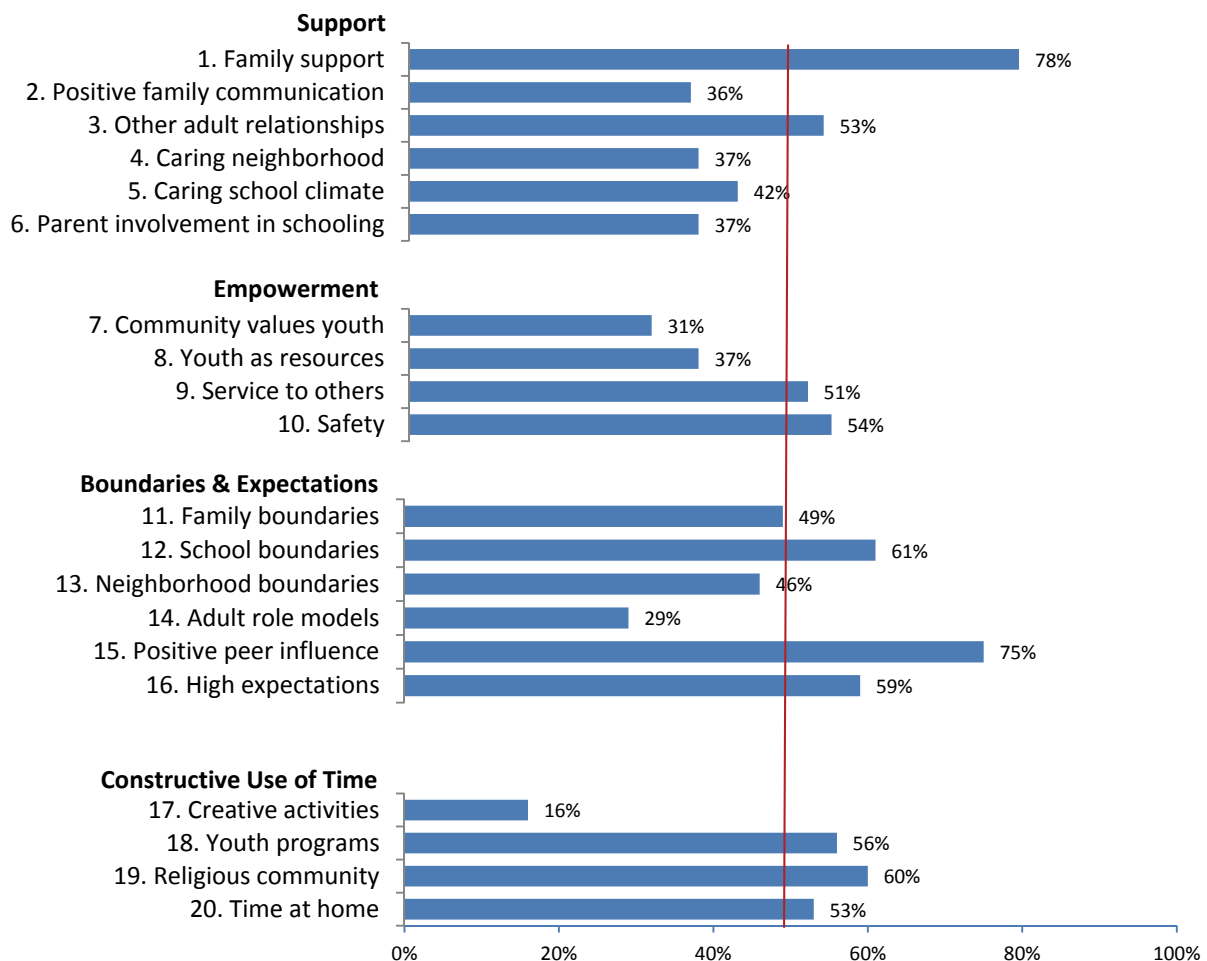


The most common **external** assets held by 6th-12th grade students in Bismarck and Mandan public schools are families that provide a high level of love and support (#1) and close friends who model positive, responsible behavior (#15); at least three-fourths of students reported having each of these assets. High proportions of students also go to a school that provides clear rules and consequences (#12), spend one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution (#19), and feel that parents and teachers encourage them to do well (#16); approximately 60 percent of students reported having each of these assets.

Conversely, less than one-third of students perceive that adults in their community value youth (#7); think that parents and other adults model positive, responsible behavior (#14); and spend three or more hours per week in creative activities like lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts (#17). Only 16 percent of students reported spending 3 or more hours per week in creative activities.

Figure 2. Percent of 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan Reporting Having Each of the 20 External Assets: Fall/Winter 2011

Note: The red line indicates 50 percent.



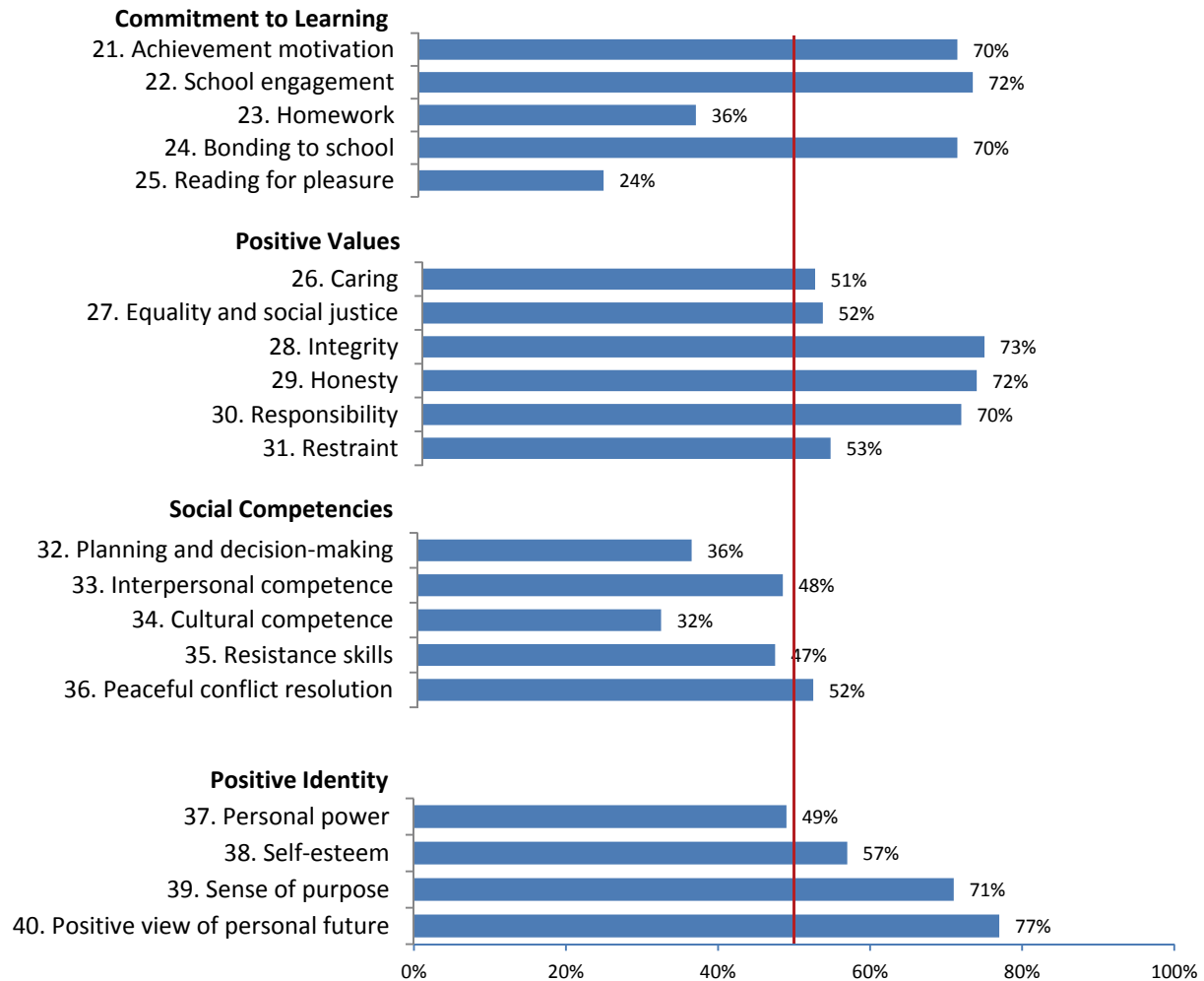
The most common **internal** assets held by 6th-12th grade students in Bismarck and Mandan public schools are optimism regarding their personal future (#40), integrity (#28), active engagement in learning (#22), honesty (#29), having a sense of purpose (#39), motivation to do well in school (#21), caring about their school (#24), and personal responsibility (#30); approximately 7 in 10 students reported having each of these internal assets.

Conversely, only 1 in 4 students reads for pleasure at least three hours per week (#25). Also, 36 percent or fewer students do at least one hour of homework every day (#23), know how to plan ahead and make choices (#32), and have knowledge of and comfort with cultural/racial/ethnic diversity (#34). Two of the lowest items fall within the Commitment to Learning category of internal assets, and two fall within the Social Competencies category.

At least 7 in 10 students in grades 6-12 reported having 8 of the 20 internal assets, compared to only 2 of the 20 external assets.

Figure 3. Percent of 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan Reporting Having Each of the 20 Internal Assets: Fall/Winter 2011

Note: The red line indicates 50 percent.



External Assets by Grade and Gender

Table 5 shows the proportions of students in Bismarck and Mandan public schools who report having each of the 20 **external** assets, by grade and gender, in fall/winter 2011. Differences of 5 percentage points or more between grade levels or between males and females are meaningful and worthy of thought and consideration (but are not necessarily statistically significant). See Figure 4 for a graphical presentation of external assets by grade and Figure 5 for external assets by gender.

Looking at external asset levels by **grade** shows some stark trends. For nearly every asset, many fewer 12th grade youth report having the asset compared to 6th grade youth; eight of the assets drop by more than 30 percentage points from 6th to 12th grade. The notable exceptions are safety (#10), which nearly doubles from 6th to 12th grade, and receiving support from at least three adults other than parents (#3), which remains stable.

Looking at external asset levels by **gender** also shows some important differences. Female students in 6th-12th grades have notably higher levels (up to 12 percentage points) for 8 of the 20 assets. The notable exception is safety (#10), which is held by more males than females.

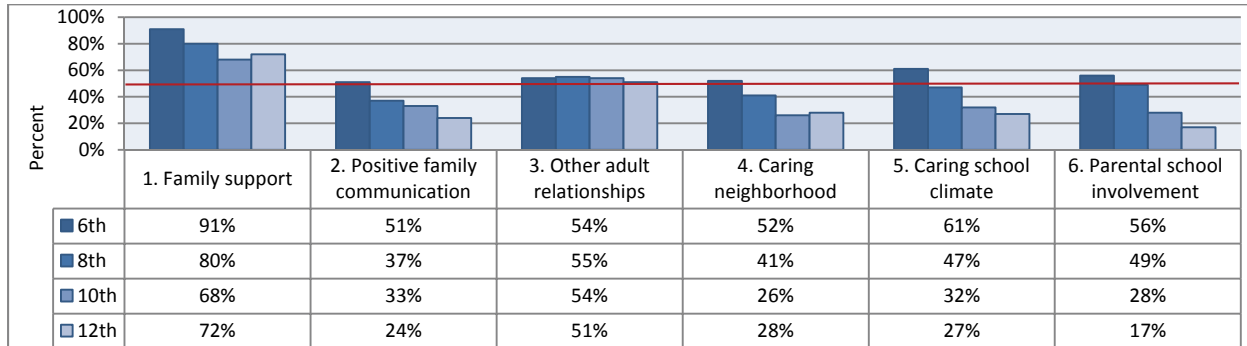
Table 5. Percent of 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan Reporting Having Each of the 20 External Assets, by Grade and Gender: Fall/Winter 2011

External Asset	Overall 6 th -12 th	Overall 6 th -12 th		By grade			
		Male	Female	6 th	8 th	10 th	12 th
Support							
1. Family support	78	77	78	91	80	68	72
2. Positive family communication	36	35	38	51	37	33	24
3. Other adult relationships	53	48	59	54	55	54	51
4. Caring neighborhood	37	37	38	52	41	26	28
5. Caring school climate	42	39	46	61	47	32	27
6. Parent involvement in schooling	37	34	41	56	49	28	17
Empowerment							
7. Community values youth	31	29	35	51	35	21	19
8. Youth as resources	37	35	39	43	44	33	26
9. Service to others	51	46	57	58	57	51	40
10. Safety	54	62	46	35	52	58	72
Boundaries & Expectations							
11. Family boundaries	49	45	53	57	53	49	36
12. School boundaries	61	62	60	82	61	54	48
13. Neighborhood boundaries	46	46	46	64	54	40	27
14. Adult role models	29	25	34	34	32	27	24
15. Positive peer influence	75	73	77	95	79	70	58
16. High expectations	59	59	60	81	62	54	43
Constructive Use of Time							
17. Creative activities	16	11	23	18	17	21	10
18. Youth programs	56	53	59	57	62	57	48
19. Religious community	60	54	66	68	66	60	46
20. Time at home	53	54	51	69	56	47	39

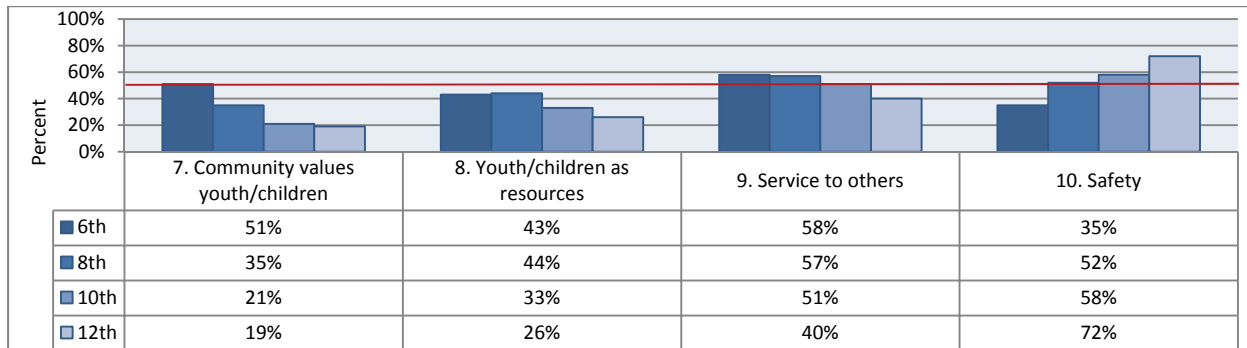
Figure 4. Percent of 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan Reporting Having Each External Asset, by Grade: Fall/Winter 2011

Note: The red line indicates 50 percent.

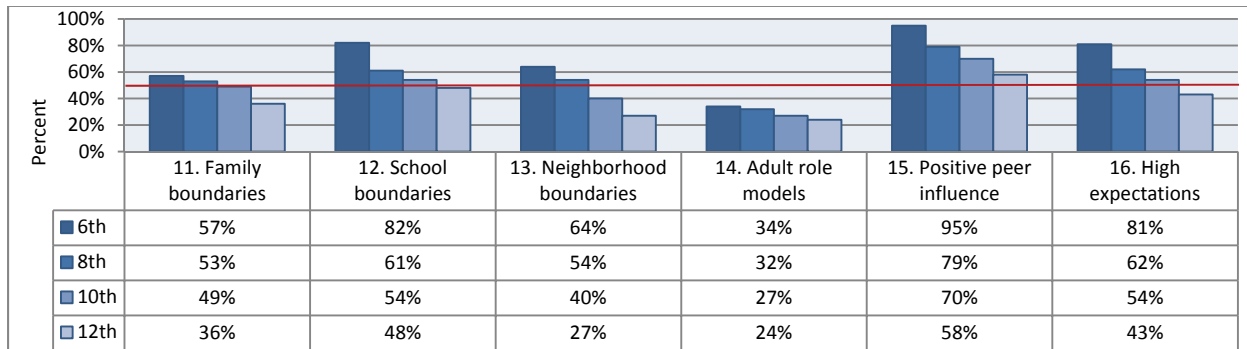
Support



Empowerment



Boundaries & Expectations



Constructive Use of Time

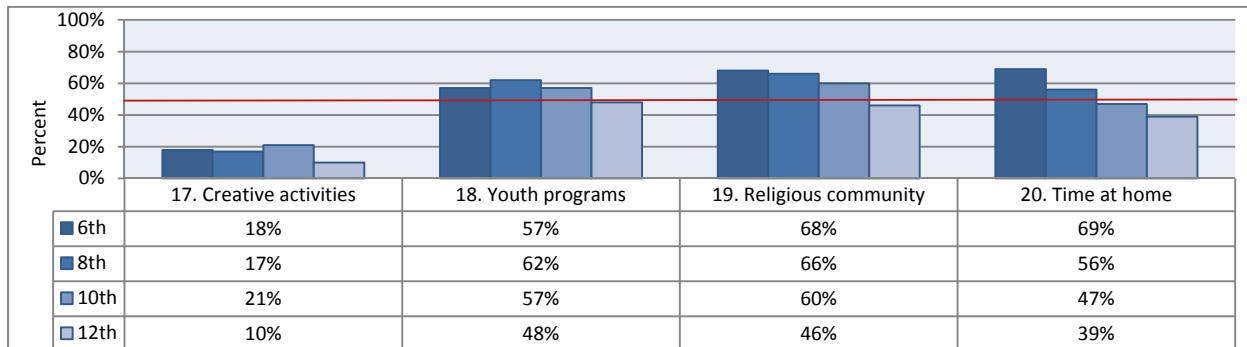
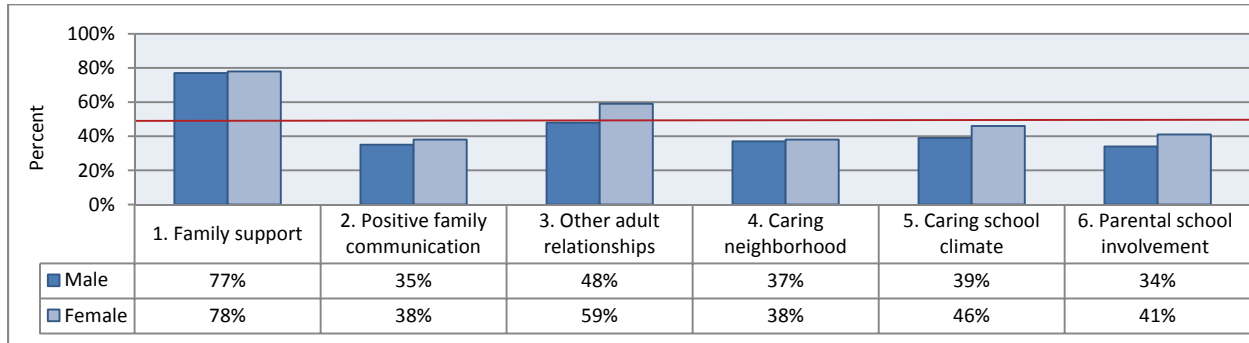


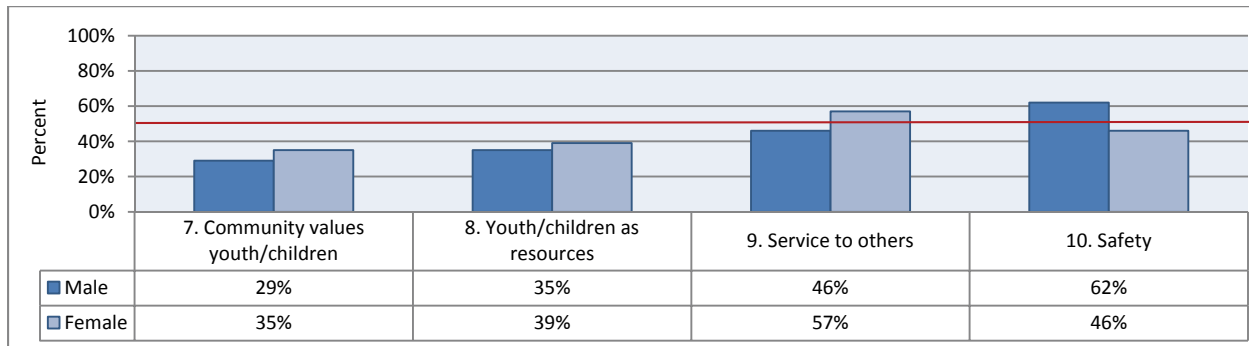
Figure 5. Percent of 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan Reporting Having Each External Asset, by Gender: Fall/Winter 2011

Note: The red line indicates 50 percent.

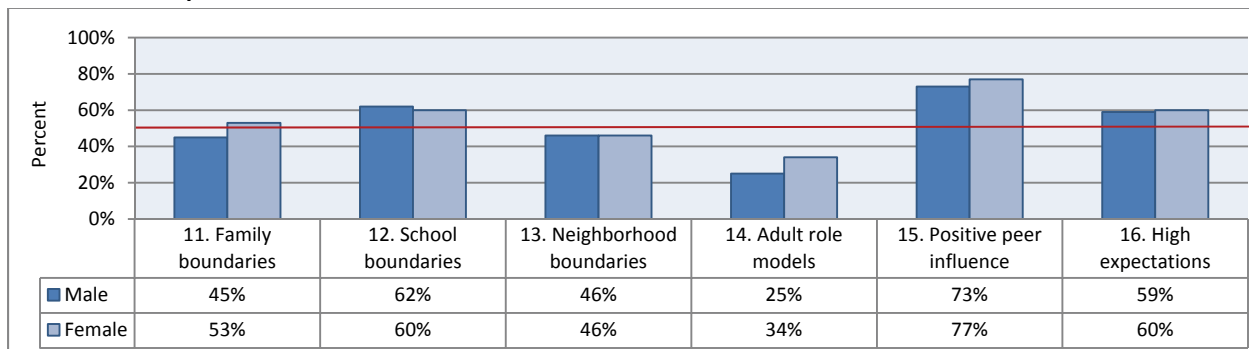
Support



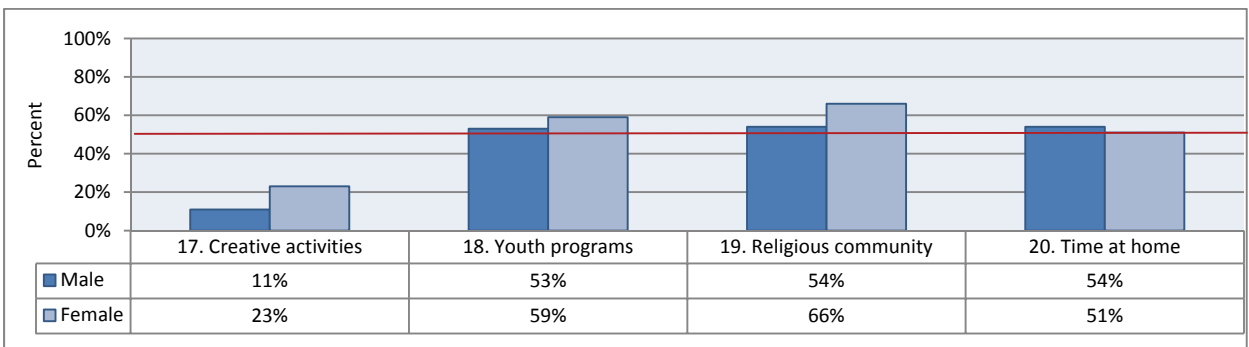
Empowerment



Boundaries & Expectations



Constructive Use of Time



Internal Assets by Grade and Gender

Table 6 contains the percentage of students in Bismarck and Mandan public schools who reported having each of the 20 **internal** assets, by grade and gender, in fall/winter 2011. Differences of 5 percentage points or more between grade levels or between males and females are meaningful and worthy of thought and consideration (but are not necessarily statistically significant). See Figure 6 for a graphical presentation of internal assets by grade and Figure 7 for internal assets by gender.

Looking at internal asset levels by **grade** shows some interesting trends. The grade level differences are not nearly as stark for internal assets as they are for external assets. However, 12th graders have notably fewer assets than 6th graders in at least 9 of the 20 internal assets. For restraint from sexual activity or use of alcohol and drugs (#31), the drop is 60 percentage points from 6th to 12th grade. One exception, however, is in the sense of having control over things that happen to them (#37), which increases 22 percentage points from 6th to 12th grade.

Looking at internal asset levels by **gender** shows some important differences that are even more notable than the gender differences in external assets. Female students in 6th-12th grades have notably higher levels than male students for 17 of the 20 assets. Females have at least 5 percentage point higher levels for all of the items in the Positive Values and the Social Competencies categories of internal assets; for skills relating to empathy, sensitivity, and friendship (#33), the difference is 32 percentage points.

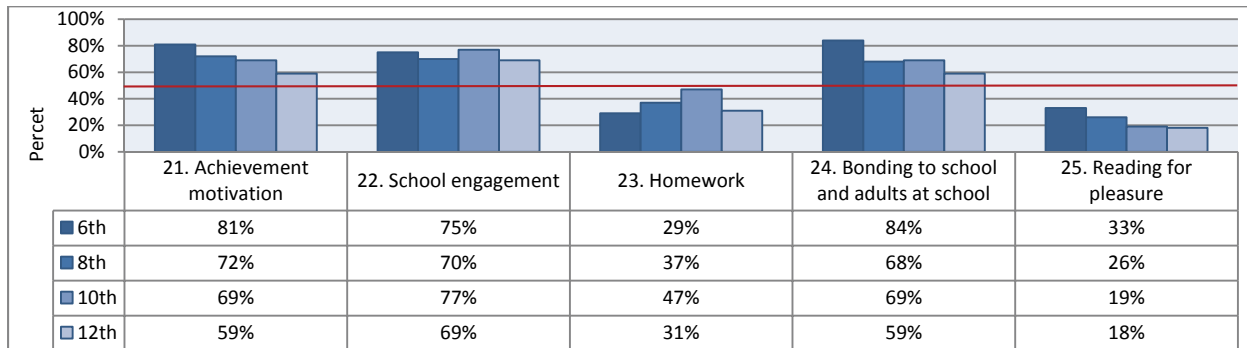
Table 6. Percent of 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan Reporting Having Each of the 20 Internal Assets, by Grade and Gender: Fall/Winter 2011

Internal Asset	Overall 6 th -12 th	Overall 6 th -12 th		By grade			
		Male	Female	6 th	8 th	10 th	12 th
Commitment to Learning							
21. Achievement motivation	70	64	77	81	72	69	59
22. School engagement	72	67	78	75	70	77	69
23. Homework	36	31	42	29	37	47	31
24. Bonding to school	70	69	71	84	68	69	59
25. Reading for pleasure	24	16	32	33	26	19	18
Positive Values							
26. Caring	51	43	61	59	47	50	48
27. Equality and social justice	52	43	64	63	51	46	49
28. Integrity	73	66	82	72	70	75	76
29. Honesty	72	68	76	75	71	68	74
30. Responsibility	70	67	74	71	67	69	73
31. Restraint	53	49	59	83	64	44	23
Social Competencies							
32. Planning and decision-making	36	32	41	38	38	37	32
33. Interpersonal competence	48	33	65	52	48	51	42
34. Cultural competence	32	28	37	36	32	30	30
35. Resistance skills	47	41	55	59	54	44	34
36. Peaceful conflict resolution	52	43	63	74	52	45	39
Positive Identity							
37. Personal power	49	44	55	38	46	52	60
38. Self-esteem	57	56	57	58	60	50	57
39. Sense of purpose	71	70	72	73	75	67	68
40. Positive view of personal future	77	74	80	76	74	78	80

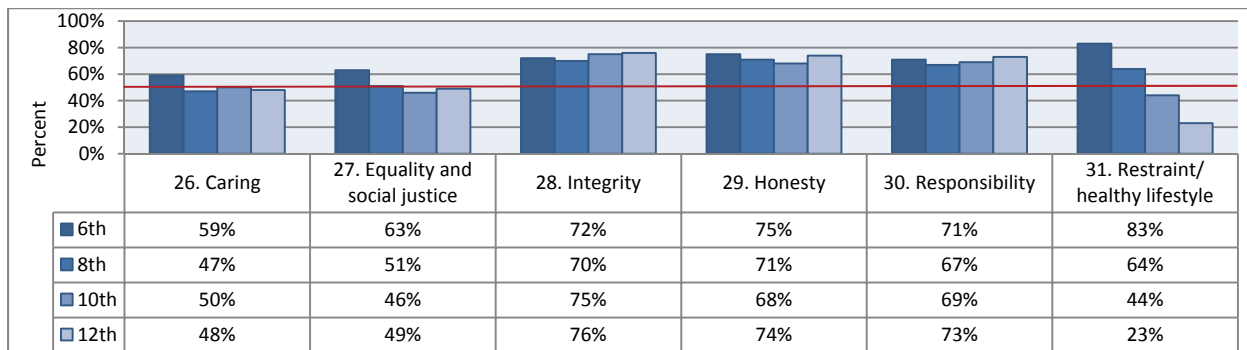
Figure 6. Percent of 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan Reporting Having Each Internal Asset, by Grade: Fall/Winter 2011

Note: The red line indicates 50 percent.

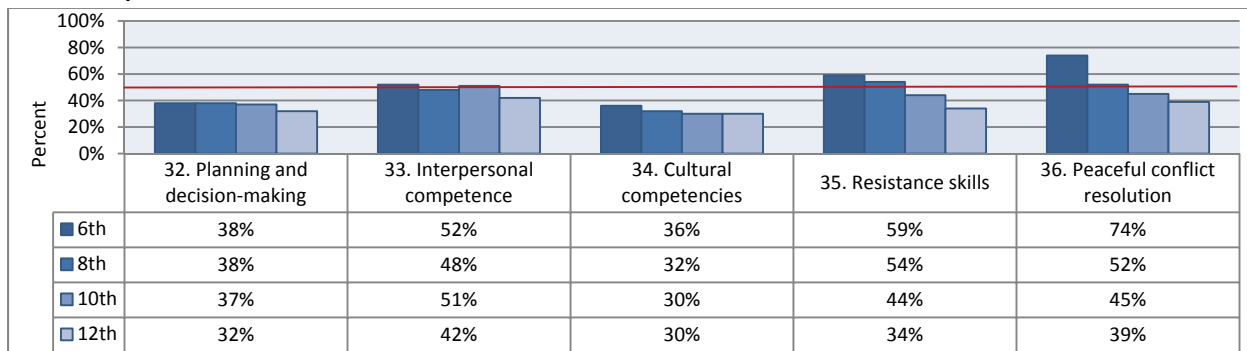
Commitment to Learning



Positive Values



Social Competencies



Positive Identity

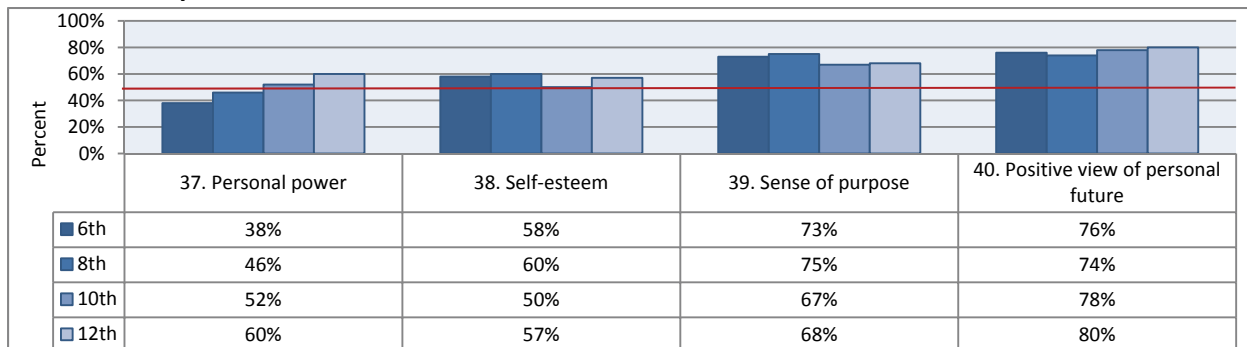
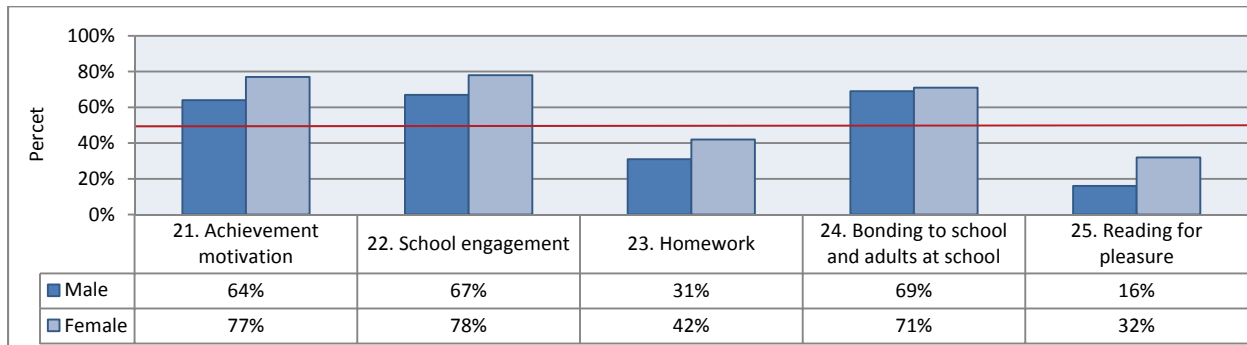


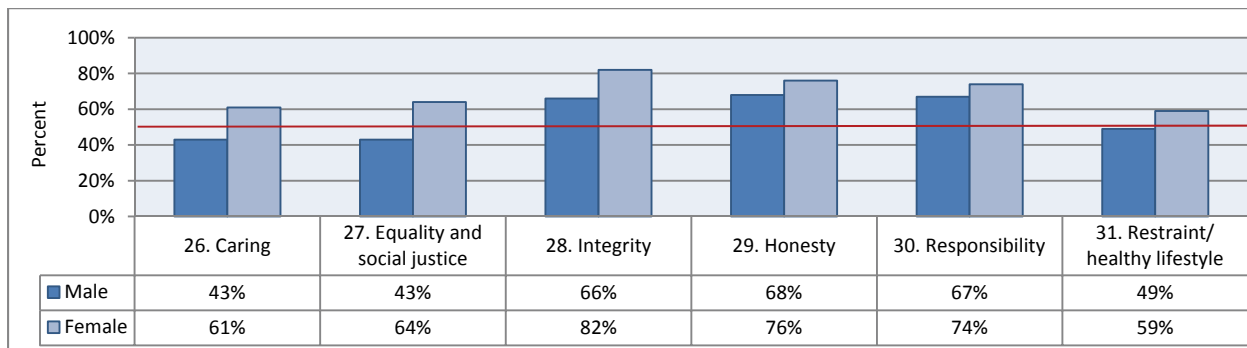
Figure 7. Percent of 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan Reporting Having Each Internal Asset, by Gender: Fall/Winter 2011

Note: The red line indicates 50 percent.

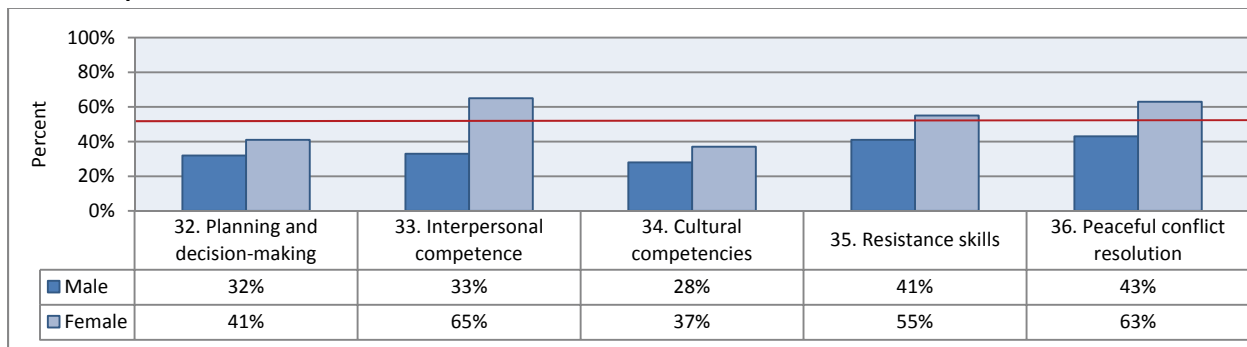
Commitment to Learning



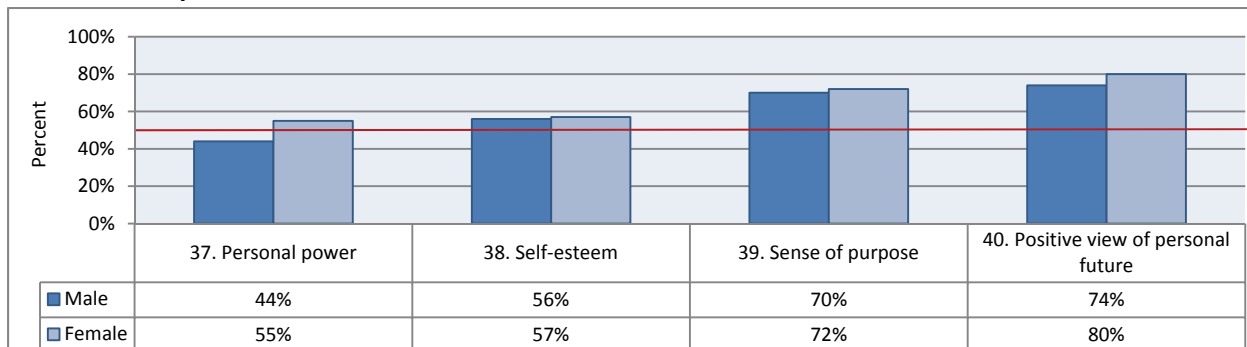
Positive Values



Social Competencies



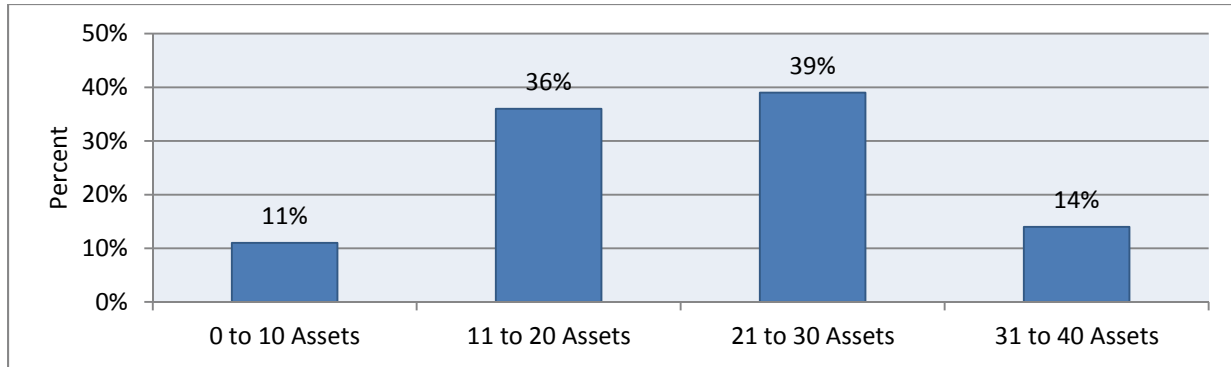
Positive Identity



Risk-Taking and Thriving Behaviors

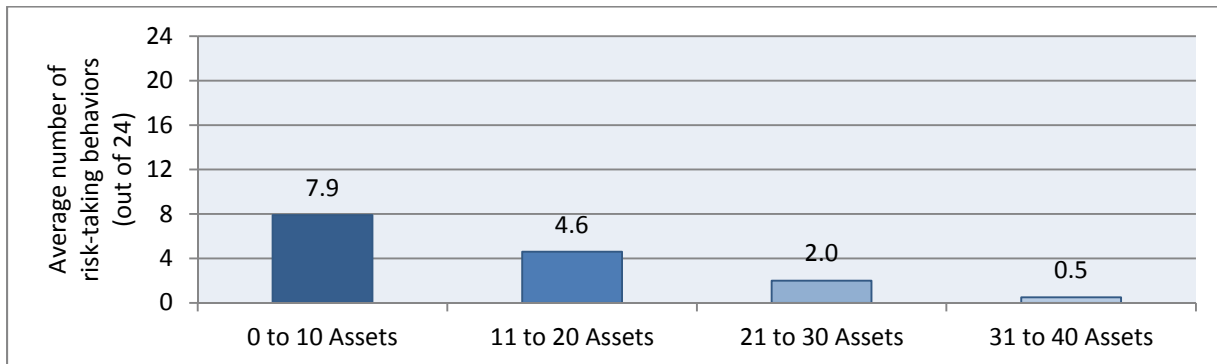
Nearly an even proportion of 6th-12th grade students in Bismarck and Mandan public schools have very few assets (11 percent have 0 to 10 assets) as have an optimal number of assets (14 percent have 31 to 40 assets).

Figure 8. Percent of 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan, by Asset Level: Fall/Winter 2011



There is a powerful relationship between the number of assets students have and the number of risky behaviors they engage in – the more assets, the fewer risky behaviors. On average, students with at least 31 of the 40 developmental assets engage in one risky behavior. In contrast, those students with 10 or fewer assets engage in, on average, eight risky behaviors.

Figure 9. Average Number of Risk-Taking Behaviors (Out of 24) for 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan, by Asset Level: Fall/Winter 2011



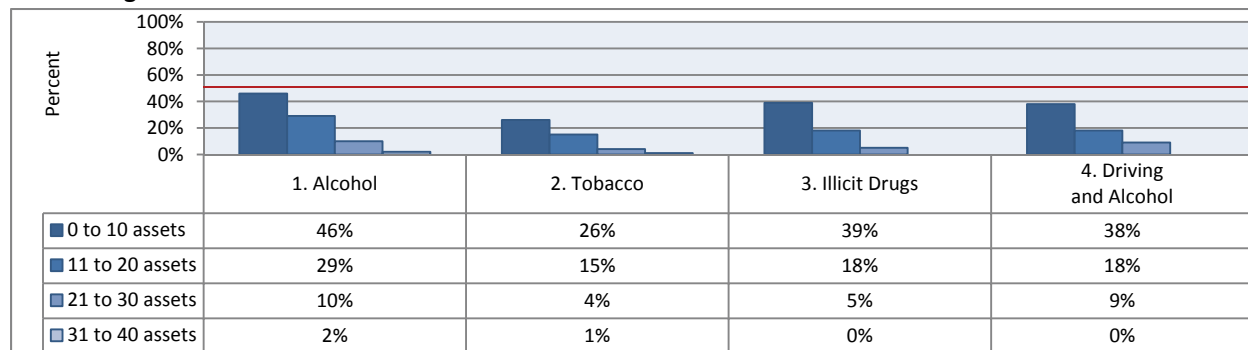
The Search Institute survey assessed 24 risky behaviors for 6th-12th grade students attending Bismarck and Mandan public schools, including various levels of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use; sexual intercourse; anti-social behaviors; various forms of violence; truancy; gambling; eating disorders; depression; and suicide attempts. These 24 risky behaviors were then categorized into 10 high-risk behavior patterns.

The proportion of 6th-12th grade students in Bismarck and Mandan public schools engaging in high-risk behavior patterns declines systematically with increases in the number of assets they have. The difference in the proportion of students who engage in risk-taking behaviors varies as much as 46 percentage points depending on asset level; nearly half of students with 0 to 10 assets have engaged in three or more acts of anti-social behavior like shoplifting, trouble with the police, or vandalism in the previous year (high-risk behavior pattern #7) compared to none of those students with 31 to 40 assets.

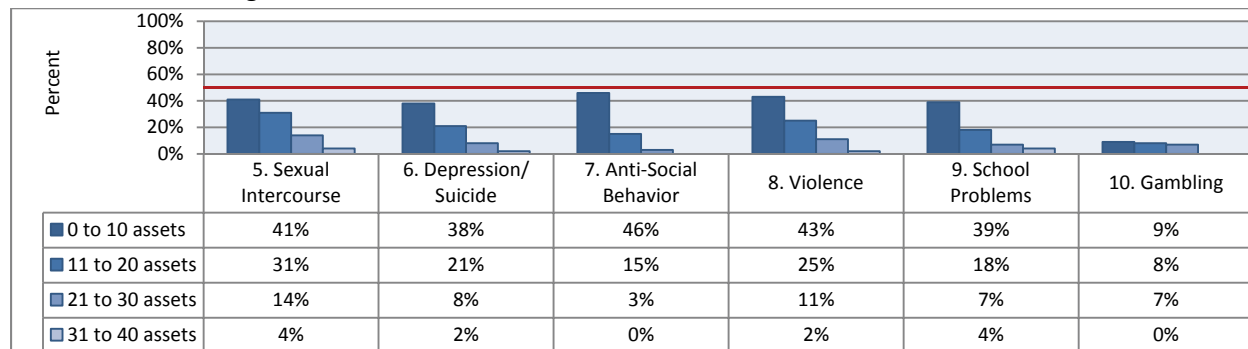
Figure 10. Percent of 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan Who Report Having Each High-Risk Behavior Pattern, by Asset Level: Fall/Winter 2011

Note: The red line indicates 50 percent.

Risk-Taking Behaviors Related to Substance Use

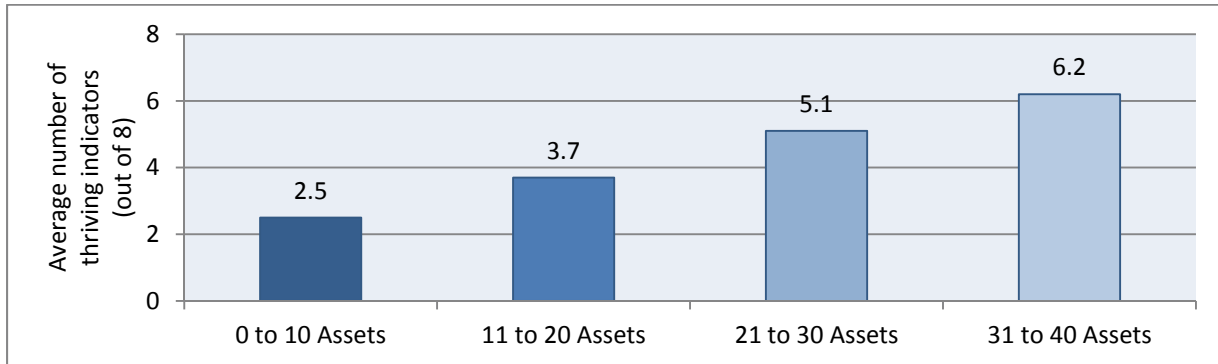


Additional Risk-Taking Behaviors



Just as assets protect children from engaging in risky behaviors, they also promote engaging in positive, developmentally appropriate behaviors. As the number of assets increases for 6th-12th grade students in Bismarck and Mandan public schools, the number of thriving indicators increases. On average, students with at least 31 of the 40 developmental assets engage in six thriving behaviors. In contrast, those students with 10 or fewer assets report, on average, three thriving indicators.

Figure 11. Average Number of Thriving Indicators (Out of 8) for 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan, by Asset Level: Fall/Winter 2011

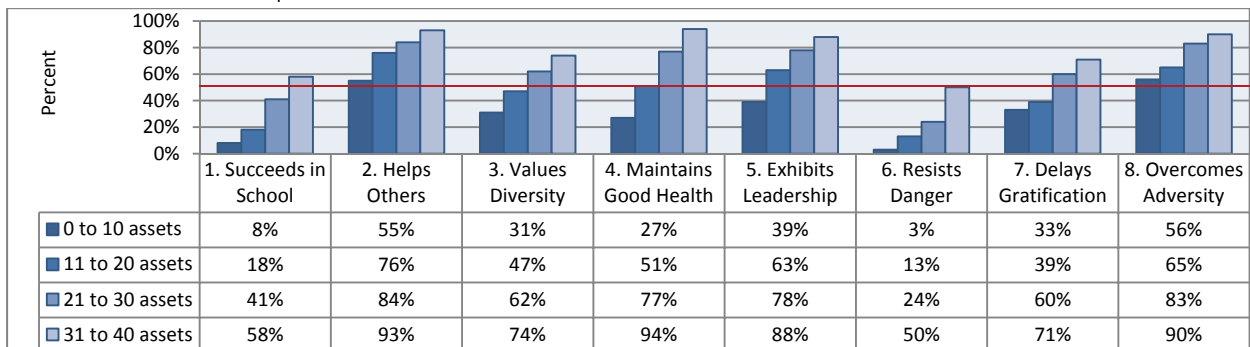


The eight thriving indicators for 6th-12th grade students include success in school, helping others, valuing diversity, maintaining good health, exhibiting good leadership, resisting danger, delaying gratification, and overcoming adversity.

The proportion of 6th-12th grade students in Bismarck and Mandan public schools engaging in thriving behaviors increases systematically with increases in the number of assets they have. The difference in the proportion of students who show a particular thriving indicator varies as much as 67 percentage points depending on asset level; 94 percent of students with 31 to 40 assets maintain good health (thriving behavior #4) compared to 27 percent with 0 to 10 assets. Among students with 0 to 10 assets, only 8 percent report succeeding in school (thriving behavior #1) and 3 percent report resisting danger (thriving behavior #6).

Figure 12. Percent of 6th-12th Grade Public School Students in Bismarck and Mandan Who Report Having Each Thriving Indicator, by Asset Level: Fall/Winter 2011

Note: The red line indicates 50 percent.



DEMOGRAPHICS

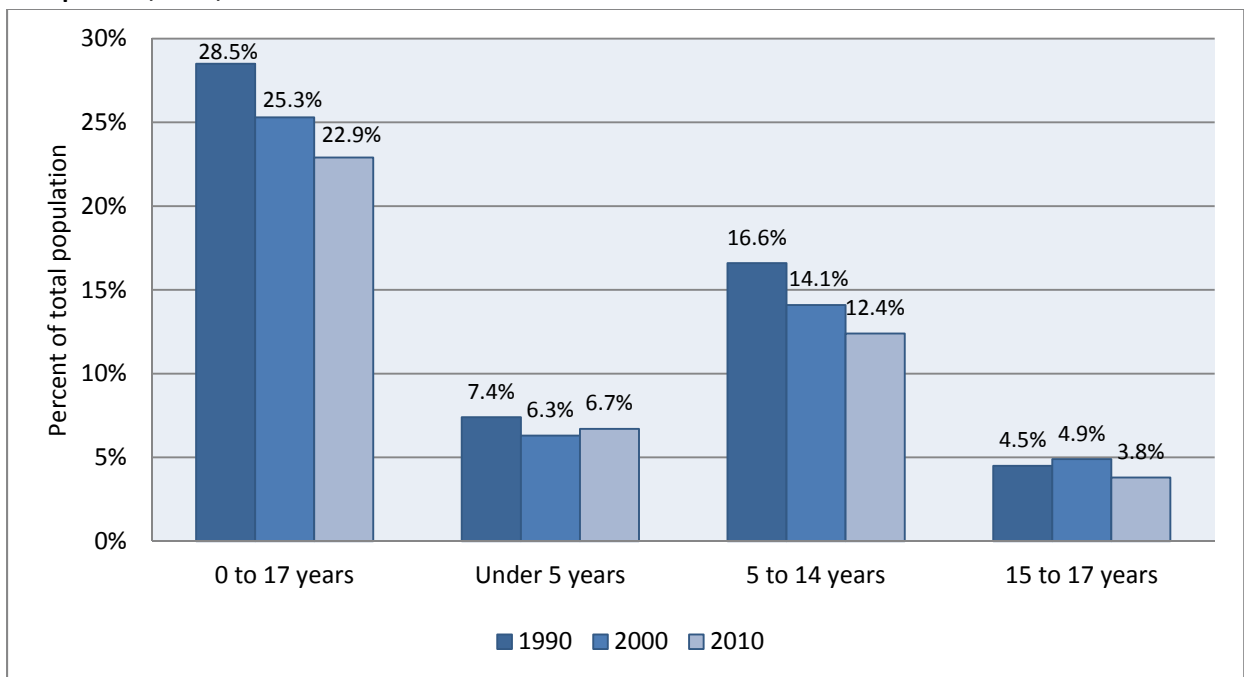
The demographics section provides a discussion of the total child population by age and race/ethnicity, family type, births, and low birth weight births for the Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Statistical Area (i.e., Bismarck-Mandan metro area), composed of Burleigh County and Mandan County, North Dakota.

Age

According to the decennial census, the Bismarck-Mandan metro area showed a 30 percent growth in total population over the last two decades, from 83,831 in 1990 to 108,779 in 2010. In that same time period, the metro area experienced only a 4 percent increase in the number of children ages 0 to 17, from 23,905 to 24,904.

The age group of 5 to 14 years saw the largest proportional decrease among all children from 1990 to 2010 (from 16.6 percent down to 12.4 percent). There was little change in the proportions of children under 5 years and children 15 to 17 years over the past two decades.

Figure 13. Percent of Total Population in the Bismarck-Mandan Metro Area That is Children Ages 0 to 17, by Age Group: 1990, 2000, and 2010



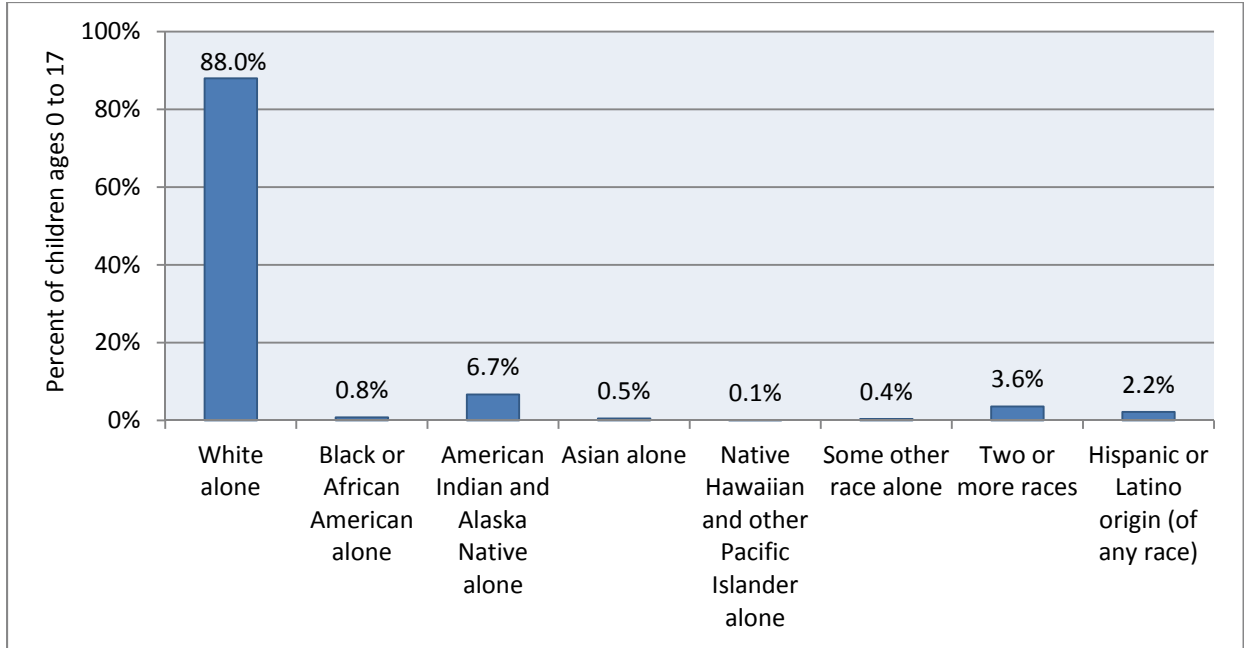
Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

Sources: 2010 Data - U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1, Table QT-P1. 2000 Data - U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, 100-Percent Data, Table QT-P1. 1990 Data - U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 Summary Tape File 1, 100-Percent Data, Table QT-P1A.

Race/Ethnicity

In 2010, the majority of children ages 0 to 17 were white in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area (88.0 percent). The largest racial minority population of children ages 0 to 17 was American Indian and Alaska Native children (6.7 percent).

Figure 14. Percent of Children Ages 0 to 17 in the Bismarck-Mandan Metro Area, by Race/Ethnicity: 2010



Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

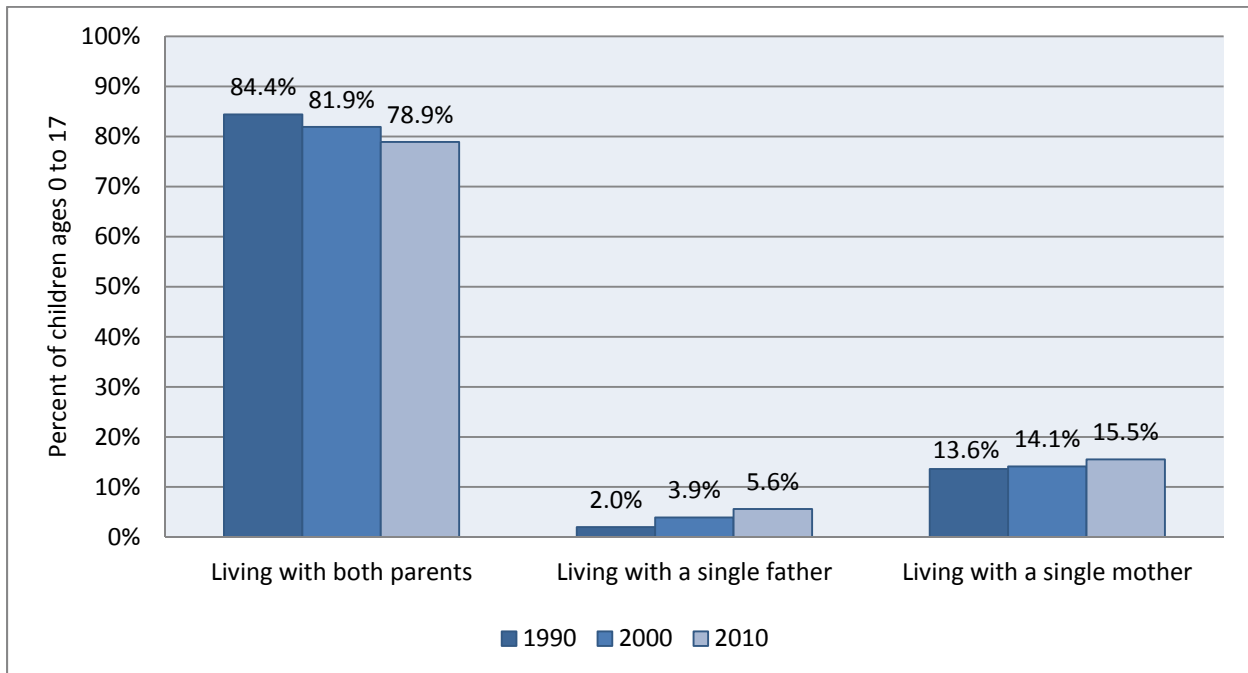
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1, Table QT-PL.

Family Type

From 1990 to 2010, the types of families in which children ages 0 to 17 live in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area have changed slightly. The proportion of children ages 0 to 17 who live with both parents decreased from 84.4 percent in 1990 to 78.9 percent in 2010. At the same time, the proportion of children living with a single parent rose from 15.6 percent in 1990 to 21.1 percent in 2010.

Most of the children living with a single parent live with a single mother; the proportion of children who live with a single mother increased from 13.6 percent in 1990 to 15.5 percent in 2010. However, over the same time period, the proportion of children who live with a single father nearly tripled (from 2.0 percent to 5.6 percent).

Figure 15. Percent of Children Ages 0 to 17 in the Bismarck-Mandan Metro Area, by Family Type: 1990, 2000, and 2010



Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

Sources: 2010 Data - U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B09002. 2000 Data - U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 - Sample Data, Table P16. 1990 Data - U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 Summary Tape File 3 - Sample Data, Table P023.

Births

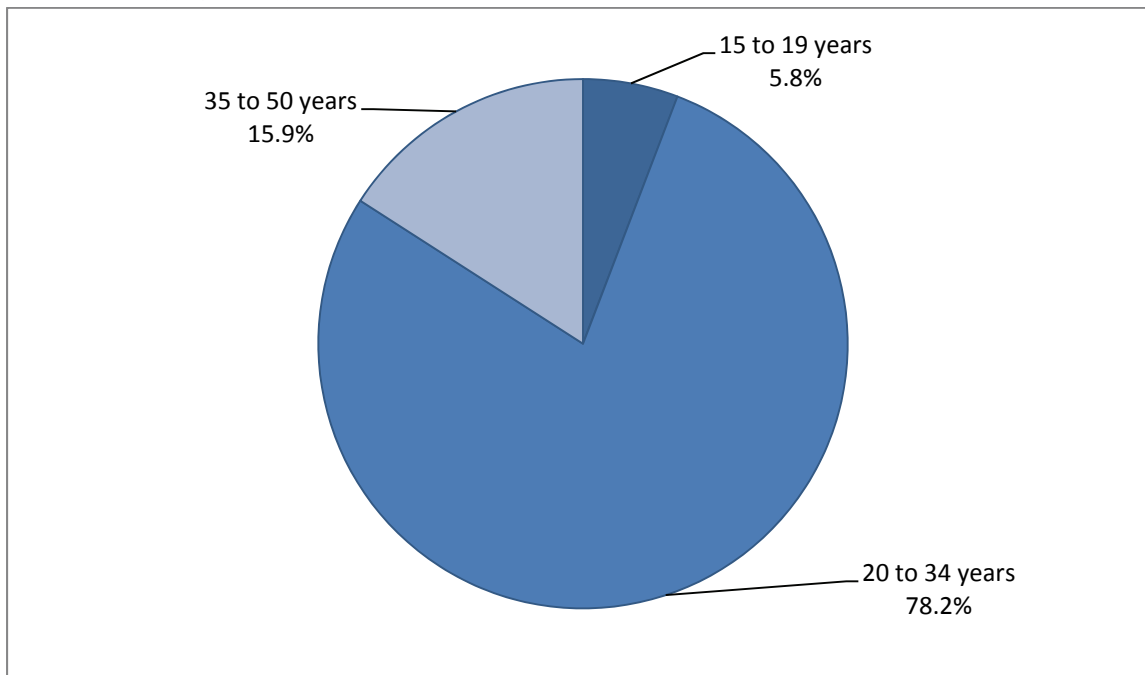
Compared with older mothers, teen mothers are less likely to finish high school or go on to college, and more likely to be dependent on welfare, especially in the first years after giving birth. Additionally, the great majority of teen births occur outside of marriage; having a child as an unmarried teen reduces the likelihood of ever marrying and increases the likelihood of divorce. As a result, teen mothers often face the primary responsibility of parenthood alone.

Compared with other teens, teenage parents are more disadvantaged, both before and after becoming parents, and they are generally unprepared for the financial responsibilities and the emotional and psychological challenges of early childbearing. These disadvantages may account for many of the negative consequences associated with teen birth (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/52>).

According to the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Vital Records, there were 1,448 births in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area in 2010 (i.e., 1,086 in Burleigh County and 362 in Morton County). Although the trend line has not been a steady increase, overall, the number of births in the metro area has been increasing an average of 2.2 percent per year since 2000.

According to the American Community Survey, most women who recently gave birth in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area were ages 20 to 34 in 2010 (78.2 percent); 5.8 percent were teenagers (i.e., women ages 15 to 19).

Figure 16. Percent of Women Ages 15 to 50 Who Gave Birth in the Past 12 Months in the Bismarck-Mandan Metro Area, by Age Group: 2010

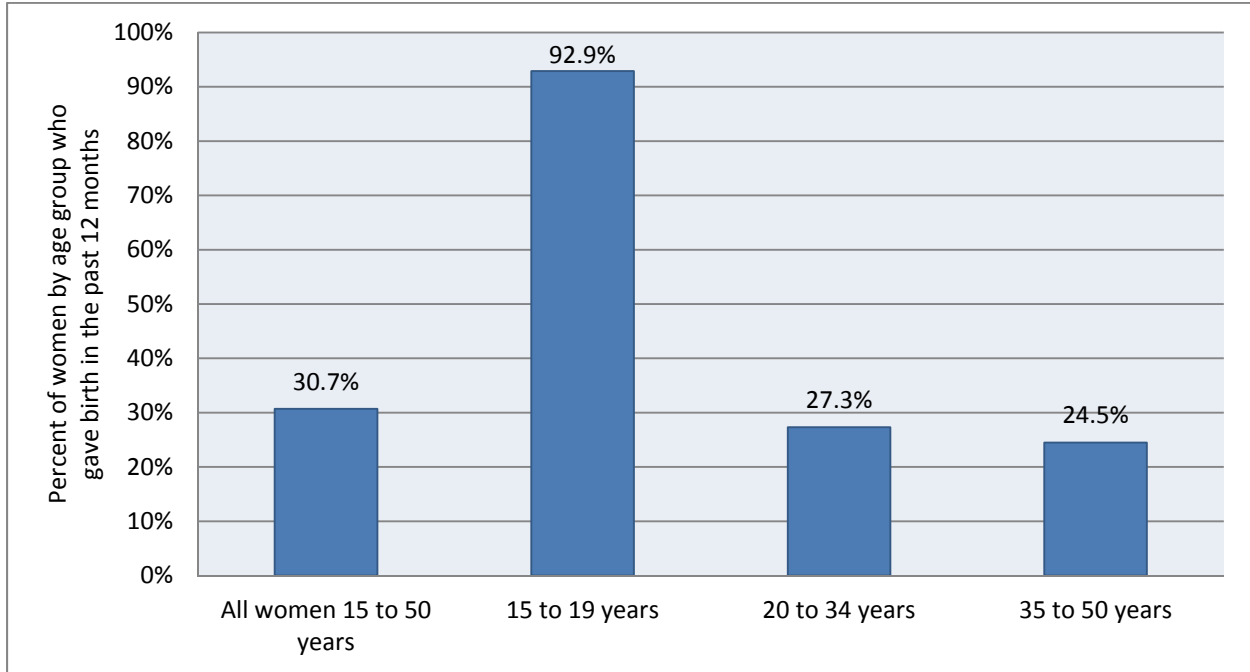


Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S1301.

Overall, nearly one-third of women who recently gave birth in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area in 2010 were unmarried (30.7 percent). The vast majority of teenagers who gave birth in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area were unmarried (92.9 percent).

Figure 17. Percent of Women Ages 15 to 50 Who Gave Birth in the Past 12 Months in the Bismarck-Mandan Metro Area Who Were Unmarried, by Age Group: 2010



Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S1301.

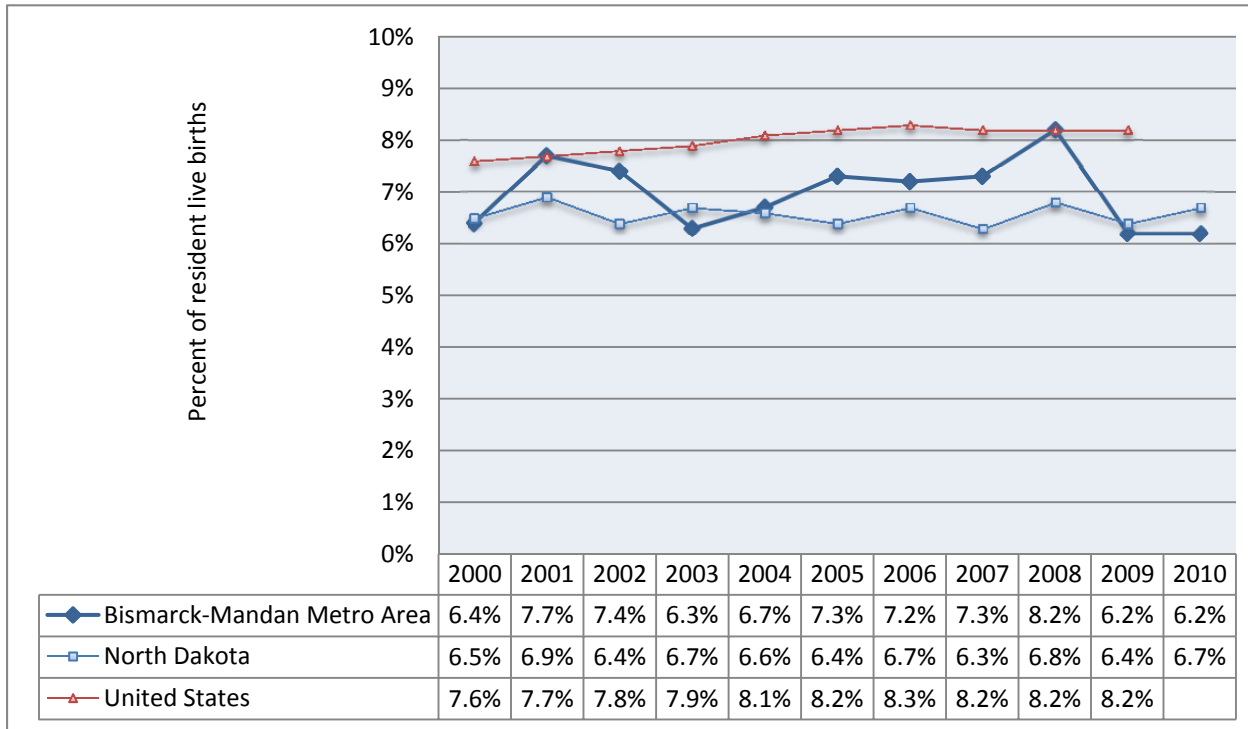
Low Birth Weight Births

Infants born at a low birth weight are at increased risk of long-term disability and impaired development. Infants born under 2,500 grams are more likely than heavier infants to experience delayed motor and social development. Lower birth weight also increases a child's likelihood of having a school-age learning disability, being enrolled in special education classes, having a lower IQ, and dropping out of high school. Risk for many of these outcomes increases substantially as birth weight decreases, with very low birth weight babies being most at risk. Being born with a low birth weight also incurs enormous economic costs, including higher medical expenditures, special education and social service expenses, and decreased productivity in adulthood (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/?q=node/246>).

In the Bismarck-Mandan metro area, the rate of low birth weight births has fluctuated moderately over the past decade, with a high of 8.2 percent in 2008 and a low of 6.2 percent in 2009 and 2010.

The overall proportion of resident live births in North Dakota that were low birth weight babies has shown little change over the past decade; in 2010, the rate was 6.7 percent.

Figure 18. Percent of All Resident Live Births That Are Low Birth Weight Births: 2000 to 2010



Notes: Blank cells in the data table indicate that no data were available. Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

Sources: National Data - The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center website, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate>.

State and County Data - North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Vital Records, 2010 Vital Events Summary,

<http://www.ndhealth.gov/vital/>.

SCHOOL READINESS

School readiness can be defined as the skills, knowledge, behaviors, and accomplishments that children know and can do as they enter kindergarten in the areas of physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development, cognition and general knowledge, and creativity and the arts.

This section of the report looks at parental and child characteristics that have an impact on the early development of children and affect the child's readiness for school.

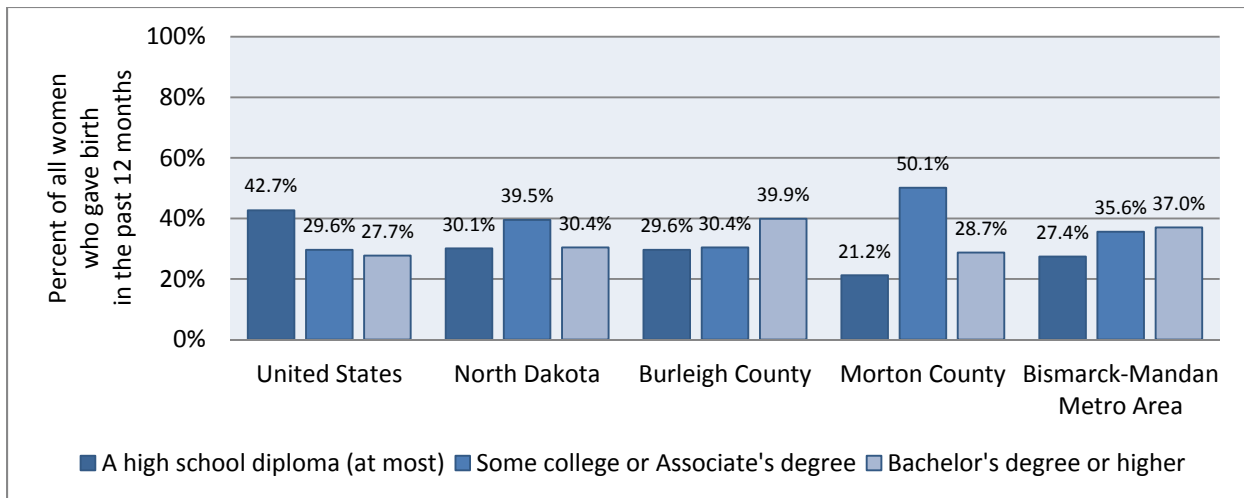
Parental Education

Higher levels of parent educational attainment are strongly associated with positive outcomes for children in many areas including school readiness, educational achievement, incidence of low birth weight, health-related behaviors including smoking and binge drinking, and pro-social activities such as volunteering. Children of more educated parents are also likely to have access to greater material, human, and social resources (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/?q=node/183>).

In 2010, the majority of women ages 15 to 50 who gave birth in the past 12 months in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area were educated beyond high school (72.6 percent).

More than one-third of new mothers in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area had a Bachelor's degree or higher level of education in 2010 (37.0 percent). Another one-third had at least some college or an Associate's degree (35.6 percent).

Figure 19. Percent of All Women Ages 15 to 50 Who Gave Birth in the Past 12 Months, by Educational Attainment: 2010



Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

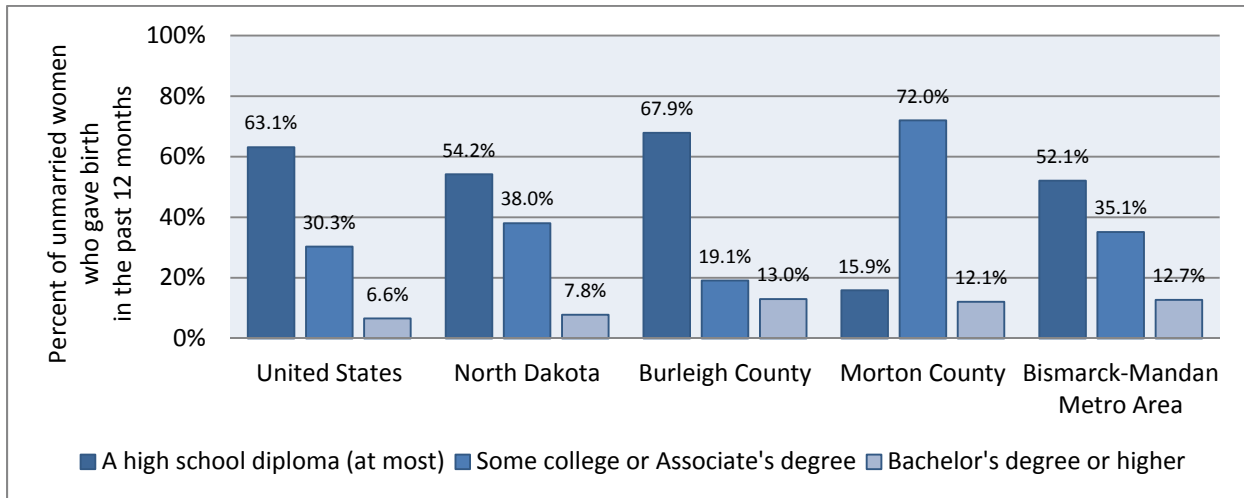
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B13014.

In 2010, about half of unmarried women ages 15 to 50 who gave birth in the past 12 months in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area had, at most, a high school education (52.1 percent), which is nearly twice the proportion of new mothers in general (27.4 percent).

Slightly more than one-third of new mothers in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area had some college or an Associate’s degree (35.1 percent) in 2010. Approximately 1 in 10 had a Bachelor’s degree or higher (12.7 percent).

Unmarried new mothers in Morton County were much more likely to have some college or an Associate’s degree than new mothers in Burleigh County (72.0 percent compared to 19.1 percent).

Figure 20. Percent of Unmarried Women Ages 15 to 50 Who Gave Birth in the Past 12 Months, by Educational Attainment: 2010



Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

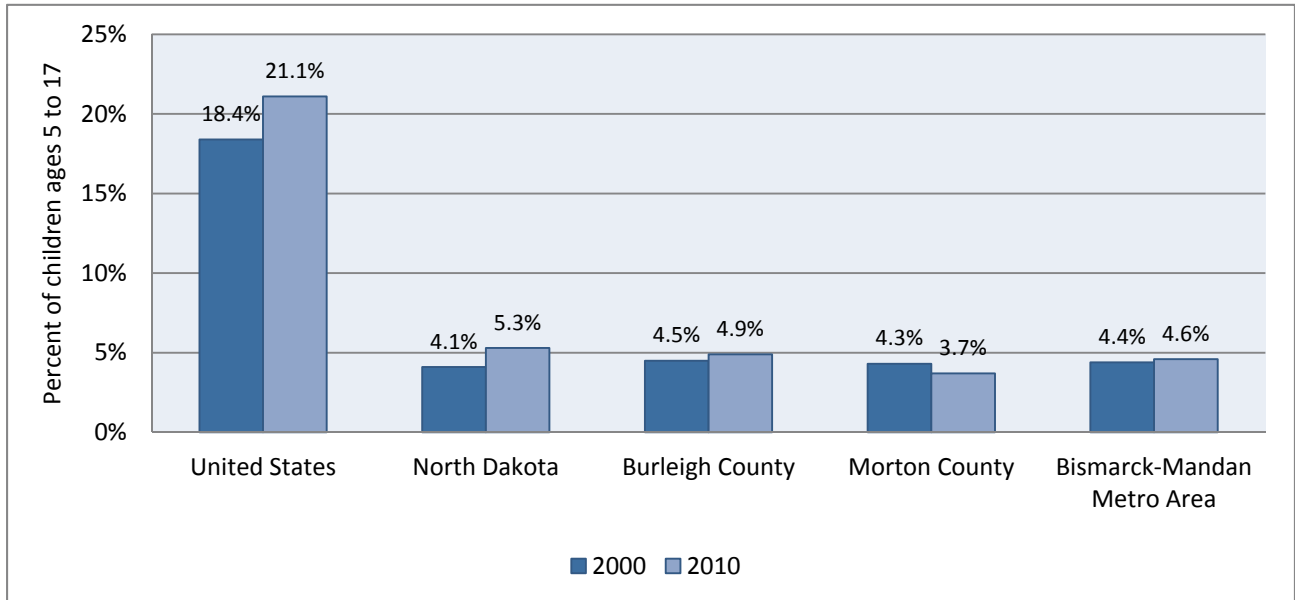
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B13014.

Language Spoken at Home

Parental involvement in school can lead to increased academic performance and positive social outcomes for children, as well as enable teachers to identify learning problems at an earlier age. Teachers' lack of understanding of cultural context can hinder child development. Parents who do not speak English well may feel less comfortable or less welcome getting involved in their children's school (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/archivepgs/104.htm>).

Approximately 5 percent of school-age children in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area spoke a language other than English at home in 2010 (4.6 percent). This proportion is relatively unchanged from 2000.

Figure 21. Percent of Children Ages 5 to 17 Who Speak a Language Other Than English at Home: 2000 and 2010



Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

Sources: 2010 Data - U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B16004. 2000 Data - U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 - Sample Data, Table P19.

Parents in the Labor Force

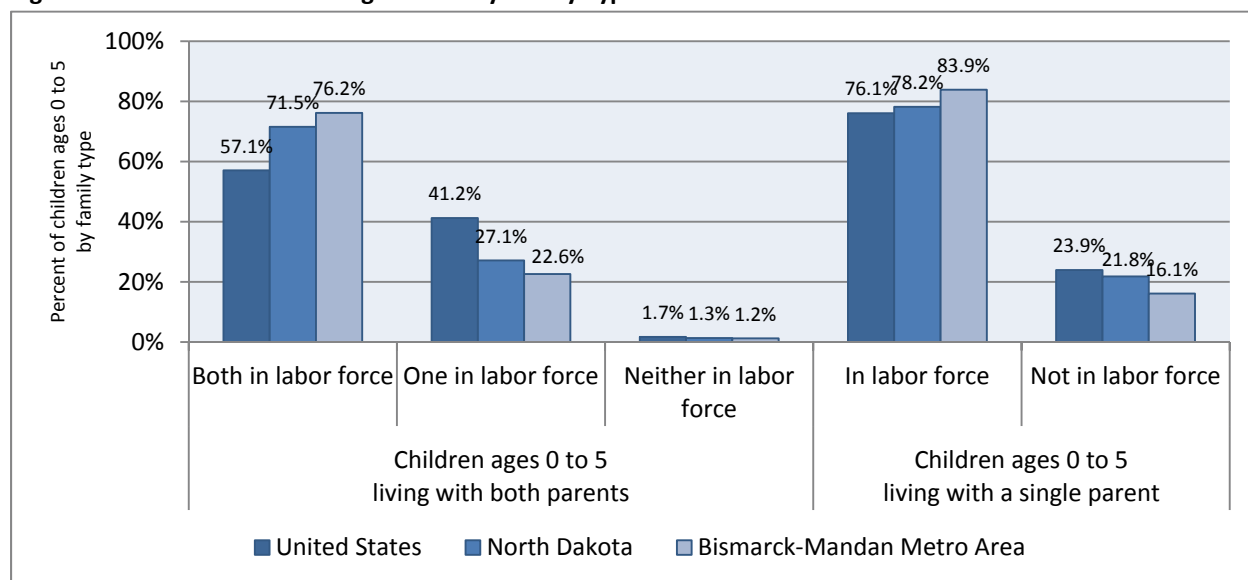
Secure attachment to the labor force, defined here as full-time, full-year employment, is a major contributor to financial stability and well-being for families. Higher income, in turn, is associated with many positive child outcomes including better health, behavior, academic achievement, and financial well-being as adults. In particular, deep, persistent and early poverty are related to poorer child development, though, in some cases, long hours of employment among mothers with very young children has been associated with modestly negative child outcomes. One study found large drops in family income, and fluctuating incomes, to be associated with a greater risk of behavioral problems and lower reading scores, compared with children in families who had not been poor (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/archivepgs/68.htm>).

In the Bismarck-Mandan metro area, the proportion of mothers with young children (ages 0 to 5) in the labor force grew from 80.6 percent in 2000 to 83.5 percent in 2010. This is higher than the state average of 76.1 percent, which is among the highest in the nation (U.S. Census Bureau - 2000 Census, Summary File 3 (SF3) Table P45; 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B23003).

The majority of young children in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area have working parents, and rates of labor force participation are higher in the metro area than they are in the state and the nation overall. In 2010, three-fourths of children ages 0 to 5 living with both parents in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area had both parents in the labor force (76.2 percent); an additional 22.6 percent had at least one parent in the labor force. Most children ages 0 to 5 living with a single parent had that parent in the labor force (83.9 percent). Among all metro area children ages 0 to 5 in 2010, 95.3 percent lived with at least one parent who was in the labor force.

Participants in the labor force reflect both employed and unemployed persons. Unemployment in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area and North Dakota overall is much lower than the national average (3.4 percent and 3.5 percent compared to 8.9 percent in 2011) (North Dakota Job Service, Labor Market Information Center).

Figure 22. Percent of Children Ages 0 to 5 by Family Type with Parents in the Labor Force: 2010



Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B23008.

Child Care

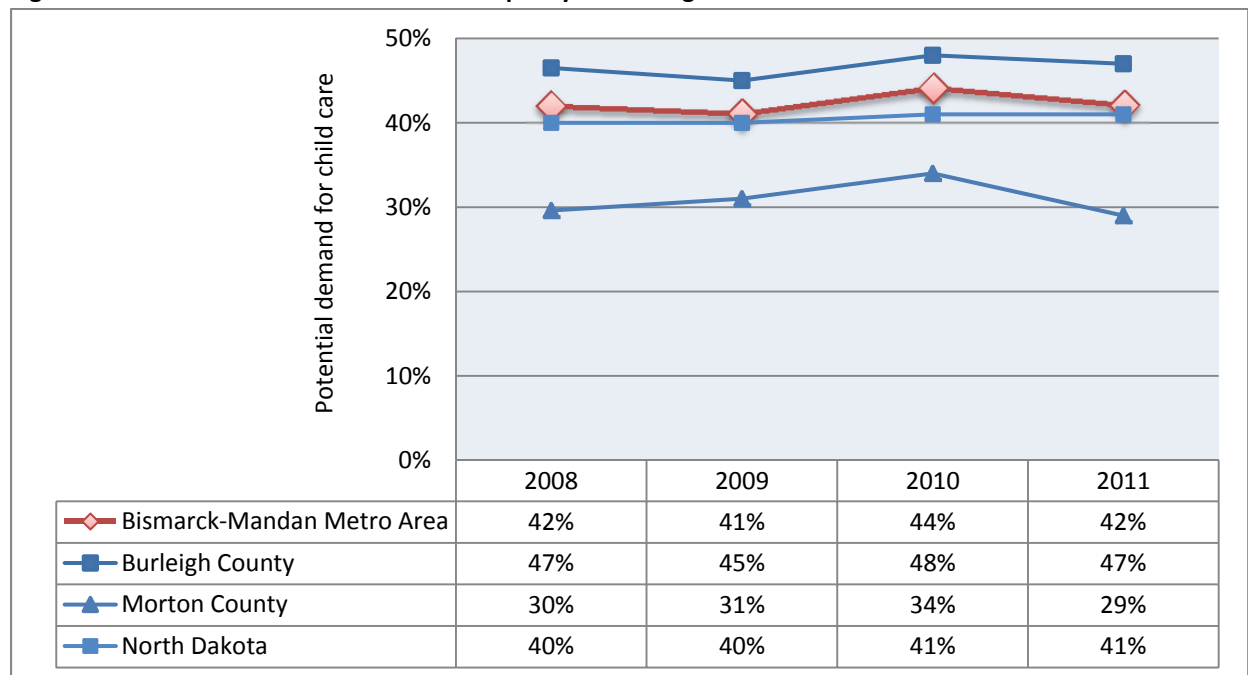
A substantial percentage of children spend time in either center- or home-based child care. There is no conclusive evidence that child care is either better or worse for children than being cared for solely by a parent. However, researchers have found that consistent, developmentally sound, and emotionally supportive care has a positive effect on both children and families. In general, high quality child care is more beneficial for children's cognitive, language, and social development than low quality child care.

Low-income children who attend intensive, high quality early education programs have greater school success, higher graduation rates, lower levels of juvenile crime, decreased need for special education services, and lower teen pregnancy rates than their peers (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/archivepgs/21.htm>).

In the Bismarck-Mandan metro area, licensed child-care options met 42 percent of the potential demand for child care in 2011. Potential demand, as calculated by North Dakota Child Care Resource and Referral, is estimated as the number of children ages 0 to 12 with working mothers.

A larger proportion of the demand was being met in Burleigh County compared to Morton County (47 percent and 29 percent, respectively). The capacity of licensed child care to meet potential demand has seen little change since 2008.

Figure 23. Extent That Licensed Child Care Capacity is Meeting Potential Demand for Child Care: 2008 to 2011



Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

Source: North Dakota Child Care Resource and Referral, <http://www.ndchildcare.org>.

Poverty

Aside from physical and mental health, poverty in childhood and adolescence is associated with a higher risk for poorer cognitive and academic outcomes, lower school attendance, lower reading and math test scores, increased distractibility, and higher rates of grade failure and early high school dropout. Poor children are also more likely than other children to have externalizing and other behavior problems, and emotional problems, and are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviors during adolescence. Finally, growing up in poverty is associated with lower occupational status and lower wages in adulthood (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/221>).

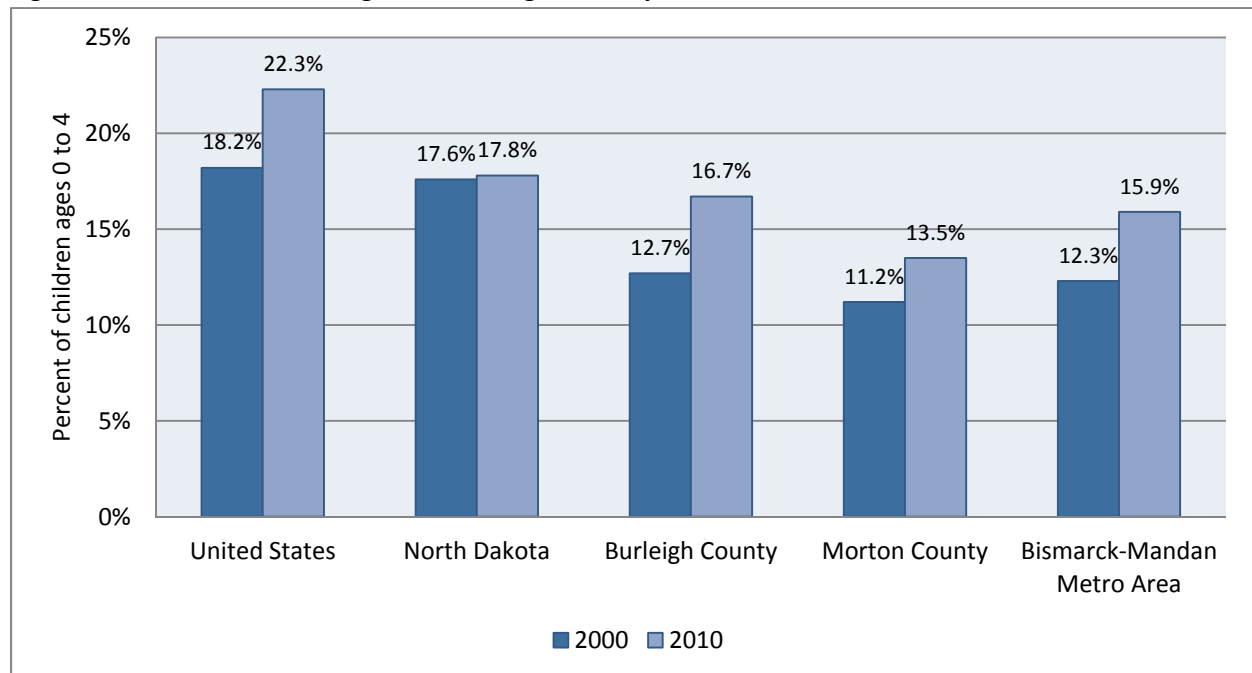
From 2000 to 2010, the Bismarck-Mandan metro area saw an increase in the proportion of children ages 0 to 17 living in poverty (from 9.7 percent to 11.4 percent). The poverty rate for all children in the metro area was below the state average in 2010 (11.4 percent compared to 14.2 percent).

An even larger proportion of young children ages 0 to 4 are in poverty, and over the past decade, the metro area saw an increase in that proportion as well (from 12.3 percent to 15.9 percent). The rate in the metro area was lower than the state average in 2010 (15.9 percent compared to 17.8 percent).

While better than the state averages overall, poverty among young children in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area has risen while the statewide average has remained relatively unchanged.

In addition, there are dramatic pockets of poverty. In the Bismarck-Mandan metro area in 2010, 83.7 percent of American Indian children ages 0 to 4 were in poverty, which is much higher than the state's rate among young American Indian children of 58.2 percent and the national rate of 38.9 percent (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table 17001C*).

Figure 24. Percent of Children Ages 0 to 4 Living in Poverty: 2000 and 2010

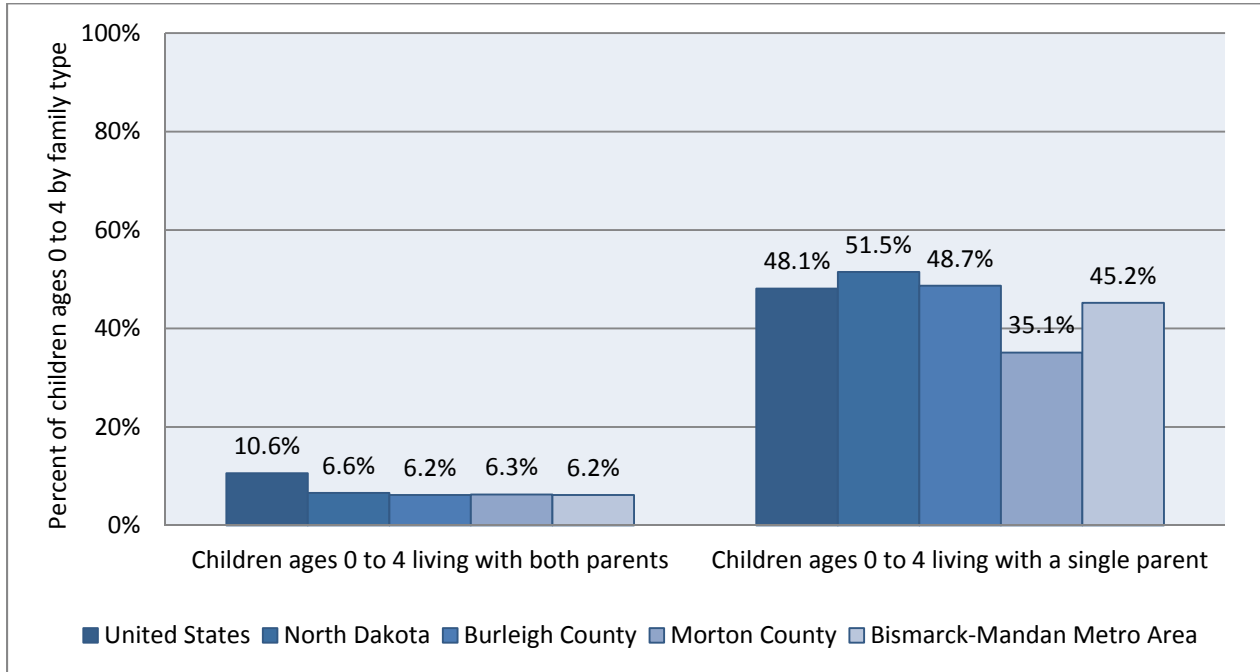


Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

Sources: 2010 Data - U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17001. 2000 Data - U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 - Sample Data, Table PO87.

Child poverty also varies dramatically depending on family type. The proportion of children ages 0 to 4 living in poverty in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area in 2010 was more than seven times higher for children living with a single parent than for children living with both parents (45.2 percent compared to 6.2 percent).

Figure 25. Percent of Children Ages 0 to 4 by Family Type Who Are Living in Poverty: 2010



Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17006.

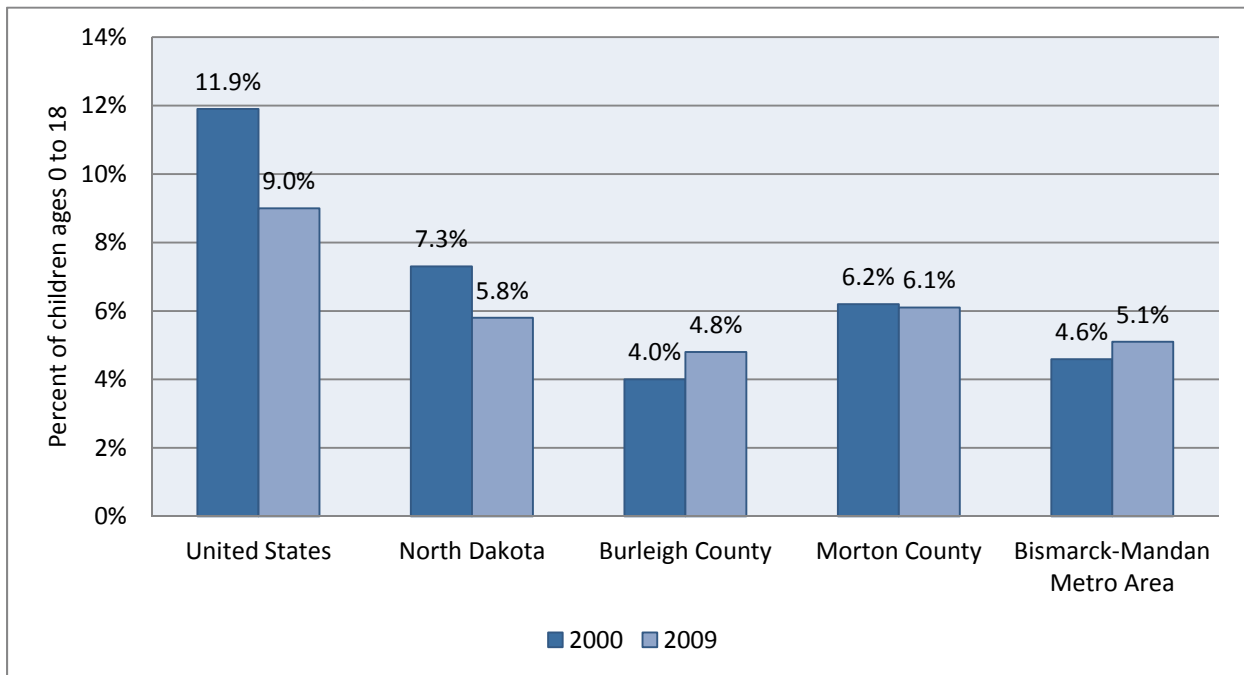
Health Insurance

Children not covered by health insurance are less likely than those with insurance to have a regular source of health care and are less likely than the privately insured to have used prescription medicines. Children without health insurance are also more likely than others to receive late or no care for health problems, putting them at greater risk for hospitalization. In addition to resulting in reduced access to health care, a lack of health insurance can also negatively influence children's school attendance and participation in extracurricular activities, and increase parental financial and emotional stress (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/83>).

In 2009, 5.1 percent of children ages 0 to 18 in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area were without health insurance. While rates of uninsured children were higher in the state and the nation overall, those rates decreased between 2000 and 2009 while the metro area's rate increased slightly (from 4.6 percent in 2000 to 5.1 percent in 2009).

A larger proportion of children ages 0 to 18 lacked health insurance in Morton County than in Burleigh County in 2009 (6.1 percent compared to 4.8 percent).

Figure 26. Percent of Children Ages 0 to 18 without Health Insurance: 2000 and 2009



Notes: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND. The data in 2009 reflect rates for children ages 0 to 18. The data in 2000 reflect rates for children ages 0 to 17.

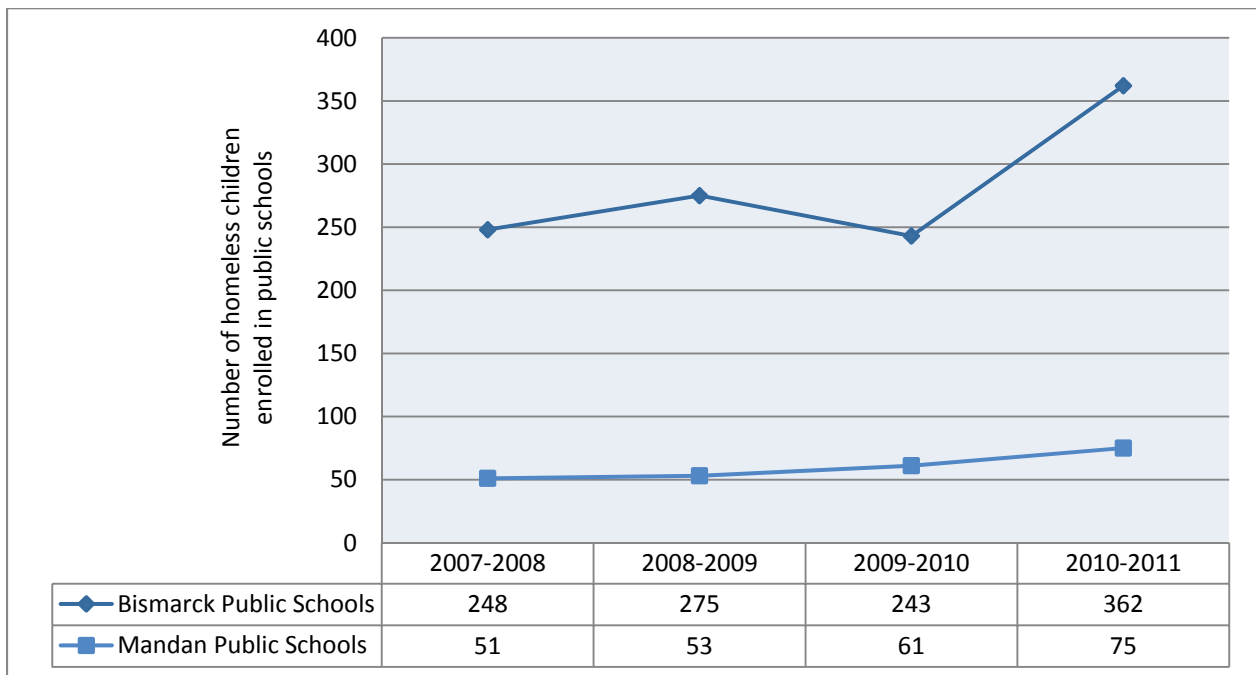
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, 2000 and 2009 Health Insurance Coverage Status for States and for Counties, <http://www.census.gov/did/www/sahie>.

Homelessness

Homelessness influences every facet of a child's life – from conception to young adulthood. The experience of homelessness inhibits the physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and behavioral development of children (Homelessness and its Effect on Children – a report by Ellen Hart-Shegos of Hart-Shegos and Associates, Inc. for the Family Housing Fund in December 1999).

The number of homeless children enrolled in Bismarck and Mandan public school districts has increased over the past four years. During the 2010-2011 school year, Bismarck reported 362 homeless children enrolled in school, up from 248 homeless children in 2007-2008. Mandan reported 75 homeless children enrolled in school in 2010-2011, up from 51 in 2007-2008.

Figure 27. Number of Homeless Children Enrolled in Bismarck and Mandan Public Schools: 2007-2008 to 2010-2011



Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, special request.

Hunger

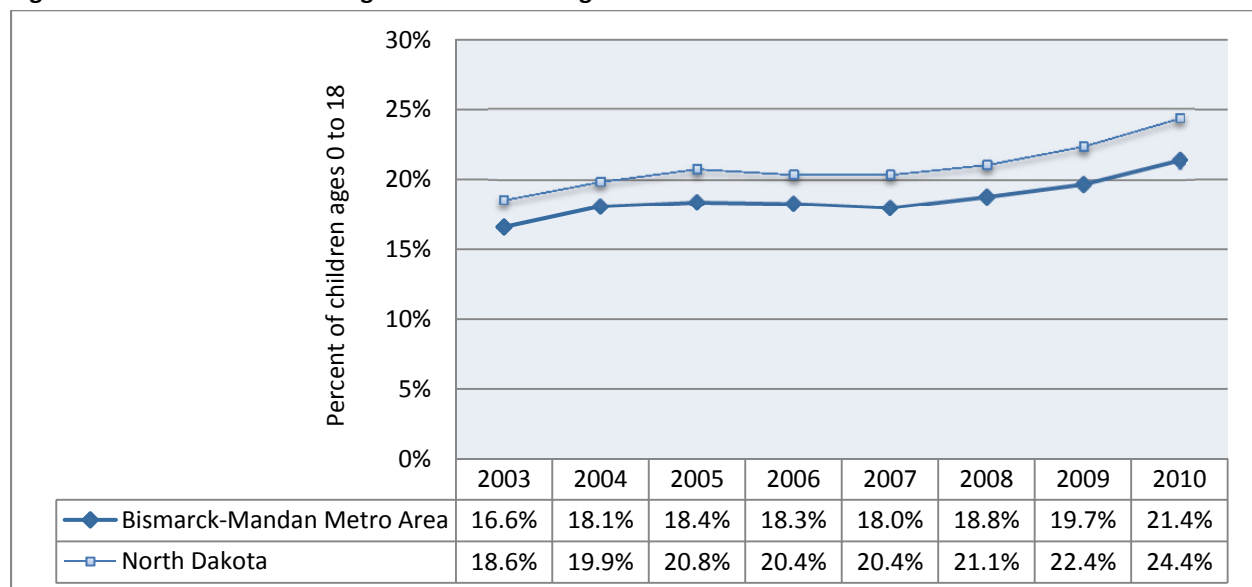
Inadequate food intake in children is associated with a number of serious health, behavior, and cognitive deficits. Children who are food insecure are in poorer health and are more likely to be developmentally “at-risk” than non-food insecure children, according to parental reports. Children in food insecure households have more stomach aches, frequent headaches, and colds than children who are in food secure households. Higher rates of hospitalization, iron deficiency anemia, and chronic health conditions are reported among food insecure children (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/363>)

The Great Plains Food Bank is an important source of food for agencies addressing hunger in North Dakota and western Minnesota. The Great Plains Food Bank pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters continue to serve more clients each year. In 2011, 9.4 million pounds of food were distributed to 71,468 people across North Dakota. In the Bismarck-Mandan metro area, the number of visits to food pantries increased from 4,152 in 2007 to 7,314 in 2011, an increase of 76 percent. The population of the metro area increased nearly 8 percent over the same time period (from 103,023 in 2007 to 110,879 in 2011, according to annual estimates by the U. S. Census Bureau, Population Division). Nearly 615,000 pounds of food were distributed in 2011, an increase of 219 percent since 2007. The Great Plains Food Bank started a new perishable food delivery program in Bismarck-Mandan in September 2010, which has allowed the food pantries to more adequately meet their clients’ needs.

SNAP (formerly referred to as the Food Stamp Program) is a uniform, nationwide entitlement program to supplement the nutritional needs of people whose income is at or below poverty. If one uses SNAP to estimate food insecurity, at least one in five children living in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area is food insecure. In 2010, 21.4 percent of children in the metro area received SNAP benefits. This proportion is up from 16.6 percent in 2003.

The proportion of children receiving SNAP benefits statewide (24.4 percent in 2010) has been consistently higher than the Bismarck-Mandan metro area.

Figure 28. Percent of Children Ages 0 to 18 Receiving SNAP Benefits: 2003 to 2010



Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

Source: North Dakota Department of Human Services.

Head Start

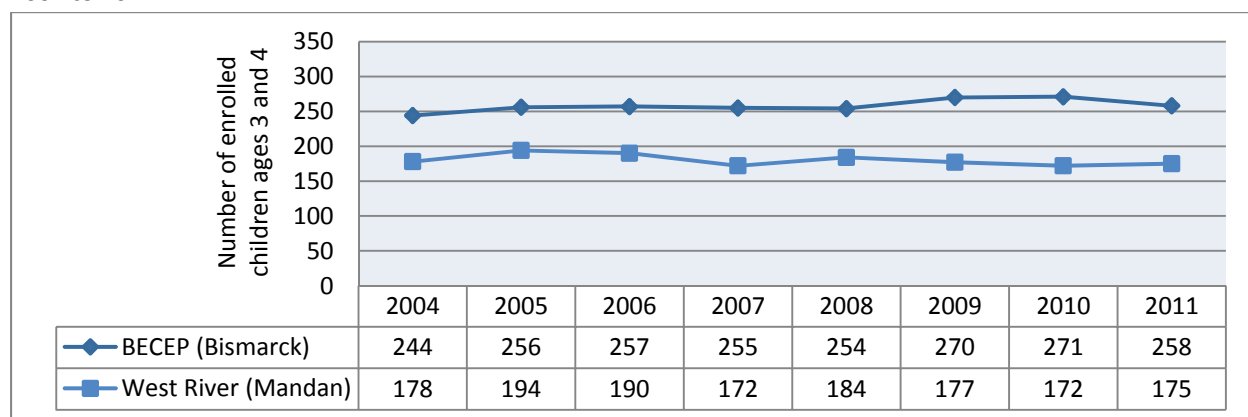
Head Start is a federally funded program designed for children in low-income families to help prepare them for school. In addition to educational services, Head Start provides health and social services, and encourages parental involvement in all aspects of the program. One rigorous national evaluation, the Head Start Impact Study, found gains for Head Start children in pre-reading, pre-writing, vocabulary, and literacy skills. Children assigned to participate in Head Start also had fewer behavior problems, better overall physical health, less hyperactivity, and more access to dental care than did children with comparable backgrounds who did not participate. More positive effects were found for children who entered the program as three-year-olds than for those entering as four-year-olds. Another study found that four-year-olds participating in Head Start did better in receptive language and phonemic awareness than four-year-olds of similar backgrounds who were wait-listed for the Head Start program (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/352>).

The Head Start Program at the Bismarck Early Childhood Education Program (BECEP) in Bismarck, North Dakota, serves the counties of Burleigh, Kidder, Logan, Emmons, and McIntosh. The West River Head Start Program located in Mandan, North Dakota, serves the counties of Morton, Mercer, Oliver, and Grant. These programs serve children primarily ages 3 and 4.

The number of funded enrollment slots in these two programs has remained fairly stable over the past decade. In program year 2010-2011, BECEP had 231 funded slots and West River had 160 funded slots. Statewide, there were 3,426 funded slots among 14 Head Start programs (serving children ages 3 and 4) and 8 Early Head Start programs (serving pregnant women and children ages 0 to 2).

The actual enrollment of children ages 3 and 4 reflects some turnover within the program year. In 2004, 244 children ages 3 and 4 were enrolled in BECEP; 258 children ages 3 and 4 were enrolled in 2011 (i.e., program year 2010-2011). In 2004, 178 children ages 3 and 4 were enrolled in West River; 175 children ages 3 and 4 were enrolled in 2011. Both programs typically have waiting lists.

Figure 29. Enrollment of Children Ages 3 and 4 in Head Start Programs Serving Burleigh and Morton Counties: 2004 to 2011



Notes: The Head Start Program at the Bismarck Early Childhood Education Program (BECEP) is located in Bismarck, ND, and serves the counties of Burleigh, Kidder, Logan, Emmons, and McIntosh. West River Head Start is located in Mandan, ND, and serves the counties of Morton, Mercer, Oliver, and Grant. Data are actual enrollment figures, which reflect turnover within a program year, as opposed to the number of funded enrollment slots.

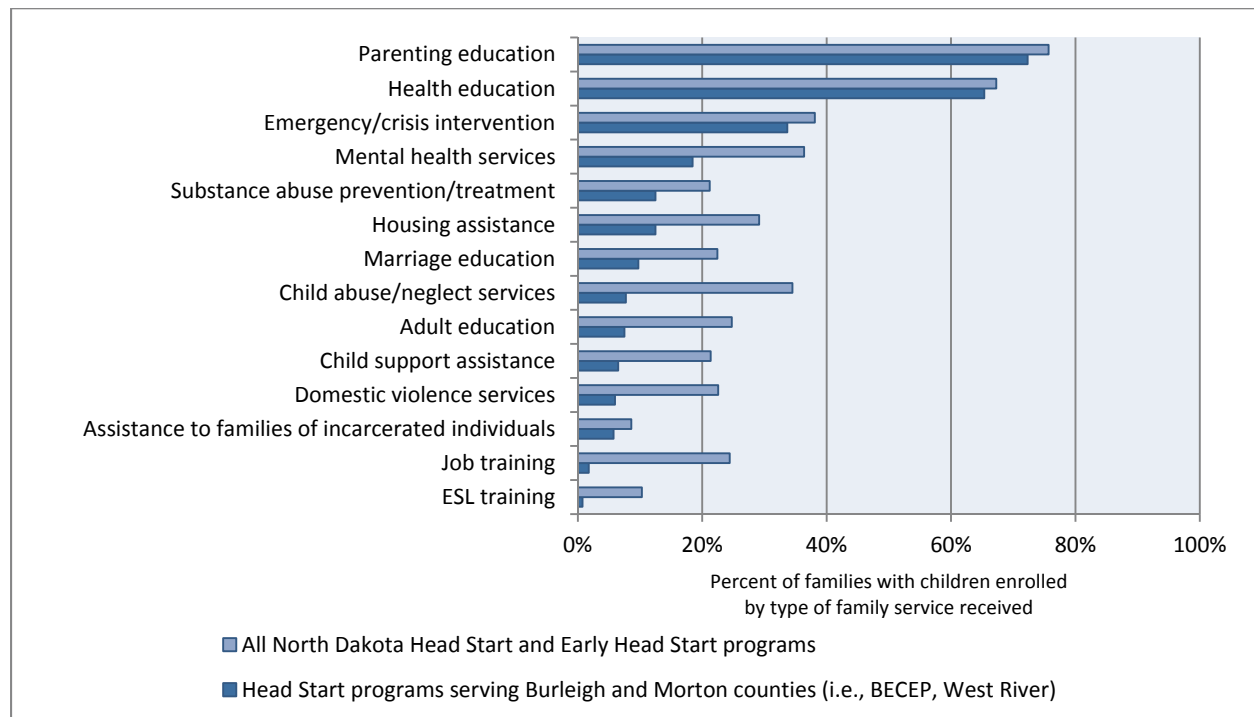
Source: Office of Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) Database, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <https://hses.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>.

Children enrolled in Head Start in Burleigh County are served by the Bismarck Early Childhood Education Program (BECEP) in Bismarck, which also serves the counties of Kidder, Logan, Emmons, and McIntosh. Children enrolled in Head Start in Morton County are served by the West River Head Start Program, which also serves the counties of Mercer, Oliver, and Grant. In 2011, these two programs served 401 families. Three-fourths of these families accessed at least one family service through Head Start (76.8 percent).

Parenting education was the most commonly accessed family service (72.3 percent), followed by health education (65.3 percent). Emergency crisis/intervention was accessed by 33.7 percent of families with children enrolled in the Head Start programs that serve the Bismarck-Mandan metro area. Other family services that Head Start families access include: substance abuse prevention or treatment, housing assistance, marriage education, child abuse and neglect services, adult education, child support assistance, domestic violence services, assistance to families of incarcerated individuals, job training, and English as a Second Language (ESL) training.

While utilization of the most common family services by families served by the BECEP and West River Head Start programs is similar to the state, many of the other services are much more commonly utilized by families served by other Head Start and Early Head Start programs across the state. This could be due to a variety of factors. For example, fewer families using a service may reflect less need (such as for ESL training) or it may reflect an issue of diminished access to services, especially in the more rural counties served by the BECEP and West River programs (such as child support assistance or domestic violence services).

Figure 30. Percent of Families with Children Enrolled in Head Start Programs by Types of Family Services Received: 2011



Notes: The Head Start Program at the Bismarck Early Childhood Education Program (BECEP) is located in Bismarck, ND, and serves the counties of Burleigh, Kidder, Logan, Emmons, and McIntosh. West River Head Start is located in Mandan, ND, and serves the counties of Morton, Mercer, Oliver, and Grant. Data for BECEP and West River Head Start programs reflect children ages 3 and 4. Data for North Dakota include the state's 22 Head Start and Early Head Start programs, so reflect data for enrolled pregnant women and children ages 0 to 4.

Source: Office of Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) Database, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <https://hses.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>.

Social and Emotional Development

Children enter school with a range of knowledge and skills in multiple domains—physical, social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive. There is no exact profile of a child who is "ready" for school. Nevertheless, children whose skills are far behind those of their new classmates do enter school at a disadvantage. If they are unable to catch up, they face greater challenges throughout their school careers. Social development is an important, often over-looked factor in children's transition to kindergarten. A child who is socially ready for school should be able to make friends, get along with peers, and communicate well with peers and teachers. Children who arrive at kindergarten with social competencies generally have an easier time forming relationships with their peers and have better school outcomes (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/archivepgs/47.htm>).

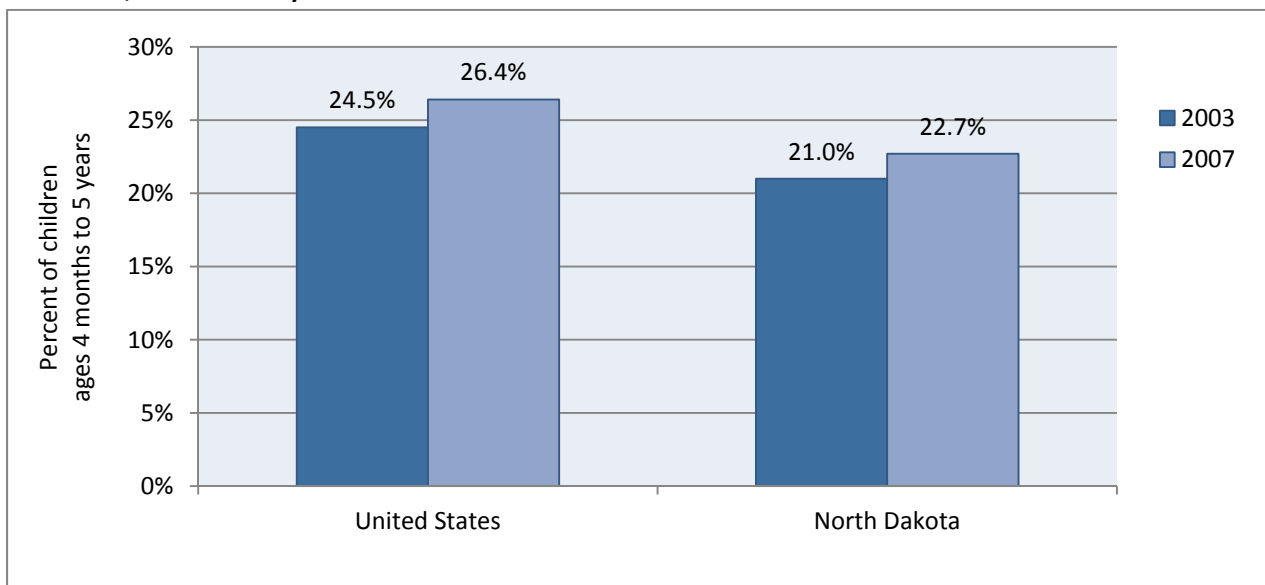
Information at a local level relating to a child's physical, behavioral, and social development is difficult to obtain. In lieu of data specific to the Bismarck-Mandan metro area, this report offers comparisons between national and state level data from the National Survey of Children's Health.

Parents were asked if they had concerns about their child's development; one-third of North Dakota parents in 2007 indicated they had one or more concerns about their child's physical, behavioral, or social development (33.9 percent).

Based on parental responses to specific, age-appropriate questions about their child's development, nearly one-fourth of North Dakota children ages 4 months to 5 years were considered to be at moderate to high risk for developmental, behavioral, or social delays in 2007 (22.7 percent).

From 2003 to 2007, there was a slight increase in the proportion of North Dakota young children who were at a moderate to high risk for developmental, behavioral, or social delays (from 21.0 percent to 22.7 percent).

Figure 31. Percent of Children Ages 4 Months to 5 Years Who Are at a Moderate to High Risk for Developmental, Behavioral, or Social Delays: 2003 and 2007



Source: 2003 and 2007 National Survey of Children's Health. Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health website, <http://childhealthdata.org/>.

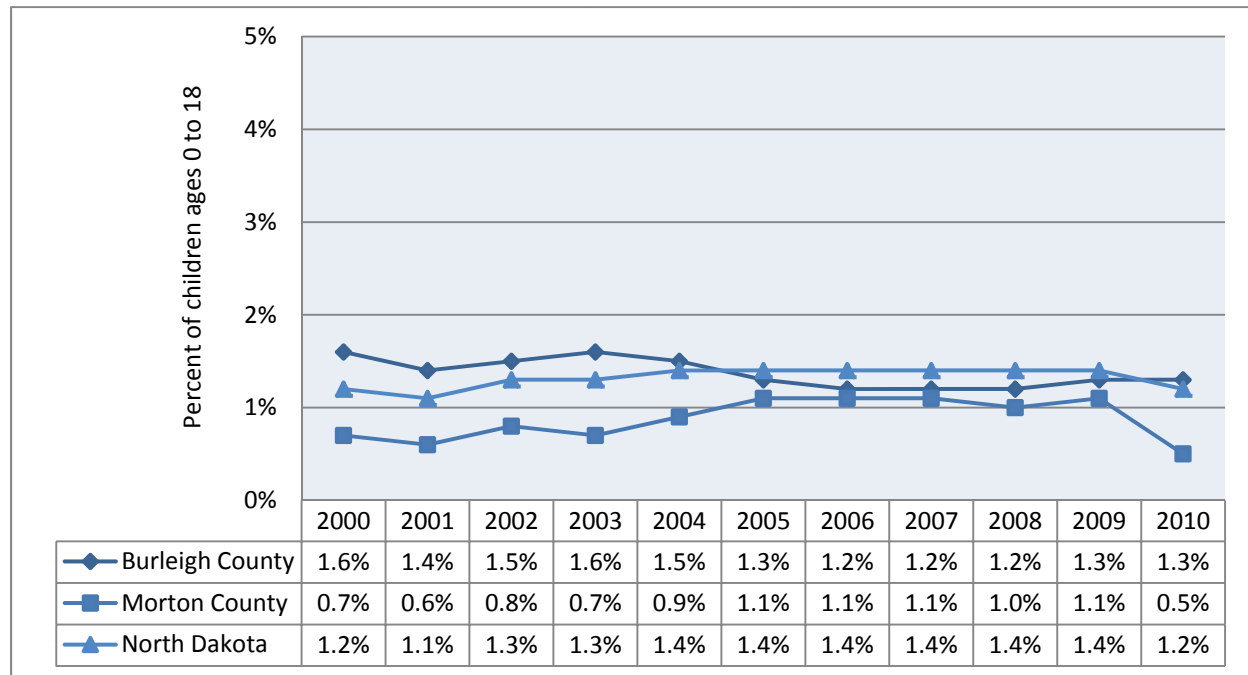
Foster Care

Children in foster care are more likely than other children to exhibit high levels of behavioral and emotional problems. They are also more likely to be suspended or expelled from school and to exhibit low levels of school engagement and involvement with extracurricular activities. Children in foster care are also more likely to have received mental health services in the past year, to have a limiting physical, learning, or mental health condition, or to be in poor or fair health.

Youth who “age out” of foster care instead of returning home may face challenges to making a successful transition to adulthood. As adults, children who spent long periods of time in multiple foster care homes were more likely than other children to encounter problems such as unemployment, homelessness, and incarceration, as well as to experience early pregnancy (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/199>).

Approximately 1 percent of children were served by the foster care system in Burleigh County (251 children), Morton County (32 children), and North Dakota (1,912 children) in 2010. These proportions have remained relatively unchanged since 2000.

Figure 32. Percent of Children Ages 0 to 18 Served by the Foster Care System: 2000 to 2010



Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center website, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate>.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child maltreatment (a term that encompasses both abuse and neglect) is associated with physical injuries, delayed physical growth, and neurological damage. Child maltreatment is also associated with psychological and emotional problems, such as aggression, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

In addition, child abuse is linked to an increased risk of substance abuse, eating disorders, obesity, depression, suicide, and sexual promiscuity later in life. Women who were victims of physical assault as children are twice as likely to be victims of physical assault as adults. Also, some evidence suggests that victims of child maltreatment may be more likely than others to engage in deviant or criminal behavior as juveniles and adults.

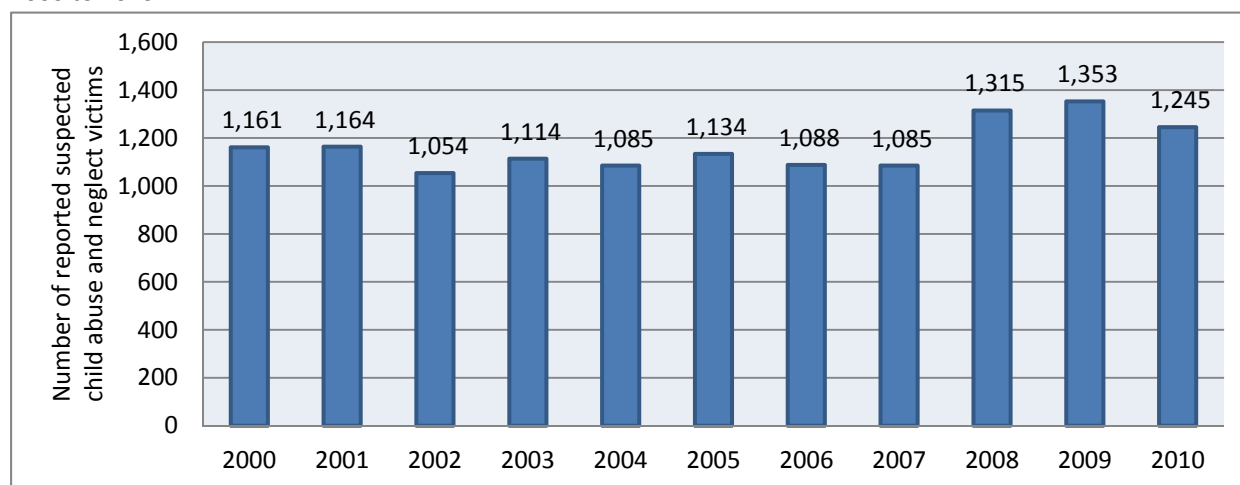
Child maltreatment is influenced by a number of factors, including poor knowledge of child development, substance abuse, other forms of domestic violence, and mental illness. Although maltreatment occurs in families at all economic levels, abuse and, especially, neglect are more common in poor and extremely poor families than in families with higher incomes (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/?q=node/248>).

Overall, the number of children in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area who are being reported as suspected victims of child abuse and neglect is up from a decade ago. In 2010, 1,245 children were suspected of being abused or neglected in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area. These suspected victims represented 5.2 percent of all children in the metro area, which is higher than the state average of 4.4 percent of all children. The rates were higher in Burleigh County than Morton County (5.7 percent of the total child population in Burleigh County compared to 3.8 percent in Morton County) (*2011 North Dakota KIDS COUNT Fact Book*).

Of these 1,245 suspected child abuse victims in 2010, 16.8 percent required immediate services. The number of suspected child abuse and neglect victims in the metro area fluctuated from 2000 to 2007, averaging approximately 1,100 children per year. The numbers rose to more than 1,300 in 2008 and 2009, and decreased to 1,245 in 2010.

Statewide, 6,399 children were suspected victims of abuse and neglect in 2010. Of these children, 17.8 percent required immediate services.

Figure 33. Number of Reported Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Victims in the Bismarck-Mandan Metro Area: 2000 to 2010

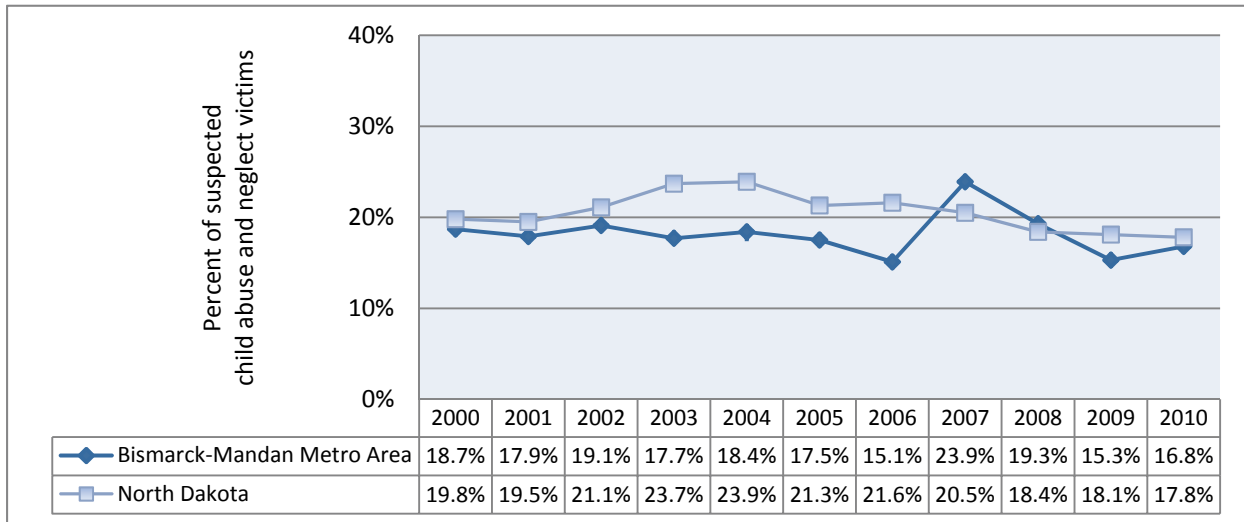


Source: North Dakota Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services.

In 2000, 18.7 percent of the children suspected of being abused or neglected in the metro area required immediate services (217 children). In 2010, 16.8 percent of the suspected victims required immediate services (209 children). The proportion of child abuse and neglect victims that required immediate services fluctuated some in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area from 2000 to 2010. The proportion was as low as 15.1 percent in 2006 and as high as 23.9 percent in 2007.

In 2010, 17.8 percent of the suspected child abuse victims in North Dakota required immediate services (1,136 children). With the exception of 2007 and 2008, the rate of child abuse and neglect victims requiring immediate services in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area has stayed below the statewide average since 2000.

Figure 34. Percent of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Victims That Required Immediate Services: 2000 to 2010



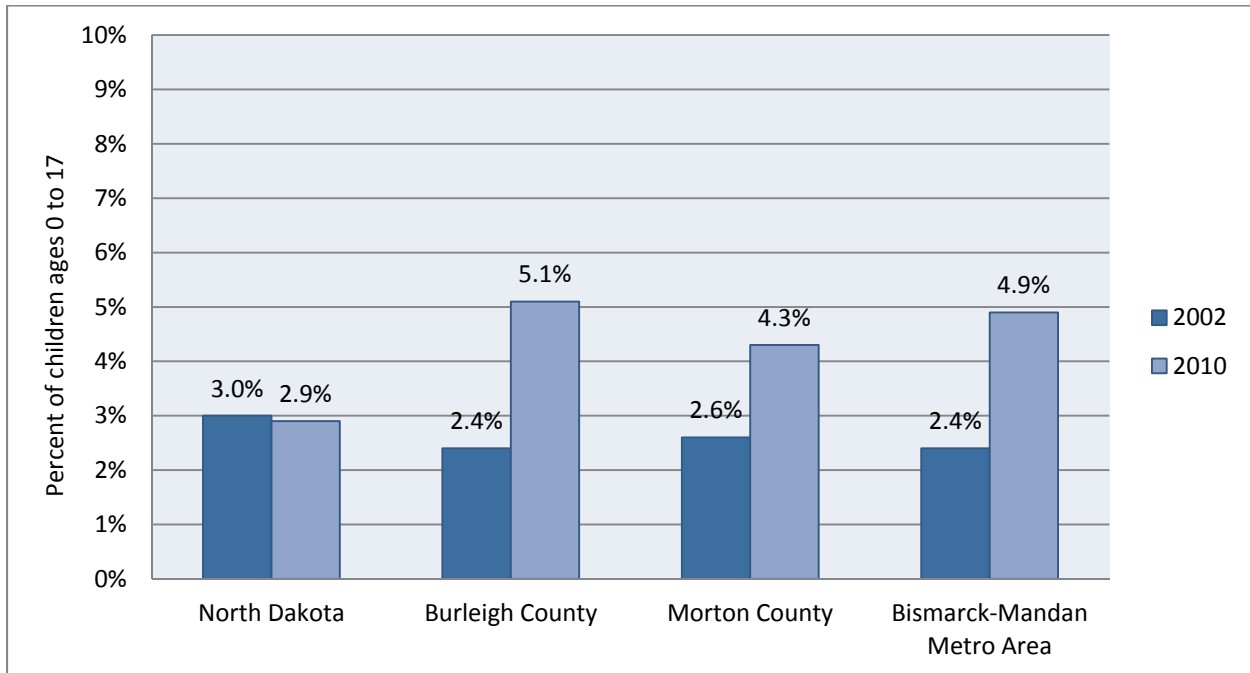
Note: North Dakota data reflect the rate of children for whom a report of child abuse or neglect was substantiated by a county child protection worker and it was determined that immediate services were required.

Source: North Dakota Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services.

Children Impacted by Domestic Violence

From 2002 to 2010, the proportion of children impacted by domestic violence in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area doubled. The proportion grew from 2.4 percent in 2002 (587 children) to 4.9 percent in 2010 (1,171 children). The rate now exceeds the statewide average of 2.9 percent in 2010 (4,180 children), which remained relatively unchanged from 2002.

Figure 35. Percent of Children Ages 0 to 17 Impacted by Domestic Violence: 2002 and 2010



Source: North Dakota Council on Abused Women's Services, special request.

IN-SCHOOL SUCCESS

As discussed earlier, the more assets a child has, the fewer risky behaviors the child exhibits. In this section we explore data which highlight the level of risk children in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area are experiencing. We start with children in special education, followed by a variety of risky behaviors such as fighting and violence; alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use; sexual activity; suicide; physical activity; and television viewing.

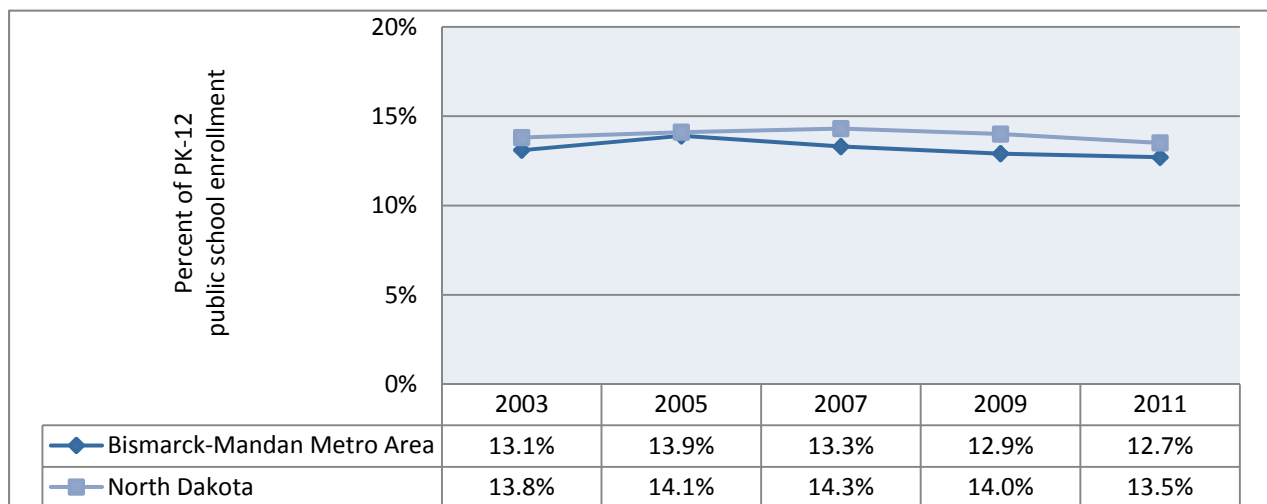
Much of the data about risky behaviors come from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). North Dakota has eight planning regions for the purposes of standardizing the areas being served by state agencies; the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction uses these planning regions for reporting the results of the YRBS. County-specific YRBS data are not readily available due to small sample sizes; thus, we offer YRBS data for Planning Region VII which consists of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons counties combined.

Special Education

Learning disabilities include a number of discrete disorders that affect children's ability to learn. A learning disability can be a life-long condition affecting many aspects of life including education and employment, family life, and daily routines. However, persons with learning disabilities can learn. Academic supports and accommodations can help the learning process, as can medical treatment for certain disorders (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/archivepgs/65.htm>).

Overall, the proportion of children enrolled in special education in the Bismarck-Mandan metro area remained relatively unchanged from 2003 to 2011, mirroring the statewide trend. In 2011, 12.7 percent of public school children in the metro area were enrolled in special education, which was slightly lower than the statewide average of 13.5 percent.

Figure 36. Children Ages 3 to 21 Enrolled in Special Education as a Percent of Public School PK-12 Enrollment: 2003 to 2011



Note: North Dakota data reflect children ages 3 to 21 enrolled in public school special education programs (as a proportion of all PK-12 public school enrollment).

Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.

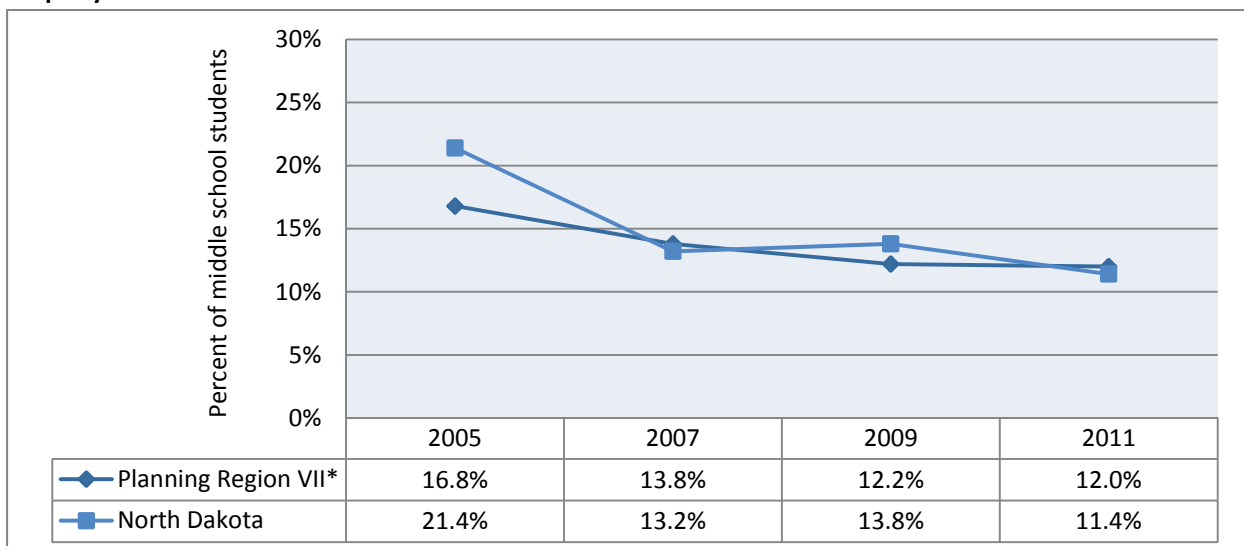
Fighting and Violence

Physical fighting by youth can lead to serious injury and even death. Risk factors that predict violence by youth include substance abuse, conflict and abuse at home, harsh or inattentive parenting, antisocial and delinquent peers, and neighborhoods where crime and drug use are prevalent. Youth who are involved in physical fighting are also often engaged in other high-risk activities, such as illegal drug use, binge drinking, carrying weapons, and unsafe sex.

Youth attending schools where fighting is common may be unable to maintain the focus necessary for academic success. Adolescents who are victims of violence are also more likely to be victims or perpetrators of violence during adulthood. The likelihood of drug use, property offenses, and stress during adulthood also all increase in association with youth violence. A high grade-point average, religiosity, and connectedness to family and peers have all been cited as protective factors against youth violence (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/136>).

From 2005 to 2011, there was a decrease in the proportion of middle school students who had been in a physical fight on school property in the past 12 months in Planning Region VII (from 16.8 percent to 12.0 percent), mirroring a similar statewide trend (from 21.4 percent to 11.4 percent).

Figure 37. Percent of Middle School Students in 7th and 8th Grades Who Were in a Physical Fight on School Property in the Past 12 months: 2005 to 2011

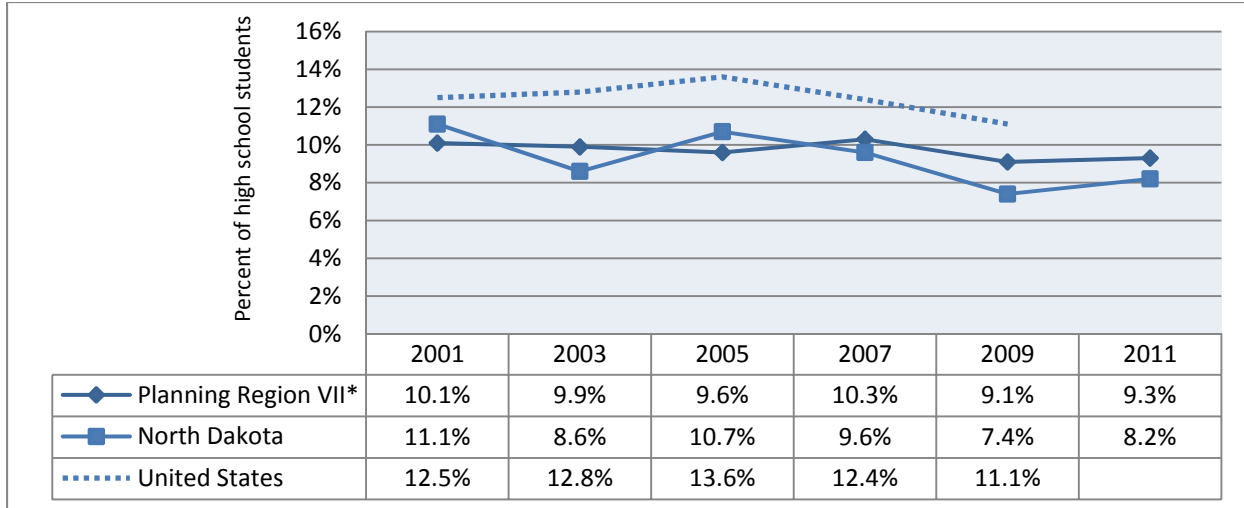


*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

Source: The North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>.

The proportion of high school students involved in a physical fight on school property at least once in the past year was slightly larger in Planning Region VII than in North Dakota in 2011 (9.3 percent and 8.2 percent, respectively), but has historically trended below the national average.

Figure 38. Percent of High School Students in 9th-12th Grades Who Were in a Physical Fight on School Property at Least Once in the Past Year: 2001 to 2011



Note: Blank cells indicate that no data are available.

*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

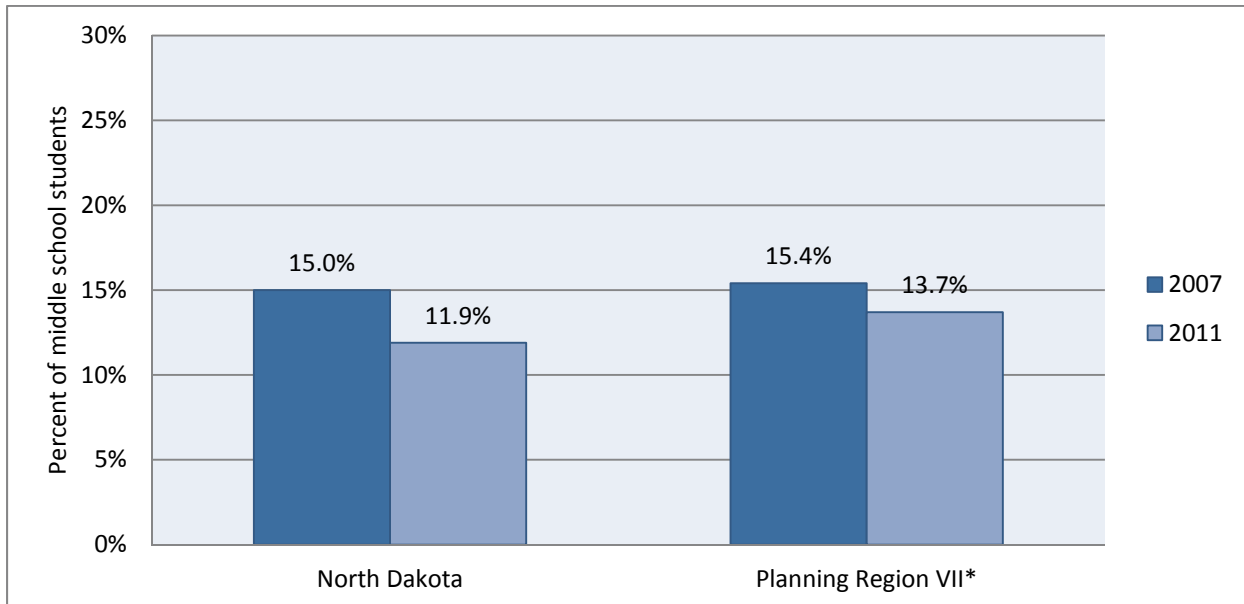
Sources: State and Regional Data - North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>. National Data - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

Alcohol Use

Alcohol use among youth is associated with a wide variety of other risky behaviors and poor outcomes, including unprotected sexual intercourse, vulnerability to coerced sexual activity, the use of marijuana, and poor academic performance. Binge-drinking, in particular, is associated with poor school performance and involvement in other health risk behaviors, such as riding with a driver who has been drinking, cigarette smoking, sexual activity, being a victim of dating violence, attempting suicide, and using illicit drugs. Consuming larger quantities of alcohol is also associated, among young women, with benign breast disease, a risk factor for cancer (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/140>).

From 2007 to 2011, the proportion of middle school students who reported having ever engaged in binge drinking (i.e., five or more drinks in a row within a couple hours) decreased slightly in Planning Region VII (from 15.4 percent to 13.7 percent). North Dakota saw a somewhat larger decrease over the same time period (from 15.0 percent to 11.9 percent).

Figure 39. Percent of Middle School Students in 7th and 8th Grades Who Reported Having Ever Engaged in Binge Drinking: 2007 and 2011



Note: Binge drinking is defined as consuming five or more drinks in a row, within a couple of hours.

*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

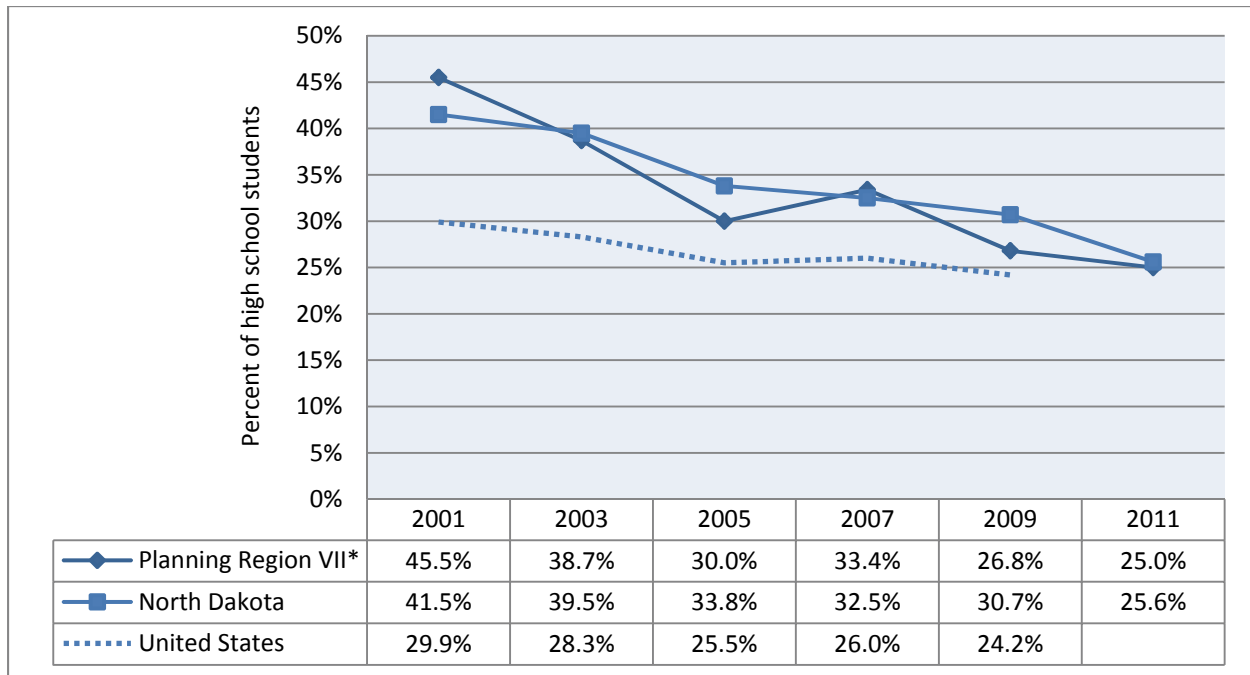
Source: North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>.

Historically, the binge drinking rate among high school students in North Dakota, and specifically in Region VII, has trended higher than the national average. Current data suggest that the gap has narrowed.

The proportion of high school students who reported binge drinking (i.e., five or more drinks in a row within a couple of hours) in the past month has shown a fairly consistent decline over the past decade in Planning Region VII (from 45.5 percent in 2001 to 25.0 percent in 2011). This trend mirrors the overall downward trend in North Dakota (41.5 percent in 2001 to 25.6 percent in 2011).

Nationally, 24.2 percent of high school students reported binge drinking in 2009.

Figure 40. Percent of High School Students in 9th-12th Grades Who Reported Binge Drinking in the Past Month: 2001 to 2011



Note: Binge drinking is defined as consuming five or more drinks in a row, within a couple of hours.

*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

Sources: State and Regional Data - North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>. National Data - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

Tobacco Use

Cigarette smoking, which usually starts in adolescence, is the leading preventable cause of premature death in the United States. More than 430,000 Americans die each year from tobacco-related illnesses.

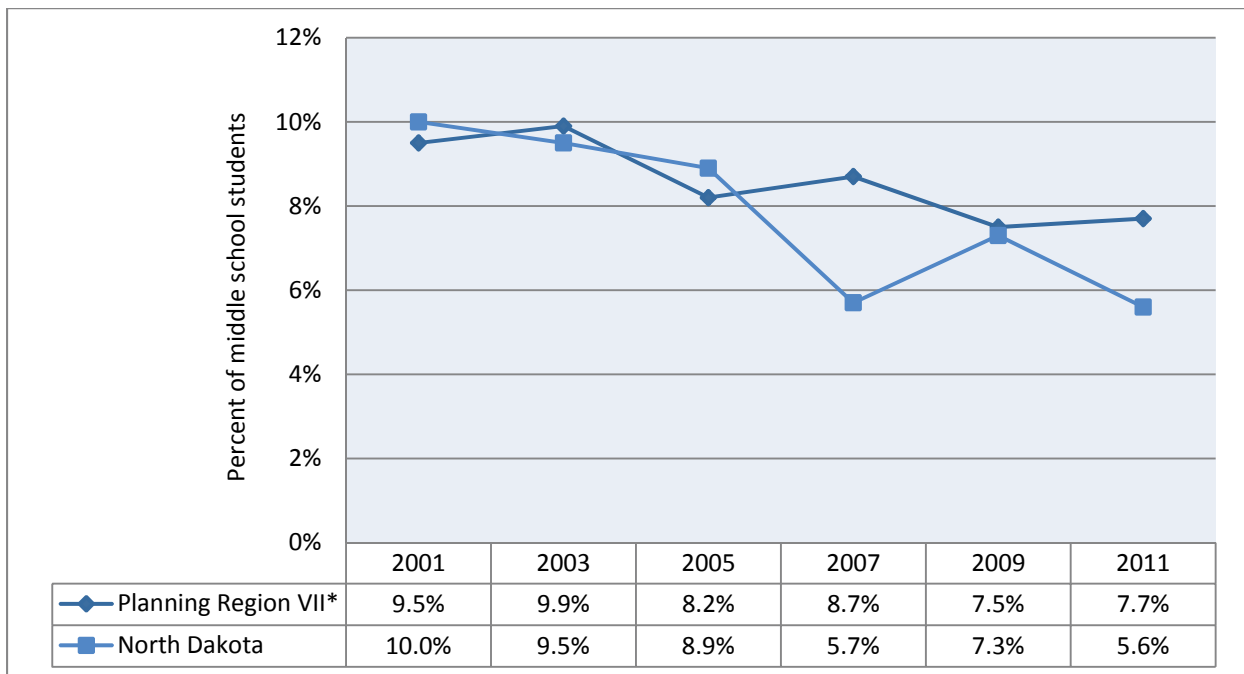
Youth who smoke are more likely to drink, to use other drugs, and to engage in a variety of other risky behaviors. They are also less likely to be physically fit and more likely to suffer from respiratory problems.

Factors identified as associated with the progression to daily smoking among youth who initiated smoking by eighth grade include youths' antisocial behavior, and smoking among parents and peers. Parents' positive family management was associated with lower likelihood of escalation to daily smoking (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/?q=node/133>).

Over the past decade, smoking among middle school students in Planning Region VII has decreased. In 2011, 7.7 percent of middle school students reported that they had smoked cigarettes on at least one day in the past month, which is down from 9.5 percent in 2001. This mirrors a similar statewide trend.

The proportion of middle school students that reported smoking cigarettes on at least one day in the past month was higher in Planning Region VII than in the state overall in 2011 (7.7 percent compared to 5.6 percent).

Figure 41. Percent of Middle School Students in 7th and 8th Grades Who Smoked Cigarettes on at Least One Day in the Past Month: 2001 to 2011



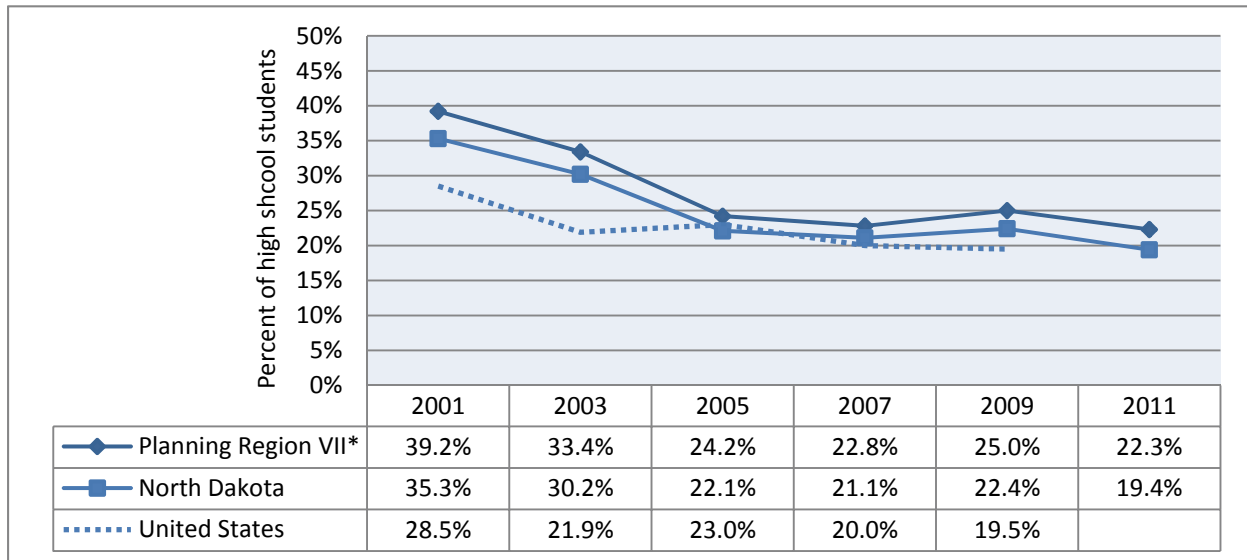
*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

Source: North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>.

Smoking among high school students decreased in the first part of the last decade, but has since remained relatively unchanged in Planning Region VII, mirroring similar state and national trends. In 2011, 22.3 percent of high school students in Planning Region VII smoked cigarettes on at least one day in the past month, which is down from 39.2 percent in 2001.

The proportion of high school students that reported they had smoked cigarettes on at least one day in the past month has been consistently higher in Planning Region VII than in the state overall (22.3 percent and 19.4 percent in 2011, respectively).

Figure 42. Percent of High School Students in 9th-12th Grades Who Smoked Cigarettes on at Least One Day in the Past Month: 2001 to 2011



Note: Empty cells indicate that no data are available.

*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

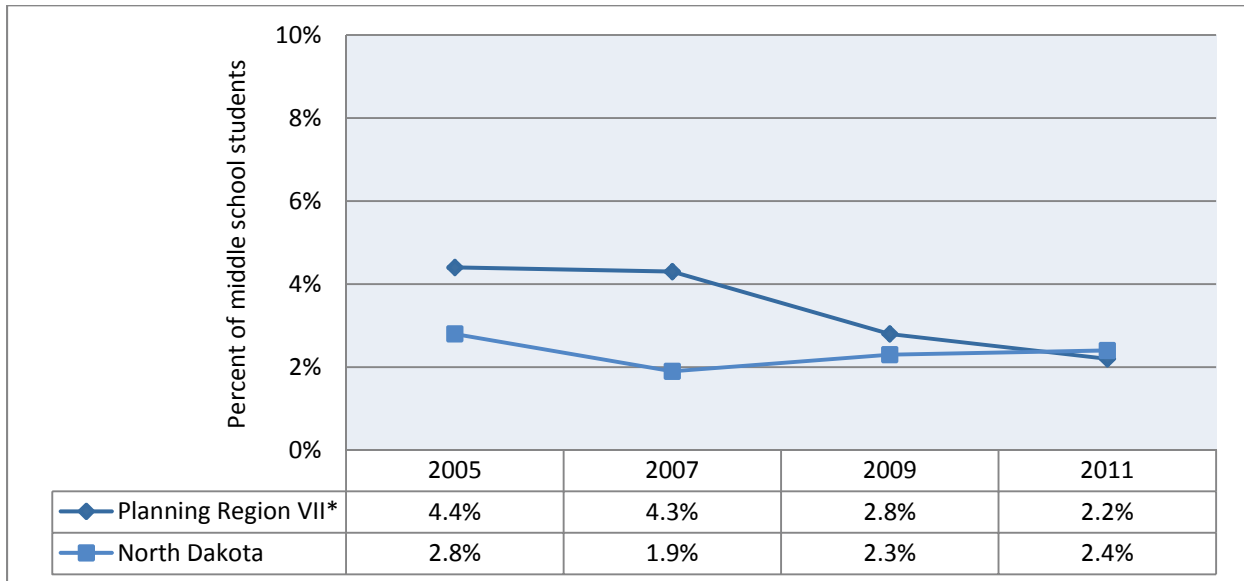
Sources: State and Regional Data - North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>. National Data - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

Marijuana Use

For most youth, marijuana is not difficult to obtain. Many youth think marijuana is not as harmful as other illicit drugs, though in fact it has both short- and long-term negative health effects. The former include memory problems, loss of coordination, anxiety attacks, and increased heart rate. Possible long-term effects include respiratory problems, a weakened immune system, testicular cancer, and cognitive deficits. While attributing causality is complicated by the frequent co-occurrence of other risk factors, teens who use marijuana are also more likely to have lower academic achievement, more delinquent behavior and aggression, and weaker relationships with parents, compared to non-users (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/?q=node/138>).

The proportion of middle school students who tried marijuana for the first time before the age of 11 has decreased since 2005. In 2011, 2.2 percent of middle school students in Planning Region VII tried marijuana for the first time before the age of 11, which is down from 4.4 percent in 2005. The rate for Planning Region VII is now very similar to the overall rate for North Dakota of 2.4 percent in 2011.

Figure 43. Percent of Middle School Students in 7th and 8th Grades Who Tried Marijuana for the First Time Before the Age of 11: 2005 to 2011



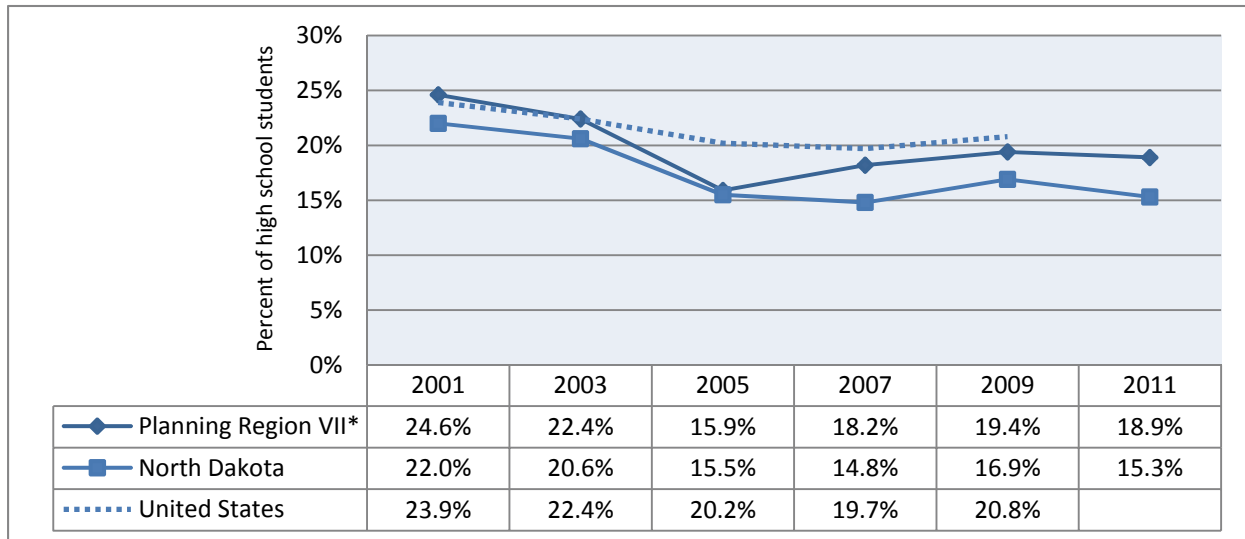
*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

Sources: State and Regional Data - North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtml>. National Data - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

Marijuana use among high school students in Planning Region VII decreased over the past decade. In 2011, 18.9 percent of high school students in Planning Region VII used marijuana at least once in the past month, which is down from 24.6 percent in 2001. However, the current rate is up from a low of 15.9 percent in 2005.

The rate for Planning Region VII has generally been slightly higher than the overall North Dakota rate.

Figure 44. Percent of High School Students in 9th-12th Grades Who Used Marijuana at Least Once in the Past Month: 2001 to 2011



Note: Empty cells indicate that no data are available.

*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

Sources: State and region data - North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>. National data - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

Sexual Activity

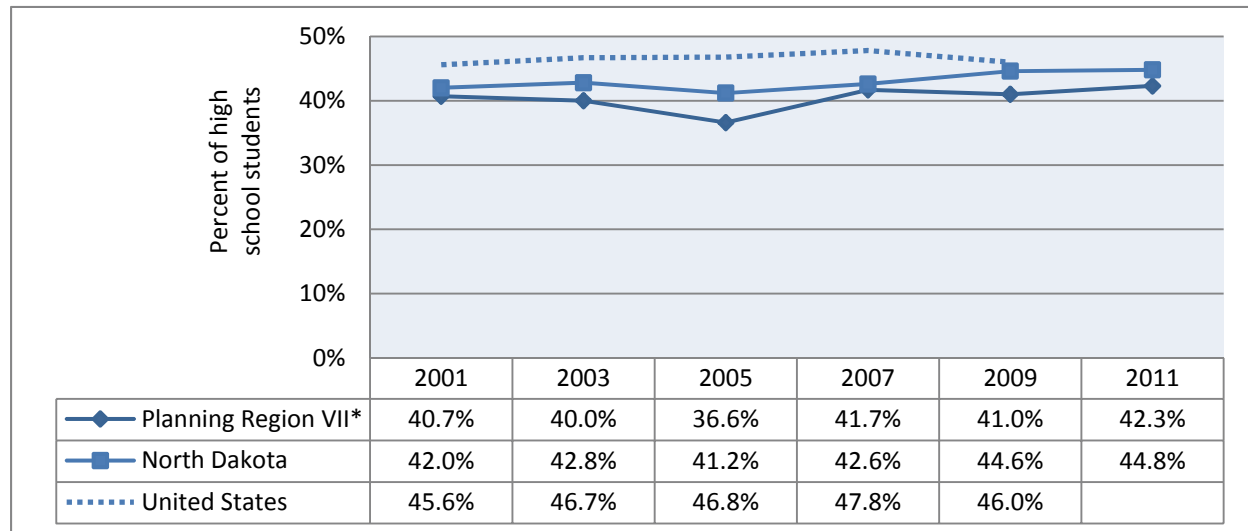
Sexually active teenagers—defined as those who have had sexual intercourse in the past three months—are at immediate risk of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Teens who engage in certain sexual behaviors—for example, teens who don’t use contraceptives, use contraceptives inconsistently, or have multiple sex partners—have an even higher risk. Sexually active youth are also more likely than youth who are not sexually active to report problems with substance abuse and depression, as well as have lower levels of educational attainment.

Prior research has identified factors associated with delaying the onset of sexual activity among teens. Teens who grow up in stable families with more resources, who communicate with their parents about sex, who express more religiosity, and who are more connected to their schools are more likely to delay sexual intercourse, whereas those who engage in delinquent activities, or who have higher levels of externalizing behaviors, have an increased risk of early sexual activity (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/120>).

In 2011, 10.2 percent of 7th and 8th grade middle school students in Planning Region VII indicated they had ever had sexual intercourse.

The proportion of high school students who had ever had sexual intercourse increased slightly over the past decade in Planning Region VII, mirroring a similar statewide trend. In 2011, 42.3 percent of high school students in Planning Region VII had engaged in sexual intercourse, which is up from 40.7 percent in 2001.

Figure 45. Percent of High School Students in 9th-12th Grades Who Had Ever Had Sexual Intercourse: 2001 to 2011



Note: Empty cells indicate that no data are available.

*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

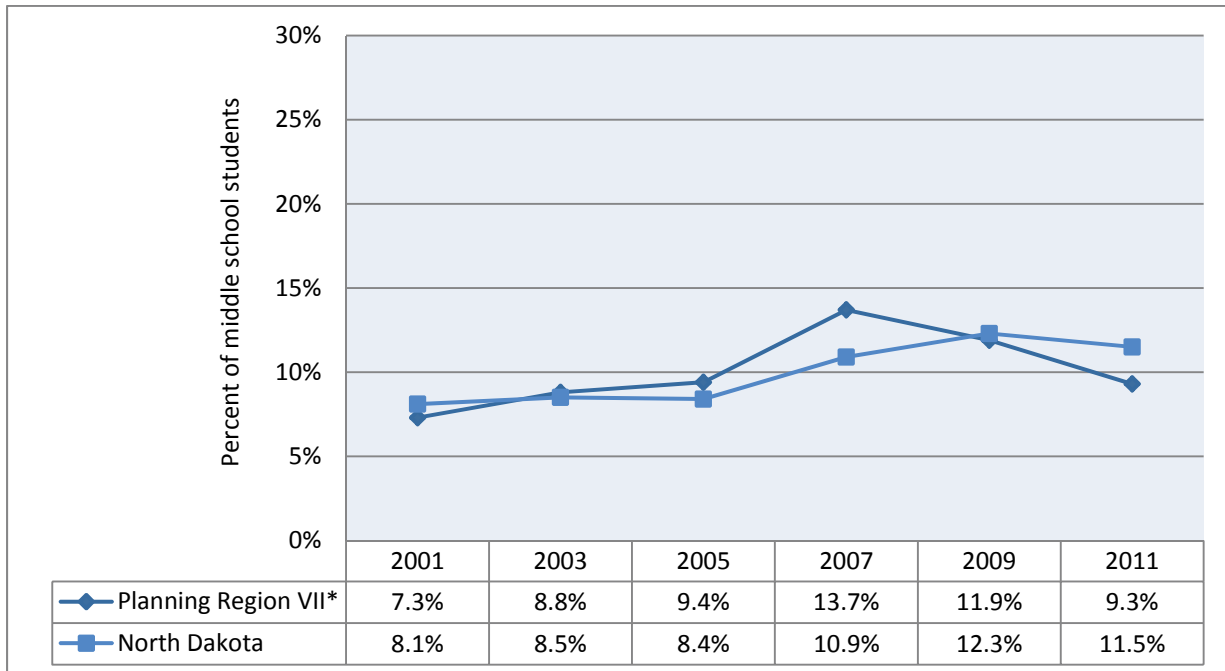
Sources: State and region data - North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>. National data - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

Suicide

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among teenagers ages 15-19. Considering or attempting suicide is often indicative of serious mental health problems, and may signal other traumatic life events such as physical or sexual abuse. Youth are much more likely to think about and attempt suicide if they are depressed. Other risk factors for suicide include co-occurring substance or alcohol abuse and mental disorders; a family history of suicide; physical illness; relational, social, work, or financial loss; and easy access to lethal methods, especially guns. Finally, youth who have experienced stressful life events, who have poor levels of communication with their parents, and who have been exposed to the suicidal behaviors of others are more likely than others to commit suicide (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/317>).

Within Planning Region VII, the proportion of middle school students in grades who had ever made a plan about how they would attempt suicide increased over the past decade (from 7.3 percent in 2001 to 9.3 percent in 2011). However, the current rate is down from 13.7 percent in 2007.

Figure 46. Percent of Middle School Students in 7th and 8th Grades Who Had Ever Made a Plan About How They Would Attempt Suicide: 2001 to 2011



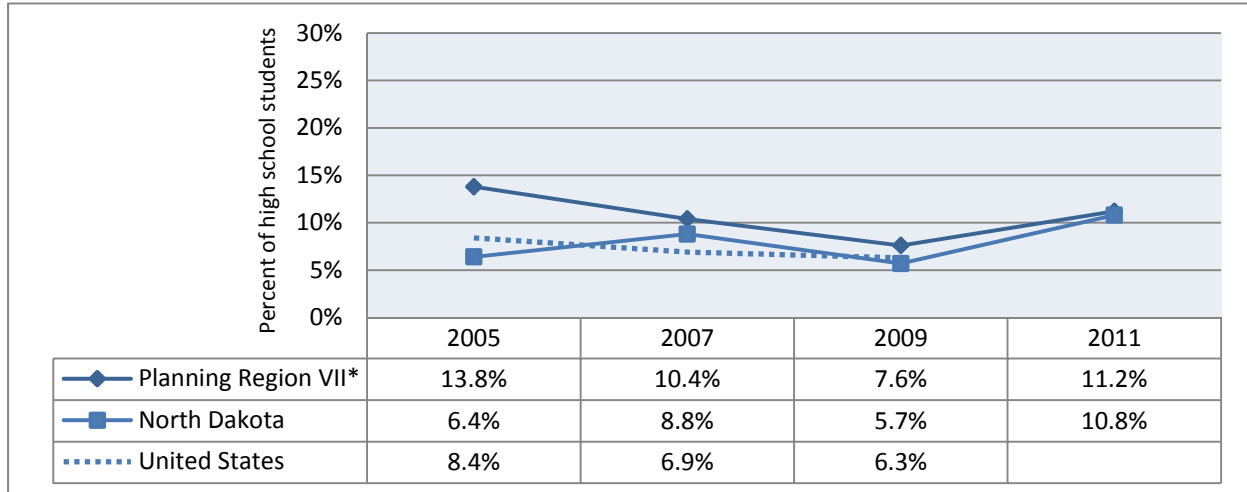
Note: Data from 2001 to 2005 reflect middle school students who had made a plan about how to attempt suicide in the past 12 months. Data from 2007 to 2011 reflect middle school students who had ever made a plan about how they would kill themselves.

*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

Source: North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>.

In 2011, 1 in 10 high school students in Planning Region VII indicated that they attempted suicide in the past year (11.2 percent). This proportion is down from 13.8 percent in 2005, but up from 7.6 percent in 2009.

Figure 47. Percent of High School Students in 9th-12th Grades Who Attempted Suicide in the Past Year: 2001 to 2011



Note: Empty cells indicate that no data are available.

*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

Sources: State and Regional Data - North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>. National Data - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

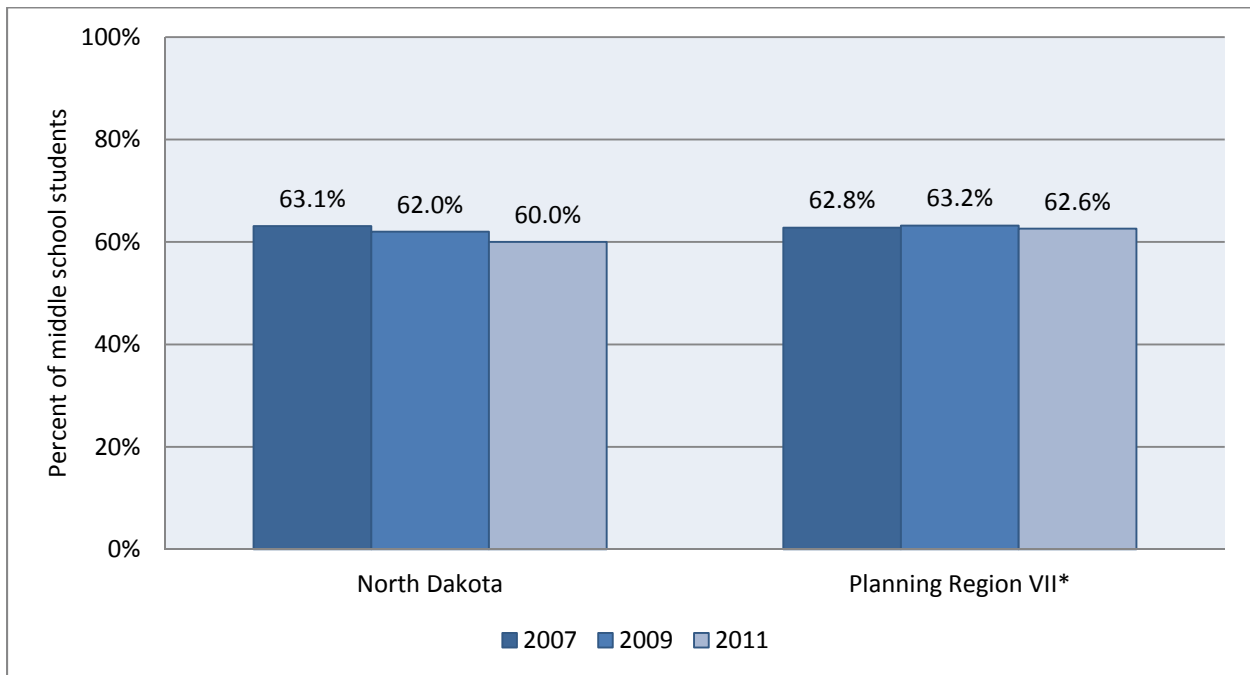
Physical Activity

Regular physical activity has both short- and long-term health benefits. For adolescents, participation in sports, physical education classes, or any other type of regular exercise helps to build and maintain healthy bones and muscles, controls weight, and has positive psychological benefits.

Adolescents who exercise also improve their long-term health. Participation in physical activity decreases the risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension. Additionally, people who are active in their youth tend to remain active and physically fit as adults (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/134>).

In 2011, less than two-thirds of middle school students in Planning Region VII were physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day on five or more of the past seven days (62.6 percent). This proportion has remained relatively unchanged since 2007. The trends for Planning Region VII mirror statewide trends very closely.

Figure 48. Percent of Middle School Students in 7th and 8th Grades Who Were Physically Active for a Total of at Least 60 Minutes Per Day on Five or More of the Past Seven Days: 2007 to 2011



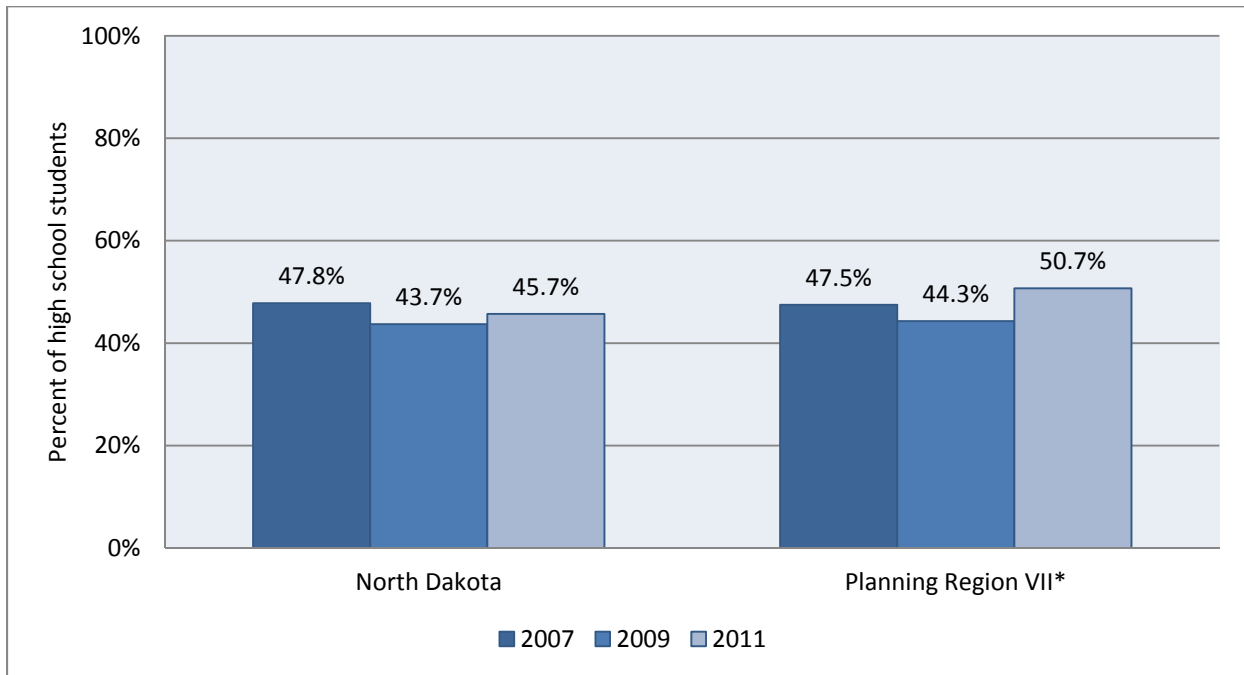
*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

Source: North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>.

In 2011, half of high school students in Planning Region VII were physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day on five or more of the past seven days (50.7 percent). This proportion is up from 47.5 percent in 2007. The trends for Planning Region VII mirror statewide trends very closely. However, a larger proportion of students in Planning Region VII than in the state overall were physically active in 2011 (50.7 percent and 45.7 percent, respectively).

In 2011, approximately one-fourth of high school students were overweight or obese in Planning Region VII (24.1 percent), which closely mirrored the statewide average (25.5 percent).

Figure 49. Percent of High School Students in 9th-12th Grades Who Were Physically Active for a Total of at Least 60 Minutes Per Day on Five or More of the Past Seven Days: 2007 to 2011



*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

Source: North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>.

Television Viewing

Although current evidence falls short of establishing causal relationships, excessive television viewing is associated with a number of negative outcomes for children. Children watching high levels of television are less likely to experience feelings of contentment, to participate in after-school activities,³ to engage actively in other intellectually stimulating activities, to have mostly “A” or “B” grades, and to do well on math achievement tests. Activities that contribute to positive development may be neglected. When mothers watch educational programs with their infant, they tend to engage in less conversation. In addition, when extensive television viewing is coupled with another risk factor, such as low parental involvement, this is linked to higher levels of children’s behavior problems. For example, children who watched more than three hours of television a day, who communicated poorly with parents, and whose parents knew few of their friends, had greater levels of “externalizing” (acting out) and “internalizing” behaviors (such as depression), according to one report.

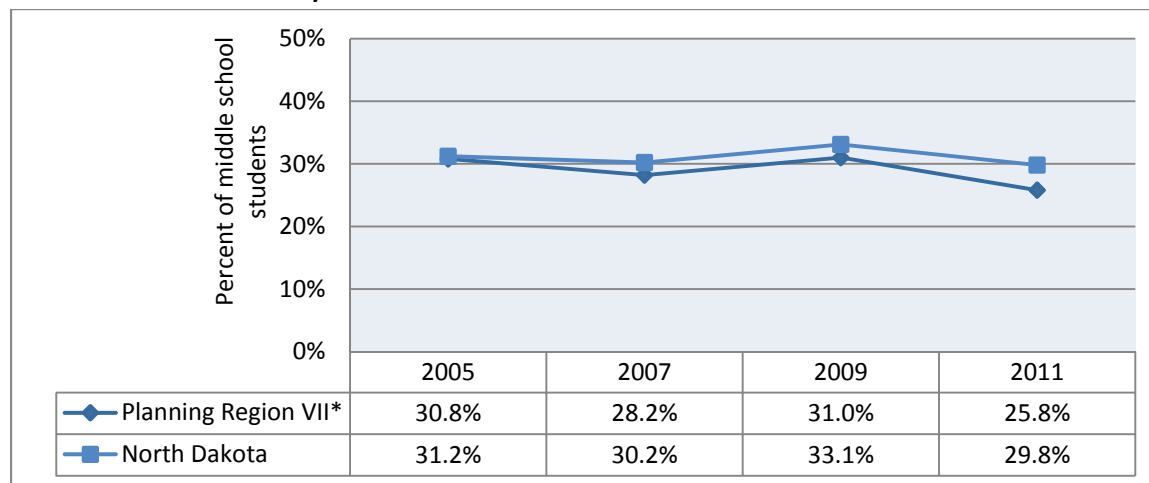
Research has also found that viewing television violence is associated with children’s aggression. In particular, excessive exposure to violent television programs may increase aggression levels. Young adults who routinely watch violent television programs as children (six- to ten-year-olds) exhibit more aggressive behaviors as young adults than their peers who watch no violent television (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/archivepgs/55.htm>).

One-fourth of middle school students in Planning Region VII reported watching three or more hours of television per school day in 2011 (25.8 percent). This proportion has fluctuated; however, the most current data show a decrease since 2005 (30.8 percent).

A slightly smaller proportion of middle school students in Planning Region VII than in the state overall reported watching at least three hours of television per school day in 2011 (25.8 percent and 29.8 percent, respectively).

It is worth noting that 27.3 percent of middle school students in Planning Region VII played video or computer games or used a computer for something other than school work for at least three hours on an average school day in 2011; statewide, the proportion was 29.5 percent.

Figure 50. Percent of Middle School Students in 7th and 8th Grades Who Reported Watching Three or More Hours of Television Per School Day: 2005 to 2011



*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

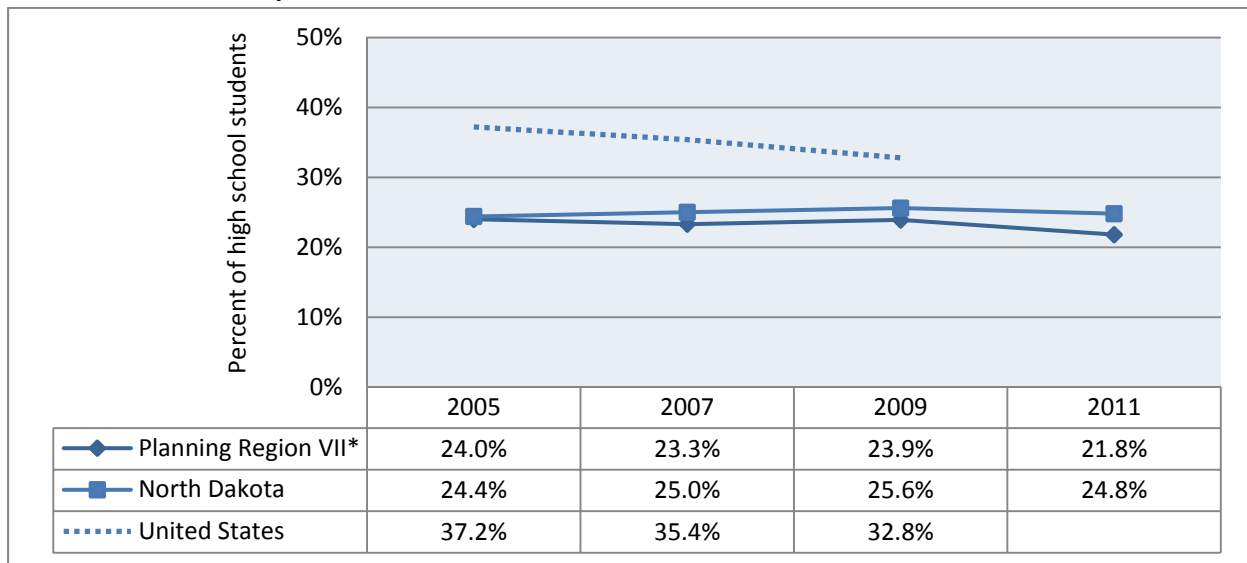
Source: North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>.

Approximately one-fifth of high school students in Planning Region VII reported watching three or more hours of television per school day in 2011 (21.8 percent). The current proportion is down from 24.0 percent in 2005.

A slightly smaller proportion of high school students in Planning Region VII than in the state overall reported watching at least three hours of television per school day (21.8 percent compared to 24.8 percent, respectively).

It is worth noting that 24.1 percent of high school students in Planning Region VII played video or computer games or used a computer for something other than school work for at least three hours on an average school day in 2011; statewide, the proportion was 25.1 percent.

Figure 51. Percent of High School Students in 9th-12th Grades Who Reported Watching Three or More Hours of Television Per School Day: 2005 to 2011



Note: Empty cells indicate that data are unavailable.

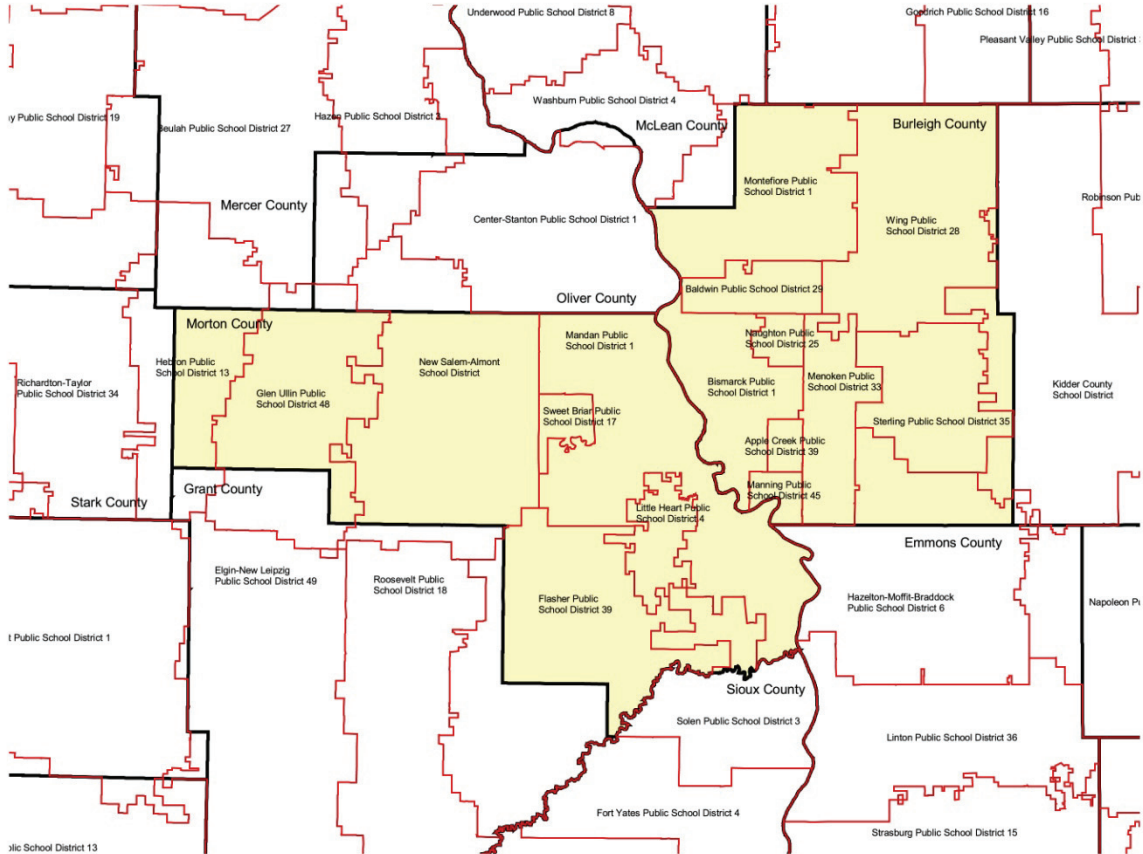
*Planning Region VII in North Dakota includes the counties of McLean, Sheridan, Mercer, Oliver, Burleigh, Kidder, Morton, Grant, Sioux, and Emmons.

Sources: State and Regional Data - North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/YRBS/index.shtm>. National Data - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

This section of the report looks at indicators representing achievement in school, including reading and math proficiency, ACT scores, graduation and attendance rates, idle youth, and educational attainment. When data are presented for Bismarck and Mandan public school districts, data for the other school districts in Burleigh and Morton counties are also provided to offer context.

Figure 52. Map of School Districts in Burleigh and Morton Counties



Reading Proficiency

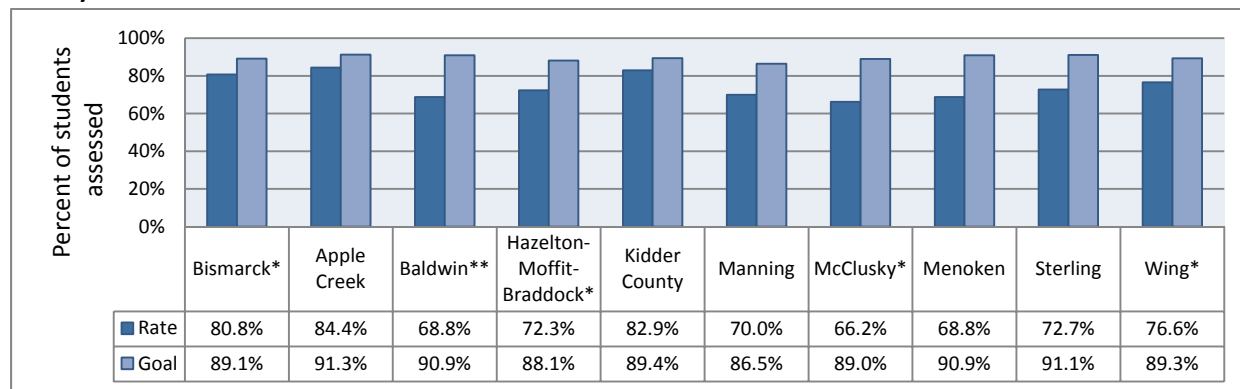
The ability to read proficiently is a fundamental skill that affects the learning experiences and school performance of children and adolescents. Students who are competent readers, as measured by their performance on reading tests, are more likely to perform well in other subjects, such as math and science. Children who struggle with reading and reading comprehension also often have deficits in spoken language. Students with reading difficulties are much less likely to be academically engaged. Reading achievement also predicts the likelihood of graduating from high school and attending college.

Reading skills also influence students' well-being as adults. Adults with poor literacy skills find it difficult to function in society, because many basic decision-making skills require reading proficiency. People who are not able to fill out an application because of limited reading or writing skills are likely to have difficulty finding a job or accessing social services. Strong reading skills protect against unemployment in early adulthood (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/?q=node/258>).

During the 2010-2011 school year, 80.8 percent of students in the Bismarck public school district were determined to be proficient or advanced in reading, which is short of the district goal of 89.1 percent.

The school districts have a complex set of criteria to determine if they are meeting adequate yearly progress toward the goals. The Bismarck school district, along with the Hazelton-Moffit-Braddock, McClusky, and Wing school districts in Burleigh County, did not meet the criteria for adequate yearly progress for reading proficiency among students in 2010-2011.

Figure 53. Percent of Students Who Are Proficient or Advanced in Reading by Public School District in Burleigh County: 2010-2011



Notes: Reading and math assessments were administered in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11. The Naughton school district was excluded because no data were available.

*School district did not meet the criteria for adequate yearly progress.

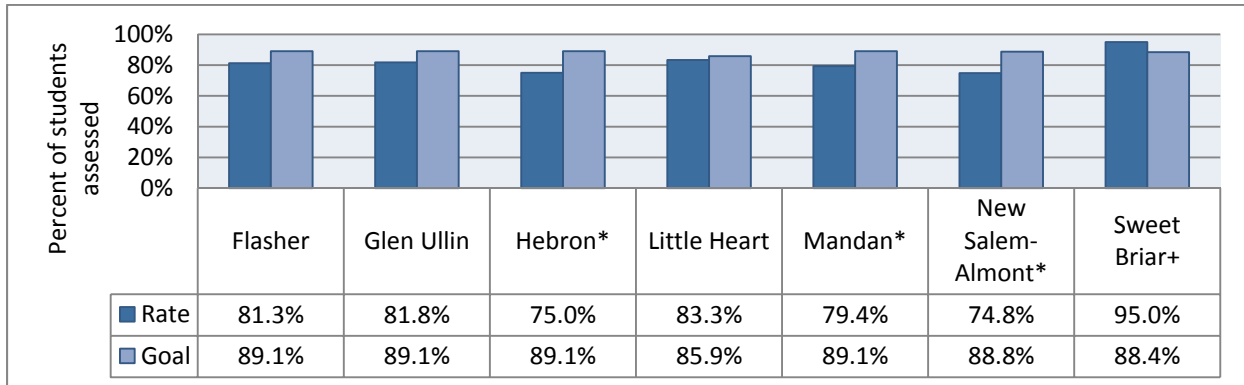
**School district had insufficient data to determine adequate yearly progress; therefore, up to three years of data were combined to obtain the proficiency rate.

Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/reports/Profile/index.shtm>. For interpretation, visit <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/account/AYP0809.pdf>.

During the 2010-2011 school year, 79.4 percent of students in the Mandan public school district were determined to be proficient or advanced in reading, which is short of the district goal of 89.1 percent.

The school districts have a complex set of criteria to determine if they are meeting adequate yearly progress toward the goals. The Mandan school district, along with the Hebron and New Salem-Almont school districts in Morton County, did not meet the criteria for adequate yearly progress for reading proficiency among students in 2010-2011.

Figure 54. Percent of Students Who Are Proficient or Advanced in Reading by School District in Morton County: 2010-2011



Note: Reading and math assessments were administered in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11.

*School district did not meet the criteria for adequate yearly progress.

+Sweet Briar school district reading achievement was greater than or equal to 95.0 percent.

Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/reports/Profile/index.shtm>. For interpretation, visit <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/account/AYP0809.pdf>.

Math Proficiency

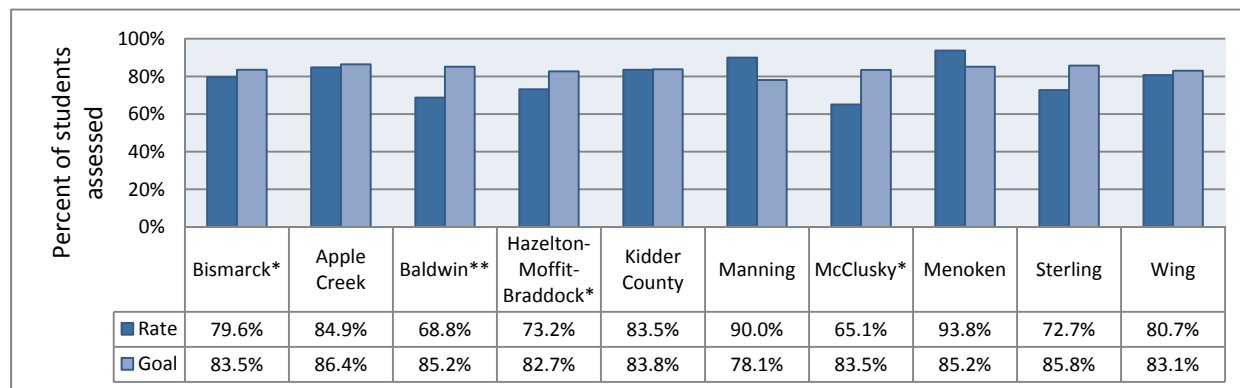
Competence in mathematics is essential for functioning in everyday life, as well as for success in our increasingly technological workplace. Students who take higher level mathematics and science courses which require strong fundamental skills in mathematics are more likely to attend and to complete college. One study of high school females found that one difference between those who later dropped out of high school and those who graduated was lower math scores among the former group.

The importance of mathematics extends beyond the academic domain. Young people who transition to adulthood with limited mathematics skills are likely to find it difficult to function in society. Basic arithmetic skills are required for everyday computations, and sometimes for job applications. Additionally, competence in mathematics skills is related to higher levels of employability. Since 1976, the influence of high school students' mathematics skills on later earnings has grown steadily (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/91>).

During the 2010-2011 school year, 79.6 percent of students in the Bismarck public school district were determined to be proficient or advanced in math, which is short of the district goal of 83.5 percent.

The school districts have a complex set of criteria to determine if they are meeting adequate yearly progress toward the goals. The Bismarck school district, along with the Hazelton-Moffit-Braddock and McClusky school districts in Burleigh County, did not meet the criteria for adequate yearly progress for math proficiency among students in 2010-2011.

Figure 55. Percent of Students Who Are Proficient or Advanced in Math by School District in Burleigh County: 2010-2011



Notes: Reading and math assessments were administered in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11. The Naughton school district was excluded because no data were available.

*School District did not meet the criteria for adequate yearly progress.

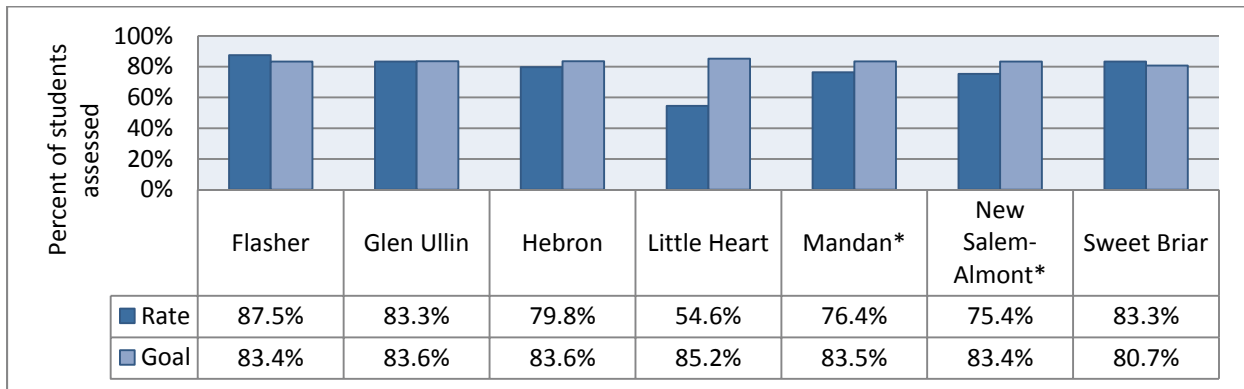
**School district had insufficient data to determine adequate yearly progress; therefore, up to three years of data were combined to obtain the proficiency rate.

Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/reports/Profile/index.shtm>. For interpretation, visit <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/account/AYP0809.pdf>.

During the 2010-2011 school year, 76.4 percent of students in the Mandan public school district were determined to be proficient or advanced in math, which is short of the district goal of 83.5 percent.

The school districts have a complex set of criteria to determine if they are meeting adequate yearly progress toward the goals. The Mandan school district, along with the New Salem-Almont school district in Morton County, did not meet the criteria for adequate yearly progress for math proficiency among students in 2010-2011.

Figure 56. Percent of Students Who Are Proficient or Advanced in Math by School District in Morton County: 2010-2011



Note: Reading and math assessments were administered in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11.

*School District did not meet the criteria for adequate yearly progress.

Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/reports/Profile/index.shtm>. For interpretation, visit <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/account/AYP0809.pdf>.

ACT Scores

Many skills and competencies needed for success in college, the workplace and adult life are not commonly addressed in current school curricula. Students often do not receive sufficient instruction to help them develop the following skills and competencies:

- problem-solving/critical thinking and reasoning;
- healthy habits and avoiding risky behaviors;
- self-management and other learning and motivational strategies;
- a strong work ethic;
- social competencies such as communication, conflict resolution, and understanding other cultures; and
- a strong moral character (for example, being an ethical person or having integrity).

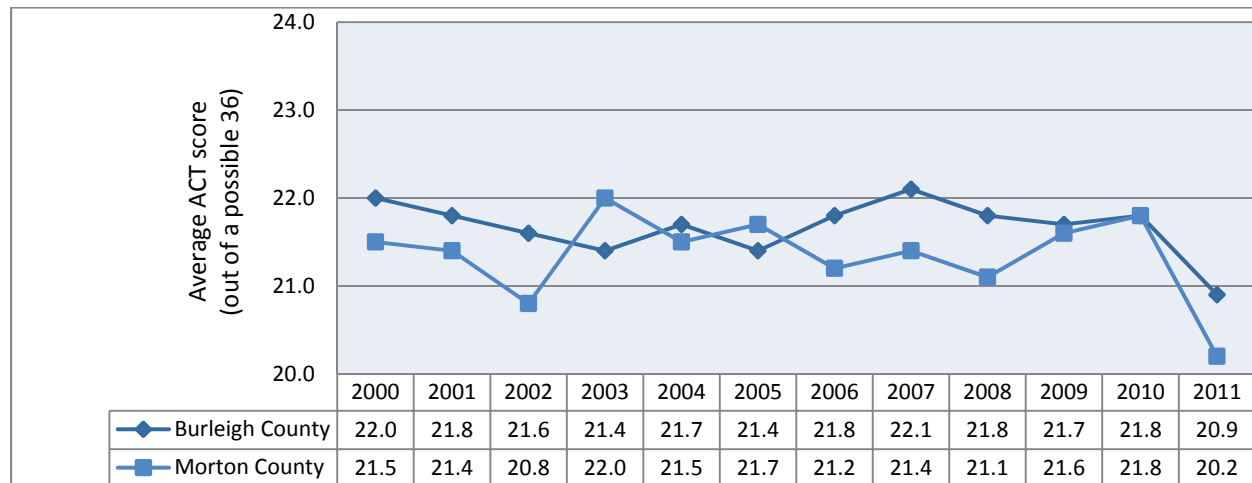
In this era of high-stakes testing, expanding curricula is difficult, especially when the additional areas do not focus directly on academic subjects. Yet the research base is quite clear and strong: When these competencies are developed, students do better on the cognitive tasks of high school, as well as on long-term outcomes of college and the workplace (A Developmental Perspective for High School Practitioners on College and Workplace Readiness – April 2009 Child Trends research brief, http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2008_09_15_FR_ReadinessReport.pdf).

The average ACT composite score for North Dakota was 20.7 in 2011, down from 21.5 in 2010. The highest possible score on the ACT is 36. The vast majority of graduating high school students in North Dakota take the ACT. However, 2011 marks a notable increase in the proportion of students taking the test; in 2011, 96 percent took the test, up from 80 percent in 2010.

In 2011, the average composite score among ACT-tested graduating seniors was 20.9 in Burleigh County and 20.2 in Morton County, down from 21.8 each in 2010.

From 2000 to 2011, average ACT composite scores among students in Burleigh and Morton fluctuated slightly. During this 12-year span, Burleigh County saw its highest average ACT score of 22.1 in 2007. Morton County saw its highest average score of 22.0 in 2003.

Figure 57. Average ACT Composite Scores of ACT-Tested High School Graduates in Burleigh and Morton Counties: 2000 to 2011



Source: ACT, Department of Program Evaluation and Institutional Research Services, special request.

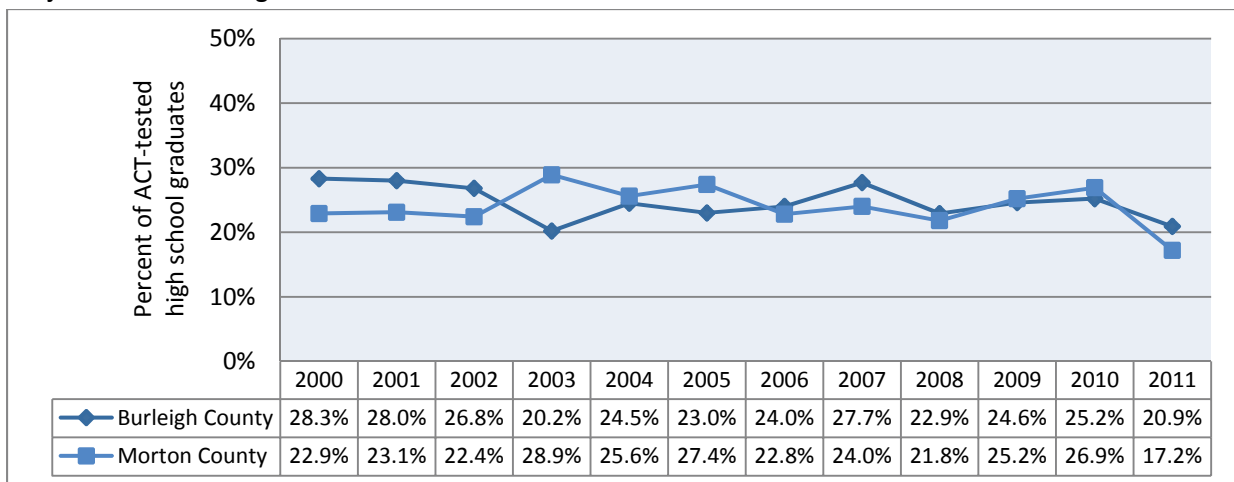
In addition to the overall composite score, the non-profit organization ACT, Inc. reports the proportion of high school students meeting benchmarks in the areas of English, math, reading, and science that reflect what it takes to be successful in standard first-year college courses.

In 2011, approximately one-fifth of high school graduates who took the ACT test met the college benchmark scores in all four subject areas in Burleigh County (20.9 percent) and Morton County (17.2 percent). Statewide, 21.0 percent of ACT-tested graduating high school students met all four college benchmark scores. These proportions changed little through 2010, but showed a notable decrease in 2011.

Students tend to score much better for individual course areas. In Burleigh County, 67.7 percent of the 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates were ready for college English, 44.5 percent were ready for college math, 49.4 percent were ready for college reading, and 27.6 percent were ready for college science. However, only 20.9 percent were ready for all four courses.

Students in Morton County showed similar results. Nearly two-thirds of the 2010 ACT-tested high school graduates were ready for college English (62.2 percent), 36.5 percent were ready for college math, 44.9 percent were ready for college reading, and 24.7 percent were ready for college science. However, only 17.2 percent of students were ready for all four courses.

Figure 58. Percent of ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Benchmark Scores in All Four Subject Areas in Burleigh and Morton Counties: 2000 to 2011



Source: ACT, Department of Program Evaluation and Institutional Research Services, special request.

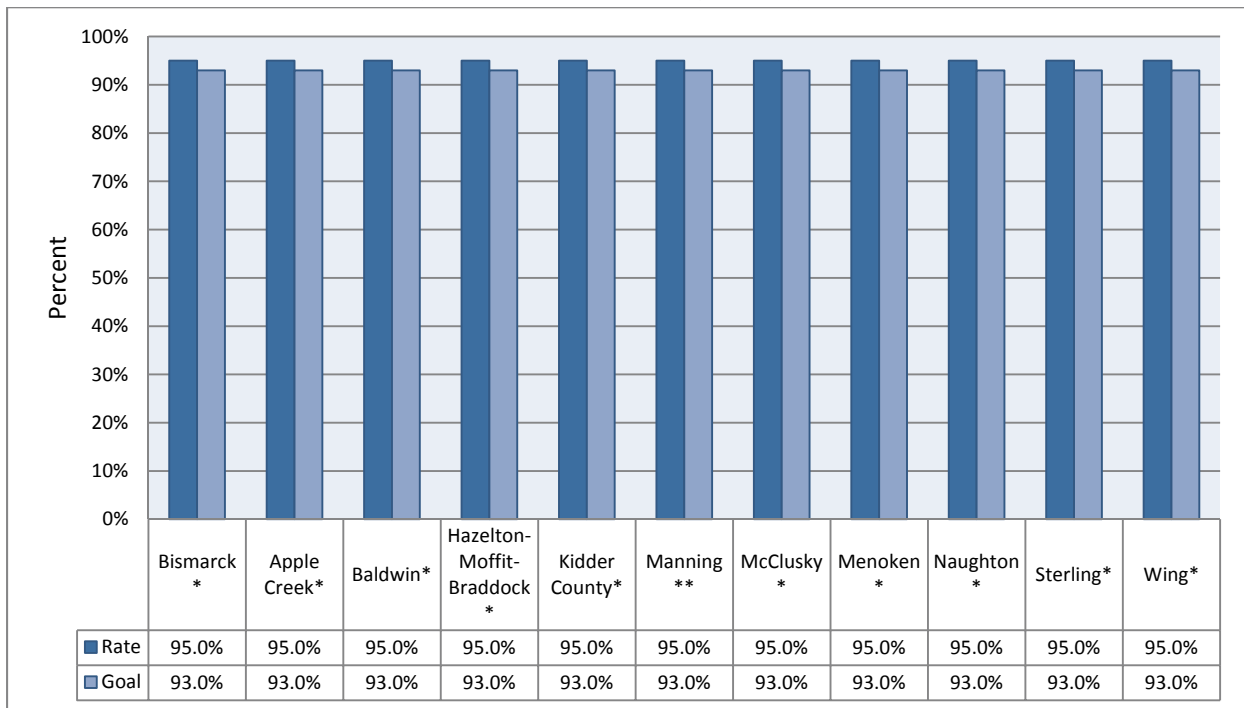
Attendance Rates

Attendance is an important factor in school success among youth. Studies show that better attendance is related to higher academic achievement for students of all backgrounds, but particularly for children with lower socio-economic status. Beginning in kindergarten, students who attend school regularly score higher on tests than their peers who are frequently absent.

Chronic truancy (frequent unexcused absence) in particular is a predictor of undesirable outcomes in adolescence, including academic failure, school dropout, substance abuse, gang involvement and criminal activity (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/154>).

Attendance rates for the Bismarck school district and the other 10 school districts in Burleigh County exceeded the goal of 93.0 percent attendance during the 2010-2011 school year.

Figure 59. School Attendance Rates by School District in Burleigh County: 2010-2011



Note: In North Dakota, the attendance rate is defined as the aggregate days of attendance in a school divided by the aggregate days of enrollment for students in grades 3-8 and 11 (i.e., those participating in the annual statewide assessments).

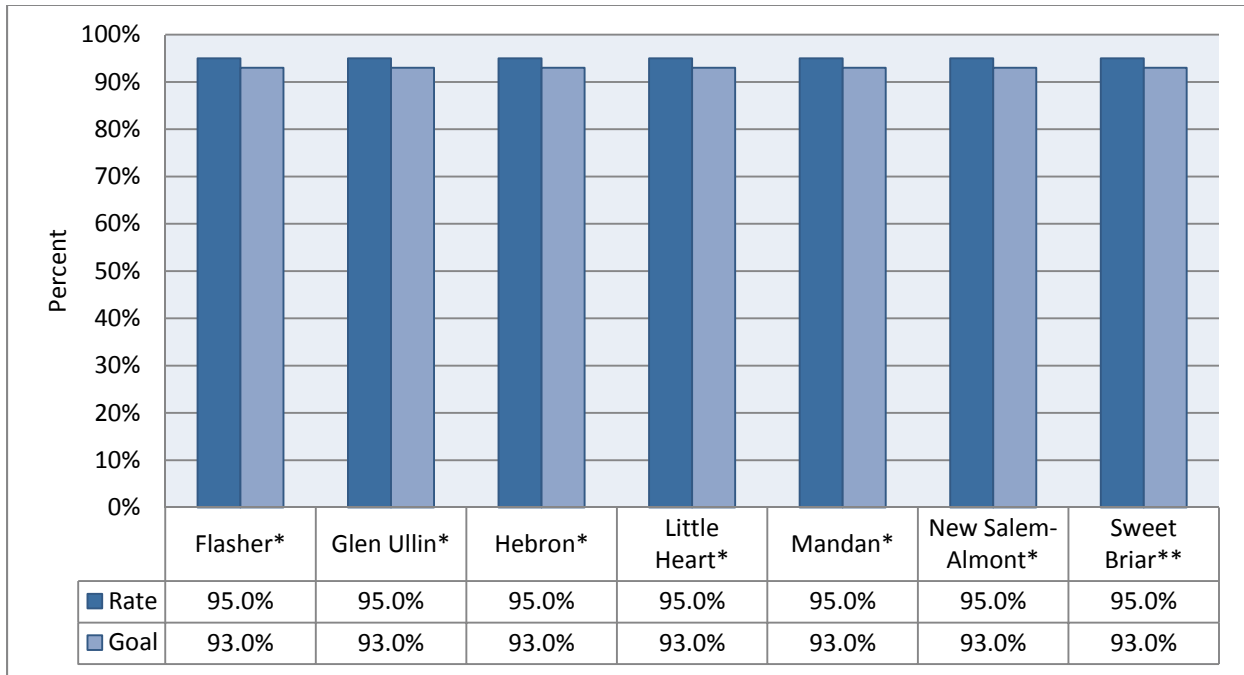
*The attendance rate is greater than or equal to 95%.

**Data for attendance rates for this school district were insufficient, therefore up to three years of data were combined to obtain the attendance rate.

Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/reports/Profile/index.shtm>. For interpretation, visit <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/account/AYP0809.pdf>.

Attendance rates for the Mandan school district and the other six school districts in Morton County exceeded the goal of 93.0 percent attendance during the 2010-2011 school year.

Figure 60. School Attendance Rates by School District in Morton County: 2010-2011



Note: In North Dakota, the attendance rate is defined as the aggregate days of attendance in a school divided by the aggregate days of enrollment for students in grades 3-8 and 11 (i.e., those participating in the annual statewide assessments).

*The attendance rate is greater than or equal to 95%.

**Data for attendance rates for this school district were insufficient, therefore up to three years of data were combined to obtain the attendance rate.

Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/reports/Profile/index.shtm>. For interpretation, visit <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/account/AYP0809.pdf>.

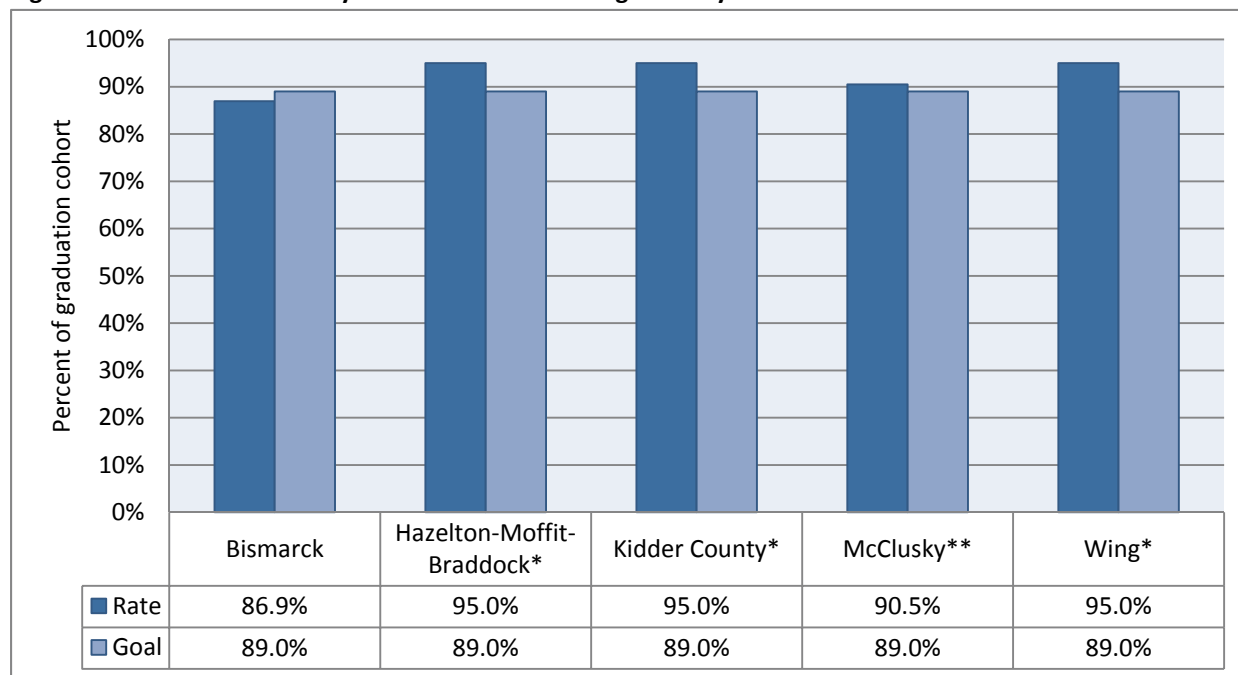
Graduation Rates

Young people who drop out of high school are unlikely to have the minimum skills and credentials necessary to function in today's increasingly complex society and technological workplace. The completion of high school is required for accessing post-secondary education and is a minimum requirement for most jobs. High school dropouts are more likely than high school completers to be unemployed. Additionally, a high school diploma leads to higher income and occupational status. Interestingly, however, many youth who drop out of high school eventually earn a diploma or a GED. One study found that 63 percent of students who dropped out had earned a diploma or GED within eight years of the year they should have originally graduated. Studies have found that young adults with low education and skill levels are more likely to live in poverty and to receive government assistance. High school dropouts are likely to stay on public assistance longer than those with at least a high school degree. Further, high school dropouts are more likely to become involved in crime (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/archivepgs/01.htm>).

During the 2010-2011 school year, 86.9 percent of students graduated within the Bismarck public school district, short of the district goal of 89.0 percent.

Graduation rates were available for 5 of the 11 school districts in Burleigh County. Four of these school districts exceeded their graduation rate goals in 2010-2011.

Figure 61. Graduation Rates by School District in Burleigh County: 2010-2011



Notes: In North Dakota, the graduation rate is a cohort rate, measuring the number of graduates who completed high school in four years divided by those same graduates plus 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade dropouts of the same graduation cohort. Graduation rates were unavailable for the Apple Creek, Baldwin, Manning, Menoken, Naughton, and Sterling school districts.

*The graduation rate is greater than or equal to 95%.

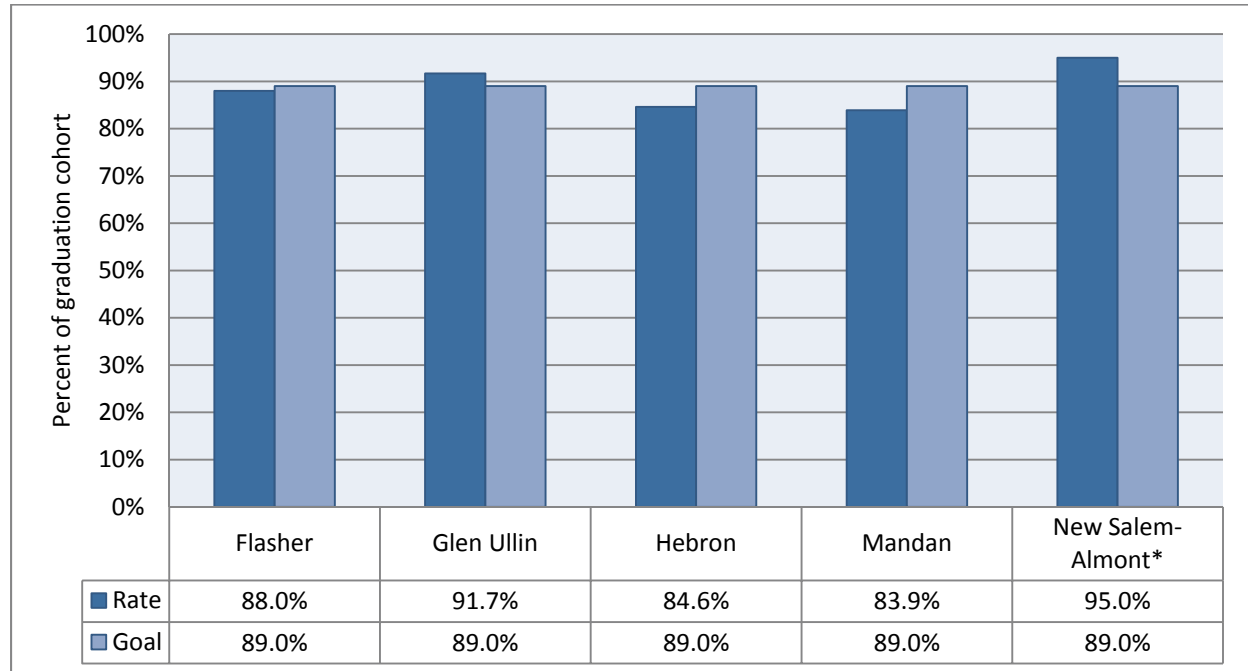
**Data for graduation rates for this school district were insufficient, therefore up to three years of data were combined to obtain the graduation rate.

Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/reports/Profile/index.shtm>. For interpretation, visit <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/account/AYP0809.pdf>.

During the 2010-2011 school year, 83.9 percent of students graduated in the Mandan public school district, which is short of the district goal of 89.0 percent.

Graduation rate data were available for 5 of the 7 school districts in Morton County. Two of these school districts exceeded their graduation rate goals in 2010-2011.

Figure 62. Graduation Rates by School District in Morton County: 2010-2011



Notes: In North Dakota, the graduation rate is a cohort rate, measuring the number of graduates who completed high school in four years divided by those same graduates plus 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade dropouts of the same graduation cohort. Graduation rates were unavailable for the Little Heart and Sweet Briar school districts.

*The graduation rate is greater than or equal to 95%.

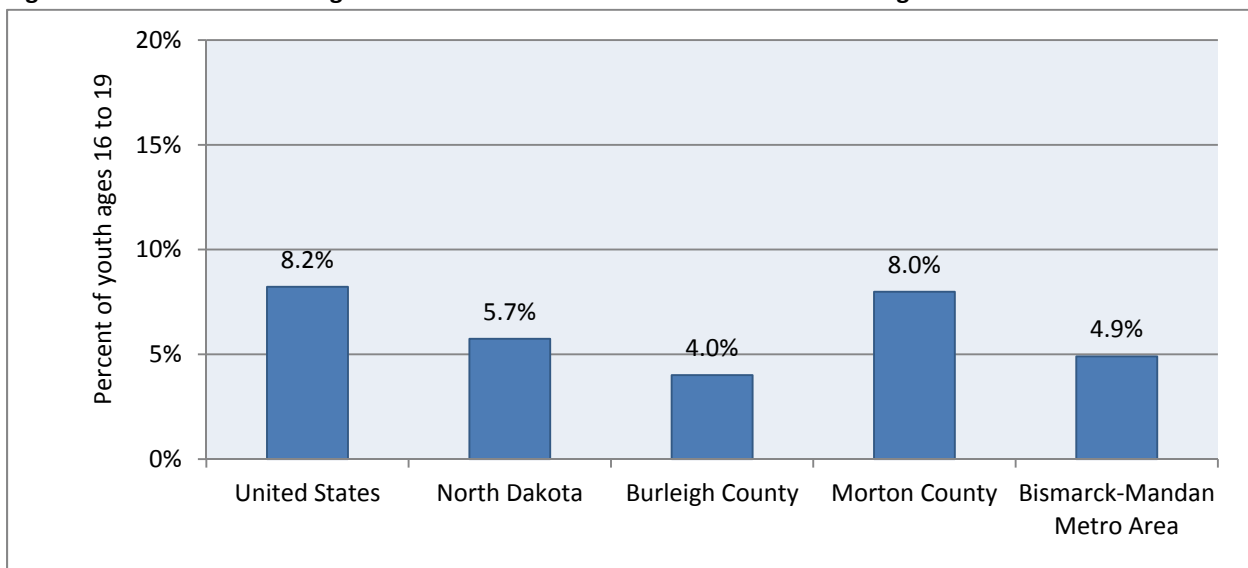
Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/reports/Profile/index.shtm>. For interpretation, visit <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/account/AYP0809.pdf>.

Idle Youth

The transition from youth into independent adulthood involves many challenges, one of the most important of which is gaining secure employment. While there are multiple pathways to success, the consequences of unemployment, under-employment, or not acquiring post-secondary education can be damaging and enduring. Males who are neither enrolled in school nor working are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior or illegal activities. Females in this group are more likely to become dependent on welfare. Young adults in the juvenile justice, foster care, and special education system are particularly vulnerable, since they tend to drop out of the workforce and school at an early age, leaving them ineligible for services meant to aid in the transition to adulthood. Even if these youth eventually do obtain jobs, their earnings tend to be low. In short, youth neither enrolled in school nor working are on the sidelines of achieving economic self-sufficiency, and at risk for multiple additional poor outcomes (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/alphalist?q=node/181>).

In the Bismarck-Mandan metro area, 4.9 percent of youth ages 16 to 19 were considered idle teens (i.e., teens who were neither working nor enrolled in school) in 2010. The proportion of idle teens was twice as high in Morton County as it was in Burleigh County (8.0 percent and 4.0 percent, respectively).

Figure 63. Percent of Youth Ages 16 to 19 Not Enrolled in School and Not Working: 2010



Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B14005.

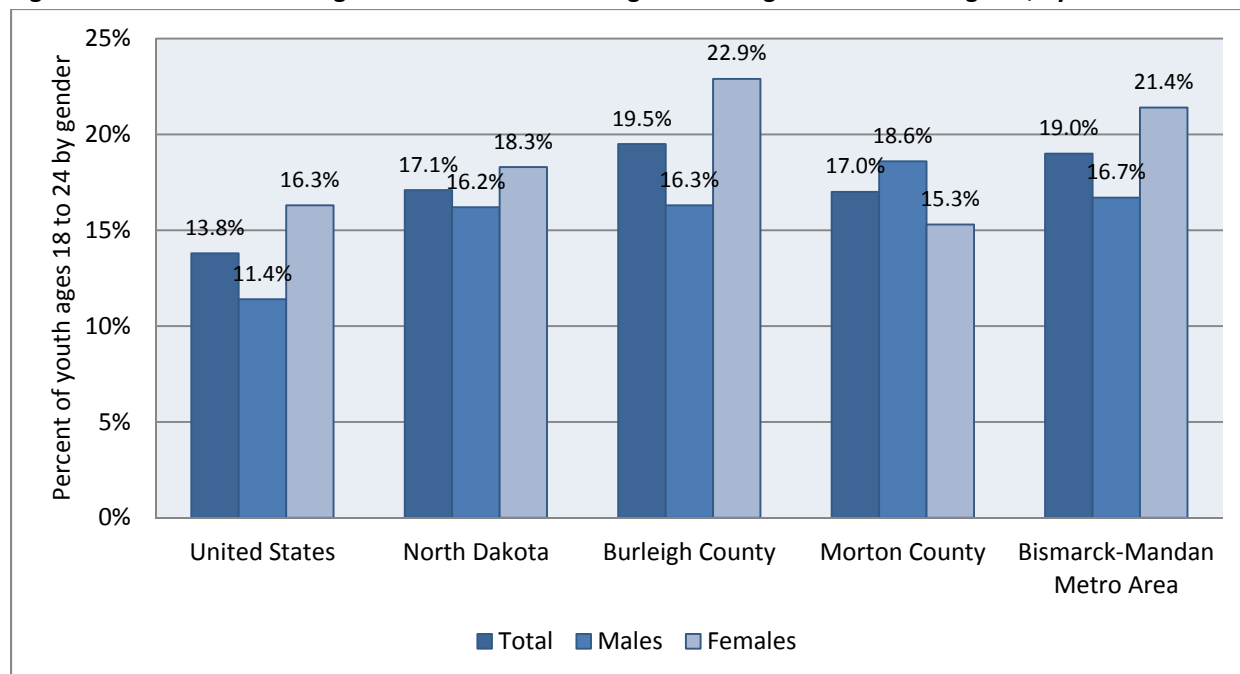
Educational Attainment of Young Adults

Educational attainment is a powerful predictor of well-being. Young adults who have completed higher levels of education are more likely to achieve economic success than those who have not. In addition to qualifying one for a broader range of jobs, completing more years of education also protects against unemployment. Further, higher levels of educational attainment often lead to higher wages and income: in 2008, Americans with bachelor's degrees or higher earned a median income that was more than 50 percent higher than that of their peers with only high school diplomas. In the past few decades, earning differentials by education level have been increasing, especially among men. Adults with higher levels of education also report being in better health and having higher levels of socio-emotional well-being. They are also less likely to divorce, or be incarcerated (Child Trends DataBank, 2010, <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/182>).

In the Bismarck-Mandan metro area, one-fifth of youth ages 18 to 24 had a post-high school higher education degree (i.e., Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Graduate or other Professional degree) in 2010 (19.0 percent). More females than males ages 18 to 24 had a post-high school higher education degree in 2010 (21.4 percent and 16.7 percent, respectively). These proportions are higher than the national average.

The proportion of female youth ages 18 to 24 with a higher education degree was higher in Burleigh County than in Morton County (22.9 percent and 15.3 percent, respectively). Conversely, somewhat more males had a higher education degree in Morton County than in Burleigh County (18.6 percent and 16.3 percent, respectively).

Figure 64. Percent of Youth Ages 18 to 24 with a Post-High School Higher Education Degree*, by Gender: 2010



Note: Bismarck-Mandan metro area includes Burleigh County, ND and Morton County, ND.

*A post-high school higher education degree includes individuals with an Associate's degree, a Bachelor's degree, and a Graduate or other professional degree.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15001.

This report is available on the MSA United Way website at <http://www.msaunitedway.org/>.
For more information regarding the report, please contact Kendre Israel at impact@msaunitedway.org or 701.255.3601.