

ESD 113 True North Student Assistance Model

HCA Behavioral Health Advisory Council

January 14th, 2025

Presented by: Sara Ellsworth, MA, LMHC, SUDP, Clinical Services Director

Our Mission

- Guiding students
- Enriching our school districts
- Increasing knowledge of mental health
- Raising awareness of substance abuse

Our Why

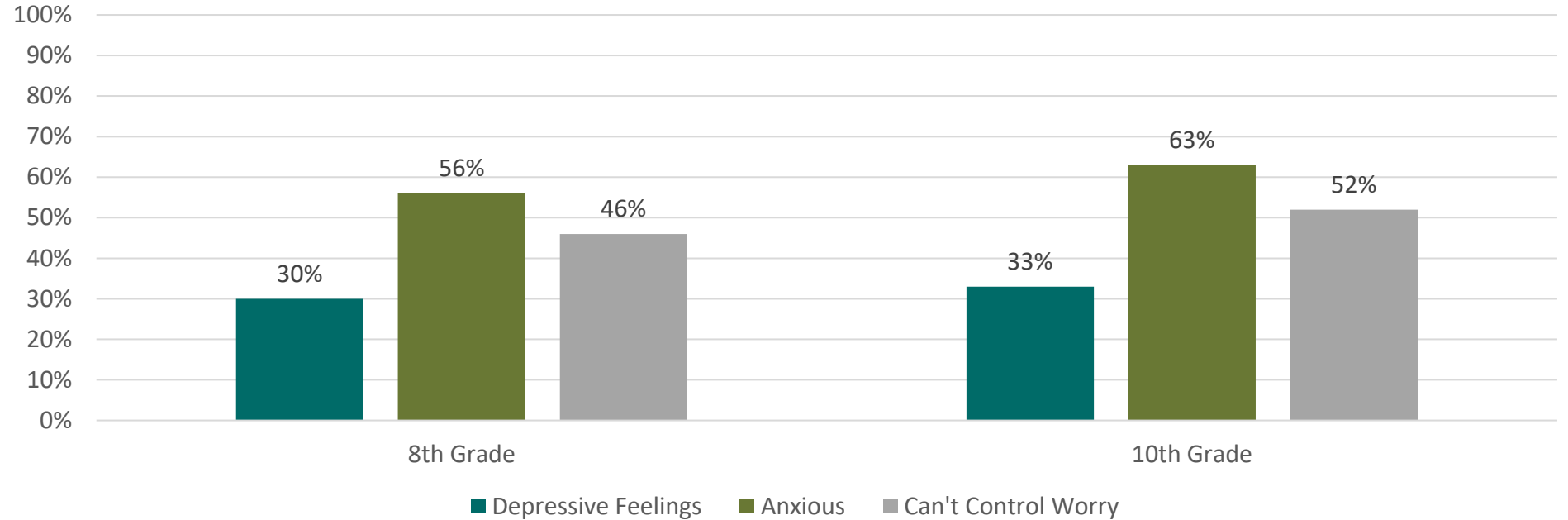
All students who need treatment are identified, assessed, and provided evidence-based services and ongoing supports.

Why is Behavioral Health in Schools Critical?

- Washington state students are experiencing significant behavioral health issues.
- Students are not connecting with services available in the community.
- Students with behavioral health issues are less likely to graduate.

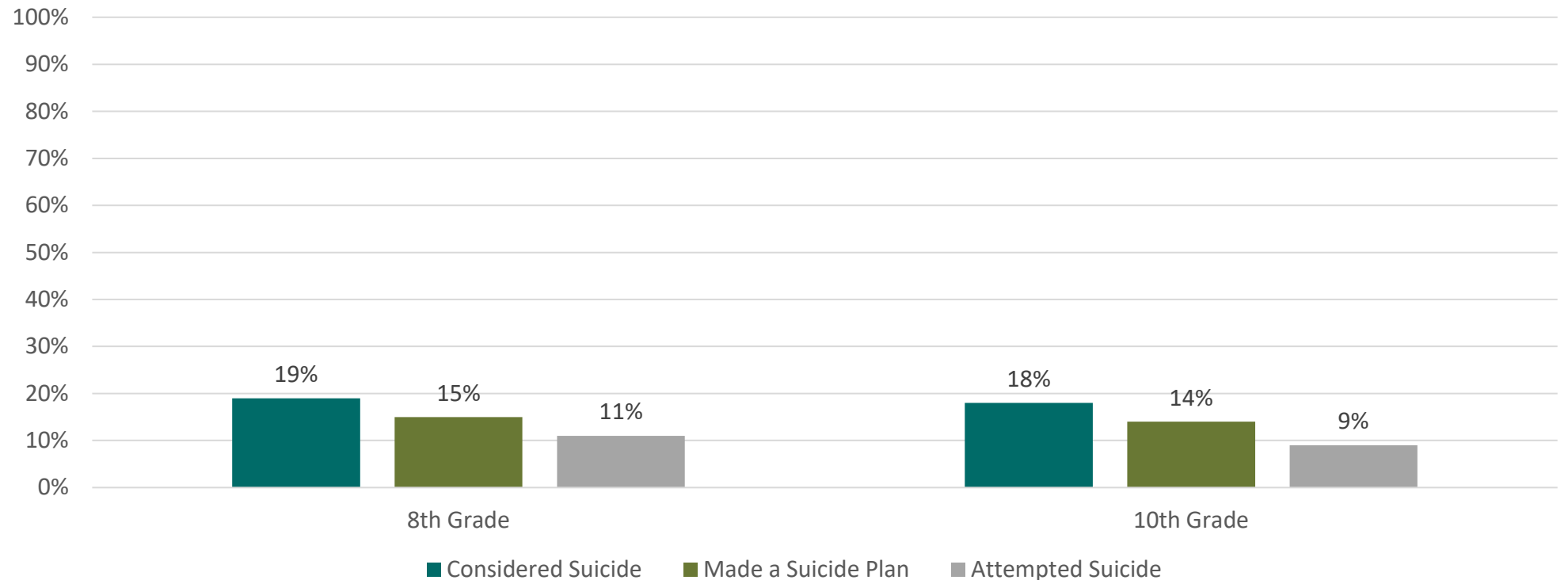
Significant Behavioral Health Issues

Depression and Anxiety



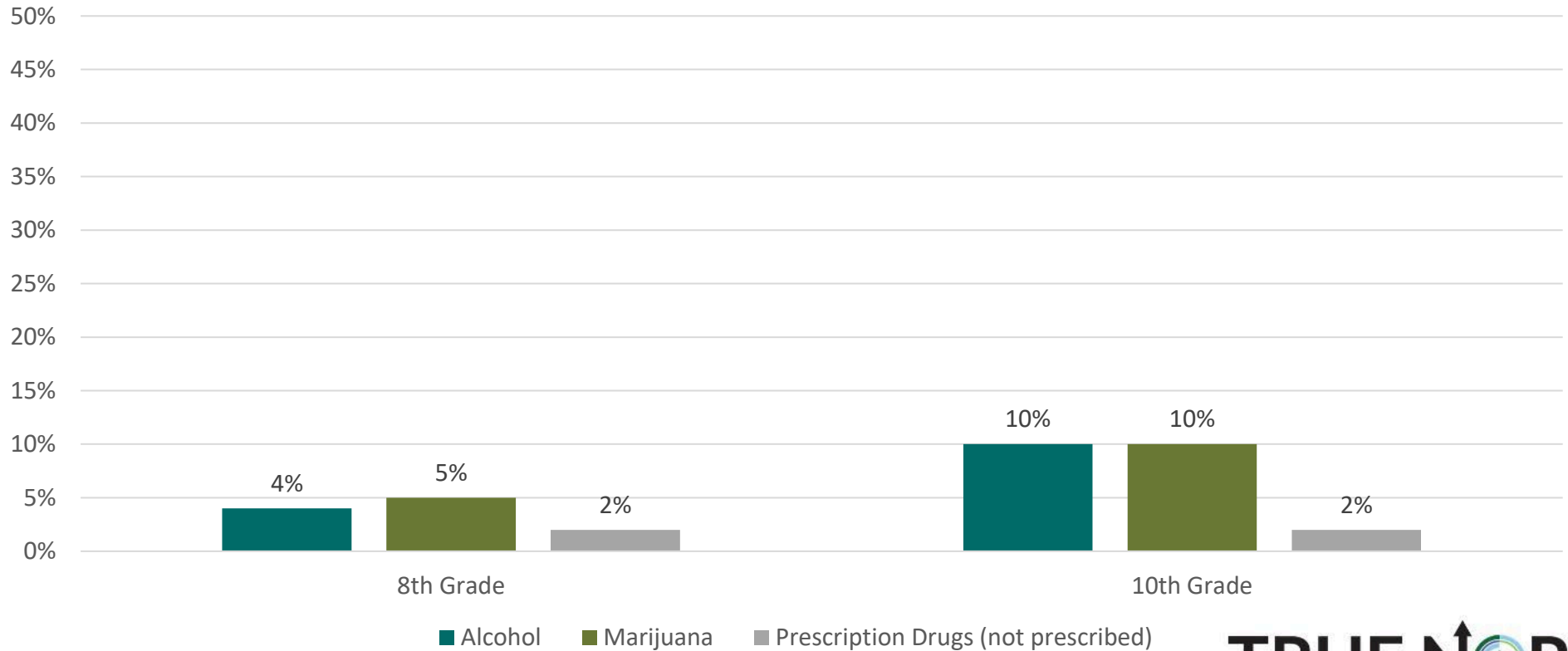
Significant Behavioral Health Issues

Past Year Suicidal Feelings and Actions



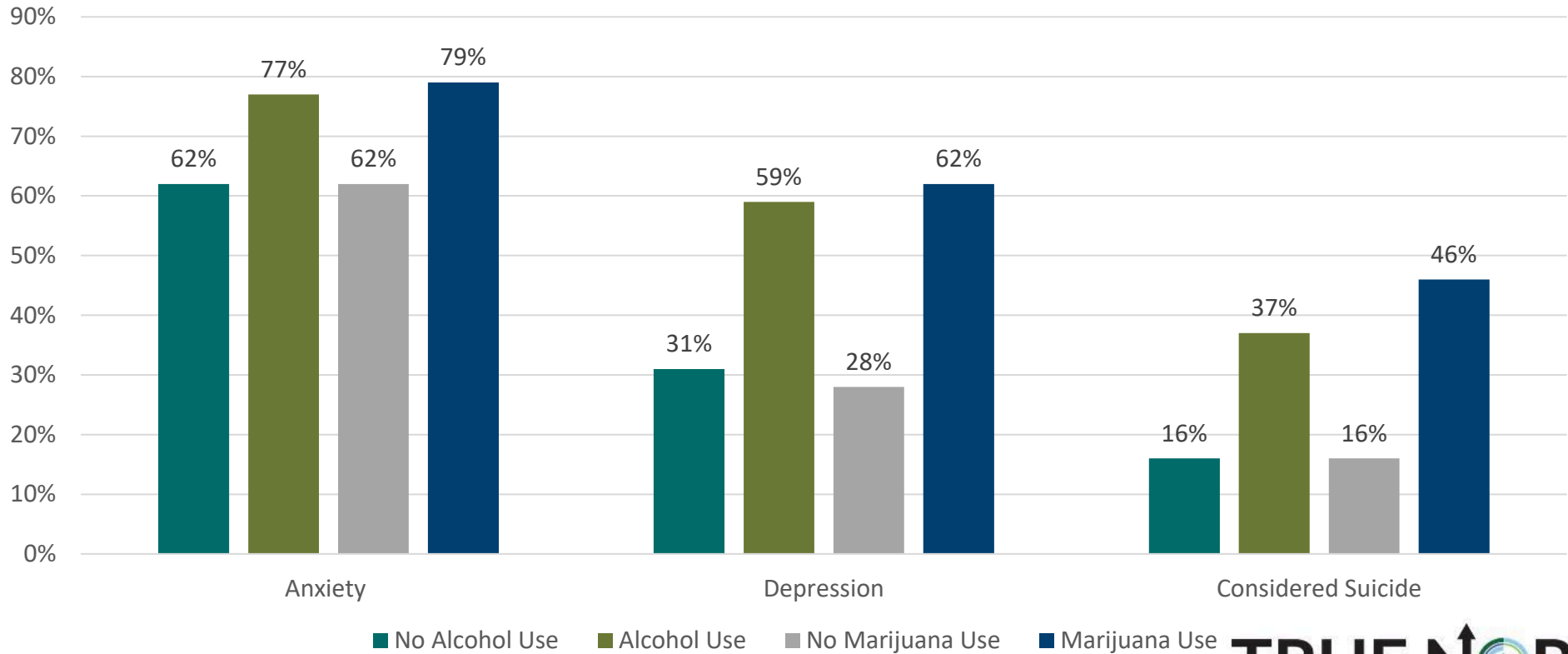
Significant Behavioral Health Issues

Current (Past 30 Day) Substance Use



Significant Behavioral Health Issues

10th Grade Co-Occurring Conditions



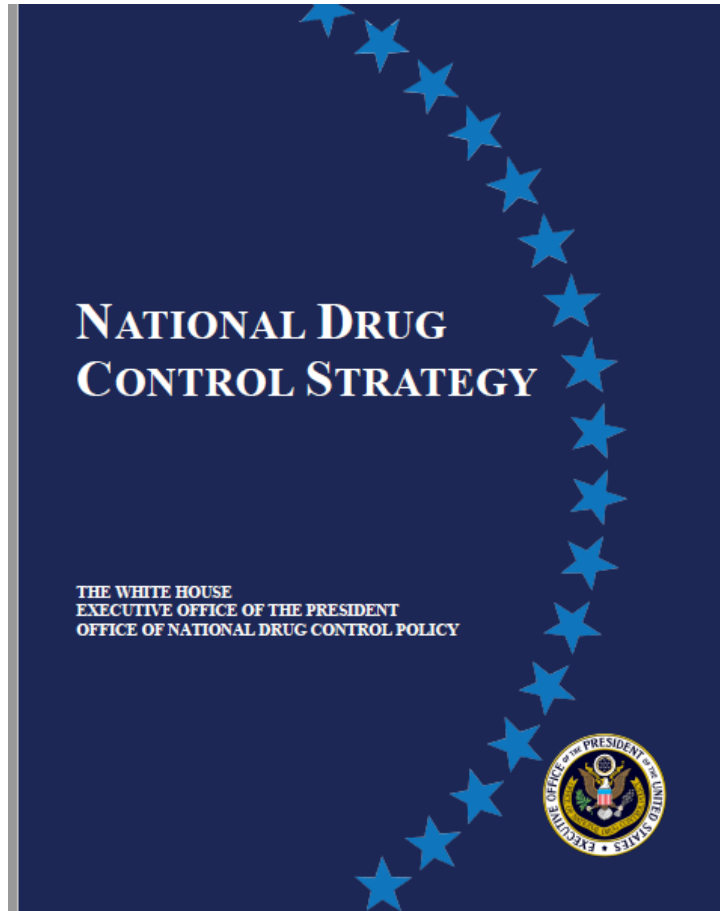
Behavioral Health & Graduation

- The single greatest predictor of a person's health and well-being across the lifespan is educational attainment.
- Youth with co-occurring needs were the least likely to graduate on time (12%) and most-likely to drop out (80%).
- If high school dropout rates were cut in half nationally, the US would save an estimated \$7.3 billion annually in Medicaid spending

Youth Behavioral Health: What we know

- Behavioral health services benefit academic performance & achievement
- School-based prevention and early intervention services are accessible and effective
- Nationally, most children and adolescents who receive behavioral health services do so at school

WHAT WE KNOW

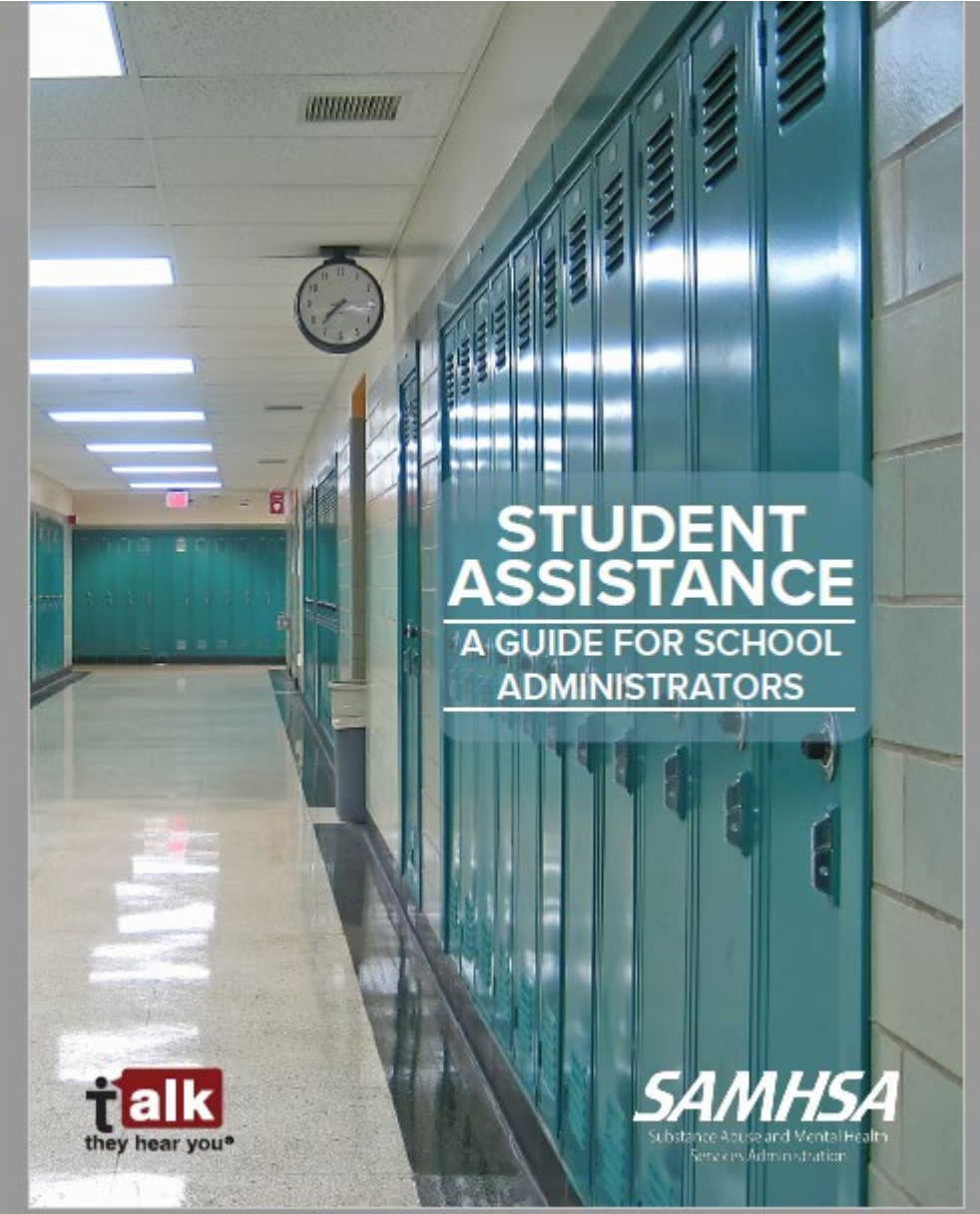


Right Service, Right Time, for the Right Child: How a Washington State School District Provided Comprehensive Behavioral Health Services for Students

In 2012, the Capital Region Educational Service District 113 in Washington State faced a challenge with substance use and behavioral issues among high school students. Tenth grade current alcohol use rates for one identified district were at 36-percent, compared to the state average of 23-percent according to the state's Healthy Youth Survey. Additionally, problem behaviors and suspensions were at troubling levels, as were school attendance rates. These problems were compounded by a lack of access to clinically appropriate treatment and recovery support services for youth. To respond, the district established a Student Assistance Program (SAP) in 2013. Under the SAP model, a trained and credentialed behavioral health professional was brought onsite and the entire school staff was engaged to identify and help prevent substance use and address behavioral challenges among students. This made the entire team responsible for the behavioral health of the students. Under the SAP, the spectrum of services available to students was expanded and included: prevention services, behavioral health screening and early intervention of youth at high risk of substance use or mental health issues, referral and care management to substance use and/or mental health treatment and comprehensive recovery support services. The program also engaged parents/caregivers and the community.

The SAP's comprehensive approach had overwhelmingly positive outcomes. From 2013 to 2018, the comprehensive approach adopted under the SAP was associated with a reduction in past 30-day alcohol use from a peak of 36% in 2012 to just 10% in 2018. Comparatively, statewide alcohol use rates only changed from 25% to 18% in that same time frame. But most compelling were the stories from the students themselves. The students described how an adult at the school saw they were struggling and referred them to someone who could figure out what was going on, understand their unique situation, and could figure out how to help them in their unique situation. The adoption of the SAP philosophy created a school environment where an individual focus on the needs of each student was possible.

Source: Data provided by Capital Region Educational Service District 113, Washington State.



**STUDENT
ASSISTANCE**
A GUIDE FOR SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATORS



What is a Student Assistance Program?

Services include:

1. Education
2. Prevention
3. Early identification
4. Evidence-based intervention
5. Referral processes
6. Guided support services



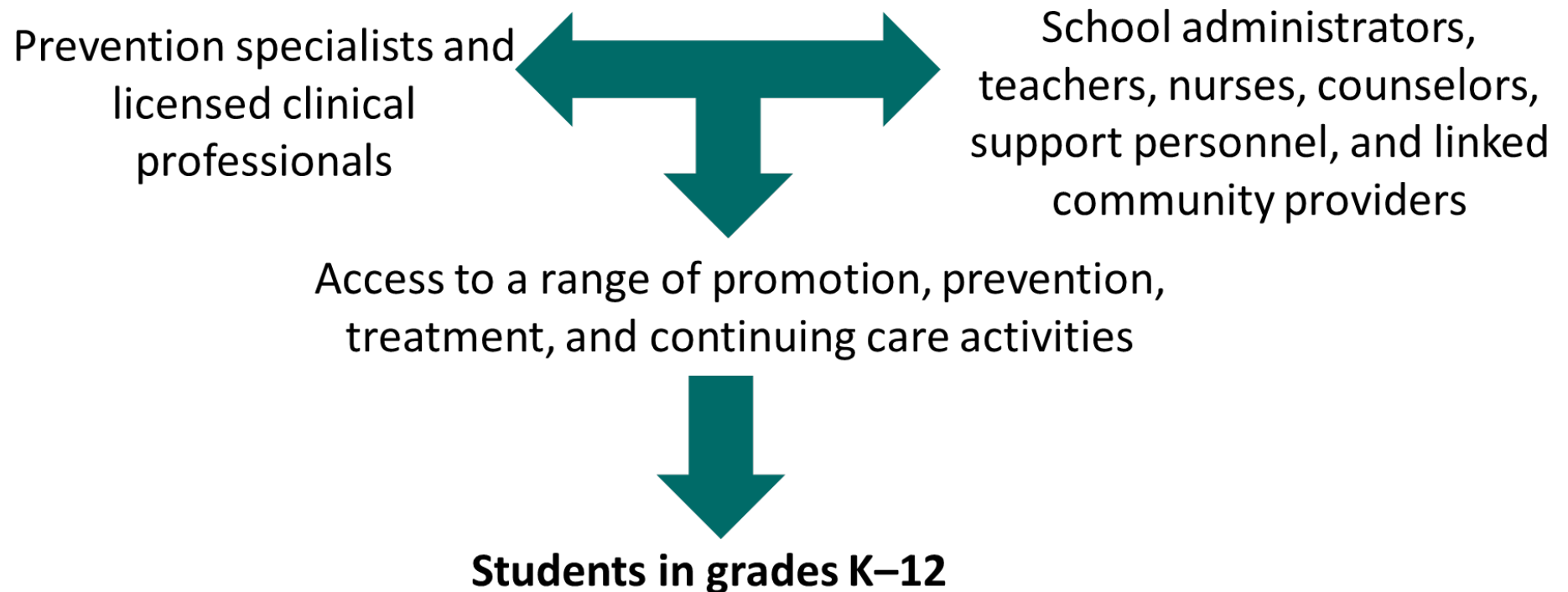
Who does a Student Assistance Program Serve?

ALL students benefit from a Student Assistance Program

- Substance use prevention
- Mental health promotion
- Classroom presentations
- Information campaigns

Students experiencing substance use or misuse and/or mental health challenges are best suited to receive Student Assistance interventions

How Do SAPs Work?



Identification and Referral Process

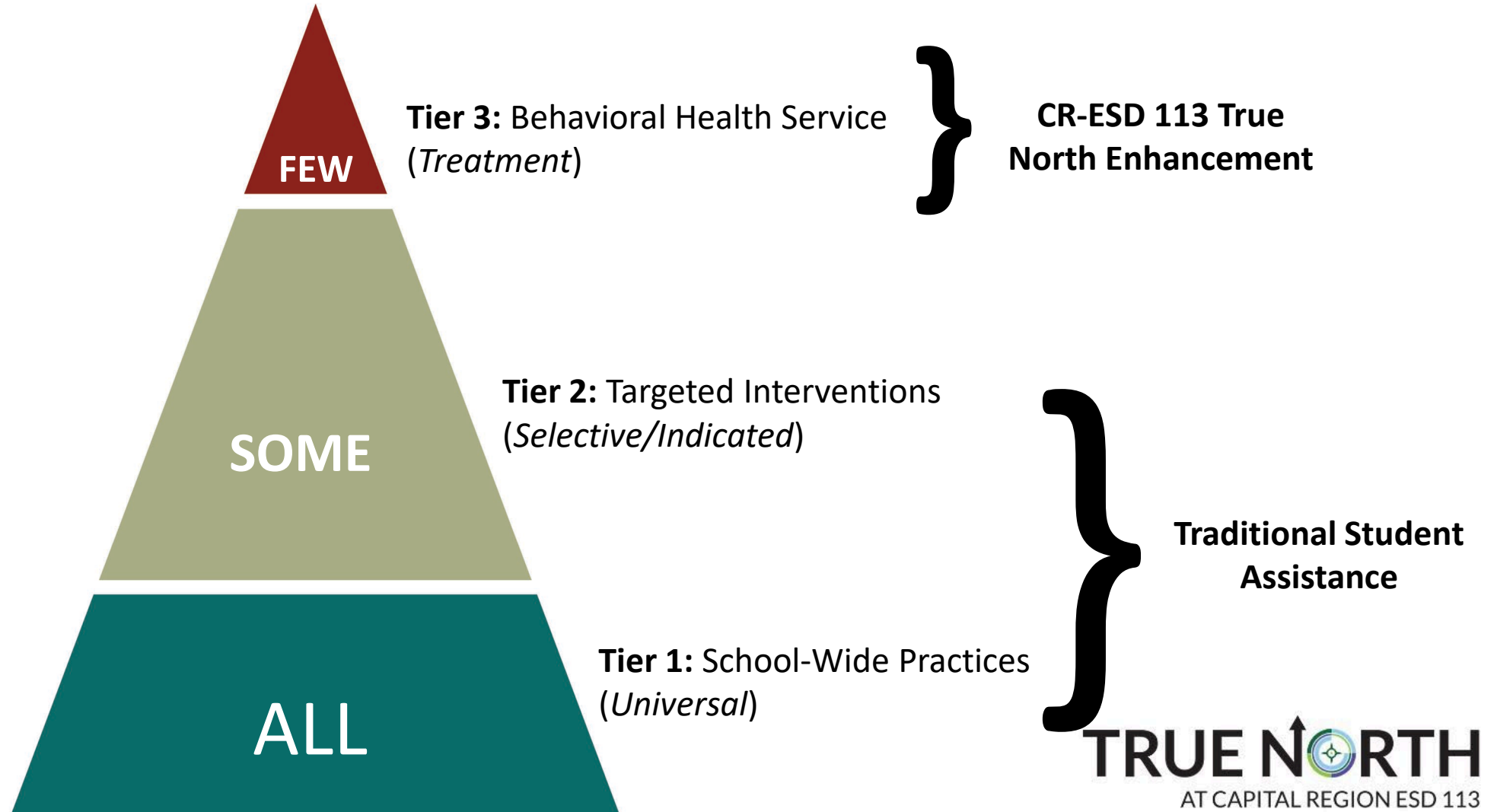
Identification/referral by...

Teachers, administrators, and interdisciplinary team members **OR**
Students and/or families

Process:

1. Provide brief description of concerns.
2. Students receive notification from designated SAP team member(s).
3. SAP team member(s) meets with student and assesses current concerns or risks.

True North Student Assistance Program



True North Student Assistance Program

Student Assistance Professional provides full spectrum of services, including:

- Universal school-wide prevention services
- School-based youth prevention team
- Screening & Referral for behavioral health conditions
- Early intervention for behavioral health concerns
- Outpatient behavioral health treatment*

* Treatment available at branch office sites and some school locations

True North Services Impact

Student Wellbeing

- **Symptom Reduction**

- **33%** fewer students reported feeling they couldn't "stop or control" their worrying
- **35%** fewer students reported feeling "worthless or inferior"
- **35%** fewer students reported feeling "unhappy, sad, or depressed"

- **Increased Coping**

- **61%** more students reported they had healthy strategies to help manage negative emotions
- **53%** more students reported knowing how to ask for help when they need it

Based on 2023-2024 Student Assistance Outcomes Data , 357 students with matched pre/post tests

True North Services Impact

Student Behaviors

- **Decreased substance use**
 - Alcohol – **19% reduction**
 - Binge Drinking – **23% reduction**
 - Marijuana – **26% reduction**
 - Other Drug Use – **44% reduction**
 - Vaping – **24% reduction**
- **Decreased problem behaviors**
 - Got in trouble at school – **28% reduction**
 - Skipping school – **23% reduction**
 - School suspensions – **48% reduction**

Based on 2023-2024 Student Assistance Outcomes Data , 357 students with matched pre/post tests

True North Services Impact

- **Increased school attendance**
 - **38%** of participants report they are more likely to attend school because of SAP services
- **Satisfaction with services**
 - **93%** reported they were glad they participated in SAP services

Based on 2023-2024 Student Assistance Outcomes Data , 357 students with matched pre/post tests

Challenges

- Interaction of the school system that serves ALL and the Medicaid system that serves SOME
- Infrastructure that only funds medically necessary (Tier 3) services
- Fee-for-service models that do not reflect service delivery trends in a school setting

Opportunities

- Existing model and infrastructure that can be built upon
- ESD network creates opportunities to build and sustain a statewide system
- Coordination, collaboration, and expansion of partnerships with School-based Health Centers
- Fully fund a system of care that works