



PRESS RELEASE

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NEW DATA LINK SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, SUSPENSIONS, AND YOUTH HOMICIDE

The Baltimore City Public School System and the Baltimore City Health Department today released initial data outlining the links between attendance, suspension and youth homicide. Data show a strong correlation between poor attendance, suspensions and expulsions and youth who become victims of shootings or homicide. These issues, traditionally thought of as "school" issues, are also an important part of reducing youth homicide rates.

“The data make clear that the problems facing our city are interconnected and great schools are essential to a great city,” said Dr. Alonso. “It is abundantly clear that we have to reach and support all our kids while they are in school so they can succeed. We are making the tough decisions that we need to make to transform our schools. Likewise, we are appealing to the entire community to support our kids and our schools. These statistics reinforce the urgency of the work before us.”

“Problems with attendance, suspension, and expulsion place youth at risk not only for school failure, but also for severe injury or death from violence. Keeping youth engaged in school is a critical priority,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Commissioner of Health for Baltimore City.

The findings are based on a collaboration between the Health Department and Baltimore City schools involving the review of 391 attendance, suspension/expulsion records of youth homicide and shooting victims between 2003 and 2007. The preliminary data indicate:

- Victims of homicide or non-fatal shooting attended an average of 105 days of school (out of 180 total school days) per academic year spent in BCPSS schools.
- Two thirds of victims (67% of 391) were suspended or expelled at least once prior to the shooting or homicide.
- Victims who were suspended or expelled in a given academic year had on average 2.2 suspensions or expulsions per school year. They missed an average of 14.6 days of school per year because of suspensions and expulsions.

The collaboration between the Health Department and Baltimore City schools is ongoing as work advances inside and outside of the classroom to help at-risk youth in the city.