

SUSPENSION FACT SHEET MARYLAND AND BALTIMORE CITY, 2006-2007

OSI-Baltimore believes that the out-of-school suspension of 74,518 students in Maryland schools is unacceptable. We call for an end to the excessive, biased, and inconsistent application of this school disciplinary practice, which put 9.0% of Maryland students at increased risk of academic failure, drop-out, and incarceration in 2006-2007.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATE HAS RISEN OVER THE PAST DECADE

- During the 1996-1997 school year, Maryland public schools suspended **8.1%** of the student population; by 2006-2007, that rate had increased to **9.0%** (**74,518 students** out of a total enrollment of 825,966).¹
- Although the number of suspension incidents and the number of students suspended by BCPSS had decreased for four consecutive school years between 2002-2003 and 2005-2006, both figures rose again in 2006-2007, with **9,854 students** suspended in **16,752 incidents**. This represents **12.5%** of the total enrollment.²

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION POLICIES INCONSISTENTLY APPLIED

- Suspension rates vary by district and school. In 2006-2007, out-of-school suspension rates for Maryland school districts ranged from **4.0%** for Howard County Public Schools to **17.2%** for Somerset County Public Schools.
- In 2006-2007, two large, comprehensive BCPSS high schools with similar demographics – Frederick Douglass High School and Patterson High School – administered short-term out-of-school suspensions at the divergent rates of **7.2%** and **27.5%**, respectively.³

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS FREQUENTLY GIVEN FOR NON-SERIOUS, NON-VIOLENT OFFENSES

- In the 2006-2007 school year, Disrespect/Insubordination/Disruption was the **#1** reason for suspension in Maryland, accounting for **37.2%** of out-of-school suspensions. Only **6.7%** of suspensions were issued for Dangerous Substances, Weapons, Arson/Fire/Explosives, and Sex Offenses.
- Likewise, in Baltimore City during that period, Disrespect/Insubordination/Disruption was the **#1** reason for suspension, accounting for **32.9%** of out-of-school suspensions. More suspensions were issued for Attendance Reasons (i.e., tardiness and truancy) than for Dangerous Substances, Weapons, Arson/Fire/Explosives, and Sex Offenses combined.

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS SUSPENDED AT HIGHER RATES

- In the 2006-2007 school year, African American students comprised **38.1%** of the student population in Maryland, but accounted for **60.6%** of the students suspended, while white students made up **47.8%** of the population, but accounted for **31.4%** of suspensions statewide.
- In Baltimore City in 2006-2007, African Americans comprised **89.0%** of the student population, but accounted for **93.8%** of suspensions. White students comprised **7.9%** of the population, but made up only **4.8%** of suspensions.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SUSPENDED AT HIGHER RATES

- In 2006-2007, **12.5%** of Maryland students had disabilities, while **20.0%** of suspended students had disabilities.
- In that same year, students with disabilities comprised **16.9%** of the BCPSS student population, while accounting for **25.7%** of suspended students.

PRE K AND ELEMENTARY STUDENTS ALSO SUSPENDED

- In 2006-2007, **10,197 elementary school students** in Maryland were given out-of-school suspensions, including **784 kindergartners**, **1,087 first-graders**, and **1,338 second-graders**. In addition, **77 prekindergartners** were given out-of-school suspensions.
- During that period, BCPSS suspended **1,592 elementary school students** and **13 prekindergartners**.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all data from: Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Accountability and Assessment. Suspensions, Expulsions, and Health Related Exclusions, Maryland Public Schools, 2006-2007. December 2007; and MSDE Division of Accountability and Assessment. Maryland Public School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Gender and Number of Schools. September 2006. Accessed at www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/divisions/planningresultstest/2005-2006+student+publications.htm.

² Source: Presentation by Dr. Andres Alonso, Baltimore City Public School System. September 25, 2007.

³ Source: Baltimore City Public School System.

Note: In 2006-2007, MSDE began collecting and publishing data on in-school suspensions; however, the data cited in this document refer to out-of-school suspensions only. For data on in-school suspension rates, see MDSE, supra note 1.