



**BALTIMORE CITY**  

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**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Informational Hearing on School Safety &  
Youth Violence**

**Baltimore City Council  
Education, Workforce and Youth Committee**

**August 25, 2022**

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises  
Chief Executive Officer, Baltimore City Public Schools



The New York Times

# More Pandemic Fallout: The Chronically Absent Student

By Jacey Fortin

Published April 20, 2022 Updated July 18, 2022

NEA News

# Mental Health in Schools: The Kids Are Not All Right

neaToday

By: Mary Ellen Flannery, Senior Writer

Published: 07/20/2022

# Stress and short tempers: Schools struggle with behavior as students return

By Kaly Belsha | Sept 27, 2021, 5:00am EDT

Chalkbeat

# Advocates fear suspensions could add to pandemic pain for vulnerable students

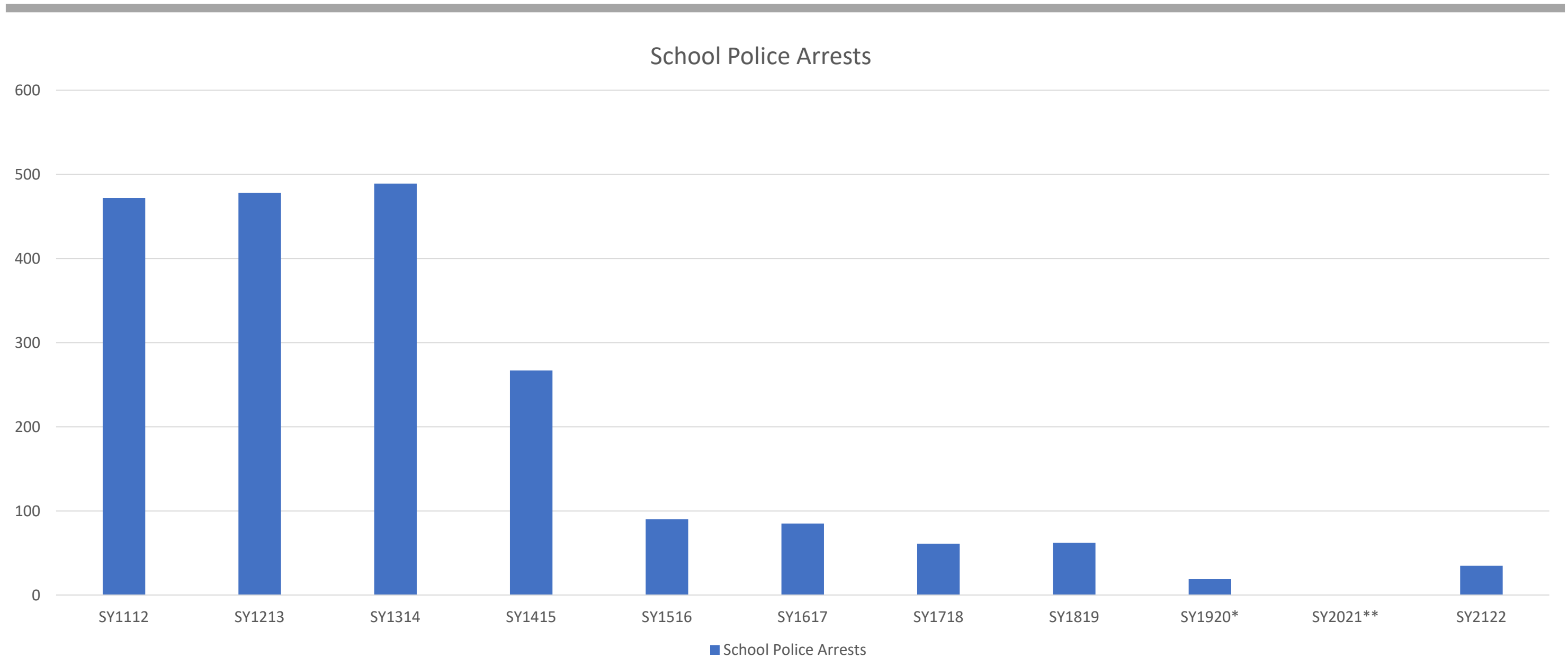
Administrators say they're navigating difficult choices about school safety and student discipline in a year when children are reeling and acting out.

 NEWS

Jan. 2, 2022, 9:01 AM EST / Updated Jan. 3, 2022, 1:09 PM EST

By Erin Einhorn

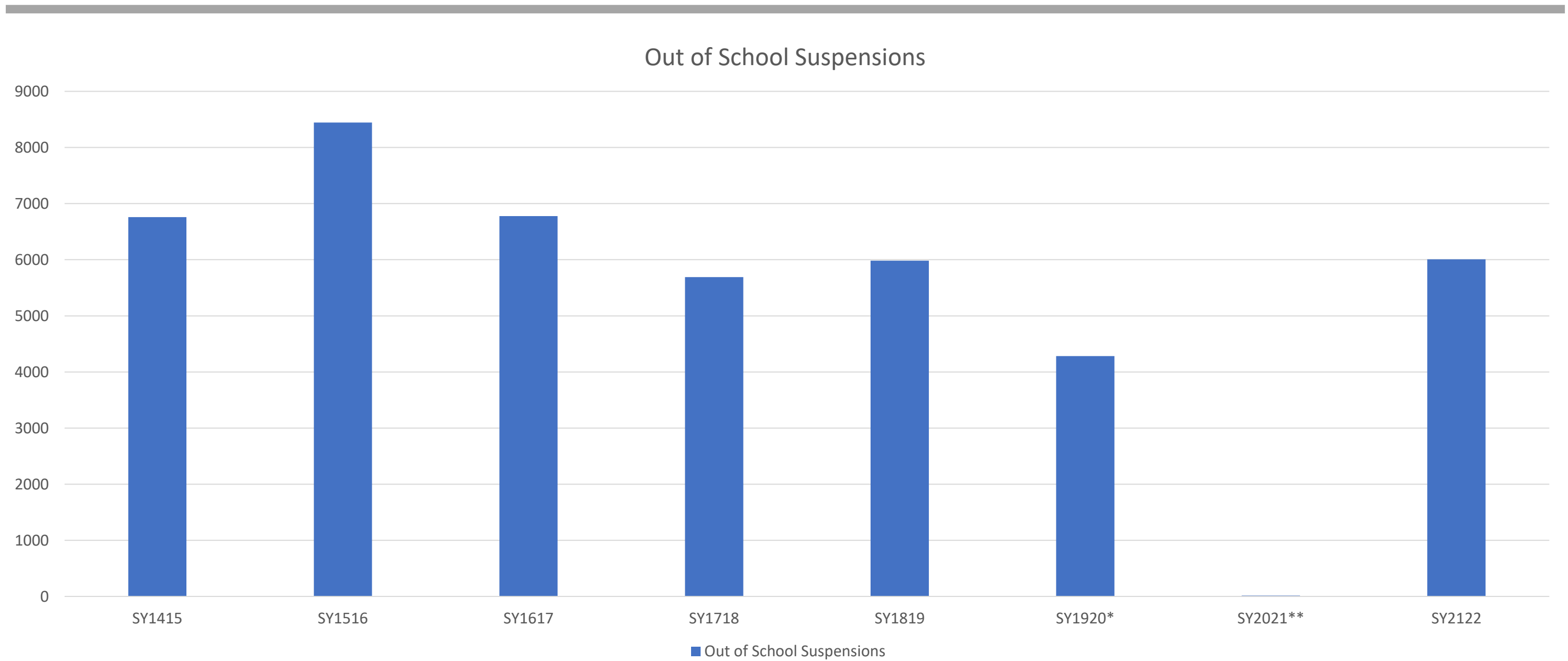
# Arrest Data



\*SY1920 was 1/3 virtual due to COVID in March 2020

\*\*SY2021 was completely virtual

# Suspension Data



\*SY1920 was 2/3 in-person due to COVID in March 2020

\*\*SY2021 was completely virtual

# Additional Information

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Long term suspensions (4-10 days) and extended suspensions (up to 44 days) increased by 20%, mostly due to controlled substance suspensions.

Student Survey Data - 56% of students responded that they feel safe.

"Wishing bullying isn't that big of an issue."

"Actually doing something about things that happen."

# Proactive Work – School Culture and Climate

Begins and ends with relationship building:

- Professional development for school leaders and teachers for the past three years
- Resources/activities to promote relationship building; many of them aligned with circle discussions and restorative practices

Consistent and predictable schoolwide routines and classroom procedures is also a focus this year.



# Proactive Work – School Culture and Climate

Summer Institute for teachers focused on:

- Relationship building
- Restorative practices
- The social discipline window - knowing when to use the appropriate discipline approach “to” someone, “for” someone, “neglect” someone or “with” someone
- Using affective statements ("I feel.....")
- Understanding the relationships between trauma, healing and relationship building



# Proactive Work – School Culture and Climate



## Advisory and Morning Meeting

- SEL practices: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision making
- Restorative practices
- College and Career Readiness

## Anti-bullying

- October is anti-bullying month with highlighted activities for anti-bullying and positive relationship building
- Training everyone around bullying and harassment laws and policies



# Proactive Work – School Culture and Climate

## Extracurriculars and Athletics

- Increasing expectations and support regarding extracurricular offerings
- Additional MS sports this year: boys and girls cross country, boys and girls soccer, girls volleyball, along with clinics in lacrosse, baseball and softball

"In sports you can talk with coaches to get help from them and sports is about helping your team and to do that you have to show leadership."

"This applies to athletics, but an actual soccer team would be very fun for a lot of kids in my grade and definitely other grades in the future."

# Proactive Work – Mental Health Supports

## Student Wellness Support Teams

- Related service providers, counselors, wholeness specialists and school behavior health clinicians are all members of the individual school teams
- Launched last year (85% of schools) and will strengthen this year
- Goal is that all students know where to go when seeking support for themselves and their peers



# Proactive Work – Mental Health Supports

Always working to expand our mental health supports:

- Still a national shortage
- Added two partners to our Expanded School Behavior Health Supports for a total of 7 partners in 131 schools



# Proactive Work – Facilities

## Layered Security Approach

- Exploring Weapons Detection System, which is advanced weapons screening that can identify threat objects without requiring students, staff, and visitors to stop, empty pockets, and remove and open their bags.
- Modernizing exterior doors through replacement as needed, upgrading door hardware with delayed release or audible alarms and adding security cameras at egress doors and blind spots.
- Security professionals are conducting a risk assessment at our high schools to determine how to strategically and systematically address our biggest risks and vulnerabilities by looking at what to address first and gaps we may overlook.





# Proactive Work – Central Office Support

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## Central Mediation

- Responding to requests from school leaders, we have central office personnel that mediate very tense situations away from school grounds at central office, especially in large group situations.
- Overwhelmingly positive response from schools.
- 148 mediation conferences and 439 students served.

## Code of Conduct

- Based on feedback this summer from HS principals, we are clarifying the use of the code of conduct in specific discipline situations, specifically large group fights and when students let other people into the building.

# Proactive Work – School Police

## Community Engagement

- National Night Out
- Last Friday at Moravia Park and this week at Weinberg Housing and Resource Center

## Body Worn Cameras

- Pilot this year on the road to full implementation by 2025

## Relationship Building and Trainings

- Quality, Connected Relationships; mindfulness & self-de-escalation and restorative practices.
- History of segregation in Baltimore; implicit bias training.

**Emphasizing the diversion process instead of arrests for low-level offences.**



# Proactive Work – Violence Interruption Program

Violence Interruption Program – City Schools working with Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement:

- Early stages of this partnership
- Funding to place Violence Interrupters in a small set of high schools
- Violence interrupters are community-based personnel in schools that support and mentor students to prevent conflicts from erupting into violence



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