

School or the Streets: Crime and New York's Dropout Crisis



A brief from FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS NEW YORK

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS NEW YORK is a bipartisan anti-crime organization made up of almost 250 law enforcement leaders and crime survivors statewide. Its sheriffs, police chiefs, prosecutors and crime victims promote greater public investments in programs proven to direct kids to a better path in life, leading them away from crime and towards success.

New York faces a dropout crisis that poses a significant threat to public safety. Statewide, more than three out of ten high school students fail to graduate from high school on time.

High school dropouts are more likely to turn to crime

High school dropouts are three and one-half times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested, and more than eight times as likely to be incarcerated. Throughout the country, 68 percent of state prison inmates have not received a high school diploma.

According to researchers, a 10 percentage-point increase in graduation rates has historically been shown to reduce murder and assault rates by approximately 20 percent. Increasing graduation rates by 10 percentage points from the estimated state average of 67 to 77 percent would yield 26,000 additional graduates annually and prevent 180 murders and 9,100 aggravated assaults in New York each year.

Increasing Graduation Rates Cuts Murders and Assaults
Annual impact if high school graduation rates increased 10 percentage points

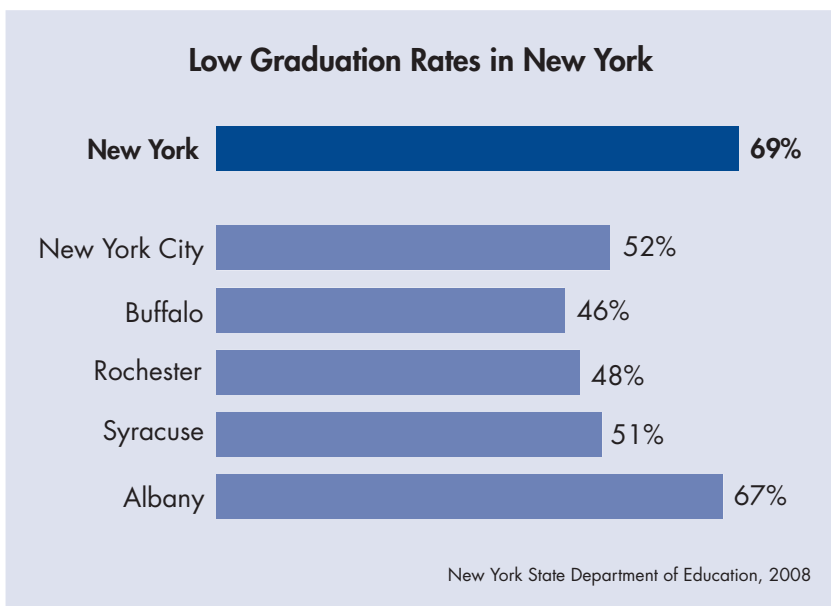
	Murders Prevented	Aggravated Assaults Prevented
New York	180	9,100
New York City	108	5,590
Buffalo	11	410
Rochester	11	159
Syracuse	4	185
Albany	2	150

Lochner & Moretti, 2004
FBI Uniform Crime Report, 2007

High-quality pre-kindergarten is proven to increase graduation rates and cut crime

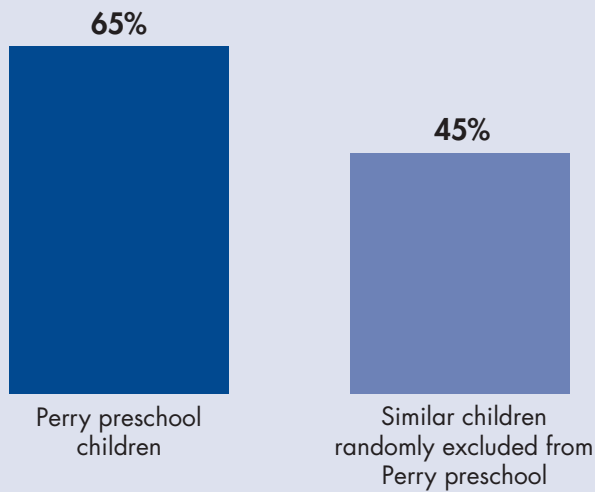
Many efforts are underway in New York to increase graduation rates, but the most tested and most widely adopted school reform shown to greatly increase graduation rates is high-quality pre-kindergarten. The Perry Preschool program followed at-risk three and four-year-old children through age 40. Children enrolled in the program were 44 percent more likely to graduate from high school than similar children not in the program. A separate analysis concluded that the Perry Preschool Program would yield 19 extra high school graduates for every 100 students provided the intervention.

Another program, Chicago's federally-funded Child-Parent Centers have served over 100,000 three- and four-year-olds since 1967. Researchers found that Child-



Quality Preschool Increases Graduation Rates

Percent of children who have graduated from high school by age 40



Schweinhart, et al, 2005

Parent Center children were 29 percent more likely to graduate from high school than similar children not enrolled in the program. A separate analysis concluded that this program yields 11 extra high school graduates for every 100 students provided the intervention.

Law enforcement leaders have long known about the impressive crime-prevention benefits of high-quality pre-kindergarten. By age 27, at-risk three- and four-year-olds left out of the Perry Preschool program were five times more likely to be chronic lawbreakers than similar children who attended the program. And youngsters left out of Chicago Child-Parent Centers were 70 percent more likely than program participants to have been arrested for a violent crime by age 18.

Cutting dropouts saves lives and money

New York's dropout crisis not only threatens public safety, it also damages New York's economy. Dropouts earn less, pay fewer taxes, and are more

likely to collect welfare and turn to a life of crime. If New York could raise male graduation rates by 10 percent, the state would save approximately \$913 million dollars every year, including almost \$573 million in reduced crime costs alone.

Increased investments in early education are needed

Of particular concern are school districts that are not yet using their allocated funding, due to a variety of concerns. Each school district in the state now has the opportunity to operate a pre-k program. But under current law the state's Universal Prekindergarten Program (UPK) funding can't be used on full-day programs or other needs. While a few new programs are being added this year, many school districts have not yet applied for available funding for their preschoolers. Statewide, funding for Head Start -- the nation's premier pre-kindergarten program for poor kids -- is sufficient to serve only 42 percent of all eligible children.

High quality is essential to achieving the crime prevention benefits of preschool. Efforts are now underway in New York state to improve the quality of the programs through a voluntary quality rating system called QualityStarsNY that will help provide uniformity, accountability and improved outcomes. This effort should be supported.

Law enforcement leaders and crime victims are united

The almost 250 members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *NEW YORK* are convinced that to cut violent crime and to save lives and money, New York should invest far more in high-quality early education programs. Too much is at stake, including the safety of all those living in New York State.

To download the full report, go to our website at <http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/fcik-dropout-ny.pdf>

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Source citation and other research are available at www.fightcrime.org/ny.

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