

Making the Connection: Youth Violence and Academic Grades

Data from the 2015 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) show that students with higher academic grades are less likely than their peers with lower grades to experience some forms of violence like fighting. It is important to remember that these associations do not prove causation. School health professionals, school officials, and other decision makers can use this information to better understand the associations between grades and violence, as well as to emphasize the importance of violence prevention.

Key findings

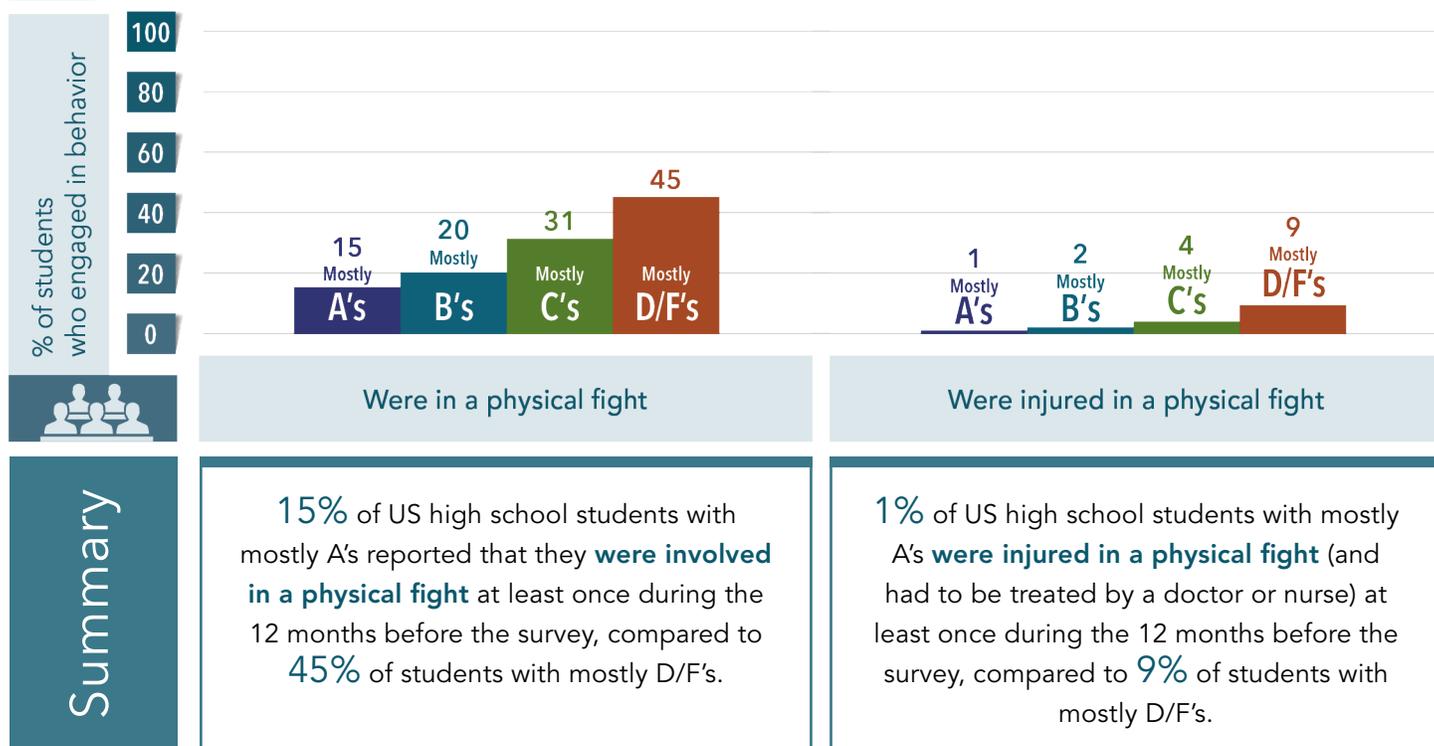
Compared to students with lower grades, **students with higher grades are**

less likely to:

- Be in a physical fight.
- Be injured in a physical fight.
- Be in a physical fight on school grounds or property.
- Skip school because they feel unsafe either at school or on their way to or from school.

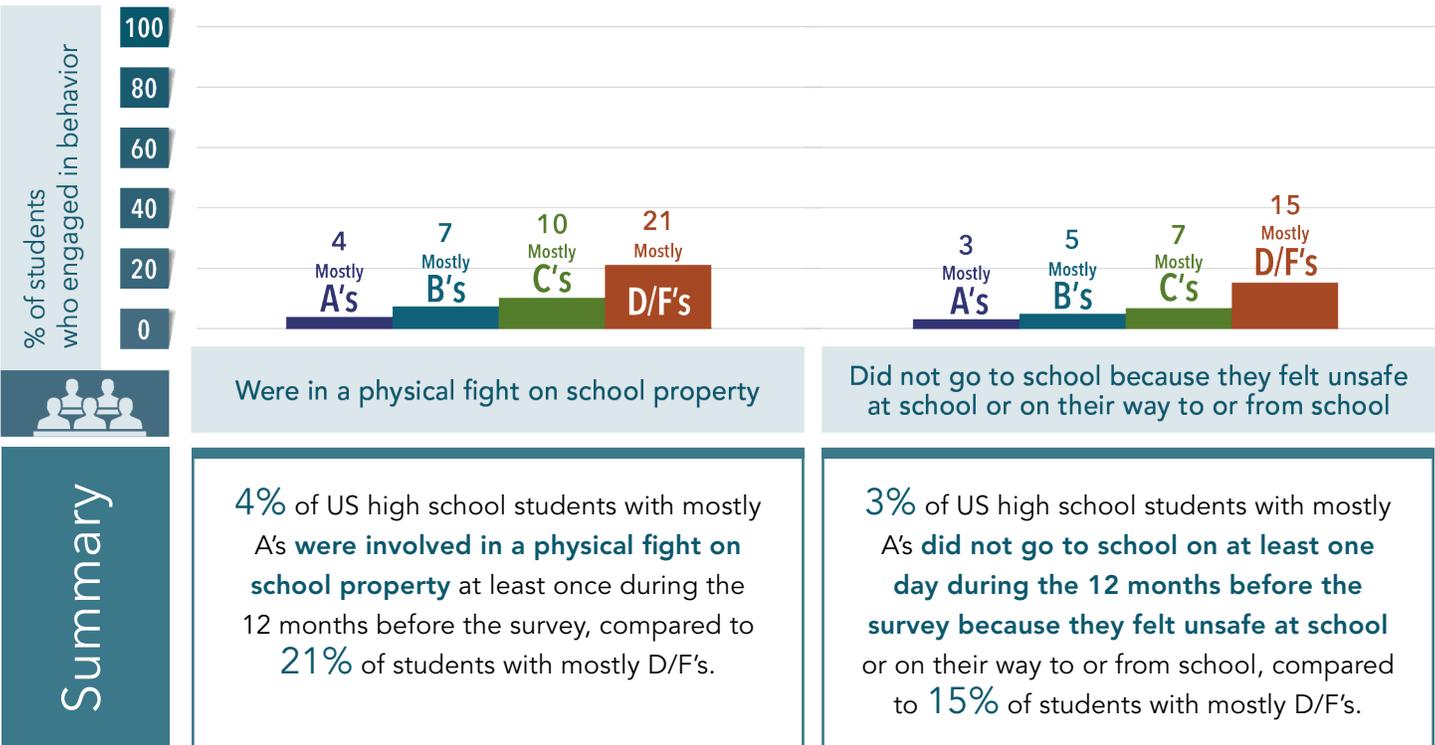
FIGURE 1A

Youth Violence Behaviors, by type of academic grades earned
- United States, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015



*Figure 1^A and Figure 1^B illustrate the percentage of students who engaged in each risk behavior, by type of grades mostly earned in school (mostly A's, B's, C's, D's/F's) (row proportions). The percentage of students who did not engage in each risk behavior are not shown. However, the percentages of students who did and did not engage in each risk behavior, by type of grades mostly earned in school, sum to 100%. Logistic regression analyses (not shown) controlling for sex, race/ethnicity, and grade in school confirmed a significant association between youth violence and academic grades. You can also view data from other [2015 YRBS youth violence variables](#).

FIGURE 1B Youth Violence Behaviors, by type of academic grades earned
- United States, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015



Summary

4% of US high school students with mostly A's were involved in a physical fight on school property at least once during the 12 months before the survey, compared to 21% of students with mostly D/F's.

3% of US high school students with mostly A's did not go to school on at least one day during the 12 months before the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school, compared to 15% of students with mostly D/F's.

Conclusions

These results from the YRBS provide evidence of a significant association between academic grades and youth violence. Further research is warranted to determine whether higher grades in school lead to less risk of violence, if less violence leads to higher grades, or some other factors lead to these behaviors.

There is a close relationship between health and education. By working together, education and health agencies, parents, and communities can ensure that students are healthy and ready to learn in school. To help inform decisions about youth violence prevention strategies, please see CDC's resource, [A Comprehensive Technical Package for the Prevention of Youth Violence and Associated Risk Behaviors](#).

About the Data

The National YRBS monitors priority health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. It is conducted every 2 years during the spring and provides data representative of 9th through 12th grade students in public and private schools throughout the nation. In 2015, students completing the YRBS were asked, "During the past 12 months, how would you describe your grades in school?" and given seven response options (Mostly A's, Mostly B's, Mostly C's, Mostly D's, Mostly F's, None of these grades, Not sure). In 2015, 32% of students received mostly A's, 38% received mostly B's, 20% received mostly C's, 6% received mostly D's or F's, and 4% reported receiving none of these grades or not sure.

For more information, visit the [CDC's Healthy Youth website](#), or call 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).



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