

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 10-0195R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers D’Adamo, Henry, Curran, Kraft, Holton, Middleton, Branch,
Spector, Clarke, Stokes, Reisinger, Welch
Introduced and read first time: March 8, 2010
Assigned to: Education Committee

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Response to the Closure of 13 Catholic Schools**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting His Excellency, Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien to report to the
4 Council on the benefits to taxpayers of tax exemptions granted to the Archdiocese and its
5 related entities, to make a commitment to make the buildings of those schools slated for
6 closing available to non-profit groups, and to retain the principals and faculties of closing
7 schools to provide educational services to schools that are developed to serve the needs of
8 displaced children; and requesting Dr. Andres Alonso, CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools
9 to report on the process necessary to convert the closing Catholic schools into public charter
10 schools.

11 **WHEREAS**, The expected closing of 13 Catholic Schools by the Archdiocese of Baltimore
12 will have a devastating impact on working families and neighborhoods that have relied on those
13 schools to attend to their educational, social, and spiritual needs; and

14 **WHEREAS**, The Archdiocese of Baltimore obtained a court decision in the 2001 case of
15 *Supervisor of Assessments v. Keeler* that exempted the church from property tax on buildings
16 and land, even if that land is not used for religious and charitable purposes; and

17 **WHEREAS**, The taxpayers of Baltimore will have to provide police and fire protection and
18 other services to vacant Catholic school buildings without obtaining any charitable or religious
19 benefits from those buildings; and

20 **WHEREAS**, The CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools served on the Blue Ribbon
21 committee that assessed citywide educational needs and capacity in order to determine which
22 schools should be closed and has particular knowledge regarding the educational needs of
23 Baltimore’s children; and

24 **WHEREAS**, Other cities have successfully converted closed Catholic schools into successful
25 public charter schools, and Dr. Alonso is best able to explain the process for Baltimore’s closing
26 schools to similarly be successfully converted into public charter schools.

27 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, That His
28 Excellency, Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien is invited to report to the Council on the benefits to
29 taxpayers of tax exemptions granted to the Archdiocese and its related entities, to make a
30 commitment to make the buildings of those schools slated for closing available to non-profit

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 groups, and to retain the principals and faculties of closing schools to provide educational
2 services to schools that are developed to serve the needs of displaced children; and Dr. Andres
3 Alonso, CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools is requested to report on the process necessary to
4 convert the closing Catholic schools into public charter schools.

5 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Archdiocese and its related entities are requested
6 to make the school buildings slated for closing available for 5 years, at a cost of \$1 a year, to any
7 non-profit group that wishes to operate a charter school on the premises.

8 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Archdiocese is urged to make every effort to retain
9 principals and faculties of the schools slated for closing so that any non-profit group wishing to
10 operate a charter school may continue to provide an excellent education to the children who have
11 relied on Catholic schools for a quality education.

12 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor;
13 Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien; the CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools; the Mayor's Legislative
14 Liaison to the City Council; and the Parent-Teacher organizations affiliated with the following
15 schools:

- 16 • Ascension School
- 17
- 18 • St. Bernardine Catholic School
- 19 • Fr. Charles Hall Catholic School (elementary and middle schools)
- 20 • St. Clare School
- 21 • Holy Family School
- 22 • St. Katharine School, Queen of Peace Cluster
- 23 • Mother Mary Lange Catholic School
- 24 • Our Lady of Fatima School
- 25 • St. Rose of Lima School
- 26 • Sacred Heart of Mary School
- 27 • Shrine of the Sacred Heart School
- 28 • St. William of York School
- 29 • The Cardinal Gibbons School