

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 12-0072R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Henry, Stokes, Mosby, President Young, Councilmembers
Holton, Scott, Middleton, Welch, Clarke, Curran, Kraft, Branch, Cole, Spector

Introduced and read first time: October 22, 2012

Assigned to: Education and Youth Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Baltimore City Public School System

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing - Baltimore City Public Charter Schools**

3 FOR the purpose of calling on representatives of the Baltimore City Public School System, public
4 charter school operators, and other stakeholders to report to the City Council on the current
5 status of the City's public charter schools, and to discuss their accomplishments and their
6 challenges, particularly in regards to the per-pupil funding formula and addressing the on-
7 going capital needs of those public charter schools housed in privately-owned buildings.

8 **Recitals**

9 Baltimore's school system has made great strides in recent years towards providing every
10 child in Baltimore City with the best possible education. Although there is still far to go, one of
11 the positive changes has been the flexibility provided by public charter schools to apply new and
12 different approaches to education that may better meet the needs of some students. Since the
13 passage of the Maryland Charter School Law of 2003, public charter schools have grown and
14 flourished – particularly in Baltimore, which boasts the majority of charters in the state.

15 A cornerstone of the theory behind public charter schools is that different approaches to
16 education may work best with different students. For the most part, public charters reject a one-
17 size-fits-all approach to education, an attitude which has benefited their students. While still part
18 of the overall network of public schools in Baltimore City, public charters are privately run by
19 nonprofits. They enjoy more autonomy than traditional schools but are held to a higher measure
20 of accountability.

21 Public charter schools are mandated by law to receive funding commensurate with the
22 amount received by traditional public schools. As with BCPSS' Fair Student Funding (FSF)
23 Initiative, public charters are funded on a per-pupil basis, with the funds following the child to
24 the school. However, even though the per-pupil number is higher than the base FSF amount for
25 non-charter schools, public charter schools receive no separate capital or facilities funding, which
26 forces charter schools that reside in non-City owned buildings to pay all of their facilities costs –
27 heat, light, maintenance, and rent/any debt service on capital improvements – out of their
28 operating budgets. For other public schools, these costs are addressed by central administration,
29 not by the individual schools out of their FSF allowance.

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

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1 The state of school facilities in Baltimore City is well known to be unacceptable, and school
2 advocates are joining together to fight for increased funding from the state to address this
3 enormous issue. At the same time, privately owned charter schools must necessarily get more
4 and more creative in finding funding sources for their facilities needs. A lack of consistency and
5 predictability in future per-pupil funding – while difficult and frustrating for BCPSS and non-
6 charters – can result in a crippling disconnect between operational needs and capital planning.

7 As the city begins to tackle the state of its schools' facilities, measures should be taken to
8 ensure that, moving forward, charter schools also have access to funding for building costs, so
9 that they aren't forced to utilize money that should be spent on programming.

10 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
11 Council calls on representatives of the Baltimore City Public School System, public charter
12 school operators, and other stakeholders to report to the City Council on the current status of the
13 City's public charter schools, and to discuss their accomplishments and their challenges,
14 particularly in regards to the per-pupil funding formula and addressing the on-going capital needs
15 of those public charter schools housed in privately-owned buildings.

16 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the CEO of the
17 Baltimore City Public School System, the Coalition of Baltimore Charter Schools, and the
18 Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.