

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Cheryl A. Casciani
*Chair, Baltimore City Board of
School Commissioners*

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises
Chief Executive Officer

Letter of Information
**Baltimore City Council Resolution 18-0087R –
Evening and Weekend High School Apprenticeship Programs**

June 21, 2018

As drafted, Council Resolution 18-0087R seeks to explore the possibility of evening and weekend apprenticeship programs at Carver Vocational-Technical High and Mergenthaler Vocational-Technical Senior High School. City Schools is pleased to provide the following context, which we hope will be helpful to informing the Council's discussion of this important topic.

City Schools is committed to graduating students who are ready for the next steps toward college and career and, as such, recognizes the importance of providing Baltimore's young people with high-quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) options. In a CTE pathway, students take rigorous academic courses while participating in work-based learning opportunities, including job shadowing, mentoring with industry professionals or internships. After successful completion of a CTE program, students can graduate from high school with industry certification or college credit – ultimately leading them toward an in-demand, well-paid career.

More than 20 City Schools middle and high schools offer state-approved CTE. As of 2017, there were 9,514 high school students enrolled in City Schools CTE programs. The two most popular career clusters include Information Technology (1,828 students) and Health and Biosciences (1,402 students). The lowest enrolled clusters include Construction and Development (390 students) and Transportation Technologies (293 students). Currently, the District is working with a national, outside expert in education strategies to conduct an expansive review that will analyze the intersection of current City Schools CTE program offerings, labor market needs, and the career readiness of CTE graduates.

In addition to CTE programming, Baltimore's Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECH) represents another important area of focus for City Schools. P-TECH assists students with preparing for college rigor by allowing them to earn their first college credits at no cost through the public education system. This means not only having the opportunity to have earned both a high school diploma and BCCC associates degree upon graduation, but also to be first in line for employment opportunities with the program's industry partners, which currently include Johns Hopkins University and Health System, University of Maryland-Baltimore, Kaiser Permanente, and IBM. Presently, City Schools students from Paul Laurence Dunbar High School and Carver Vocational-Technical High School participate in the P-TECH program, with an expansion planned for next year to New Era Academy High School.

Yet, despite our commitment to providing students with these types of hands-on experiences, funding restraints and staffing challenges continue to prevent us from conducting our daytime programming options in ways that we believe would best meet the needs of our students. It has been well-documented that City Schools are not being adequately funded under the state's current education funding formula. An analysis conducted by the state's Department of Legislative Services found that

City Schools should be receiving an additional \$290M per year under the current Thornton formula. Similarly, a state-commissioned report indicates the district needs an additional \$358M annually in order to ensure adequacy for the city's students.

In conferring with our partners at Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) who also serve as our sponsor under the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), several concerns were raised with regards to the proposed resolution. Per these conversations, City Schools anticipates significant infrastructure costs that would be incurred as a result of opening vocational schools in the evenings and weekends. In addition to paying teachers, the district would have to ensure the presence of custodial staff and school police, as well as lead teachers or principals who would need to be on-site during operating hours. What's more, given the substantial strain that would be placed on our Career and Technology Office as a result of coordinating these efforts with the schools (i.e., overseeing purchasing, training providers, handling recruitment, managing contracts, etc.) additional FTEs would have to be established at the district level. This is not to mention the costs related to books, supplies, and testing materials, as well as the potential costs related to the wear and tear on equipment – including equipment repair – as well as electricity and utility costs.

As noted previously, the proposed resolution would also lead to serious staffing challenges. Similar to other jurisdictions, the District often struggles even now with staffing daytime positions in our Career and Technology fields, as many instructors have side businesses or other obligations. In fact, the current challenges with securing qualified instructors and the subsequent vacancies have put existing programs at risk in recent years. It should also be noted that when Mergenthaler attempted a similar evening and weekend endeavor several years ago, they were unsuccessful because they were unable to secure an instructor.

In summary, while we appreciate the intent and spirit of Council Resolution 18-0087R, City Schools is simply not in a position to spearhead evening and weekend apprenticeship programming at this time. It should be noted, however, that we are exploring the possibility of developing a pilot program to be housed out of our Re-Engagement Center at North Avenue whereby evening courses would be offered to high school students in need of basic graduation requirements in order to obtain their diploma. Again, given existing funding challenges, it is more appropriate for the district to focus on offering basic graduation requirements at this time rather than more expensive, less mainstream CTE Courses.

Finally, the Council should be advised that several nonprofit providers of apprenticeship programming currently exist in the Baltimore area and do provide evening and weekend classes. Programs such as the Jane Addams Resource Corporation in Park Heights as well as Project JumpStart, with locations in East and West Baltimore, are two to name a few. The Mayor's Office of Employment Development would be best suited to provide the Council with a comprehensive list. Additionally, beyond nonprofit providers, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) announced earlier this month a new Youth Apprenticeship Agreement: Apprenticeship Maryland. Given this recent development, City Schools looks forward to exploring this potential, emerging opportunity and would encourage the Baltimore City Council to do the same.

We greatly appreciate the Education and Youth Committee's attention to this important issue and respectfully urge the Council's consideration of City Schools' concerns regarding Resolution 18-0087R.

For additional information, please contact City Schools Government Affairs:

Melissa Broome
Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs
MCBroome@bcps.k12.md.us
(443) 525-3038

Dawana Sterrette
Director of Legislative and Government Affairs
DSterrette@bcps.k12.md.us
(443) 250-0190