

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 06-0205R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Mitchell, Young, Holton, Curran, Kraft, Conaway, Clarke,
Welch, Reisinger

Introduced and read first time: August 14, 2006

Assigned to: Committee of the Whole

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners,
Baltimore City Public School System

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Request for State Legislation – Baltimore City Public Schools – Ending the City-State**
3 **Partnership**

4 FOR the purpose of requesting the Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore City Senate
5 and House Delegations to the 2007 Session of the Maryland General Assembly to introduce
6 legislation to dissolve the City-State partnership established in 1997, and to return direct
7 control of the Baltimore City Pubic School System to the Mayor and City Council of
8 Baltimore.

9 **Recitals**

10 The City-State public school partnership was established in 1997 by Chapter 105, Laws of
11 Maryland 1997. The partnership was part of an aggressive effort to reform the Baltimore City
12 Public School System and help provide a more adequately funded system and a higher level of
13 education for students in Baltimore City. Chapter 105 dismissed the existing BCPSS
14 management structure and removed the school system from under the auspices of Baltimore
15 City. Chapter 105 reorganized the management of the school system into a 9-member board of
16 commissioners, selected jointly by the Mayor and the Governor, a Chief Executive Officer, a
17 Chief Academic Officer, a Chief Operating Officer, and a Community Advisory Board. Chapter
18 105 also gave the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent the power to approve or
19 disapprove new school construction and spending.

20 The goal of this partnership was to establish a new relationship between the City of
21 Baltimore and the State of Maryland in order to improve the quality of public education in
22 Baltimore City and to encourage more efficient use of the resources offered through the State,
23 Baltimore City, and the Board of School Commissioners. When this legislation was passed, it
24 was designed to help raise the level of academic achievement of the students and to improve
25 management and administration within the Baltimore City Public School System through
26 increased funding. Unfortunately, these goals were never reached. Our students' education is
27 still underfunded, and a lack of timely reporting, as well as the lack of anticipation of future
28 deficits has made the BCPSS worse off now than it ever was before.

29 Something needs to be done to aid our students in their educational endeavors and to provide
30 fiscal accountability for school officials. The goal of Chapter 105 was to create a situation

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

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1 where local elected officials could be kept informed about the ongoing issues within the public
2 school system. Not only has this not happened, but Chapter 105 has removed the members of
3 the local government from the process entirely. Despite the fact that it was meant to provide for
4 local officials inclusion, it has alienated the elected officials who are nearest the problem. Those
5 who see and deal with the issues of education have had their hands tied and are unable to provide
6 appropriate measures to secure the educational standards that their constituents expect and
7 deserve.

8 The main issue with the measures imposed by Chapter 105 is the lack of accountability.
9 There are simply too many people in charge and too many opinions being considered to ensure
10 fiscal or educational responsibility. The new proposed legislation should not simply return
11 direct control of the school system to the Mayor and City Council, but should provide for a City
12 Education “Czar” who would be appointed by the Mayor and held accountable for the affairs of
13 the BCPSS. This “Czar” would be able to provide more focused and detailed reports on ongoing
14 school system changes to the Mayor and City Council, and would be responsible for overseeing
15 the reporting of anticipated fiscal changes as well as changes in the BCPSS curriculum on a
16 more regular basis.

17 It is time that we brought the responsibility back to where it belongs. The BCPSS needs to
18 be placed in the hands of the members of the community that are willing and able to work locally
19 to provide adequate educational facilities as well as increase the efficiency of the system, raise
20 graduation rates, and provide a better, well rounded education for students of all ages in the City
21 of Baltimore.

22 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this
23 Body the Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to
24 the 2007 Session of the Maryland General Assembly to introduce legislation to dissolve the City-
25 State partnership established in 1997, and to return direct control of the Baltimore City Pubic
26 School System to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore.

27 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
28 Governor, The Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House
29 Delegations to the 2007 Session of the Maryland General Assembly, Members of the Baltimore
30 City Board of School Commissioners, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the Council.