

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 06-0181R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Harris, D'Adamo, Kraft, Curran, Young, Holton, Conaway,
Reisinger, Mitchell, Clarke, President Dixon, Councilmembers Rawlings Blake, Welch
Introduced and adopted: May 15, 2006

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

1 Informational Hearing – Graduation Rates – Baltimore City Public Schools

2 FOR the purpose of requesting the CEO of the Baltimore City Public Schools to address the City
3 Council on graduation rates in public schools; to present an analysis of graduation rates by
4 gender and national origin; to discuss the applicability of the Manhattan Institute report
5 “Leaving Boys Behind: Public High School Graduation Rates” to the Baltimore City Public
6 School System; and to discuss any existing programs to target specific populations to prevent
7 drop-outs and to ensure graduation.

8 Recitals

9 “Leaving Boys Behind: Public High School Graduation Rates”, a report recently released by
10 the Manhattan Institute, finds that nationwide about 72% of girls in the high school class of 2003
11 – but only 65% of boys – earned diplomas and that the gender gap that is far more pronounced
12 among minorities. While 59% of African American girls graduated, only 48% of African
13 American boys graduated, and among Hispanics, 58% of the girls graduated compared to only
14 49% of the boys.

15 Suspecting that official school graduation rates were misleading, the authors of the report
16 compiled graduation data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia and tracked the school
17 populations of the 100 largest school districts in the country from the 9th grade through the 12th
18 grade. Baltimore ranked 91st, with an overall graduation rate of 48%, in 2003.

19 According to the study, black females in Baltimore graduated at a rate high than white
20 females, at 58% compared to 43%. And although the general perception is that black males are
21 the least likely to finish high school, the study found that both black males and white males had a
22 troubling graduation rate of only 39%, in 2003.

23 The information in the Manhattan Institute report differs drastically from the statistics
24 reported by the Maryland State Department of Education. The State reports that the graduation
25 rate for Baltimore was 54%, in 2003. It also shows that the graduation rate for black females
26 that year was 62%, with white females graduating at a 52% rate, white males at a 49% rate, and
27 black males at a 45% rate.

28 The author of the report, a senior fellow at the Institute, suggests that graduation rates
29 reported by local districts might be higher than those in the report because local districts might
30 include pupils who receive GEDs in their graduation statistics, while the Institute does not, and
31 because schools do not keep track of students who transfer. A large percentage of those students
32 are reported as transfers when they are, in fact, drop outs.

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

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1 The reality of the situation is that not enough of our students graduate and not enough of our
2 adults are equipped to enter the job force or sustain a decent standard of living. Although the
3 City is making strides in economic development, we are not making strides in the social and
4 educational development of many of our citizens.

5 In Baltimore, nearly 1/3rd of City adults do not have a high school diploma or a GED.
6 Because, on average, almost 1/2 of public high-school students drop out before reaching the 12th
7 grade, their job prospects are limited. There are 200,000 residents 16 and older who do not have
8 jobs, and 1/2 of Baltimore's adults are not working.

9 We cannot expect to continue Baltimore's revitalization unless we include everybody. When
10 one half of the City workforce has to support the other half, the rate at which we can evolve is
11 restricted. The limited tax base that has continued to be eroded in recent decades does not bode
12 well for the future of Baltimore.

13 When kids drop out of school they effectively drop out of life. We cannot let that happen –
14 in their best interest and in ours.

15 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the CEO
16 of the Baltimore City Public Schools is requested to address the City Council on graduation rates
17 in public schools; to present an analysis of graduation rates by gender and national origin; to
18 discuss the applicability of the Manhattan Institute report "Leaving Boys Behind: Public High
19 School Graduation Rates" to Baltimore City Public School System; and to discuss any existing
20 programs to target specific populations to prevent drop-outs and to ensure graduation.

21 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
22 CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools, the Chair and Members of the Baltimore City Board of
23 School Commissioners, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.