

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 06-0200R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: President Dixon, Councilmembers Young, Clarke, Reisinger, Welch, Holton,
Mitchell
Introduced and adopted: July 10, 2006

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

**Nonpartisan Search Committee to Appoint A
New CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools**

FOR the purpose of requesting the Board of School Commissioners to appoint an all inclusive, nonpartizan search committee that will tailor the search process to find a new CEO for the Baltimore City Public School System to the unique requisites of the community to ensure that candidates who are selected have the skills and experience necessary to meet the needs and priorities of the school system, students, parents, and community.

Recitals

“Urban School Superintendents: Characteristics, Tenure, and Salary Fifth Survey and Report”, Urban Indicator: June 2006, states that urban school superintendents hold one of the most important and challenging jobs in America’s education system. The Council of Great City Schools, the publisher of the report, represents the majority of large urban districts in the country – though there are approximately 17,000 school districts in the country, the Council’s 65 districts serve approximately 7.4 million of America’s 48.3 million k-12 students (15 %), and 30% of the nation’s students of color, low-income, and English language learners.

The Council reports that with such vast numbers of students – including the nation’s most vulnerable children – urban superintendents clearly face a set of challenges that are systemically different from those in the rest of the nation’s schools districts; are expected to make visible and rapid improvements in student achievement; are under more public scrutiny than ever; face a variety of challenges, such as political pressures and internal conflicts, that are often largely unrelated to teaching and learning; and are subject to historically short tenures that increased from an average of 2.8 years in 2003 to 3.1 years in 2006.

While the tenure of urban school superintendents may be precarious, *“Beating the Odds”*, a new annual survey of the same organization, found that urban school achievement in reading and mathematics on state-mandated tests continues to climb, accompanied by a parallel upward trend of big-city school districts that participated in NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) the more rigorous federal test. The study, released in March of this year, shows students in 66 major city school systems in 38 states posting new gains in 4th and 8th grade mathematics and reading on state assessments in 2005.

Baltimore City Public Schools are part of the trend of improving urban school districts. Data collected by the Council shows that Baltimore, among cities close in size and demography, ranks high in the percentage of African-American and low income students – variables that usually predict low student achievement. Nonetheless, on reading and math, the school system showed a

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

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1 more positive trend line than most similar cities, and, though exact comparisons are not possible,
2 had higher scores than most of its counterparts. The Great Cities study for 2004 also cited
3 Baltimore as one of only 7 cities where reading and math scores improved faster than average in
4 their respective states in all grades tested.

5 As reported by the local media, however, the bad news about city schools is all too familiar to
6 the various stakeholders in the development of a sound public school system. Many students are
7 far below grade standards, well-qualified teachers are in short supply, discipline problems and
8 dropout rates are high, and scarce funds cause excessive class sizes, rundown facilities, and lack
9 of academic interventions.

10 To be certain the next CEO is a “good fit” with our public school system and these
11 stakeholders it is important to involve as many of them in the selection process as possible. The
12 Nonpartizan Search Committee to Appoint A New CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools will
13 include representation from, but not limited to the following entities:

- 14 • Baltimore’s faith-based community.
- 15 • The Department of Juvenile Services
- 16 • Baltimore City Department of Social Services
- 17 • The Maryland Roundtable for Education
- 18 • ACORN
- 19 • BUILD
- 20 • The Abell Foundation
- 21 • The Greater Baltimore Committee
- 22 • The Chamber of Commerce
- 23 • ACLU
- 24 • Council of PTA’s
- 25 • The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- 26 • The Fund for Educational Excellence

27 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
28 Board of School Commissioners is requested to appoint an all inclusive, nonpartizan search
29 committee that will tailor the search process to find a new CEO for the Baltimore City Public
30 School System to the unique requisites of the community to ensure that candidates who are
31 selected have the skills and experience necessary to meet the needs and priorities of the school
32 system, students, parents, and community.

33 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
34 Acting CEO of Baltimore City Public School System, the Chair and Members of the Baltimore
35 City Board of School Commissioner, the CEO, Director, or Executive Director of the entities
36 asked to serve on the Nonpartizan Search Committee, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the
37 City Council.