

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 06-0212R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Harris, Curran, Kraft, Mitchell, Clarke, Welch
Introduced and adopted: September 18, 2006

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

Informational Hearing – Edison Schools, Inc.

1
2 FOR the purpose of requesting the Chief Education Officer of Edison Schools, Inc., and the
3 General Manager of Baltimore Edison Partnership Schools to address the City Council on the
4 reported drop in test scores in Furman L. Templeton Elementary, Gilmor Elementary, and
5 Montebello Elementary and to present evidence that rebuts those reports and supports the
6 company’s contention that student performance has improved in these schools under
7 Edison’s management.

Recitals

8
9 Edison Schools, Inc., founded in 1992, purports to be the nation’s leading public school
10 partner with schools and districts, focused on raising student achievement through its research-
11 based school design, uniquely aligned assessment systems, interactive professional development,
12 integrated use of technology, and other proven program features. The company claims that
13 Edison students are achieving annual academic gains well above national norms.

14 Contrary to these claims, recent articles published by the news media contend that scores in
15 the 3 subject elementary schools, taken over by the State 6 years ago and given to the
16 management of Edison, Inc., have fallen and that at least 1 might not meet federal No Child Left
17 Behind standards – scores at Furman L. Templeton and Gilmore elementaries dropped at least 10
18 percentage points in most grades, and scores for 5th- and 6th - graders at Montebello Elementary
19 also fell sharply. At Montebello fewer than 50% of the 5th graders passed the Maryland School
20 Assessment math test, compared with 71% last year, and only 54% passed reading. Because 3rd
21 and 4th graders did far better, Montebello is not in danger of being labeled a school that needs
22 improvement.

23 It was reported, however, that Furman L. Templeton and Gilmor fell below the citywide
24 average in nearly all grades in both math and reading. The 2 schools also ranked in the bottom
25 25 of the City’s 114 elementary schools according to an analysis done by the paper of the
26 Maryland School Assessment results. The analysis also showed that 62.7% of 3rd graders at
27 Gilmore passed the math test in 2005, but only 41% passed this year; 6th grade math scores
28 dropped from 53.2% passing to 30% passing. At Furman L. Templeton, scores dropped in 3rd,
29 4th, and 6th grades in both reading and math. In each grade, for both reading and math, the scores
30 of the 3 schools averaged together were about 20 percentage points below the statewide
31 averages.

32 Maryland Department of Education and Edison, Inc., officials refute these findings,
33 contending that since Edison began running the schools - then considered some of the worst in
34 the City - student performance has improved. Edison, Inc., representatives hold that school

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

Council Bill 06-0212R

1 improvement is a long process, and that in the 6 years since Edison has assumed control, the
2 culture of the schools is much better, and parents are pleased with the education their children
3 are getting.

4 A new study by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center of the American Institutes
5 of Research, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Elementary and
6 Secondary Education, rated Edison Schools the nation’s top Education Service Provider in a
7 study released April 24, 2006. In the study, designed to be a guide for consumers, Edison earned
8 the highest score possible in such important categories as the research of its design, professional
9 development and technical assistance, and readiness for successful implementation.

10 Edison earned its distinction after a study of Education Service Providers that operate in
11 approximately 350 schools nationwide and represent about 65 % of schools served by this new
12 industry. These providers contribute to the nation’s public school improvement efforts, running
13 charter schools that have failed to make adequate yearly progress under the federal government’s
14 tough accountability system, No Child Left Behind.

15 While Edison, Inc., came to Baltimore with impressive credentials and the empirical
16 evidence shows that their initiatives are universally successful in underperforming schools
17 nationwide, we cannot afford to assume that the company is the best fit for our elementary
18 schools. If, in fact, they are not able to perform their transformation in the Baltimore City public
19 school system, we need to urge the State to reconsider renewing their contract that expires next
20 June. Currently Edison reportedly has a \$21 million contract, with an additional \$1.85 million
21 bonus if its schools reach a certain benchmark.

22 If Edison, Inc., cannot deliver on it promise of improved performance, maybe the State
23 should consider returning our 3 elementary schools to us, along with the money they intended to
24 pay Edison, and let us have a try. With adequate funding for what would be the 1st time in its
25 history, Baltimore City Public School system could certainly deliver the “goods.”

26 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the Chief
27 Education Officer of Edison Schools, Inc., and the General Manager of Baltimore Edison
28 Partnership Schools are requested to address the City Council on the reported drop in test scores
29 in Furman L. Templeton Elementary, Gilmore Elementary, and Montebello Elementary and to
30 present evidence that rebuts those reports and supports the company’s contention that student
31 performance has improved in these schools under Edison’s management.

32 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
33 State Superintendent of Education, the Acting CEO, Baltimore City Public School System, the
34 Chief Education Officer of Edison Schools, Inc. and the General Manager of Baltimore Edison
35 Partnership Schools, the Principals of Furman L. Templeton Elementary, Gilmore Elementary,
36 and Montebello Elementary, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.