

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 07-0267R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Harris, Curran, Clarke, Welch, Reisinger, Mitchell, Holton
Introduced and read first time: March 12, 2007

Assigned to: Education, Housing, Health, and Human Services Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Baltimore City Public School System, Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, Police Department, Department of Recreation and Parks, Department of Finance, Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office, Housing Authority of Baltimore City, Mayor's Office of Employment Development, Department of Social Services, Department of Real Estate

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Request to the Mayor – A Baltimore Truancy Assessment Center for West Baltimore**

3 FOR the purpose of urging the Mayor to provide funding for, and to identify a building
4 appropriate to house, a truancy center for West Baltimore using the Baltimore Truancy
5 Assessment Center in East Baltimore as a programmatic and operational model.

6 **Recitals**

7 The Baltimore Truancy Assessment Center (BTAC) at 400 North Caroline Street in East
8 Baltimore has been successful in the providing an interagency collaboration for the delivery of
9 services to address issues that contribute to the alarming truancy rate in the Baltimore City
10 Public School System since it's inception in November of 2003.

11 Through the Center, the Department of Social Services, the Social Security Administration,
12 the Office of Employment Development, the Baltimore Police Department, the Baltimore City
13 Public School Offices of School Police and Pupil Guidance, the Department of Juvenile
14 Services, and the Housing Authority of Baltimore provided direct services or referred students to
15 Baltimore Rising, the Department of Recreation and Parks, First Call for Help, the Boys and
16 Girls Club for mentoring services, Child Find, Child Protective Services, Job Corps, Maryland
17 Mentoring Partnership, the State's Attorney's Office for Educational Services, and Treatment
18 Resources for Youth.

19 BTAC has done a commendable job in addressing truancy, and its underlying contributing
20 social issues, among Baltimore City public school students but much remains to be done. As of
21 February 2007, 11,392 students, including 16 year olds who can legally withdraw, missed 20 or
22 more days of school – 5,000 of them were under the age of 16. By March 2007, 11,980 students
23 missed 20 or more days. As of March 2, 2007, the total number of days a systemwide student
24 body of 80,912 reported absent was a dismaying 848,467.

25 The *Alliance for Excellent Education* offers evidence that the cost of truancy, which
26 invariably leads to lower educational attainment levels or drop-out, increases the likelihood that
27 individuals, particularly males, will be arrested and/or incarcerated. A study that looked at State

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

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1 prisoners' education levels showed that male inmates were about twice as likely as their
2 counterparts in the general population to not have completed high school or its equivalent, and 4
3 times as many males in the general population had attended some college or other post secondary
4 classes than those in prison.

5 The Alliance reports that a 10% increase in the male graduation rate would reduce murder
6 and assault arrest rates by about 20%, motor vehicle theft by 13%, and arson by 8%. Beyond the
7 savings related directly to crime reduction, almost \$2.8 billion in additional annual earnings
8 would enter the economy if more students graduated from high school. Using 2004 U.S. Census
9 Current Population Survey data, the Alliance calculates that if an additional 5% of male students
10 not only graduated and also went on to college in the same percentages as current male high
11 school graduates, their average earnings would increase significantly. In Maryland, it is
12 estimated that a 5% increase in male high school graduation would result in annual crime related
13 savings of \$160,557,762 and additional earnings of \$50,869,458, equaling a total overall benefit
14 to the State economy of \$211,427,220.

15 C.C. Resolution 06-0181 – Informational Hearing – Graduation Rates – Baltimore City
16 Public Schools cites: “Leaving Boys Behind: Public High School Graduation Rates”, a report by
17 the Manhattan Institute, that black females in Baltimore graduated at a rate high than white
18 females, at 58% compared to 43%. And although the general perception is that black males are
19 the least likely to finish high school, the study found that both black males and white males had a
20 troubling graduation rate of only 39%, in 2003.”

21 The Maryland State Department of Education refutes those statistics and reports that the
22 graduation rate for Baltimore was 54%, in 2003. It also shows that the graduation rate for black
23 females that year was 62%, with white females graduating at a 52% rate, white males at a 49%
24 rate, and black males at a 45% rate. Regardless of what statistics one accepts, one cannot ignore
25 the fact that in Baltimore, nearly 1/3rd of City adults do not have a high school diploma or a
26 GED. Because, on average, almost 1/2 of public high-school students drop out before reaching
27 the 12th grade, their job prospects are limited. There are 200,000 residents 16 and older who do
28 not have jobs, and 1/2 of Baltimore's adults are not working.

29 The evidence of the cost to the individual and to society of students not completing their
30 education is overwhelming. It is incumbent on those who have the ability to affect this outcome
31 to take necessary action. The societal and personal benefits of a Westside Baltimore Truancy
32 Assessment Center to our students and our neighborhoods would far outweigh any fiscal costs to
33 Baltimore City's budget.

34 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
35 Mayor is respectfully requested to provide funding for, and to identify a building appropriate to
36 house, a truancy center for West Baltimore using the Baltimore Truancy Assessment Center in
37 East Baltimore as a programmatic and operational model.

38 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
39 organizations listed in the Planning Department Directory of Community Associations, the
40 Executive Director of the Baltimore Truancy Assessment Center, and the Mayor's Legislative
41 Liaison to the City Council.