



**TO:** The Honorable Stephanie Rawlings Blake  
and Members of the Baltimore City Council  
Room 400 City Hall,  
100. N. Holiday Street  
**Attn: Karen Randle**

**FROM:** *JAD* Sheryl Goldstein, Director, Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice  
*JHG* James H. Green, Deputy Legal Counsel, Baltimore Police Department  
Jonathan Brice, Executive Director for Student Support, Baltimore City  
Public Schools

**DATE:** January 22, 2009

**RE:** City Council Bill No. 08-0068R

**City Council Bill No.:** **08-0068R – Baltimore City Public School Teachers –  
Gang Related Violence Training**

Ensuring that students feel safe on their way to and from school and while in school is a top priority. Gang activity threatens the well-being of City students and reducing gang activity and related violence is a critical to improve and maintain school safety. The Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice (MOCJ), the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) and the Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) are committed to working together to prevent youth from becoming gang-involved and to intervene and provide alternatives to youth who are already gang-involved.

Overall, safety in City schools is improving. Suspensions and serious offenses are down this year and students and parents report feeling safer at school than in years past. Schools have been successful in minimizing gang related incidents. There have been twenty-four (24) such incidents so far this year as compared to forty-six (46) in the 2007/08 school year. However, there is much work to be done.



*Comments*

Partnerships and information sharing between BCPSS, BPD, the Department of Juvenile Services and other agencies continue to grow. These partnerships are vital to make our schools safer. Beginning last school year, a School Dismissal Detail was established daily during the school week and coordinated at the BPD's Watch Center. The detail is staffed by members of the Maryland Transit Administration Police Department, BPD, and Baltimore City School Police Department.

Training on gang activity has occurred at every school in BCPSS. School police have made presentations to school staff and faculty on gang prevention and principals will undergo training on gang awareness, prevention and intervention in the near future. Schools are charged with communicating the message to staff, students and parents that schools are neutral ground and that gang, drug and weapon activities will not be tolerated. School staff participates in professional development that helps establish and improve the good discipline and management practices that ultimately help fight gang activity. Schools are encouraged to establish mechanisms for student conflict mediation and obtain input from students on youth-related concerns and gang prevention strategies.

Schools at high risk for gang activity receive additional support. In partnership with law enforcement, high-risk schools receive special attention in the form of safety checks by police and deployments that help ensure safe travel to and from school. The School Police Dare program and the BPD G.R.E.A.T. program both serve several City schools. Four schools in Central and West Baltimore receive additional gang prevention and intervention support through a grant with the Baltimore City Housing Department. City students who are identified as gang members are referred to the BPD's Get Out The Game program.

MOCJ, the BPD and BCPSS will continue to collaborate regarding school safety and are committed to developing and strengthening efforts to keep students safe.