



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: Jean Lewis, Deputy Director, Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice

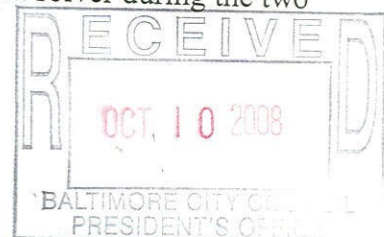
DATE: October 10, 2008

RE: City Council Bill No. 08-0064R

City Council Bill No.: **08-0064R – Informational Hearing – Baltimore City Public School System – Transitional Years Intervention Program**

The Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice (MOCJ) supports the development of intervention programs for transitional year students.

This past summer MOCJ worked with members of the BCPS school system to ensure that a significant portion of a grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention was used to enhance the school system's Summer Bridge program for students transitioning from middle school to high school. The Summer Bridge program was offered at 36 sites across the school system for students making the transition from 8th grade to 9th grade. It operated for two weeks during the summer, serving 3,660 students. \$75,600 from the City's Safe and Drug Free Schools grant was used to support part-time coordinators at each of the Summer Bridge sites. Those coordinators were charged with recruiting and registering students during the week preceding the program, targeting in particular students who had poor attendance in 8th grade, and acting as coordinator/problem solver during the two weeks of the program.



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Comments

Preliminary results from the program are encouraging. Attendance data from September 2008 shows that students who participated in the Summer Bridge program in the summer of 2008 have better attendance rates than students who did not participate: Students who attended the Summer Bridge program had an 89.6 % attendance rate in September 2008; by comparison, the attendance rate for 9th graders who did not participate was 80.1%. While this information is only preliminary, it is consistent with evaluations of summer bridge programs in other cities; summer bridge programs both “stem the summer slide” and help students to develop attachment to their new schools.

Unfortunately, the grant funds that covered the coordinators’ stipends for the Summer of 2008 will not be available next year. MOCJ supports any effort to make up this particular shortfall and, on a more general level, the Council’s interest and support of bridge programs that address the increase in truancy that occurs when students transition from one school to the next.



Jean Lewis
Deputy Director
Mayor’s Office on Criminal Justice