

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 07-0337R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Middleton, Young, Reisinger, Clarke, Harris, Curran
At the request of: Baltimore Teachers Union c/o Marietta English, President, Teachers Chapter
& Dr. Loretta Johnson, President, Paraprofessional Chapter
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Introduced and read first time: October 15, 2007

Assigned to: Labor Subcommittee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Board of School Commissioners, Baltimore City
Public School System

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **In Support of Baltimore City Public School Teachers**
3 **– Retain Lesson Planning Time**

4 FOR the purpose of requesting the CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools and the Chair and
5 Members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners to keep intact the current
6 policy regarding teacher lesson planning activities.

7 **Recitals**

8 Officials of the Baltimore Teachers Union report that “contract negotiations have come to an
9 impasse over the question of planning time. Baltimore school administrators have suggested that
10 teachers give up a portion of their lesson planning time so that more time can be devoted to
11 developing plans with school principals and administrators”. Baltimore City School
12 Commissioners and the CEO reportedly want teachers to meet weekly with principals for shared
13 planning time, the CEO contending that experience in other urban systems demonstrates that
14 success in reforming low-performing schools relies on jointly-planned lesson plans.

15 In an “open letter”, BTU membership states that a structured lesson plan is essential to the
16 educational process, that lesson planning time is necessary so that teachers can develop the best
17 learning strategies for children, and that time to plan lessons is particularly important when
18 teachers must compete – as Baltimore teachers often must – with such distractions as dilapidated
19 building environments, dysfunctional ventilation systems, classes with a larger than average
20 number of at-risk youth, and student populations of 35 or more.

21 The President of the Greater Baltimore Committee notes that both parties have a chance to
22 write a new history and create a new cooperative relationship within Baltimore City’s school
23 system, noting that private schools and other school districts have solved this issue successfully.
24 For example, some schools carve out an extra hour for collaboration by shortening the school
25 day and an alternative school that is part of the public system brings teachers in on Saturdays for
26 collaboration and development.

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

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1 In August, Council issued a *Back to School Welcome* to students returning for the 2007-2008
2 school year, noting that the Body “has been fully engaged in championing the needs of students.
3 Although direct control of the public school system has been wrested from local government, the
4 Council will continue to support State legislation that seeks to bring our school system to fiscal,
5 capital, and educational resource parity with the rest of the State, will partner with State
6 representatives to craft legislative remedies to systemic inequities, will monitor Baltimore City
7 School Board policies, and will evaluate existing educational programs and expand the ones that
8 work and eliminate the programs that don’t.”

9 The August 22, 2007 *Message from the CEO* makes a statement that can most appropriately
10 be applied to this situation – Baltimore City Public Schools can only be successful if “we are
11 successful together. I am only successful if my principals are successful. The principals are
12 only successful if the teachers are successful. Schools are successful only if the custodians, food
13 service, paraprofessionals, secretaries, school police, etc. are successful.”

14 Baltimore City Public Schools must succeed – on that all parties agree. Although the City
15 Council is not directly involved in the negotiation or approval of teachers contracts, we need the
16 issue resolved. To that end and in keeping with the pledge to champion the needs of students, the
17 Baltimore City Council urges the administration to revisit this issue and to allow our teachers the
18 latitude they need in planning lessons that will enable our children to achieve the academic
19 success that has all too often alluded students of the public school system.

20 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the CEO
21 of Baltimore City Public Schools and the Chair and Members of the Baltimore City Board of
22 School Commissioners are respectfully urged to keep intact the current policy regarding teacher
23 lesson planning activities.

24 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
25 CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools, the Chair and Members of the Baltimore City Board of
26 School Commissioners, the President of the Baltimore Teachers Union, the President and
27 Members of the Greater Baltimore Committee, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City
28 Council.