

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 17-0018R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Clarke, Schleifer, Henry, Costello, Scott, Pinkett, Stokes,
Burnett, Sneed

Introduced and read first time: April 3, 2017

Assigned to: Budget and Appropriations Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Baltimore City Public School System, Department of
Finance

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Investigative Hearing – Crossing Guard Cuts**

3 FOR the purpose of reviewing and helping reverse the recent annual reductions in crossing guard
4 personnel, elimination of previously assigned crossing locations, and the proposed cutback of
5 hours paid for crossing guard services.

6 **Recitals**

7 Crossing guards are an essential part of our public safety system, protecting the smallest and
8 youngest of our citizens. These crossing guards are their first – and often only – line of defense
9 against the dangers they may encounter moving between the safer and more controlled
10 environments of school and home. Unfortunately, at current and projected funding levels, there
11 are simply not enough of them or enough crossing locations to provide the protection our
12 children and their families need and deserve.

13 Loss of 64 funded positions and numerous crossing locations since 2015-16

- 14 - In school year 2015-16, the City funded 321 crossing guard positions, including
15 33 substitutes.
- 16 - In the current school year, the number shrank to 290, with substitutes eliminated.
- 17 - In the 2017-18 school year, Finance projects 290 funded positions, again with no
18 substitutes, representing a loss of 64 positions in two years.

19 But that’s just positions funded!

- 20 - Last year, only 245 positions were actually filled, plus 33 substitutes.
- 21 - This year, only 246 filled, with no substitutes.
- 22 - For the 2017-18 school year, Finance recommends 290 budgeted positions, no
23 substitutes. We do not yet know how many positions will actually be filled.

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

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1 To accommodate such steady annual defunding, Transportation has already eliminated a
2 number of formerly protected corners, using as a major cut off criteria of school guard crossings
3 used by fewer than 30 children.

4 Reduction of Crossing Guard Hours from 4 to 2 hours daily

5 Of urgent concern regarding our crossing guards is pending current negotiations, namely
6 Finance's proposal to reduce their workday from a minimum of 4 to a minimum of 2 hours.

7 Although crossing guards may work fewer than the current 2 hours in the morning and 2 in
8 the afternoon, this minimum payment was created and has been traditionally honored by the City
9 for the following reasons:

- 10 1. The crossing guards must report to work in a "split shift" fashion, in the morning and
11 again in the afternoon. This requires them to dress in uniforms twice daily, travel to their
12 assigned locations twice daily, and remain on the job till the last child is safely crossed.
- 13 2. In addition, guards must report to and from a designated location to sign in and out each
14 day, a "double reporting" which requires them to remain local for most of the day, placing
15 limitations on their ability to make other plans or take other part-time jobs for the day.
- 16 3. Crossing guards need to be present for early-arriving and late-dismissing children and,
17 especially in these difficult times, to run interference when troubles erupt.
- 18 4. Many current guards will be forced to seek alternative employment should their minimum
19 hours and compensation be cut in half, leaving even more corners unprotected as the City
20 undertakes challenging recruitment efforts to replace and retain them.
- 21 5. To pay them any less is not worth the pay and level of responsibility they have for the
22 safety of Baltimore's children.

23 Substitutes are required to cover absences

24 In addition to full budget staffing, substitute crossing guards are important to add to the
25 full-time projected budget, including a more efficient process for ensuring timely coverage, that
26 is, for a crossing guard calling Transportation to report absence to also call the principal of their
27 assigned school as well as the parent representative designated to recruit parent volunteers when
28 substitutes are not available.

29 Now, more than ever, Crossing Guards are Needed

30 In recent months in Baltimore, schools and neighborhoods have overwhelmingly complained
31 of dangerous increases in speeding traffic and have appealed for traffic calming such as speed
32 humps, additional crosswalks, police traffic enforcement, more pedestrian-oriented traffic
33 signals,— and restoration of former crossing guard locations at dangerous speedways.

34 Also, more and more, crossing guards intervene to prevent bullying among children and to
35 help their charges navigate threatening obstacles to the safety of their travel.

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1 In addition, in this era of school system deficits, a crucial State per-pupil funding formula
2 helps dictate the adequacy of our local school budgets – which fiscally require an annual increase
3 in the number of students enrolled in our schools. Reaching higher enrollment goals means even
4 more students to protect in their travels to school and back home. Safe passage will be an
5 important family consideration in deciding on the Baltimore City Public Schools.

6 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, that the
7 Council requests the Budget Bureau and the Baltimore City Public Schools, local school leaders,
8 and crossing guards themselves to appear at a City Council hearing to discuss the need to restore
9 necessary crossing guard personnel and locations, 4-hour workdays, and safe passage for all
10 Baltimore City students of all ages and how to accomplish these goals in the upcoming FY2018
11 budget.

12 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
13 Director of Finance, the CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools, the President of the City Union
14 of Baltimore, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.