

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 09-0166R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Holton, Henry, Middleton, Cole, Young, D’Adamo, Kraft,
Clarke, Welch, Reisinger, Spector, Conaway, Branch
Introduced and read first time: October 19, 2009
Assigned to: Education Committee

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **In Recognition - Baltimore City Public Schools – Good Health, Great Kids!**

3 FOR the purpose of expressing appreciation to the CEO, the Director of Food and Nutrition, and
4 the employees of Baltimore City Public Schools for their leadership in promoting healthier
5 eating habits, more active lifestyles, and other interventions that assist children in avoiding or
6 correcting behaviors that lead to childhood obesity and other life-threatening or life-altering
7 medical conditions; and inviting Baltimore City Public School officials to brief the City
8 Council on their innovative approaches to addressing the challenges of childhood obesity.

9 **Recitals**

10 *A Lighter Future for Baltimore City: Using Schools in the Fight Against Childhood Obesity,*
11 a publication of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies and co-recipient of the 2009 Abell
12 Award in Urban Policy, which explores the reasons why Baltimore City is suffering from a high
13 rate of childhood obesity and how this problem can be overcome through school programs and
14 policies, found the number of overweight children has skyrocketed in the past couple of decades
15 and is estimated to have reached 23 million.

16 Maryland is the 27th most obese state in the country, with an obesity rate of 25.2. In
17 Maryland, 60% of adults were overweight or obese in 2007, rising from 34% from 1995-2003.
18 A 2005 study showed that 27.5% of Maryland students described themselves as overweight, and
19 42.6% were trying to lose weight.

20 Baltimore City’s obesity rate of 35% is higher than that of Maryland and of the U.S. In
21 2007, 13% of children ages 2-5 receiving services from the Maryland Women, Infants, &
22 Children Program were obese. Additionally, 37% of Baltimore City high school students are
23 overweight or at-risk compared to 29% of their counterparts in other parts of Maryland and the
24 U.S.

25 The Office of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, reports
26 that as they grow older, these young people are more likely to have risk factors associated with
27 cardiovascular disease, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and Type 2 diabetes.
28 Overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.

29 The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that the nation’s children are facing a health
30 crisis. Few are meeting the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, developed jointly with the U.S.

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

Council Bill 09-0166R

1 Department of Health and Human Services to provide science-based advice to promote health
2 and to reduce risk for major chronic diseases through diet and physical activity, as “the major
3 causes of morbidity and mortality in the United States are related to poor diet and physical
4 inactivity.”

5 Baltimore City Public School Director of Food and Nutrition reports that “urban areas are
6 disproportionately affected by diet-related diseases. In Baltimore City approximately 37% of
7 public high school students are overweight or at risk of becoming so. That’s 8 percentage points
8 greater than the state and national average. These poor health indicators go hand in hand with
9 high rates of poverty – fully 27.5 % of Baltimore’s children live below the poverty line – and
10 low levels of academic achievement.”

11 The Hopkins study similarly found that the high rate of childhood obesity in Baltimore City
12 must be targeted because of its adverse educational, social, and health consequences and that it
13 can overcome, in part, through school programs and policies that many studies have shown to be
14 effective through nutritional education, physical education, and family-reinforced programs and
15 policies.

16 The study concluded “factors which contribute to childhood obesity, such as unhealthy
17 lifestyle and the impact of corporate advertisements in the media, can be counteracted through
18 school-sponsored programs. Because schools are controllable factors that have the most contact
19 with children during a consistent period of time, they should be enlisted in the fight against
20 childhood obesity. Given that a large number of African-American and low-income students are
21 enrolled in the Baltimore City Public School System, school-based policy efforts to reduce
22 childhood obesity would have significant impacts on the obesity rates of Baltimore City as a
23 whole.”

24 The Baltimore City Public School system has taken a leadership position in the national
25 struggle against childhood obesity by becoming the first fully Meatless Monday school system in
26 the United States; Meatless Monday is a non-profit initiative of the Monday Campaigns, in
27 association with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, to reduce meat
28 consumption 15% in order to improve personal health and protect the planet by reducing our
29 “carbon footprint”.

30 The 80,000 young people of our City public schools will begin each week with a plant-based
31 diet on Meatless Monday. In addition, the school system has introduced a wide variety of
32 projects to ensure its students eat and learn about healthy, environmentally friendly choices. The
33 pilot No Thank You Bites was introduced in 18 elementary schools last year as a way to expand
34 students’ palettes and get feedback on which new foods and ingredients they might or might not
35 like. At the end of the lunch line 1- or 2 - ounce cups, the equivalent of a bite and a half of a
36 fruit, vegetable, or entree item. The students may have as much of the item as he or she likes or
37 simply say “no thank you” and move on.

38 In Fall 2008, the Great Kids Farm, a 33-acre organic farm created with private funding and
39 owned and operated by Baltimore Public Schools opened. The farm produces fresh food for the
40 school system’s students; earns income for the system by selling fresh food to local, upscale
41 restaurants and at local farmers’ markets; houses vocational training programs in farming and
42 food services for students; and welcomes students by the busload each week for experimental
43 learning opportunities.

Council Bill 09-0166R

1 The efforts of Baltimore City Public Schools have garnered national attention, including a
2 visit from an assistant White House chef and U.S. Department of Education officials. The
3 Council joins in recognizing the exemplary efforts of our schools and invites school officials to
4 brief the Council on their forward-looking program.

5 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this
6 Body hereby expresses its appreciation to the CEO, the Director of Food and Nutrition, and the
7 employees of Baltimore City Public Schools for their leadership in promoting healthier eating
8 habits, more active lifestyles, and other interventions that assist children in avoiding or
9 correcting behaviors that lead to childhood obesity and other life-threatening or life-altering
10 medical conditions and invites Baltimore City Public School officials to brief the City Council
11 on their innovative approaches to addressing the challenges of childhood obesity.

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