

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 07-0251R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers Holton, Reisinger, Welch

Introduced and read first time: February 12, 2007

Assigned to: Education, Housing, Health, and Human Services Committee

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

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Investigative Hearing – Should Baltimore City Have A Partially Elected School Board?**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting parents, students, teachers, elected officials, education professionals,  
4 and other stakeholders to join the City Council in a discussion of the efficacy of changing the  
5 current method of selection of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners from  
6 appointment by the Mayor and the Governor to majority membership election by the citizens  
7 of Baltimore.

8 **Recitals**

9 In a 2007 policy statement, the National School Board Association states that school boards,  
10 elected or appointed by their communities, represent the community’s beliefs and values and are  
11 best suited to shoulder the responsibility for preparing children to live productive and satisfying  
12 lives. The Association lists “*Five Reasons for Local Control of Public Education*:

- 13 1. Your school board looks out for children - first and foremost. Education is not a line  
14 item in your school board’s budget - it is the *only* item.
- 15 2. Your school board is the advocate for your community when decisions are made  
16 about your children’s education. The school board represents the public’s voice in  
17 public education, providing citizen governance for what the public schools need and  
18 what the community wants.
- 19 3. Your school board sets the standard for achievement in your district, incorporating  
20 the community’s view of what students should know and be able to do at each grade  
21 level. Your school board also is responsible for working with the superintendent to  
22 establish a valid process for measuring student success and, when necessary, shifting  
23 resources to ensure that the district’s goals are achieved.
- 24 4. Your school board is accessible to you and accountable for the performance of the  
25 schools in your district. If the schools are not producing, it is your right as a voter to  
26 select new board members who will see to it that your students and your schools  
27 succeed.

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

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1           5. Your school board is the community’s education watchdog, ensuring that taxpayers get  
2           the most for their tax dollars. Public education is a \$423 billion business. In the majority  
3           of districts, school boards have taxing authority. That direct oversight - and  
4           responsibility - should not be given to politicians whose first priority is something other  
5           than education.”

6           Nationally, about 96% of school board members are elected, and about 85% have fiscal  
7           autonomy. In Maryland, 17 of 24 boards are currently elected, and this year legislators from  
8           Anne Arundel, Harford, and Baltimore counties, as well as Baltimore City, are seeking to pass  
9           legislation to allow their subdivisions to change from an appointed school board to one elected  
10          by their constituents.

11          The election of 5 of the 9 members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners  
12          will serve to enfranchise parents, increase accountability, and isolate schools from political  
13          influence. The appointment of the remaining 4 will allow for the inclusion of persons from  
14          educational, gender, professional, or ethnic backgrounds that are not represented by the members  
15          who are seated through the electoral process.

16          An open dialogue on the relative merits of an appointed, an elected, or a hybrid (5 elected, 4  
17          appointed) school board is the most effective way to determine the will of those closest to, and  
18          most effected by, the governance of the Baltimore City Public School System.

19          **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this  
20          Body invites parents, students, teachers, elected officials, education professionals, and other  
21          stakeholders to join the City Council in a discussion of the efficacy of changing the current  
22          method of selection of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners from appointment by  
23          the Mayor and the Governor to majority membership election by the citizens of Baltimore.

24          **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore  
25          City Senate and House Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly are invited to take part in  
26          the discussion on the merits of a partially elected school board.

27          **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
28          Honorable Chairs and Members of the Senate and House Delegations to the Maryland General  
29          Assembly, the CEO of the Baltimore City Public School System, the Chair and Members of the  
30          Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, the Baltimore Council of Parent Teacher  
31          Associations, the listees of the Planning Department Directory of Community Associations, the  
32          Executive Director of the Mayor’s Office of State Relations, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison  
33          to the City Council.