

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 12-0066R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Clarke, Henry, Cole, Kraft, Middleton, Holton, Branch, Mosby,
Scott, Welch, Reisinger, President Young, Councilmembers Curran, Stokes, Spector

Introduced and read first time: September 10, 2012

Assigned to: Education and Youth Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Baltimore City Public School System

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing and Roundtable Discussion on Developments Affecting the**
3 **Education of Older Teens and Young Adults in Baltimore City**

4 FOR the purpose of assessing the status and efficiency of Maryland’s GED program in Baltimore
5 City; determining the impact of Senate Bill 362’s increase to 18 of the age for mandatory
6 education in Maryland and the local school system’s “adult education” plans to attract, retain
7 and successfully educate these older students; and examining the State’s blueprint for
8 adopting a GED Options Program in response to the SB 362 mandate.

9 **WHEREAS**, We in Baltimore, Maryland, are at a crossroads in determining our State’s and
10 City’s capacity to attract, retain and educate a “disconnected” segment of our older teens and
11 young adults so as to prepare them for living wage jobs and challenging careers and to lay the
12 groundwork for our own successful future as a society.

13 **WHEREAS**, That “disconnected” segment includes actual and potential high school drop-outs
14 who, for a universe of reasons, will not or cannot currently complete even the most basic high
15 school equivalency requirements, their obstacles running the gamut from histories of academic
16 failure and the disruptions of periodic incarceration and homelessness to caretaker
17 responsibilities for dependent siblings and job responsibilities to support themselves and often
18 their entire families.

19 **WHEREAS**, The crossroads is a confluence of changes directly affecting this key segment of
20 our population, i.e.:

- 21 • a 2009 change of administrative jurisdiction for the General Equivalency Diploma
22 (GED) testing program from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to
23 the Maryland Department of Licensing and Regulation (DLLR);
- 24 • Senate Bill 362, popularly supported and approved into law by the Maryland General
25 Assembly, which increases from 16 to 18 the age at which Maryland’s youth are
26 required to attend a public school regularly during the entire school year;

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

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- 1 • the presumed expansion and redesign of alternative programs within the Baltimore
2 City Public Schools (BCPS) to accommodate and successfully educate the older
3 cohort of teens required by 2014 to attend public school regularly or risk breaking the
4 law; and,
- 5 • a proposed GED Options Program, evolving from the SB 362 mandate, which MSDE
6 and DLLR must prepare by December 1, 2012, to help older students combine the
7 benefits of traditional high school and GED enrollment.

8 **WHEREAS**, The transfer of GED training from MSDE to DLLR occurred with an unfair lack
9 of resources for DLLR to address such major new educational responsibilities. In a program
10 designed to expedite the academic process, GED students have experienced delays in scheduling
11 their tests, sometimes for five or six months, and delays in receiving test results, generally
12 experiencing a two month wait in which community college enrollment and job options must be
13 placed “on hold” .

14 **WHEREAS**, It is crucial for Baltimore City residents, students, and officials to determine how
15 the State of Maryland and DLLR will restore GED to the efficiency and expediency inherent in
16 its attraction to older teens and adult enrollees.

17 **WHEREAS**, It is crucial for Baltimore City residents, students, and officials to understand
18 how BCPS plans to “make good” on the long-requested and now imminent increase in the legal
19 age for mandatory school attendance. For all the long-term benefits of this change, many older
20 teens will consider themselves the “captive audience” of this mandate. The challenge is to meet
21 this new population halfway, as the adult learners we aspire for them to become.

22 **WHEREAS**, Finally, it is crucial for Baltimore City residents, students, and officials to explore
23 with MSDE, DLLR, and BCPS their proposal for the GED Options Program and its potential for
24 bridging legal divides which deprive both enrollees of GEDs, and our Local Education District
25 (LED) of the mutual benefits of complementary education pathways.

26 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, that this body
27 most urgently seeks information to determine how the State of Maryland plans to enhance the
28 DLLR’s operation of the GED program to better and more expeditiously serve our city residents;
29 to learn about BCPS’s plans for the “adult education” required to attract, retain, and successfully
30 educate SB 362’s new cohort of older teens within its alternative education construct; and, to
31 better understand the GED Options proposals being developed by MSDE, DLLR, and BCPS for
32 a better mesh of GED with LED’s.

33 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That this body applauds the dedicated efforts of education,
34 governmental, and non-profit organizations throughout the City who provide GED and
35 alternative learning classes for older teens and adults, including The Community School in
36 Remington, Baltimore Reads, Inc., South Baltimore Learning Center, Baltimore City Community
37 College, and the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development.

38 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That representatives of DLLR, MSDE and BCPS are
39 cordially invited to participate in this hearing to present their plans and aspirations to the City
40 Council and that representatives of alternative and GED programs are likewise invited to
41 participate and testify.

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1 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Superintendent
2 of the Maryland State Department of Education, the Director of the Department of Labor,
3 Licensing and Regulation, the CEO of the Baltimore City Public Schools, the directors of those
4 alternative and GED programs listed in this resolution, the Mayor, and the Mayor's Legislative
5 Liaison to the Baltimore City Council.