

**CITY OF BALTIMORE**  
**COUNCIL BILL 15-0265R**  
**(Resolution)**

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

Introduced and read first time: September 21, 2015

Assigned to: Education and Youth Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Baltimore City Public School System

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Equitable Funding For City Public Charter Schools**

3 FOR the purpose of urging Baltimore City Public Schools to reconsider its inequitable proposed  
4 public charter school funding formula to ensure that adequate funds are allocated to all  
5 Baltimore students in accordance with State law.

6 **Recitals**

7 Public charter schools are effective for our families – with increased accountability and better  
8 outcomes, on average, for students. The fact that more than 5,500 students are on public charter  
9 school waiting lists, in Baltimore City alone, illustrates that parents see their value. Despite this,  
10 the public charter school funding formulas proposed by Baltimore City Public School System  
11 continually fall short of meeting either these schools’ needs or the standards set by State law.

12 Education funds for our children are not making it to the classroom, and given past  
13 accounting errors and accountability problems at North Avenue, public school families need  
14 transparency to ensure that education dollars are following children to classrooms. The choice  
15 here is clear: either more funding will be delivered to Baltimore City public school classrooms to  
16 support students, or more money will be soaked up at North Avenue.

17 The law here is also clear – the State Board of Education, not Baltimore City school staff,  
18 should determine how funding follows students to the classroom. In 2007, Maryland’s highest  
19 court ruled that public charter school students deserve equal funding that follows them to the  
20 classroom – regardless of which public school they attend.

21 Yet, since 2011, general fund revenues for Baltimore City’s Public Schools have increased by  
22 11.6% – from \$1.075 billion to \$1.2 billion – while per pupil funding for public charter schools  
23 has declined from \$9,412 to \$9,387. Public charter schools represent more than 15% of total  
24 enrollment, but receive only about 10% of the school system’s general fund revenue.

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

## Council Bill 15-0265R

1 The school system recently made its proposal for the next school year, and it shifts even more  
2 funding from classrooms to central administration. In other words, less money is getting to our  
3 classrooms, and more money is getting stuck at North Avenue – justified through vaguely  
4 described “services” that charter schools neither want nor need. This is not happening to  
5 students in other counties, and it is against the law.

6 In an attempt to resolve this ongoing problem, an alliance of public charter school leaders  
7 proposed a collaborative workgroup to find a compromise and offered to engage in mediation to  
8 find a solution. But the school system would not agree to mediation, and insisted that it can  
9 essentially pick a per-pupil funding number – without the transparency required by law.

10 The new public charter school funding formula proposed by Baltimore City Public School  
11 System staff would have a devastating impact on many of the approximately 13,700 students  
12 learning in Baltimore’s 34 public charter schools – as well as the more than 5,500 students on  
13 charter school waiting lists.

14 Under this proposal:

- 15 • Millions of additional dollars would be retained at North Avenue, rather than being  
16 directed to classrooms to support students – dramatically reducing transparency in  
17 public education spending.
- 18 • Based on our initial calculations, 26 public charter schools (77%) would see a decline  
19 in per pupil funds. In many cases these declines will be dramatic.
- 20 • 13 schools would not receive sufficient funding to cover current basic expenses –  
21 teachers, books and facilities – creating a threat of closure.
- 22 • 8 of Baltimore’s 20 highest performing schools are among the 13 schools facing this  
23 threat.

24 Public charter operators and their partners in City government and the City school system are  
25 dedicated to creating great public schools – and to improving the entire school system. However,  
26 too often, the Baltimore City school administration’s actions have caused Baltimore City families  
27 to lose faith in our schools – whether through surprise, inexplicable, deficits, or the school year  
28 starting without principals and teachers assigned to schools. It is important that the school  
29 system reconsider the proposed public charter school funding formula to avoid yet another reason  
30 for parents to lose faith in our school system.

31 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
32 Council urges Baltimore City Public Schools to reconsider its inequitable proposed public charter  
33 school funding formula to ensure that adequate funds are allocated to all Baltimore students in  
34 accordance with State law.

35 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
36 CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.