



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Henry

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Equitable Funding For City Public Charter Schools

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

Recitals

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

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

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

Yet, since 2011, general fund revenues for Baltimore City♦s Public Schools have increased by 11.6% ♦ from \$1.075 billion to \$1.2 billion ♦ while per pupil funding for public charter schools has

declined from \$9,412 to \$9,387. Public charter schools represent more than 15% of total enrollment, but receive only about 10% of the school system's general fund revenue.

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

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

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

Under this proposal:

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

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

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

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the CEO

of Baltimore City Public Schools, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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