



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmembers Middleton, Young
At the request of: Baltimore Teachers Union c/o Marietta English, President, Teachers Chapter & Dr. Loretta Johnson, President, Paraprofessional Chapter
Address: 5800 Metro Drive, Baltimore, Maryland 21215-3242
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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
In Support of Baltimore City Public School Teachers - Retain Lesson Planning Time

FOR the purpose of requesting the CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools and the Chair and Members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners to keep intact the current policy regarding teacher lesson planning activities.

Recitals

Officials of the Baltimore Teachers Union report that "contract negotiations have come to an impasse over the question of planning time. Baltimore school administrators have suggested that teachers give up a portion of their lesson planning time so that more time can be devoted to developing plans with school principals and administrators". Baltimore City School Commissioners and the CEO reportedly want teachers to meet weekly with principals for shared planning time, the CEO contending that experience in other urban systems demonstrates that success in reforming low-performing schools relies on jointly-planned lesson plans.

In an "open letter", BTU membership states that a structured lesson plan is essential to the educational process, that lesson planning time is necessary so that teachers can develop the best learning strategies for children, and that time to plan lessons is particularly important when teachers must compete - as Baltimore teachers often must - with such distractions as dilapidated building environments, dysfunctional ventilation systems, classes with a larger than average number of at-risk youth, and student populations of 35 or more.

The President of the Greater Baltimore Committee notes that both parties have a chance to write a new history and create a new cooperative relationship within Baltimore City's school system, noting that private schools and other school districts have solved this issue successfully. For example, some schools carve out an extra hour for collaboration by shortening the school day and an alternative school that is part of the public system brings teachers in on Saturdays for collaboration and development.

In August, Council issued a Back to School Welcome to students returning for the 2007-2008 school year, noting that the Body "has been fully engaged in championing the needs of students. Although direct control of the public school system has been wrested from local government, the Council will continue to support State legislation that seeks to bring our school system to fiscal, capital, and educational resource parity with the rest of the State, will partner with State representatives to craft legislative remedies to systemic inequities, will monitor Baltimore City School Board policies, and will evaluate existing educational programs and expand the ones that work and eliminate the programs that don't."

The August 22, 2007 Message from the CEO makes a statement that can most appropriately be applied to this situation - Baltimore City Public Schools can only be successful if "we are successful together. I am only successful if my principals are successful. The principals are only successful if the teachers are successful. Schools are successful only if the custodians, food service, paraprofessionals, secretaries, school police, etc. are successful."

Baltimore City Public Schools must succeed - on that all parties agree. Although the City Council is not directly involved in the negotiation or approval of teachers contracts, we need the issue resolved. To that end and in keeping with the pledge to champion the needs of students, the Baltimore City Council urges the administration to revisit this issue and to allow our teachers the latitude they need in planning lessons that will enable our children to achieve the academic success that has all too often alluded students of the public school system.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools and the Chair and Members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners are respectfully urged to keep intact the current policy regarding teacher lesson planning activities.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools, the Chair and Members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, the President of the Baltimore Teachers Union, the President and Members of the Greater Baltimore Committee, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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