



Legislation Text

File #: 09-0167R, **Version:** 0

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Welch

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Baltimore City Public Schools - Are Current Physical Education Requirements Enough?

FOR the purpose of requesting the CEO, the Director of the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Education Specialist for Physical Education and Athletics of the Baltimore City Public School System to brief the City Council on the Physical Education requirements for students grades Pre-K through 12, to present an analysis of the impact of the physical education program on the rate of childhood obesity in public school students.

Recitals

The final report of the Baltimore City Council Task Force on Childhood Obesity, released early last year, addressed the national increase in childhood obesity that has been on a steady increase for the last 30 years or more. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in the last 20 years alone the prevalence of obesity among children aged 6-11 has doubled; the rate among adolescents aged 12-19 has more than tripled.

As reported by the Task Force: “obesity brings with it a host of co-morbidities that are expensive in human terms and in medical costs:

- Overweight young people face a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults, placing them at high risk of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis.
- 61% of overweight young people have at least one additional risk factor for heart disease, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure.
- Children who are overweight are at greater risk for orthopedic problems, sleep apnea, and psychological problems such as stigmatization and low self-esteem.
- Excess weight is suspected as a factor in early onset of puberty, which in turn is linked to greatly increased risk of breast cancer.”

In 2004, Congress passed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act that mandated that all schools

participating in the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast Programs must create a Local Wellness Policy that sets goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based initiatives that deal with promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity. Although the Board of School Commissioners approved the BCPSS Local Wellness Policy, the status of its implementation was unclear to Task Force members.

Physical Activity and the Health of Young People, a November 2008 publication of the Division of Adolescent and School Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention presented the findings of a survey of participation in physical education classes:

- Over half (54%) of high school students (67% of 9th grade students but only 41% of 12th grade students) attended physical education classes in 2007.
- The percentage of high school students who attended physical education classes daily decreased from 42% in 1991 to 25% in 1995, and has remained stable at that level until 2007 (30%). In 2007, 40% of 9th grade students but only 24% of 12th grade students attended physical education class daily.
- Among the 54% of students who attended physical education classes, 84% actually exercised or played sports for 20 minutes or longer during an average class.

The Local Wellness Policy of the Baltimore City Public School System adopted Component Two: Physical Education Goals to comply with the Maryland COMAR regulation requirements for physical education instructional programs for grades K-12. Included in the goals to accomplish this is making available to every student in BCPSS the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive physical education program. This will be accomplished by the following Action Steps:

- Incorporate fitness content into physical education class to help students develop the knowledge, skills, motivation, and behaviors that will promote and reinforce a lifetime commitment to wellness through a physically active and healthy lifestyle. This will be provided by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction.
- Align all fitness activities with the MSDE-VSC. This will be accomplished by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction.

A Position Statement of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) asserts: "Schools play an important role in public health, and the physical, mental, and social benefits of regular physical activity for youth are well documented. Leading public health, medical, and educational organizations, including NASPE, have made important physical activity recommendations for school-aged youth. These recommendations are for children to accumulate at least 60 minutes of physical activity on all or most all days of the week."

As documented by the Task Force and supported by many studies, Baltimore City children are at high risk to become obese and to suffer from the deleterious effects of childhood obesity. It is incumbent on the adults in their lives to ensure that they are provided every opportunity to avoid this entirely preventable outcome.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the CEO, the Director of the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Education Specialist for Physical Education and Athletics of the Baltimore City Public School System are requested to brief the City Council on the Physical Education requirements for students grades Pre-K through 12, to present an analysis of the impact of the physical education program on the rate of childhood obesity in public school students.

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

of the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, the Education Specialist for Physical Education and Athletics of the Baltimore City Public School System, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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