



Legislation Text

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Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Dorsey

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning **The Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education - Arts Education**

For the purpose of requesting that the Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education include arts education as part of the base educational funding formula to enable local educational systems to comply with the Code of Maryland Regulations (“COMAR”) 13A.04.16.

Recitals

On October 18, 2018, the Baltimore City Council Youth and Education Committee held a public hearing on the status of arts education in the Baltimore City Public School System (“BCPSS”). At the public hearing, BCPSS staff, as well as students, parents, and community members testified about the lack of arts education BCPSS students receive. Only 78% of pre-kindergarten through 8th grade students are enrolled in the visual arts, and only 53% of pre-kindergarten through 8th grader students are enrolled in music. Less than 7% of students are enrolled in dance or theater courses. In Baltimore and Anne Arundel counties, every pre-kindergarten through 8th grade student receives instruction in the visual arts and music by certified teachers every year.

The inequity between the education BCPSS students receive and the education that students from the counties receive is partially due to deficient state-wide funding. The State has found that BCPSS should receive an additional \$290-358 million each year. This shortfall in funding has resulted in devastating cuts to the BCPSS budget over the past decade.

In June of this year, BCPSS adopted the Baltimore Arts Education Initiative (“BAEI”) Strategic Plan and 5-year implementation goals to meet COMAR standards and achieve equity and excellence in arts education for all BCPSS students. The BAEI is the result of a 6-month-long project that had over 100 stakeholders, including students, parents, community members and organizations, principals, teachers, artists, the City Council, and BCPSS central office staff. Through direct engagement with the development and implementation of the plan, CEO Dr. Sonja Santelises and her staff have taken a proactive stance in addressing the gross inequities in arts education between city schools and schools in the counties. Arts education is essential in fulfilling the “whole child” component of the BCPSS *Blueprint for Success*.

The Baltimore City Council has a deep and continuing interest and commitment to supporting opportunities for the youth of Baltimore City. We are in the first year of implementation of the Children and Youth fund -

proposed by Council President Jack Young and confirmed by 80% of voters in 2016 - that provides \$12 million in grants annually to childhood and youth programs. Some of these programs include extracurricular arts opportunities, but this cannot substitute for or begin to address the current inequities in standards-based school arts programs.

These inequities can only be addressed with adequate state funding. All students in Maryland deserve access to a world-class education. Arts education - dance, media, music, theater, and visual arts - is an essential element of a well-rounded education. Maryland's educational funding formula should reflect and support what has been recognized and memorialized in COMAR, by the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, and the State legislature, that arts education is part of a well-rounded education for every student. The State Board of Education in 1997, and again 2017, confirmed standards-based arts education in COMAR as essential to a complete education for students in Maryland. Unfortunately, the State has not provided the resources to fund this mandate. The Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education has the opportunity and responsibility to fund this mandate.

In order to fulfil the requirements described in COMAR, the Commission should align adequate funding to enable each Maryland school district to meet the requirements of COMAR. The Commission should support base funding formulas that enable school districts to support a 150-450:1 student to art teacher ratio at the elementary school level, a 750-900:1.5/2 student to art teacher ratio at the middle school level, and a 1200-2000:3/5 student to art teacher ratio at the high school level. The Commission should include standards or curricular frameworks with embedded standards in instructional systems, as stipulated in COMAR, for subjects in which students receive core content credit.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Baltimore City Council requests that the Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education include arts education as part of the base educational funding formula to enable local educational systems to comply with the Code of Maryland Regulations ("COMAR") 13A.04.16.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Chair and all Commissioners of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, the Baltimore City 2019 delegation to the Maryland General Assembly, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Standing Committee of the Maryland Senate, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Ways and Means Standing Committee of the Maryland House of Delegates, the Senate President of the Maryland General Assembly, the House Speaker of the Maryland General Assembly, the Baltimore City Director of Government Relations, the CEO of the Baltimore City Public School System, the Mayor, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the Baltimore City Council.