



Legislation Text

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The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Cohen

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning

Recognizing Black Lives Matter Week of Action in Baltimore City Schools

For the purpose of recognizing the first full week of February each year as “Black Lives Matter At School Week of Action” and calling on all schools and organizations dealing with youth in Baltimore to do their part to bring awareness to the school-to-prison pipeline, the need to recruit and retain Black teachers, and the full rights of students as outlined in the National Student Bill of Rights.

Recitals

Black Lives Matter At School is a national committee of educators organizing for racial justice in education. They encourage all educators, students, parents, unions, and community organizations to join their annual week of action during the first week of February each year.

Schools and local officials must actively combat racism and confront the existence of a school-to-prison pipeline in this era of mass incarceration. The educational system, as it stands, utilizes harsh disciplinary policies, provides limited opportunities for students to learn about their own cultures, and excludes the history of struggle and contribution of Black people and other people of color. Furthermore, the racial composition of our teachers does not reflect the racial composition of our student body. In fact, there is a wide gap between the percentage of Black teachers and Black students in Baltimore City.

For those reasons, Black Lives Matter At School calls for:

- 1) an end to "zero tolerance" discipline and the implementation of restorative justice policies in our schools;
- 2) the hiring of more Black teachers;
- 3) the inclusion of Black history and ethnic studies in the K-12 curriculum; and
- 4) the funding of additional counselors in our schools.

The first Black Lives Matter At School national week of action was organized in 2018, and thousands of educators around the United States wore Black Lives Matter shirts to school and taught lessons about structural

racism, intersectional Black identities, Black history, and anti-racist movements. Educators in over 20 cities, including Baltimore, Seattle, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, Boston, New York City, and Washington, D.C., participated in this national uprising to affirm the lives of Black students, teachers, and families.

The lessons that educators taught during the week of action corresponded to the thirteen guiding principles of Black Lives Matter:

Monday: Restorative Justice, Empathy, and Loving Engagement

Tuesday: Diversity and Globalism

Wednesday: Trans-Affirming, Queer Affirming, and Collective Value

Thursday: Intergenerational, Black Families, and Black Villages

Friday: Black Women and Unapologetically Black

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council recognizes the first full week in February as “Black Lives Matter At School Week of Action” and calls on all schools and organizations dealing with youth in Baltimore to do their part to bring awareness to the school-to-prison pipeline, the need to recruit and retain Black teachers, and the full rights of students as outlined in the National Student Bill of Rights.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools, the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Wage Enforcement, the CEO of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the Chair of the Youth Commission, the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.