

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, President

BALTIMORE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Monday, September 15, 2008

CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE CALLS FOR NEW SCHOOL DROPOUT INTERVENTION PROGRAM

**Resolution urges school system to create a new intervention program for students during
'transitional years' to increase city's graduation rate**

BALTIMORE—Despite recent gains in state test scores, rising SAT participation rates and more schools meeting federal standards, Baltimore City Public School graduation rates are among the lowest in the nation. Tonight, at City Hall, Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake will introduce a City Council Resolution calling for a new proactive intervention program aimed at high-risk students who are transitioning into 6th and 9th grades to help increase graduation rates in Baltimore City Public Schools.

"Baltimore City Public Schools continue to make significant progress, but, we need to do more," Rawlings-Blake said. "High school graduation rates are unacceptably low and research shows that with targeted, early-intervention programs in place, we can reduce school dropouts."

Students in high poverty school districts who successfully navigate 6th grade to 9th grade graduate from high school at a rate of 75% or higher, while students who get off-track between the middle grade to high school transition, graduate at a rate of 20% or lower, according to a recent study by Robert Balfanz, Research Scientist, Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University. The study suggests that about 40% of high school dropouts could be identified in the 6th grade and 75% by the 9th grade.

"Sadly, during the 6th and 9th grades we begin to lose our most at-risk students," Rawlings-Blake said. "I look forward to working with School CEO Dr. Andres Alonso to determine how we can best target resources to these children and make our school system better, safer and stronger."

The resolution urges the school system to tailor programs for incoming students to both middle school and high school. The first step would be to identify at-risk students in 5th grade and 8th grade based on factors such as attendance, suspensions, and academic performance. In the summer of the student's transitional year, administrators, teachers, and counselors would meet with these students and their families in order to provide services and help students get back on track. A hearing date for this resolution will be announced at a later date by the Education Committee Chair, Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke.

WHO: City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.

WHAT: President will introduce a City Council Resolution urging the creation of a new targeted intervention program to increase graduation rates and Baltimore City Public Schools.

WHEN: 5:00pm tonight, Monday, September 15, 2008.

WHERE: Du Burns Council Chambers, 4th Floor, City Hall.

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