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Better Schools. Safer Streets. Stronger Neighborhoods.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT SEEKS CITY FUNDING FOR TEACH FOR AMERICA

Rawlings-Blake says a portion of the city's undesignated surplus could fill gap in funding

BALTIMORE— Today, Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake urged the Dixon Administration to support the City School System's ambitious plan to expand Teach for America's program in Baltimore. The organization has raised all but \$500,000 of the \$3.8 million needed to double the number of Teach for America teachers in city classrooms over the next two years. Rawlings-Blake said the funding gap presents an opportunity for city government to invest one-time surplus funds into the program.

"Teach for America is an absolutely vital component to reforming public education in Baltimore," Rawlings-Blake said. "The simple truth is that you cannot support school reform without supporting Teach for America. It is time for city government to do its part to fill this gap in funding."

Despite a very successful multi-million dollar private fundraising effort, Teach for America needs an additional \$500,000 to expand the number of Teach for America teachers in city schools from 170 to 300 by 2010, according to a Baltimore Sun report. If the funds are not obtained by the end of June, Teach for America will be forced to redeploy teachers away from Baltimore to other school systems.

"Even in these difficult economic times, city government must continue to make smart, innovative investments to improve public education in Baltimore," Rawlings-Blake said. "I'm confident that Mayor Dixon understands how important this program is to our school system's reform efforts."

Teach for America is the national corps of outstanding recent college graduates who commit two years to teach in urban and rural public schools and become lifelong leaders in expanding educational opportunity. This year was Teach for America's largest Baltimore corps to date with 170 of the nation's most promising future leaders teaching to over 12,000 students in the Baltimore City Public School System.

A recent Urban Institute study is part of a growing body of evidence demonstrating that Teach for America is having a positive impact on student achievement. The study notes "Teach for America (TFA) teachers tend to have a positive effect on high school student test scores relative to non-TFA teachers, including those who are certified in-field. Such effects exceed the impact of additional years of experience and are particularly strong in math and science."

During last year's budget process, Rawlings-Blake and City Council members worked collaboratively with Mayor Sheila Dixon to find grant funding for Teach for America. As a result of this effort, city government provided its first grant to the organization in the amount of \$50,000 to support the recruitment, training, and development of effective teachers for the 2008-09 school year.

"This organization has a track record of success, which is why you see so much support coming from the private sector," Rawlings Blake said, pointing to the fact that local corporations such as T. Rowe Price and Legg Mason have increased their contributions, despite the recent economic downturn.

Rawlings-Blake thanked Baltimore City Schools CEO Dr. Andrés Alonso and Teach for America—Baltimore Executive Director Omari Todd for their tireless work raising funds for the program. “Dr. Alonso and Mr. Todd have done a tremendous job getting the support for this important initiative. They’ve done their job, now it is time for city government to step in and fill the gap.”

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