



Legislation Text

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ORIGINAL

ALD. ZIELINSKI and HAMILTON

Resolution relating to a pilot program to improve academic performance in Milwaukee Public Schools.

This resolution calls on the Milwaukee Board of School Directors (or any successor entity responsible for operation of public schools in Milwaukee) to create a pilot program to address the problem of habitually disruptive students in Milwaukee Public Schools classrooms. Under this program, which would initially be offered in one middle school and one high school, a teacher would be authorized to identify habitually disruptive students in his or her classroom and to assign these students to an alternative learning program. The emphasis of the alternative learning program would be on providing family preservation support specialists and other related professionals who would work intensively with both disruptive students and their parents to understand the root causes of the students' behavioral issues. The goal of the program would be to eventually re-integrate these students in regular classrooms upon successful completion of the alternative learning program.

Whereas, The overall academic performance of Milwaukee Public Schools ("MPS") students is poor, as exemplified by the low percentages of MPS 10th graders rated as proficient or above on the most recent state standardized math and English tests (28.7% and 39.0%, respectively); and

Whereas, MPS is also plagued by a high truancy rate (46% of students were habitually truant during the 2006-07 school year) and a low high school graduation rate (in the range of 46% to 58%); and

Whereas, These statistics indicate that MPS is failing to produce the well-educated workforce that Milwaukee and its businesses need to remain economically competitive; and

Whereas, Chronic disruptive behavior in many MPS classrooms creates a huge burden on MPS teachers who are trying their best to give students a sound education, but must frequently halt regular classroom activities to discipline the disruptive students or wait for the disruptive behavior to subside; and

Whereas, Students in these classrooms who would like to obtain an education and make academic progress are faced with the daunting challenge of trying to learn in a chaotic environment that is not conducive to the educational process; and

Whereas, The serious behavioral and discipline problems in MPS are reflected in sky-high suspension rates, including 53.7% of middle-school students and 43.7% of high-school students suspended during the 2006-07 school year (compared to statewide averages of 8.7% and 9.3%, respectively); and

Whereas, In order to improve the chances of academic success for MPS students, especially at the middle- and high-school levels, MPS teachers need to be empowered to identify habitually disruptive

students and have them removed from the classroom so that the remaining students can learn in a calm, safe environment that is conducive to learning; and

Whereas, In light of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors' September 18, 2008, vote to explore the impact of dissolving the Milwaukee Public Schools system, City leaders need to be prepared for possible dissolution by developing and implementing a plan to improve academic performance in the Milwaukee's public schools; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Milwaukee Board of School Directors, or any successor entity responsible for operation of public schools in Milwaukee, is called upon to establish a pilot program to address the problem of habitually disruptive students in Milwaukee Public Schools classrooms; and, be it

Further Resolved, That, under this program, a teacher would be authorized to identify habitually disruptive students in his or her classroom and to assign them to an alternative learning program, in effect removing the students from the classroom; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the emphasis of the alternative learning program should be on providing family preservation support specialists and other related professionals who would work intensively with both the disruptive students and their parents to understand the root causes of the students' behavioral problems and to reduce the barriers, both inside and outside the school, that affect the students' ability to focus on classroom activities; and, be it

Further Resolved, That this initiative should strive to eventually re-integrate students into regular classrooms upon their successful completion of the alternative learning program; and, be it

Further Resolved, That this pilot program should initially be established in one MPS middle school and one MPS high school; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City Clerk shall send copies of this resolution to all members of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors and to MPS Superintendent William Andrekopoulus.

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