

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 060807)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Committee on Education to investigate and conduct hearings related to the reported crisis faced by the City of Philadelphia regarding the high drop out rate among public school students prior to high school graduation, for the purpose of examining the reported data and exploring corrective measures that can be taken to encourage high school graduation.

WHEREAS, A study conducted by researchers, Ruth Curran Neild, Ph.D. and Robert Balfanz, Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University, entitled, "Unfulfilled Promise: The Dimensions and Characteristics of Philadelphia's Dropout Crisis, 2000-2005," reports that approximately 30,000 students have dropped out of Philadelphia schools between the years 2000 and 2005; and

WHEREAS, About 48% to 54% of ninth graders in Philadelphia schools graduate from high school within four years, with that number increasing to 61% to 63% after six years, according to this study; and

WHEREAS, The study also found that in any one year, approximately 8,000 students, or about 30% of all students in grades 6 through 12, drop out of school and that as many as 5,000 more are in school so infrequently that they are considered to be "near dropouts;" and

WHEREAS, Dropping out of school is not limited to high school students alone; 15% of drop outs referred to in the study were no more than 15 years old, and more than 500 students in grades 6 through 8 are officially listed as having dropped out of school; and

WHEREAS, It is reported that students attending large neighborhood high schools in low-income neighborhoods and disciplinary schools are most at risk and that the lowest graduation rates are among Latino males, followed by African American males, Latino females and African American females; and

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WHEREAS, An alarmingly high number of students, 75% or higher, within the care of various City agencies such as abused and neglected children, children in foster care, and those in “out of home placement” in the juvenile justice system are likely to leave school before obtaining a diploma, according to the study; and

WHEREAS, The report indicates that in half of the cases, there are early warning signs, while a student is still in middle school, that he or she is at risk of dropping out of school, such as a final failing grade in English or math or attending school less than 80% of the time; and

WHEREAS, According to the research, there is a need in Philadelphia for more alternative programs that offer high school equivalency diplomas in order to meet the needs of those who dropped out of school and wish to obtain their high school diplomas; and

WHEREAS, The research also reveals that there are grave social and economic consequences when individuals do not complete their high school education, since as a result, they traditionally must work at low paying jobs or are unable to find employment at all, return less in tax revenue to governments, cost more in social services, are more likely to be in the criminal justice system, are less likely to become civic participants and are more likely to be part of a cycle of poverty; and

WHEREAS, In order to provide jobs with wages that are sufficient to support a family, maintain its neighborhoods as desirable places to live and work and attract economic development opportunities, the City must have a skilled, civically engaged and educated population; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council hereby authorizes the Committee on Education to investigate and conduct hearings related to the reported crisis faced by the City of Philadelphia regarding the high drop out rate among public school students prior to high school graduation, for the purpose of examining the reported data and exploring corrective measures that can be taken to encourage high school graduation.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-sixth of October, 2006.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Blackwell for Council President Verna and Councilmembers Goode and Miller

Sponsored by: Council President Verna, Councilmembers Blackwell, Goode, Miller, DiCicco, Tasco, Reynolds Brown, Ramos, Krajewski, Kelly, Rizzo and Kenney