

www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/baltimore_city/bal-schools0819,0,5662919.story

baltimoresun.com

Schools 'more ready' than ever

Few staff vacancies as start of classes nears, Alonso says

By Annie Linskey

Sun reporter

August 19, 2008

With seven days left until students return to classrooms, city schools have a small number of positions left to fill, schools CEO Andres Alonso said yesterday.

"Let me say that we are more ready for the opening of schools than we've ever been," Alonso told a City Council education panel last night.

He said there are six schools lacking a principal and 61 other staff vacancies across the school system, an improvement from years past.

Noting only seven vacancies for math teachers, Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke, who chairs the City Council's education committee, said, "It is a miracle."

The school system is also looking for 18 elementary school teachers, eight English teachers and 10 early-education teachers.

Those vacancies cannot be filled from the pool of surplus city teachers because they do not have the appropriate certification, Alonso said.

He said he expects to lose 197 teachers in the first months of the school year through retirement and other attrition.

Though it was not the subject of the hearing, Alonso expressed concern that city funding for some after-school programs was cut -- a fact some principals learned for the first time last week.

"Clearly every school should have an after-school program," he said.

He worried that funding was going to become a "zero-sum game," where additional money he makes available to schools is subtracted by the city for other priorities.

Barclay Elementary School Principal Jenny Heinbaugh told City Council members that the 80 to 100 students served by her afterschool program will "be on their own" if she does not get emergency



funding.

The school is in a gang-infested part of the city where idle children could easily enter the city's cycle of youth violence, said Bob Brinkman, a community activist who works closely with police in the Waverly area.

Other schools set to have cuts to their after-school programs include Holabird Academy, Chinquapin Middle, Gwynns Falls Elementary, Arundel Elementary and Harford Heights Elementary.

annie.linskey@baltsun.com

Copyright © 2008, [The Baltimore Sun](#)