



## Education Advocate

### **THANK YOU for Supporting New and Modernized City School Buildings!**

The room was packed at the City Council hearing on Thursday, September 23, to support new and renovated school buildings for Baltimore City! The ACLU presented our "Buildings for Academic Excellence" report to urge the City to take the lead in developing a plan to finance the modernization of all city school buildings. See WJZ's video clip and article below.

Thanks go to Education Committee Chair Mary Pat Clarke for holding the hearing and to Dr. Alonso for his testimony. Council members Young, Stokes, Curran, and Kraft attended, as did members of the Mayor's staff.

A special thanks to all the students, teachers, parents, youth, education advocates, and business and community leaders who came out to testify and stand together for safe, healthy, and modern school buildings!

There's more work to be done! Please contact Frank Patinella, 410.889.8550 x 123 or patinella@aclu-md.org to get involved!

#### **Thanks to All Participants!**

Baltimore Education Coalition, Child First/BUILD, Greater Homewood Community Corporation, Experience Corps, Patterson High School, Baltimore Freedom Academy, Baltimore Teachers Union, City Neighbors High School, Seawall Development, Guilford Elementary School, Citywide Special Education Advocacy, Digital Harbor High School, Baltimore Curriculum Project, Frederick Douglass Alumni Association, Baltimore City Youth Commission, Samuel Coleridge Taylor Elementary, Algebra Project, Collington Square Elementary, Enterprise Community Partners, Maryland Disability Law Center, Roland Park Elementary/Middle, Fort Worthington Elementary, Safe and Sound Campaign, League of Women Voters, Cathedral of the Incarnation, Roots and Branches School, Maryland Education Law Project, Parent-Community Advisory Board, Baltimore SECAC, Maryland Public Interest Law Project, Waverly Elementary School, Ednor Gardens Lakeside Civic Association, Elev8 Baltimore, Tench Tilghman Elementary, Medfield Heights Elementary, School Social Workers of Maryland, Southwest Charter and others.

### **ACLU Has Plan To Help Build Better Schools Reporting - Gigi Barnett, WJZ September 23, 2010**

**To link to the WJZ news video on the hearing visit:**

**<http://www.wjz.com/video> and type "ACLU," and click on "ACLU Has Plan To Help Build Better Schools" to open the link.**

(Note: The link may be up for a limited time only.)

BALTIMORE (WJZ)-

Many Baltimore City classrooms feel like refrigerators in the winter and then they turn into boiler rooms in the spring. No heat in the winter, no air conditioning in the summer. The ACLU says Baltimore City school buildings are plagued with problems that are causing city students to lag behind other school districts.

Gigi Barnett reports now the ACLU has a plan to build better schools. Baltimore City schools are old. Classrooms feel like refrigerators in the winter and then they turn into boiler rooms in the spring. "There was no air-conditioning over the summer and I have to tell you the kids were basically melting in the chairs in puddles of their own sweat," said Kimberly Mooney, former teacher.

In some hallways, students walk to class in the dark. "We had problems with the lights. They would go out from time to time, which got in the way with our work," said Chutney Yates, student. It's a tale City Council members have heard before from teachers, students and parents, but they heard it again Thursday night at City Hall. But this time, the ACLU joined in. In a new report released this week, the civil liberties group urged city and school leaders to spend nearly \$3 billion to rebuild, repair and renovate aging schools. "We've looked at other states and cities that have totally renovated and modernized their building stock. It can be done," said Bebe Verdery, Maryland ACLU Director. City Schools CEO Dr. Andres Alonso agrees. Finding public and private dollars from businesses, taxpayers and state lawmakers to help is the hurdle he faces. "It's about money, but it's also about will. I always said that the reason why kids drop out is because we accept it. Well, the reason why the schools are in a particular physical condition is because for too long we accepted it," said Dr. Alonso. The ACLU says better buildings would help increase the graduation rate, improve test scores and attract highly-qualified teachers.

## American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Education Reform Project

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