



Education Advocate

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Threats to City Schools Funding Take Action! Thursday, January 13, 5:30pm

The State faces a **\$1.3 billion budget shortfall** for the upcoming fiscal year and state officials have presented some options to the governor to balance the budget. About **\$430 million** in federal stimulus funds, propping up the state education budget now, **will be gone next year**. As reported in the [Baltimore Sun](#) (January 1, 2011):

"...I have proposed for the governor's consideration a 5 percent across-the-board cut to K-12 education." -Eloise Foster, Director of the Maryland Department of Budget and Management

"It would be devastating to our school budget even if it's phased in over several years." - Mayor Rawlings-Blake on the proposal to shift 40% of teacher pension costs to local school districts, including Baltimore City Public Schools.

ACTION: Join the Baltimore Education Coalition to PROTECT EDUCATION FUNDING!

Leadership Dinner, Workshop, and Action
Thursday, January 13, 2011, 5:30pm-8:30pm
Digital Harbor High School
1100 Covington Street

DINNER -- COLLABORATION -- PLANNING -- COLLECTIVE ACTION!
FREE!

To RSVP please contact Frank Patinella at 410.889.8550 x 123, patinella@aclu-md.org

ACTION: Send an Email to Governor O'Malley!

Talking Points:

- Thank him for pledging to fully fund Maryland Public Schools
- Ask him to keep his promise to keep schools fully funded
- Cuts have already been made to education in 2008, resulting in \$70 million less each year in state funding for city schools
- Shifting pension costs to the school district and/or a 5% cut to education will be devastating to city students (teacher layoffs, increased class size)
- Remind him of all of the great work that is happening here in Baltimore such as increasing graduation rates and our exceptional art programs that are just beginning to take off

[Click Here to Send An Email to Governor O'Malley Now!](#)

City Students Set High Expectations for Mayor's School Facilities Task Force

Just before Christmas, ACLU staff and high school students from the Baltimore Freedom Academy (BFA) delivered nearly 300 postcards to Mayor Rawlings-Blake, thanking her for establishing a task force on school construction. The task force has been charged with developing a \$2.8 billion financing plan to renovate, build new, and modernize all school buildings in Baltimore City. Within weeks of the Mayor's announcement, students and advocates at the Baltimore Freedom Academy, Civitas, Greater Homewood Community Corporation, BEN Roundtable, and John Eager Howard Elementary School, gathered signatures to urge the Mayor to remain steadfast in reaching the task force's goals.

"The Mayor has taken the first big step and we greatly appreciate her efforts. Now, we need to see the next step, the plan that will get us \$2.8 billion to fix our deteriorating school buildings," said Briauna Wills, a BFA high school intern at the ACLU, who organized

the action at City Hall.

Other students gave testimonies on the condition of their school building and how it impacts learning. **"I have asthma and the poor ventilation and excessive heat during the summer months makes my condition worse. It's hard to focus on my work and sometimes I have to miss school because it makes me sick,"** said Josiah Richardson, a high school junior.

While at City Hall, the students also met with State Delegate Shawn Tarrant of District 40. Mr. Tarrant, impressed with the students, arranged for them to present to the Baltimore City Delegation in Annapolis.

A complete overhaul of city school facilities will require city and state legislation, including a commitment of revenue, necessary to fund \$2.8 billion in school construction needs. State legislators representing Baltimore City and the Mayor must firmly commit to collaborating on finding a financing solution for Baltimore City's ailing school facilities.

Support City Students, the ACLU, and the Baltimore Education Coalition at the Baltimore City Delegation meeting to urge action on modernizing all city school facilities!

**Friday, January 28, 2011, 9:30am
Lowe House Office Building
6 Bladen St, Annapolis, MD 21401**

To RSVP, contact Frank Patinella at 410.889.8550 x 123 or patinella@aclu-md.org

ACLU Tackles LGBT Youth Bullying Prevention

In an effort to create a safe environment for LGBT youth in schools, the ACLU was instrumental in prompting the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to hold a statewide LGBT youth bullying prevention conference this fall. The ACLU and its partners trained staff, teachers and administrators from across the state on LGBT cultural competency and anti-bullying strategies. Those in attendance also had the opportunity to work together on plans for how to address bullying and encourage respect within each of their respective schools.

Nationally, approximately 160,000 students skip school each day due to fear of being bullied. Ms. Kelly L. Griffith, a former high school principal described the need to "focus on acceptance of diversity amongst students and staff" in all Maryland schools. Next steps: MSDE, ACLU and the conference planning committee will work to create regional trainings for school staff to improve school climate for all youth.

For more information, contact Kalima Young at 410.889.8550 x 134 or young@aclu-md.org

American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Education Reform Project

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