

February 2013



## Education Advocate

### **TAKE ACTION: Support New Baltimore City School Construction Bill!**

A new bill filed by the Baltimore City Delegation proposes a comprehensive approach to solve Baltimore's school construction crisis, laying the groundwork for the implementation of Baltimore City School's 10-Year Plan. Take action now and tell your elected officials that you support healthy, safe, and modern schools for Baltimore City children!

[Click here to contact your elected officials!](#)

### **New Baltimore City School Construction Bill Major Step to Transform Baltimore!**

Last year, the ACLU and partner organizations worked with the city delegation on the state "block grant" bill to establish a \$1.1 billion school construction program for Baltimore City. The General Assembly decided to order a study to answer some of the questions about the proposal. Over the past year, the state's Interagency Committee on School Construction studied the proposal and released a report answering the legislature's questions. Also, Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) and Mayor Rawlings-Blake's administration have developed a more comprehensive and detailed proposal for the city school construction program - the 10 Year Plan.

The city delegation has filed a new bill - Senate Bill 743 and House Bill 860 - Baltimore City Public School Construction Authority. This bill will ensure that the City Schools' 10-Year Plan will be successful by providing a structure to finance and manage the large-scale school construction project, with a high level of accountability and effectiveness. The bill also locks-in the current level of state funding for city school construction as part of the financing plan to complete the first phase of the 10-Year Plan.

Here are the main components of Senate Bill 743 and House Bill 860:

**State provides \$32 million or 12% of the state's public school construction funding annually**

- \$32 million of state funds, combined with committed city revenue, will be leveraged to borrow

\$1.1 billion up front for the first phase of City Schools' 10-Year Plan.

- City Schools received an average of \$36 million in state school construction funding annually since FY2007. The bill asks for a lower amount, \$32 million, to ensure that the state can meet this level of funding if the budget for school construction is lower than average.
- In years that the state allocates a higher amount of school construction funding, 12% of that allocation will guarantee that Baltimore City gets its fair share of the funding.

### Establishes the Baltimore City Public School Construction Authority

- **Alternative Financing:** The Authority will have the ability to finance the 10-Year Plan.
- **Management:** The Authority will have the ability to hire staff and enter into contracts with program management and construction firms to execute the 10-Year Plan.
- **Oversight:** The Authority's board will consist of 9 members - experts in construction, finance, and architecture - to oversee all aspects of the program. The Governor, Mayor, and city school board will each appoint 3 members to the Authority board.
- **Accountability:** The Authority will produce annual audits and quarterly reports to the city school system, the Mayor's Office and City Council, and various state agencies and legislative bodies.

### State and City Accountability

- Maintains the current responsibility of the state's Interagency Committee on School Construction to approve projects.
- Maintains the current responsibility of the city's Board of School Commissioners to approve projects.

### Other Aspects of the Bill for the 10-Year Plan

- Increases City Schools' bonding authority to \$200 million from \$100 million.
- The additional borrowing capacity is part of the 10-Year Plan to help keep schools that will not receive a renovation or be rebuilt in the first phase, adequately maintained and functional.

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