

ACLU Maryland

# EDUCATION ADVOCATE

Get Engaged

Parents, students,  
community members,  
and equitable education  
advocates, the “Kirwan”  
Commission needs to  
hear from you!



In Maryland, our current education system is not equitable or sufficient. The education reforms and funding that are adopted in 2019 will affect Maryland children for a generation. ACLU of Maryland is fighting for a [full and equitable funding formula](#) that will deliver the level of education all students need to get an excellent and free public education guaranteed by the state Constitution, especially for Black, Brown, and students from low-income families who have been underserved.

The “Kirwan” Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education is expected to release their final recommendations by the end of the year. On November 29, members of the general public and representatives of statewide and local organizations have the chance to testify and deliver a public comment **directly** to the Commission about their [preliminary recommendations](#) at a public hearing.

## WHO:

Open to all Maryland residents who want to have an impact on shaping Maryland’s education funding formula!

## WHAT:

Deliver your public comment directly to the “Kirwan” Commission” and tell them why it’s imperative their final recommendations represent full and equitable education funding in Maryland.

## WHEN:

Thursday, November 29, 2018

3:00-5:00pm – Representatives of statewide or local organization testifying on behalf of the organization (in Room 120 House Office Building)

5:30-7:30pm – Members of the general public including those affiliated with organizations but not speaking on behalf of the organizations (in the Joint Hearing Room Legislative Services Building)

## WHERE:

Annapolis, MD (see locations above)

## WHY:

The “Kirwan” Commission wants feedback on its recommendations.

## HOW:

### 1. *In-Person*

To sign up for either time slot: **By 12:00 noon on November 29**, send an email to: [PreK-12InnovationandExcellenceCommission@mlis.state.md.us](mailto:PreK-12InnovationandExcellenceCommission@mlis.state.md.us) or call Sarah Bice at (410) 946–5510/(301)970–5510.

Sign-up sheets will also be available the day of the hearing.

Please provide the following information: (1) name and contact information and (2) if you are speaking on behalf of a group, please include the name of the group. It is not required, but if you want to submit written testimony, the Commission recommends bringing 60 copies.

### 2. *Written Testimony Only*

If you are unable to come in person, or would prefer not to speak, you can submit written testimony. Please email your testimony to

[PreK-12InnovationandExcellenceCommission@mlis.state.md.us](mailto:PreK-12InnovationandExcellenceCommission@mlis.state.md.us) before November 29.

Let us know you are sending in a written testimony. Copy (cc) [education@aclu-md.org](mailto:education@aclu-md.org) on your email to the Commission.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR TESTIMONY

Maryland policymakers, through the “Kirwan” Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, have the opportunity to fulfill the constitutional promise of a “thorough and efficient” education for our children. Learn more about [ACLU of Maryland’s Kirwan priorities here](#). Based on the [Commission’s](#) and [Dr. Ivory Toldson’s](#) preliminary recommendations, here are some of ACLU of Maryland’s positions for Working Groups 1-4 to help guide you as you craft your testimony:

### **Working Group 1: Early Education**

- We support the Commission’s recommendation to provide funding for full-day Pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income families as the top priority, to be followed by a sliding scale for 4-year-olds based on family income.
- However, we urge the Commission to shorten the 10-year timeline for phase-in.

### **Working Group 2: High Quality Teachers and Leaders**

- The Commission makes major recommendations about raising teacher pay, establishing a career ladder, and providing more planning time as well as establishing more rigorous requirements for becoming a teacher.
- We support the Commission’s recommendation of recruiting culturally representative Pre-K-12 educators across the state. However, we believe there should be more emphasis on retaining those educators.
- Proposed scholarships for “highly skilled and diverse” teacher candidates should specify target goals to ensure an increase of Black and Brown teachers.
- Maryland should require that teachers be trained in cultural competency to be effective in Maryland classrooms. We support identifying and implementing culturally specific pedagogy, curriculum investments, and assessments at all grade levels.

### **Working Group 3: College and Career Readiness Pathways**

- The Commission makes detailed recommendations about career technical education and preparing students by the end of 10th grade to go into a college or career pathway.
- We support recommendations providing culturally responsive counseling and career services to increase graduation rates and transition to college/career.

## Workgroup 4: More Resources for At-Risk Students

- The Commission makes a pivotal recommendation to add funding for schools in concentrated poverty (in addition to per student funding for all students whose families are in poverty). We are not convinced, however, that the funding amount is sufficient to provide all the staffing needed to address academic, socio-emotional, and enrichment needs in these schools.
- We support collaborating with culturally specific community based organizations to provide wraparound services, youth mentoring, and other supports.
- We support recommendations that ensure all school districts, especially those serving high ratios of students of color, get their full amount of funding target.

## NEED TIPS FOR WRITING AND DELIVERING A PUBLIC COMMENT?

Here are some tips from Caylin Young, Public Policy Counsel at ACLU of Maryland:

- Keep your comment brief, efficient, and on topic.
- Introduce yourself and give your affiliation, such as student, parent, community advocate. Tell the Commission which county you are from and the name of your school (if applicable).
- Identify 3 main points maximum for your comment. You can break down each point, but stick to 3 main ones.
- Structure your comment by telling the Commission what you are going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them.
- Tell a personal story that is relevant to the specific point you are trying to address. A personal story will maximize your effectiveness.
- Thank the Commission and provide your contact information along with a few printed copies of your written testimony.
- Submit an electronic copy of your comment in advance of the hearing.
- Double-check details for submitting your public comment to make sure you have checked off everything on the list of instructions.
- Practice, practice, practice! Practicing saying your comment will not only build confidence, but will help you keep it within the allotted timeframe (3 minutes!). They may cut you off if you go over.
- Relax and don't forget to breathe!

# Time to flex your advocacy muscles! Thank you for making your voice heard.

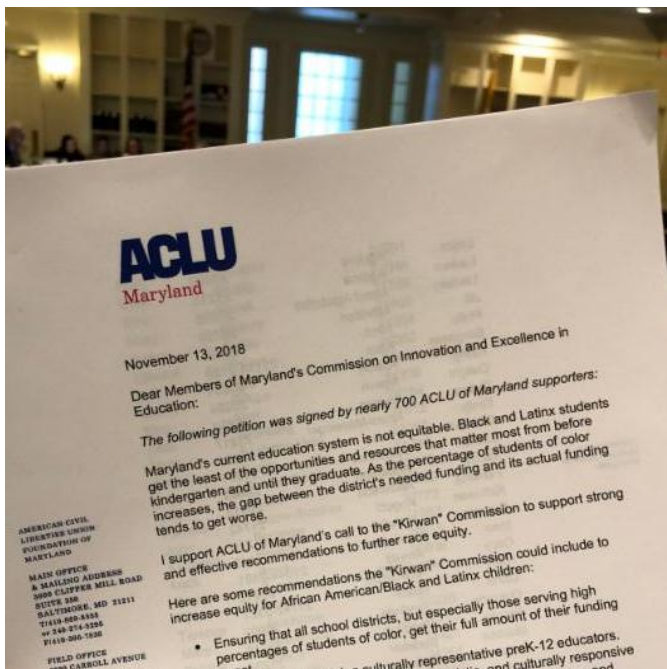
## ACLU-MD'S KIRWAN PRIORITIES



## Dr. Toldson's Race Equity Address - Round 2

Race equity expert Dr. Ivory Toldson delivered his highly anticipated second presentation to the “Kirwan” Commission along with a call to action to stand up for Black and Brown children in Maryland. The ACLU of Maryland joins Dr. Toldson in urging the Commission to include explicit policies, strategies, and staffing allocations to address racial inequities.

[READ MORE](#)



## Thank You for Taking Action for Race Equity!

Thank you to everyone who signed! We delivered nearly 700 petitions from ACLU of Maryland supporters to the Kirwan Commission calling for explicit race equity recommendations in the group's final report. Race equity must be a key priority.

[READ MORE](#)



## **American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland | Education**

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