

EDUCATION ADVOCATE

Get Engaged

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THINKING FREELY



[Full List of ACLU of Maryland's Legislative Priorities](#)

[List of ACLU of Maryland's Education Legislative Priorities](#)

GUIDE TO ACLU OF MARYLAND'S 2019 EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

ACLU of Maryland's [education priorities for the 2019 General Assembly](#) include equitable school funding, facilities our children deserve, and positive school climate. The ACLU needs your help to demand urgency, equity, and comprehensive action for Maryland's children.



EQUITABLE EDUCATION FUNDING

The Kirwan Commission, which has been working for more than two years to update Maryland's education formula, has delayed its work and will continue through fall 2019. This is an extremely disappointing development. Our children can't wait any longer for the

resources they need to realize their right to an excellent education. The ACLU and NAACP Legal Defense Fund last week [sent a letter to the Governor charging that the State is in violation of the court's orders for funding Baltimore City schools](#).

During the 2019 Legislative Session, we will work to maintain full funding of the current education funding formula and fight for it to be equitable and adequate. The Kirwan Commission recommended \$325 million to begin funding its recommendations in FY20. But the Governor did not include the \$200 million set aside by the legislature last year in his budget ([see page 7 in the Fiscal Briefing](#)) – and put much of the “lockbox” funding toward his school construction proposal. ACLU will push for [full funding of Kirwan's FY20 recommendations and passage of the larger Kirwan policy bill](#) (not yet introduced) and the \$750 million needed to begin its phase-in in FY21.



MODERN, SAFE SCHOOL FACILITIES

The Maryland State Constitution guarantees a “thorough and efficient” education, which includes school buildings that are healthy and safe and that support a high quality 21st Century curriculum. The Governor’s proposed budget includes \$438 million for FY20 for various school construction programs statewide. However, the addition of \$1.9 billion in school construction funding over the next five fiscal years in Governor Hogan’s Building Opportunity Act of 2013 ([SB159](#)) does not guarantee equity in terms of how the funds will be distributed. This bill — and the state’s Capital Improvement Program for school construction — must prioritize the schools in the worst condition, in the districts that have the least fiscal capacity or the existing disparities in school building condition between wealthy and poor districts will widen. Further, the bill proposes the use of \$125 million of the \$500 million in casino lockbox revenue annually, making the task of identifying funds for a new education formula even more challenging.



POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

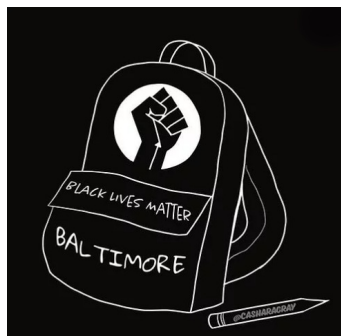
All students deserve to learn in schools that are safe and that administer discipline policies fairly. Research shows that students of color and students with disabilities disproportionately receive harsher consequences for behavioral issues, even when punishing for the same or similar incident. The ACLU will continue to support legislation that offers better training and greater specialized supports for students and school staff to create and sustain positive school climates. The ACLU will also support legislation to stop the school-to-prison-pipeline and to reduce racially disproportionate numbers of suspensions that are negatively affecting Black and Brown children in schools. Kimberly Humphrey, ACLU-MD’s education legislative counsel, served on the Maryland Commission on the School-to-Prison-Pipeline & Restorative Practices that [recently released a report and collaborative action plan](#). Based on the recommendations of this report we expect to see and support several bills introduced, including [SB223 – “Guidelines on Trauma-Informed Approach”](#). SB223 would expand the use of the trauma-informed approach used in schools and intensively train schools on becoming trauma-informed schools.

Since the start of the legislative session we’ve already had our first victory! HB31 had been filed to change state law prohibiting Baltimore City school police from carrying guns inside a school building, and to allow the local school board to make the decision. Compelling testimonies were given at the recent Baltimore City school board meeting from concerned parents, advocates including ACLU’s Kimberly Humphrey, and a direct action by students from Baltimore Algebra Project. After the board voted unanimously 10-0 to reject HB31, bill sponsor Delegate Cheryl Glenn announced that she would withdraw the bill. Another elected official outside of Baltimore City is said to be planning to introduce legislation to force the

City to arm school police. We will need your help to continue fighting this, and to make sure limited resources are used for proven strategies including restorative practices, trauma-informed care, social-emotional learning, and community schools, keeping in mind the needs of the school system's predominantly Black and Brown children.

[Check out the video from the Baltimore City school board meeting.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS



Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action - Baltimore City

February 3-10, 2019

Baltimore is joining the efforts of more than 30 cities to bring a Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action into our schools February 3rd through 10th, 2019! The Week of Action will consist of classroom curriculum resources and community building events that are centered around a set of national demands.

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Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action - Howard County

February 4-8, 2019

Howard County is joining the efforts to bring a Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action into our schools February 4-8, 2019!

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ACLU of Maryland Lobby Day in Annapolis

March 4, 2019

ACLU of Maryland's statewide grassroots lobbying efforts depend on YOUR leadership. Make an impact in Annapolis. Demand action from legislators to end youth solitary confinement, defend the rights of immigrants, and protect against warrantless use of surveillance technology by law enforcement. Get involved today!

[RSVP](#)



March for Our Schools

March 11, 2019

Maryland legislators have the historic chance to fix the \$2.9 billion funding gap impacting Maryland's schools — an average of \$2 million in every school across the state. But now some leaders in Annapolis are saying educators and students have to wait ANOTHER YEAR before they finally fix this problem. Our kids can't wait. It's time to give them the support they deserve. So on March 11th we're marching to make sure that every student in every neighborhood has a great public school and an equal opportunity for success.

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American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland | Education

Dana Vickers Shelley, Executive Director
Bebe Verdery, Education Director
Frank Patinella, Senior Education Advocate
Kimberly Humphrey, Legislative Counsel, Education
Justin Nalley, Policy Analyst
Nicole McCann, Communications & Engagement Strategist
Ashley Jones, Education Intern
Brittany Lewis, Education Intern

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