



Education Advocate

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Support Transform Baltimore in Annapolis!

Dr. Alonso to present alternative financing proposal to Senate Budget & Tax Committee; plan could leverage \$1 billion for city school buildings

Tuesday, January 24th at 1pm
Miller Senate Office Building, 11 Bladen St.

[Free bus service leaving from two locations \(RSVP below\):](#)

Baltimore Polytechnic Institute (1400 Coldspring Ln.) at 11am

Baltimore Freedom Academy (1601 E. Lombard St.) at 11:15am

The Budget and Tax Committee of the Maryland Senate scheduled a briefing with Dr. Alonso and city school system staff to discuss how state capital dollars for school construction might be leveraged to borrow large sums of money up front to rebuild city schools now. The ACLU has been advocating for this plan since releasing our report, [Buildings for Academic Excellence](#), and it is the primary focus of the [Transform Baltimore](#) campaign. This will be the first formal meeting with state legislators on this issue and it is critical that we attend in large numbers to show that education advocates and the Baltimore community fully stand behind this effort! Our students, teachers, and neighborhoods cannot wait any longer.

We're providing free bus transportation and sandwiches for those who come along for the ride, but space is limited! In order to reserve your spot, please RSVP no later than Friday, January 20th and let us know which stop you prefer. E-mail transform.bmore@gmail.com or call (410)889-8550 x123 for more information.

Fighting for education reform: 2012 legislative priorities for the Maryland General Assembly

At the ACLU, we continue to push for progressive education reforms in the state legislature. This year, we have three major priority areas:

Protect state education funding

- Support full funding of the "Thornton" education formula enacted by the Bridge to Excellence Act of 2002, including the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) and maintain funding of other parts of the education budget
- Support restoration of the state's "Maintenance of Effort" requirement that local governments contribute their required share in order to ensure that standards for adequate funding are met
- Oppose cuts to state education aid, including shifting state pension costs to local school systems and county governments
- Advocate to restore the 1% inflation factor in the "Thornton" formula, so that school systems can begin to keep pace with rising costs

Increase funding and support reform to Maryland's school buildings

- Advocate for the protection and increase of funds for improving the condition of Maryland school buildings, particularly in communities with low wealth and high levels of need
- Support policy, regulatory, and legislative efforts to implement recommendations for modernizing Baltimore City school buildings set forth in the 2010 ACLU study, [Buildings for Academic Excellence](#)

Support legislation to boost achievement among Maryland's at-risk students, such as:

- Funding full-day pre-Kindergarten for children from low-income families
- Raising the compulsory age of school attendance from age 16 to 18

Governor proposes \$350 million for school construction in state budget
Increase from last year means additional repairs statewide

On Tuesday morning, Governor O'Malley announced his proposal to include \$350 million in the state capital budget for school construction and renovation. This increased funding will help begin to address the vast backlog of repair needs, a problem that affects every school system in Maryland. In addition, the Governor estimates that the funding will support 11,650 jobs in construction and related industries.

The increase in state contribution is a welcome development, but in order to comprehensively renovate all of our facilities, especially in low wealth districts, more fundamental changes need to occur. Bebe Verdery, Director of the Education Reform Project, says "The Governor should be thanked for the increased school construction aid, and for recognizing the continuing, urgent need for school renovations. We will be seeking his support to allow state construction dollars to be delivered as block grants that could be leveraged for much greater borrowing. That could help Baltimore City schools get their first billion to address the full \$2.8 billion need."

[Click here](#) to watch coverage of the Governor's announcement from WJZ-13. Check out footage from the Transform Baltimore "Speak Out" event last November!

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American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Education Reform Project

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