



Education Advocate

March 2013

Dear Advocate,

With less than a month left in this year's Legislative Session, education issues are moving forward! The operating budget has been debated in the House, and is now moving on to the Senate. A Baltimore City School Construction deal is being negotiated to ensure all children of Maryland have the opportunity to learn in 21st century buildings that support modern education. Are you available during the day to come witness history?

[Let us know today!](#)

News: State Budget

House Passes State Budget With Increase for Education

Today the House passed a state operating budget that increases funding for education by including a 1% inflation factor. The total state budget for education has increased to \$6.1 billion dollars, an increase of approximately \$100 million over last year's budget with Baltimore City schools receiving an additional \$30 million compared to last year. While this is exciting news, it is important to understand that the level of State funding is still far below where the Thornton formula originally intended. Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute estimates that our schools receive at least \$700 million less per year than the original Thornton education formula due to several years of no inflation increases and the 1% inflation factor cap in recent years that is less than actual inflation. This means that the purchasing power of school budgets is decreasing despite the increases offered by the State. Our partners in the Maryland Education Coalition are working hard to address this issue. [Click here](#) to learn how you can help.

Budget Highlights:

- 1% Inflation factor funded. This 1% increase in per pupil funding helps districts cover the rising costs of educating students such as utilities, technology, and increasing costs of salaries for qualified teachers.
- Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) fully funded. The GCEI is meant to supplement local jurisdictions that have a higher

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You won't want to miss this!

The Baltimore City School Construction Bill will be debated on the floor of the House as early as next week. [Tell us NOW](#) if you can come during the day, on short notice, to watch this historic event.

cost of educating students based on a variety of factors that impact the cost of living and salary requirements for certain jurisdictions.

- Adjustment to Net Taxable Income Calculation. The House unanimously passed HB 229 on March 12th that would update how the state calculates the wealth of jurisdictions to determine State education funding levels. This bill ensures that all income tax filers in the state are included in the calculations for local wealth. (To read more about NTI [click here](#) and scroll down to the NTI article)
- The House removed the Governor's proposed \$1.1 million increase for funding textbooks for private schools, a position the ACLU applauds. The Senate budget committee kept the funding so the issue will likely be resolved in the budget conference committee.



[Click here](#)

to learn about other steps you can take to help win the new Buildings for Baltimore City children!



News: Baltimore City School Construction



Photo Credit: Terra Hiltner

Baltimore City School Construction Bill Being Negotiated

City Schools, the Mayor's office, legislative leaders, and the Governor's office are working to reach consensus on a financing plan for the Baltimore City School Construction bill, HB860/SB743, that will begin to overhaul City schools' decrepit buildings. As press reports have indicated, the plan will have the Maryland Stadium Authority play a central role in financing and construction, working closely with City Schools. ACLU and the Baltimore Education Coalition support these efforts and continue to emphasize the need to remain true to a pace of building laid out in the system's 10 year plan. Stay tuned for more details in the next several days!

Events

Friends and Family Day in Annapolis on March 18th

Join the Baltimore Education Coalition in Annapolis on March 18th for a Friends and Family lobby night. It is important that elected officials from around the state hear about the conditions of Baltimore City schools and the need for action in [this](#) legislative session. Bring your family and friends from around the state and visit their elected officials to share your stories and ask for their support of the Baltimore City School Construction Bill.

When: Monday, March 18th from 6pm-8pm
Where: Rm 145 House Office Building, Annapolis, MD
Who: Friends and family of the children of Baltimore!

To register for the evening please [click here](#).

Can't make it on Monday but want to help? Ask your friends from around the state to make a phone call to their legislators between 7 and 8 pm Monday night to tell their legislators that they support Baltimore City School Construction because they believe in 21st century schools for all the children of Maryland. (Check out [this site](#) to help contact information for legislators across the state)

Our efforts to ensure all children have the the resources necessary to succeed in the classroom are paying off, but we can't stop now. Your advocacy is critical - urge our elected officials to support a fully funded education budget and to support HB860, to get the school buildings necessary to support 21st century education. Please consider [joining us](#) in Annapolis in the upcoming weeks to show your support!

Sincerely,

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ACLU-MD Education Reform Project

American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Education Reform Project

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