



# Education Reform Project

## Legislative Session Update

February 29, 2016

Pre-K, funding for Baltimore City Schools, and reform of the State's "Thornton" education funding formula are just some of the goings on in Annapolis over the last two weeks! See below for highlights of the ACLU of Maryland's Education Reform Project's work over that time.

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### BEC Escalates Pressure on Governor



The Baltimore Education Coalition (BEC) brought advocates together for a [press conference in Annapolis](#) last Thursday to highlight Gov. Hogan's silence in response to a [recent letter](#) BEC sent requesting a **\$25 M. supplemental budget** to keep state aid stable to Baltimore City Schools. Afterward, BEC members testified before a Senate budget subcommittee to discuss the serious issues students and educators face, and the possible impact of losing another \$20-plus M. in state education aid for the second year in a row. Click [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) to see local TV news coverage of the press conference.

### ACLU Pushes Funding for Full Day Pre-Kindergarten



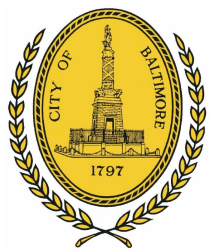
One of the priorities of the ACLU of Maryland's Education Reform Project is to expand access and funding for Pre-Kindergarten across the state, especially for low-income families. Before the session, the ACLU worked with state and local coalitions to draft a bill ([SB461](#)) to properly fund Pre-K in the "Thornton" state education funding formula (right now, a portion of compensatory aid for low-income students is supposed to cover the costs of Pre-K, but it does not). The ACLU (click [here](#) to read our testimony) brought together parents and teachers to testify in support of the bill last week, emphasizing the value of full-day programs. The ACLU also supported two other Pre-K bills that expand access ([SB369](#)) and funding ([HB668](#)). Click [here](#) and [here](#) to read the testimony.

### Bill Filed to Create Blue Ribbon Commission on Education Funding



With the [Study of Adequacy of Funding for Education](#), a State-led review of the "Thornton" education funding formula currently underway, ACLU is working with leaders on a bill ([HB999](#)) this session to create the **Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education**. The Commission would examine the findings in the adequacy study and make legislative recommendations. As the first reevaluation of the funding formula since its creation in 2000, the ACLU is paying particularly close attention to the process and serves on a stakeholder group that advises the consultants writing the adequacy study.

### Need for City School Building Repairs Highlighted



This year, Baltimore City Schools requested more than **\$85 M. in school repair projects** through the State's school construction program. The vast majority of those requests were for basic infrastructure repairs to roofs, fire safety systems, boilers, etc. The State has only provided \$24.5 M. thus far. Comptroller Peter Franchot has recently been demanding both Baltimore City and County use their limited State school construction dollars to purchase and install portable air conditioning units in schools without A/C. When the Comptroller visited the City delegation's weekly meeting in Annapolis, Delegates pointed out the dire, competing needs for repairs in City Schools' buildings compared to lack of funding. The Baltimore Sun editorial board [took Franchot to task](#) last month on this issue. Delegates noted that if state leaders want to prioritize A/C over heat, then the State needs to provide more money.

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