

*ACLU ED ADVO NEWSLETTER***In This Issue:****February 2008**

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Dr. Alonso presents School-based Budget Plan to City Council

Joint Hearing of City Council Budget and Education Committees: Progress on School-Based Budgeting Format for FY 2009 Budget of the Baltimore City School System (BCPSS)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 4:00pm

City Council Chambers, 4th floor, City Hall (Bring picture ID for admission.)

Dr. Andres Alonso has agreed to attend and present on progress and particulars. All are invited, and public testimony will be taken, but, in the interests of time, direct questioning will be reserved to City Councilmembers.

Facility Solutions Informational Meeting, Feb. 21, 2008 @ 6:30 p.m., North Avenue Building

Facility Solutions III: Public Informational Meeting- Thursday, Feb. 21, 6:30 p.m.

The Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) has created a plan called Facility Solutions III to comply with a state directive to close excess space due to decreased student enrollment, and to renovate other facilities. Changes are being proposed to the plan that was approved last year.

These changes will be described and public input sought at a meeting:

Thursday, February 21, 2008 at 6:30pm in the BCPSS School Board Meeting Room, at 200 E. North Avenue.

The proposed changes relate primarily to slowing the phase-in to K-8 schools in certain areas. At recent area meetings, many principals, teachers, and community activists voiced their concerns that schools that were to receive 6th-8th grades do not have space to do so.

The Facility Solutions Citywide Committee will vote on the proposed changes on February 28th and those recommendations will be forwarded to the school board. If you have any concerns or would like to learn about the proposed changes, attend tomorrow's meeting.

ACLU Appoints New PCAB members

The ACLU of Maryland is proud to announce the nomination of its two new Parent Community Advisory Board members: Michelle Green and Helena Napper. Both PCAB nominees have been strong advocates in the education community for a number of years and will be a wonderful addition to the transitioning board at PCAB, which boasts nine new members. ACLU appoints its PCAB members as a result of the Consent Decree signed in 1996, which arose out of the Bradford v. Maryland lawsuit. Michael Carter, Chair of PCAB for the past three years, will be stepping down from the position in late February. Mr. Carter will continue to chair the Facility Solutions community and work as one of the city's most committed youth advocates. The ACLU looks forward to the continuing strong commitment of PCAB to issues in the school and community in the future.



Campaign For Adequate School Facilities

The ACLU's Education Reform Project staff organized a small group of residents and coalition groups to testify on school construction funding at hearings in Annapolis on February 11th and 13th. The group had three points to present:

1. To maintain the increased level of funding of \$333 million dollars allocated by Governor O'Malley for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for school construction
2. To maintain the level of funding and integrity of the Aging Schools Program (ASP)
3. To fund the survey of all public school facilities in Maryland mandated by law

In addition to the ACLU, the participants included Maryland PTA, the League of Women Voters in Baltimore City, and 2 PTA activists from John Eager Howard Elementary School and Forest Park High School. The group spoke out against the proposed cuts in ASP as dozens of small renovation projects that are non-bondable (under \$200,000) are dependent on this fund. Darryl Smith and William Kelly provided testimony on the benefits that their children's schools received from ASP. John Eager Howard Elementary School (JEH) was able to replace the deteriorated floors and repaint flaking walls in their gym. Mr. Smith pointed out that the renovation not only serves the students but also the community as youth and adult afterschool and weekend programs make use of the gym regularly throughout the year. Mr. Kelly spoke to the health and safety improvements made to the boiler and swimming pool at Forest Park High School. JEH also significantly benefited from the state's CIP with the installation of new doors and windows throughout the building. Both parents closed with statements that commended the state's construction programs and urged that these programs expand due to the great need for school renovation.

In addition to reiterating the importance of the CIP and ASP, the coalition groups urged the committee to fund the statewide survey of public school

facilities that was supposed to be completed by 2007 according to the law. The law also set a goal to bring all school buildings to minimum standards by 2014. The testimonies restated the need to have a detailed and comprehensive assessment of school facilities so that the state's Public School Construction Program and legislators have accurate information as to the progress being made to public school buildings.

The Campaign for Adequate School Facilities has just begun and to be successful, we need to build a critical mass of people to join. Please contact Frank Patinella at 410.889.8550 x123 or patinella@aclu-md.org to learn more.

Algebra Project Students Demonstrate in Annapolis

The Algebra Project students participated in a rally and march entitled "CSI Annapolis" on February 6, 2008 in Annapolis. More than 300 students and advocates attended the teach-in, rally, and demonstration. The students demonstrated to address their continued requests for additional funding, peer-to-peer tutoring, jobs in a knowledge-based economy and new facilities. The Algebra Project's goal was to make the Governor and state legislature provide an adequate education to public school students as mandated in the state constitution.

Here is a link to the video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSRgIsECnvE>

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