



3600 Clipper Mill Road, Suite 350, Baltimore, MD 21211 410-889-8555 • 410-366-7838 (FAX) • [www.aclu-md.org](http://www.aclu-md.org)

---

For more information, call:  
Bebe Verdery, 410-889-8555

### **DR. THORNTON, STATE, AND NATIONAL GROUPS JOIN CITY PARENTS IN COURT**

Parents of at-risk children in Baltimore City Schools on January 24 asked the Maryland Court of Appeals to reject the State's appeal and uphold the Baltimore City Circuit Court's August ruling to restore funding to Baltimore City classrooms this school year. In that ruling, Judge Joseph H.H. Kaplan offered several options to return \$30-45 million to the schools, an amount he determined was cut from students' programs in the attempt to address the Baltimore City Public Schools' fiscal deficit.

Joining in support of the plaintiffs in Friend of the Court (amicus curiae) briefs filed with the Court are a number of high-profile parties with long-time interests in education reform and funding. Dr. Alvin Thornton, Associate Provost of Howard University and esteemed Chair of the "Thornton" Commission (whose recommendations led to the Bridge to Excellence in Education Act) joined with the Maryland League of Women Voters, the Maryland Education Coalition, and the American Association of University Women (MD) to ask that the Circuit Court's ruling and student's state constitutional rights to an adequate education be upheld.

"We are gratified that this distinguished group has chosen to weigh in on the side of Baltimore City children," said Bebe Verdery, Education Reform Director of the ACLU-MD. "They understand that the constitutional right to an adequate education should be upheld for children in Baltimore and for children across the state."

The National School Boards Association, the Education Law Center (N.J.), the Center for Fiscal Equity (N.Y.), and the national Rural School and Community Trust argued in their Friend-of-the-Court brief that Maryland's ruling was well within the court's authority, citing 23 other states where judges have ruled for the plaintiffs and are interpreting the state constitutions to uphold funding plans to bring those school systems to constitutional adequacy.

The needs of minority and special needs children was emphasized in an amicus brief filed by the Maryland State Conference of NAACP Branches, the Caucus of Black School Board Members, and the Latino Coalition for Justice. Their brief notes the "achievement gap" for these students and the additional resources that are necessary for students to reach state standards.

The Board of School Commissioners of Baltimore City and the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore filed separate amicus briefs in support of the plaintiffs.

The State's reply brief in *Bradford v. Maryland State Board of Education* is due in mid-February and oral argument is expected in the Court of Appeals in early March.

- more -

Resources for Baltimore City school children still remain in limbo as the parties apparently refuse to comply with Judge Kaplan's ruling while awaiting the hearing in the State's highest court.

*Bradford v. Maryland State Board of Education*

Brief for the *Bradford* Plaintiffs:

Howrey Simon Arnold & White, Washington, D.C., and the American Civil Liberties Union-MD

Amicus Curiae (Friend-of-the-Court) Briefs:

Joseph, Greenwald & Laake, Greenbelt, MD, for:

Dr. Alvin Thornton  
Maryland Education Coalition  
American Association of University Women- MD  
Maryland League of Women Voters

Dickstein Shapiro Morin & Oshinsky, Washington, D.C. for:

Maryland State Conference of NAACP Branches  
Maryland Latino Coalition for Justice  
Maryland Caucus of Black School Board Members

Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr, Washington, D.C. for:

National School Boards Association  
Education Law Center  
Campaign for Fiscal Equity  
Rural School and Community Trust

#