

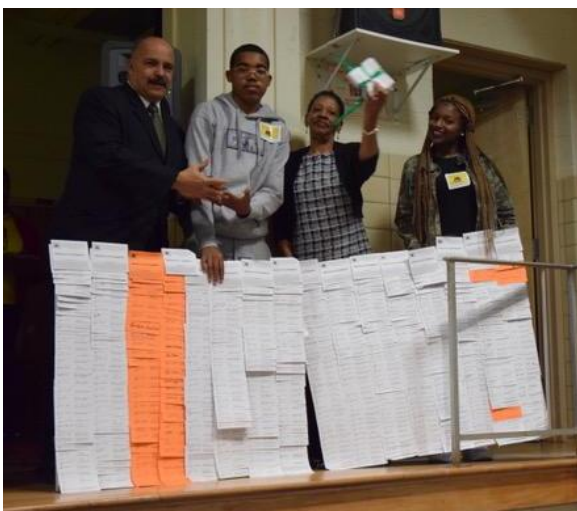
Baltimore Advocates Unite Elected City Leaders For Additional School Funding, Needed Formula Changes

Last month, the state's Kirwan Commission announced that its final report on a new education funding formula would be postponed until after the 2018 legislative session in Annapolis (see article below). For those fighting for fully funded schools in Baltimore City, this meant a delay in fixing the city school system's structural budget deficit, caused by a cut to the current state education funding formula in 2008.



Mayor Pugh ensures the audience that winning a new state education funding formula is a top priority to move the city forward.

In an effort to ensure that Baltimore's schools would not be ignored this year, the **Baltimore Education Coalition (BEC)** launched a campaign to fight for additional funding during the legislative session in Annapolis in 2018. Over 300 parents, students, teachers, and advocates attended BEC's *Unite for Our Schools* event on November 29th, which also brought together city officials including Mayor Pugh, Dr. Santelises and members of the city school board, the city delegation, and city council. [BEC asked officials to make passage of Kirwan a top priority for the next 2 sessions, and to push for additional funding this year.](#)



BEC presented to delegation chairs, Sen. Carter Conway & Del. Anderson, postcards signed by 1,000 parents at 40 Back-to-School nights

"Delay Delay is not okay!" exclaimed Shamarla McCoy, BEC member from Advocates for Children and Youth. "We are going to be present in Annapolis and ask for a down payment on funding this year."

BEC leaders spoke to the components of the state's funding formula that need to be improved to direct additional resources to low-wealth school districts for programs such as community schools, out of school time and enrichment activities, and pre-k for low-income 3- and 4-year old children.

"When a young person comes to school hungry, it's a challenge to concentrate on math problems," said George Buntin, Elev8's Community School Coordinator at Cherry Hill Elementary. "Using schools as hubs, the Community Schools strategy brings educators and other partners together to offer a range of opportunities and supports to children as well as their families and communities."

Equity was also a prominent theme for the night. The commission reported that Maryland spends 5% less on schools serving low-income students than on those in wealthy communities, making it the 15th most regressive in funding equity in the nation.

"If we look at the counties across Maryland that are the furthest from adequate funding, it is the poorer counties," said Tanyah Bridgewater, student at City Neighbors High School. "The state needs to fully fund all counties but especially those without as much wealth."

Kirwan Commission Update: Recommendations In Process

The "Kirwan" Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education is working toward consensus on details of the [Building Blocks for a World-Class State Education System](#) framework with an interim report to be finalized Jan. 8.

This past Monday, the Commission announced that they would cost out policy recommendations in the first quarter of 2018 and the interim report would not make recommendations on the base foundation funding or the weights for "at-risk" students - the amount of funding that would be "adequate" for students to meet Maryland standards.

The ACLU has paid particular attention to [Building Block 2](#) (BB2), advocating in a variety of ways toward improved systems and funding for children from low-income families and children of color. BB2: "Provide more resources for at-risk students so that Maryland students can achieve world-class college and career readiness standards,". The Commission is moving toward promising improvements to the formula in this area. At the last meeting, they discussed recommending (in part):

- Funding be distributed **equitably** both among & within school districts so students who need additional support receive it
- The weight for special education should be increased
- A **new weight for schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty** should be added
- Wraparound services for at-risk students & their families must be significantly expanded by, for example, **community schools**
- Substantially more money to strengthen **early childhood** education
- Significant reallocation of existing funds
- High-quality teachers teach in high needs schools
- For students not on track, more intensive support, including **one-on-one tutoring**
- Whether funding should "follow the child" to the school level.

The Commission meets next on Dec. 20, 9:30 am, House Appropriations Cmte, Annapolis and can be streamed live [here](#). Follow us on Twitter for live tweets that day!

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