



## BALTIMORE EDUCATION COALITION

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*The BEC's mission is to ensure that all children in Baltimore receive an excellent education.*

### Members

*Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY)*  
*American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)*  
*Baltimore Movement of Rank and File Educators (BMORE)*  
*Baltimore Curriculum Project (BCP)*  
*Cathedral of the Incarnation*  
*Child First Authority*  
*City Neighbors Foundation*  
*Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc*  
*Downtown Baltimore Family Alliance (DBFA)*  
*ELEV8 Baltimore, Division of Humanim*  
*Higher Achievement Baltimore*  
*KIPP Baltimore*  
*League of Women Voters (LWV)*  
*Maryland Out of School Time (MOST)*  
*MD Alliance for Public Charter Schools*  
*Organizing Youth in Education (OYE)*  
*PTA Council of Baltimore City*  
*Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC)*  
*Roland Park EMS PTO*  
*School Social Workers in Maryland*  
*St. Luke's Episcopal Church*  
*Strong City Baltimore*  
*York Road Partnership*

June 22, 2017

Dear Principal,

The Baltimore Education Coalition (BEC) has been fighting for adequate and equitable funding for city schools since 2009. Over the past nine years, we have successfully fought back over \$150 million in proposed state cuts to Baltimore schools. This year, we launched the #FixTheGap Campaign and rallied over 2,000 people in Annapolis to win additional funding from the state and city to help mitigate City Schools' structural deficit and protect schools. But as you know, there is still a major funding gap, and our schools have lost staff and resources. As a principal, we understand that you need sufficient funding to develop a comprehensive program with the proper staffing and programs to maximize academic outcomes for your students. Now, with the state's Kirwan Commission reevaluating the education funding formula, we have a big opportunity to act.

BEC seeks to partner with you and your school community to ensure that the Kirwan Commission and state and city lawmakers hear from students, parents, teachers, principals, and other education advocates about what city schools and students need to succeed. To get school communities informed and organized around this campaign, BEC requests 2-3 minutes on the agenda at your Back to School Night in September. BEC can provide a presenter but we strongly feel that a parent, teacher, or another advocate affiliated with your school would be preferable. BEC will provide the training and materials needed.

The presentations will highlight these facts around education funding:

- The state's constitution guarantees a "thorough and efficient" education to all public school students in Maryland.
- The district court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in the ACLU's lawsuit *Bradford vs. Maryland State Board of Education*, which contended that Baltimore schools were grossly underfunded.
- In response, the state legislature passed the "Thornton" funding law, which intended to guarantee adequate funding to all Maryland schools.
- "Thornton" directed \$270 million in additional funding annually to City Schools by 2008.
- The state partially cut "Thornton" funding in 2008, and by the state's own measure, City Schools fall \$290 million short of "adequate" funding – the primary reason for City Schools' budget deficit.
- A new study procured by the MD State Department of Education

reported that City Schools need approximately \$360 million more to reach adequate funding levels, given the new Common Core standards.

BEC will also ask parents and teachers to complete a postcard that we will send to the Mayor, Kirwan Commission members, and city and state lawmakers. The postcard will highlight these priorities for a new education funding formula:

- 1. Sufficient per pupil funding & additional funding for high need students:** Current per pupil funding has fallen short due to the cut to the Thornton formula in 2008. Also, the funding formula must include sufficient levels of additional funding for special education, low-income students, and English language learners.
- 2. Additional funding for schools that have concentrated poverty:** Schools that have high levels of students in poverty must receive additional funding for wrap-around services (community school programs), afterschool/summer learning opportunities, and other critical programs.
- 3. Per pupil funding for 3- and 4-year old Pre-K students.** City Schools provides full-day Pre-K programs for 4-year olds citywide but does not receive per pupil funding for them. Further, the benefits of expanding Pre-K to include 3-year olds is well known, and should be a priority for the new state funding formula.
- 4. Wealth Equity:** The state must ensure that the formula is equitable by requiring that each county and the city pay what it can afford. This will determine appropriate funding levels from the state.

The campaign will extend beyond Back to School Nights, as we will meet with our state senators, delegates, and other key state legislators over the next several months. BEC will be largely present in Annapolis during the 2018 session and we will provide opportunities for school communities to attend rallies and press events, testify at hearings, write letters, and more.

The opportunity to ensure the state education funding formula provides sufficient funding to our schools may come around once every 15-20 years. Let's work together to ensure that school communities are informed and equipped to act! Please let us know about presenting at your Back-to-School Night. In planning these presentations, we are asking for the date and time of your event, and who from your school can be the presenter or contact person for BEC. We can coordinate with your contact to ensure that there is a trained presenter for your event, whether that be someone from your school or from BEC. Respond to Frank Patinella and Sharicca Bolden, Co-Chairs of BEC, at [patinella@aclu-md.org](mailto:patinella@aclu-md.org) and [sboldon@strongcitybaltimore.org](mailto:sboldon@strongcitybaltimore.org), or call us at 410.889.8550 x 123.

We are excited for this opportunity to equip your school community with tools to be strong advocates for students. Over the course of the year, we will continue to offer leadership development opportunities to family and student leaders as the campaign moves forward. We look forward to hearing from you. Please reach out if you have questions or if you would like to learn more about the campaign. Thank you for your service to city school children!

Sincerely,

Frank Patinella, Co-Chair of BEC  
Sharicca Boldon, Co-Chair of BEC