

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
SB 161 - Community Schools – Alterations
March 26, 2024**

SUPPORT

Chair Barnes and members of the committee, AFT-MD asks for a favorable report on SB 161, which seeks to amend requirements for community schools. These proposed alterations hold potential to enhance the effectiveness and impact of community schools in Maryland.

This legislation introduces several key provisions aimed at enhancing the operation and effectiveness of community schools including:

- It mandates the Director of Community Schools to develop a standardized needs assessment tool to facilitate the evaluation of student, family, and community needs, ensuring that resources and services are targeted effectively.
- Community school coordinators will be required to complete an annual evaluation to assess the impacts of community school programs and services on students, families, and the community, providing valuable insights for ongoing improvement.
- They are also tasked with periodically reviewing and modifying the school's implementation plan based on changing needs and evaluation results. This iterative process ensures that community schools remain responsive to evolving challenges and priorities.
- The State Department of Education will provide feedback on needs assessments and implementation plans, offering valuable guidance and support to community schools statewide.

These provisions align with the core principles and objectives of community schools, emphasizing collaboration, accountability, and responsive decision making. By standardizing assessment tools, evaluation processes, and oversight mechanisms, SB 161 ensures consistency and quality across community schools while allowing for flexibility to meet diverse local needs.

