



AFT 340 AFL-CIO
Seton Business Park
5800 Metro Drive, 2nd Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 161/HB200

Community Schools Alterations

Senate - January 24, 2024 - Budget and Tax Committee @ 1 p.m.

House - January 30, 2024 - Ways & Means Committee @ 1 p.m.

Position: Favorable

The Baltimore Teachers Union supports Senate Bill 161/HB200, Which strengthens the Community School related provisions of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future to align with nationally recognized best practices and established definitions of Community School Implementation and to provide local flexibility with guardrails to LEAs with fewer than 40 schools

The Baltimore Teachers Union represents 8,280 teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, clinicians, librarians, secretaries, community school site specialists, bus transportation aides, and many more school-based and central office support staff. We are 4 out of 5 workers in Baltimore City Public Schools, serving 75,811 students and their families. Our national union, the American Federation of Teachers, has over 1.7 million members in the United States and its territories.

When Maryland passed Community Schools legislation in 2019, our lawmakers, including bill sponsors Senator Mary Washington and Delegate Eric Ebersole, intended to codify national best practices for Community School implementation into state law, in preparation for the investment we would make with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Unfortunately, through the legislative process, much of that important language about best practices and the role of Community Schools Coordinators was lost. Senate Bill 206/HB200 seeks to right this wrong.

This bill requires plans to be submitted for coordinating CPG funds for all school districts and restores key definition elements to community schools. The bill emphasizes the inclusion of families and community partners in Community School leadership teams and requires MSDE to

consult with local Community School implementers and stakeholders to create and implement a common needs assessment tool.

Baltimore City Public Schools have the largest number of designated Community Schools in the state and we believe this bill will improve the governance and support of the community school model. **BTU urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 161/HB200.**