

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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School Commissioners*

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Chief Executive Officer

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Opposition of
Senate Bill 275
Education – Community and Local Accountability for
Struggling Schools (CLASS) Act of 2020 –
Innovation Schools**

February 4, 2020

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners understand the sponsors desire to provide community input and local accountability into the schoolhouse, but the school board must oppose the legislation because accountability and community input are already provided for under the current Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools as identified by the Maryland State Department of Education.

Currently, schools that are designated as one star are identified by MSDE as CSI schools. MSDE makes this designation every three years, with the first cohort identified in December 2019. As a CSI school, in partnership with MSDE, a root cause analysis (RCA) is completed by a third party with input from multiple stakeholders. The stakeholder list is similar to that outlined in Senate Bill 275.

Based on the RCA, the school, in collaboration with stakeholders, must develop an intervention plan. The entire process for CSI schools is in accordance with the ESSA plan that MSDE submitted to the United States Department of Education. Due to a process already in place to support the improvement of low-performing schools, this legislation appears to require a duplication of previously completed work. Additionally, the proposal related to curriculum may conflict with the requirements under the State's ESSA plan. Finally, the legislation does not appear to include any supplemental funding to support the school turnaround work. CSI schools do receive additional grant funds through and SEA Title I reservation that is allocated on a per pupil basis.

For the foregoing reason, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners must oppose Senate Bill 275 and urge an unfavorable report.

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