



Maryland State Board of Education

200 WEST BALTIMORE ST. / BALTIMORE, MD 21201-2595 / (410) 767-0467

February 4, 2019

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

Re: Senate Bill 275 (Administration) Education – Community and Local Accountability for Struggling Schools (CLASS) Act of 2020 – Innovation Schools

Dear Chair Pinsky:

The State Board of Education (State Board) submits this letter in support of Senate Bill (SB 275 (Administration) Education – Community and Local Accountability for Struggling Schools (CLASS) Act of 2020, which requires a county board of education to designate a school as an “innovation school” if that school has been given a one star rating under the accountability system for the two consecutive school years; and to establish an Innovation Plan Committee for each innovation school to conduct an investigation for the causes of poor student performance and to develop an Innovation Plan. The bill also requires the State Board to provide planning and implementation grants to eligible schools, provide technical assistance and support, collect, and publish data and research, among other things.

This legislation aligns with the priorities of the State Board and Maryland State Department of Education to improve school performance and foster greater accountability among local school systems for enhancing student achievement. The MSDE is currently collaborating with low performing schools and school systems to address curricular gaps and support the implementation of standards-aligned curricula. The process also includes conducting a needs assessment and root cause analysis to determine targeted areas for support and improvement. The information gathered informs the development of an intervention plan, developed in partnership with the school community, and implementation of appropriate evidence-based interventions to address the root cause(s) of school performance problems.

SB 275 supplements many of the department’s current school improvement efforts by providing resources to support local systems in developing and implementing innovative plans for improvement. The bill also provides an additional layer of accountability by requiring regular monitoring and updates on goals, progress and outcomes. Further, it facilitates communication and collaboration among schools, school systems, key community stakeholders, and the MSDE, and provides flexibility in developing a customized strategy for improving and measuring school performance and student success.

The State Board supports a favorable report on SB 275. For additional information or questions, please contact Ms. Tiffany Clark at (410) 767-0469, or tiffany.clark1@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Warner I. Sumpter".

Brigadier General Warner I Sumpter (Ret.)
President, Maryland State Board of Education

cc: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Schools
Tiffany Johnson Clark