



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**HB 347 – Education – Community and Local Accountability for Struggling Schools  
(CLASS) Act of 2020 – Innovation Schools  
House Ways and Means Committee  
February 19, 2020**

**OPPOSE**

**Donna S. Edwards  
President  
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB 347 – Education – Community and Local Accountability for Struggling Schools (CLASS) Act of 2020 – Innovation Schools. My name is Donna S. Edwards and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future is our path forward for educational funding and policy. What we do this session in order to secure the future for our children is of paramount importance. HB 347, unfortunately, upends this discussion and goes directly against the grain of the recommendations provided by Commission on Excellence and Innovation in Education.

Where the Blueprint legislation sets a new accountability system of all schools, the CLASS Act creates a secondary – and perfunctory – system of accountability for struggling schools. This will create a byzantine system of different accountability metrics for schools within the same jurisdiction, hindering the ability of LEAs to serve all of the students in their district in an efficient manner. Where the Blueprint fully aligns with the current responsibilities of MSDE, the CLASS Act appears to ignore them by having “Innovation Plan Committees” craft Innovation Plans based on student outcome data, while MSDE is currently in the process of transitioning to a new assessment regime and will have to delay their report card on schools until 2021. The CLASS Act attempts to “leap-frog” past MSDE, completely.

Under the CLASS Act, Collective Bargaining goes from being a single jurisdiction contract that is negotiated, to a slew of “side agreements” with specific schools. This undermines the entire point of the CBA, and will lead to far worse outcomes for teachers, staff, and students.

**We urge an unfavorable report on HB 347.**