



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

Office. (410) 269-1940 • Fax (410) 280-2956

*President*

Donna S. Edwards

*Secretary-Treasurer*

Gerald W. Jackson

## **HB 1349 – Education Support Professionals – Workgroup and Bonus House Ways and Means Committee March 10, 2022**

### **SUPPORT**

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

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1349 – Education Support Professionals – Workgroup and Bonus. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was a once-in-a-generation re-imagining of public education in our state. From educational funding formula restructuring to Community School Expansion; from per pupil funding increases to setting a 45% goal of high school graduates achieving an industry approved occupational credential via career and technical education (CTE), the Blueprint has been a sea-change in how we address the educational needs of our students and how we honor the dignity of teachers that serve our State. However, a large and incredibly important group of workers – Educational Support Professionals – were largely left out of the Blueprint legislation:

Education Support Professionals (ESPs) strengthen our schools, communities, and associations across the country. They play an important role on the education team and in the lives of students both inside and outside of the classroom. They keep our schools running and our students safe, healthy, and ready to learn every day. HB 1349 creates a workgroup to determine how many of our ESPs earn a living wage, and to study increasing wages for our education support professionals to attract and retain them. Additionally, it appropriates \$1000 to each noncertificated education support professional – in two installments of \$500 – as a bonus in recognition of their existing work.

It is time that we correct the oversight in the Blueprint, and it is time that we give a direct bonus to our education support professionals, and, for these reasons, **we urge a favorable report on HB 1349.**