



**PSSAM**  
Public School Superintendents' Association  
OF MARYLAND

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**BILL:** HB 428

**TITLE:** Community Schools - Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund - Establishment

**DATE:** March 26, 2024

**POSITION:** Favorable with Amendments

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

**CONTACT:** Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports House Bill 428 with amendments.**

This bill creates the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program to provide rental assistance to eligible student households; it requires the Department of Housing and Community Development, in consultation with the State Department of Education, to administer the Program and establish the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Fund.

PSSAM strongly supports the creation of this Fund and the recognition of community schools as important conduits to serve our neediest families; however, as currently drafted the bill requires community schools coordinators identify eligible students and facilitate direct payments for rent and utilities to families.

This is way outside of the scope of work for community-based practitioners who are in schools to provide wraparound supports and establish trusting environments for families. Any housing assistance is most appropriately administered by county and state housing departments who regularly assist families with these intimate financial details and should be handled outside of any relationships with school personnel.

We strongly advocate for the removal of local school personnel, namely the community schools coordinators, from playing any implementation role in this new program except for providing information and referrals as appropriate.

We request the bill be amended as follows:

Page 3, new line 30-31:

(IV) Providing information about the availability of the rental assistance program to families, including eligibility requirements, and how to apply.

Page 7, strike lines 12-15 and replace with:

(F) Upon request, a local school system shall provide verification of student enrollment, and inclusion in the compensatory education enrollment, or eligibility for McKinney Vento Assistance.

The first amendment ensures that the dissemination of information regarding this program reaches community school families. The second amendment ensures best practices regarding financial privacy for families by verifying eligibility through established procedures regarding income verification at the district level, keeping it as far away from the relationship between families and their school communities and school personnel.

For these reasons, PSSAM requests a **favorable with amendments** committee report for House Bill 428.