



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director

BILL: House Bill 998
TITLE: County Boards of Education - In-Person Instruction and Related Services – Requirement
DATE: February 24, 2021
POSITION: Oppose
COMMITTEE: House Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

This legislation would require that for the 21/21 school year, school buildings are open each school day to provide in-person instruction and related services, including services such as speech-language pathology services, counseling, physical therapy, and occupational therapy, to certain students.

The Public Schools Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM) **opposes** HB 998.

While we share the sponsor's enthusiasm to return as many students as possible to in-person learning, we oppose this legislation as it removes the authority of county boards and superintendents to make decisions that reflect the health and safety of their individual communities. For months, we have been working alongside our local health departments, sometimes conferring on a daily basis, to make the best decisions on how to safely return to school. This legislation does not take into account unique local circumstances, which may include outbreaks and significant community infection, but rather demands a blanket return to in-person learning.

The pandemic has had a profound impact on the delivery of public education, and school systems and superintendents are working tirelessly to provide for a safe and healthy return for students and staff. This legislation would hamper our return-to-school efforts and remove all local authority and discretion.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **OPPOSES** House Bill 998 and requests an **unfavorable** committee report.

One Voice, One Vision for Maryland's Students

P. O. Box 12040, Baltimore, MD 21281 Cell: 410-935-7281 Web Site: www.pssam.org

Email: marypat.fannon@pssam.org
