



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: HB 935

TITLE: Public Schools - Mathematics Credit - College Preparatory Computer Science or Computer Programming Course

DATE: March 1, 2023

POSITION: Oppose

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 935.

House Bill 935 would authorize a student who is enrolled at a Maryland public high school to satisfy a graduation requirement to earn credits in mathematics by completing a credit in certain college preparatory computer science or computer programming courses. This bill specified that in order to satisfy the graduation requirement, the student must be enrolled in the computer science or programming course concurrently with or after completing Algebra II. Furthermore, the bill requires all local boards of education to certify that a college preparatory computer science or computer programming course may count toward a student's mathematics graduation requirement.

PSSAM has a longstanding policy of opposing efforts by the General Assembly to codify practices regarding curriculum standards, assessments, or in this case, graduation requirements. Local superintendents strongly believe that the role of developing graduation requirements belongs solely to local boards of education in conjunction with MSDE. Rest assured, PSSAM's opposition to this bill does not rest on an evaluation of the merits of teaching any specified subject matter, but rather opposition to statutorily mandating revisions to existing graduation requirements.

The Maryland General Assembly, in creating the Maryland State Board of Education and local boards of education, has delegated to them the responsibility of delivering a high-quality statewide system of public education through State standards and accountability measures, as

well as locally governed and administered curriculum. The State Board establishes State content frameworks, state assessment standards, and minimum state graduation requirements, while each local board and school system implement locally-developed curriculum to ensure that the state content frameworks are followed, student performance standards are met, and students are prepared to meet graduation requirements.

Maryland's superintendents have long supported high-quality, twenty-first century computer science and computer programming curriculum in all local systems. In 2018, PSSAM submitted testimony in support of legislation introduced by former delegate, and now Lieutenant Governor, Aruna Miller, which required all public high schools to offer at least one high-quality computer science course beginning in the 2021-2022 school year. This legislation has since gone into effect, prompting local systems to implement educational programming at the local level in ways that best serve their respective populations.

Again, PSSAM's opposition to this bill does not rest on the merits of instruction pertaining to computer science and computer programming. Rather, it rests on the implications of statutorily mandated or modified course requirements for high school graduation. House Bill 985, alongside similar bills which seek to interject or extract piecemeal segments of the curriculum and course offerings, only serve to weaken the effectiveness of the overall educational curriculum.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 935 and urges an unfavorable report.