



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

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**BILL:** SB 441  
**TITLE:** Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Nancy Grasmick Public School Professional Award - Public School Nurses  
**DATE:** February 14, 2024  
**POSITION:** Favorable  
**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports** Senate Bill 441.

This bill expands eligibility for the Nancy Grasmick Public School Professional Award to include public school nurses with two years of experience who provide health services in a public school and are employed by a local school system or local health department (LHD) to provide health services through an agreement with a local board of education. The bill also expands the requirements of the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to publicize the program to include doing so to eligible public school nurses in an effort to recruit and retain nurses working in public schools in the State

The Nancy Grasmick Teacher Award was created in 2012 within Janet L. Hoffman LARP for Maryland. Last year, this program expanded eligibility to include mental health professionals (including school psychologists, resource psychologists, psychologist coordinators, social workers, social worker supervisors, school counselors, or mental health coordinators), but left out school nurses. This legislation corrects that oversight and PSSAM strongly encourages its inclusion via this legislation.

School nurse shortages are a significant problem in Maryland and we support any initiatives that will encourage students to enter the field of nursing and specifically work in public education. Nursing, like teaching, is not a highly paid profession, but a labor of love for students and learning and nurses are a backbone of support for students and their families in school settings.

The demand on school nurses has grown exponentially from managing basic first aid to providing comprehensive health services and medication management for the increasing number of students with chronic health problems. In addition to hands-on treatment for students, nurses are educators who promote and support healthy development and safety for the school

community. In far too many circumstances, school nurses are the first, or only, medical professionals for underserved students and families. In short, nurses play a crucial role in the somatic and behavioral health of school ecosystems, and in turn, aid in the academic success for students.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 441 and urges a **favorable** report.