



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: HB 558

TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education - Comprehensive Health Education Framework - Established

DATE: February 7, 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 Maryland local school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 558.

This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), to develop a comprehensive health education framework that includes, at a minimum, specified topics. Each local board of education must create an age-appropriate curriculum that is consistent with the comprehensive health education framework as specified. Each local board of education must establish policies, guidelines, and procedures for a parent or guardian to opt their student out of the family life and human sexuality or the gender identity and sexual orientation topics. However, a local board may not authorize a parent or guardian to opt the student out of education related to HIV and AIDS prevention. By June 15, 2025, and annually thereafter, each local board must submit a report to MSDE on the actions taken to comply with the requirements of the bill.

PSSAM strongly supports the current local approach to implementation of health curriculum consistent with State guidelines. PSSAM also shares concerns raised by local school boards and other advocacy organizations regarding legislative efforts to codify standardized curriculum, assessments, or standards. PSSAM maintains our longstanding position regarding curricular mandates, which highlights the critical nature of preserving local authority and oversight. Each Maryland local school systems must be afforded flexibility in developing curriculum that best reflects the specific, and diverse needs of their student population and local community. Again, local superintendents support robust and comprehensive instruction in health education, and

believe that this objective is best accomplished by preserving local flexibility in implementing health curriculum.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 558 and kindly requests an unfavorable committee report.