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BILL:	HB 540
TITLE:	Maryland Green Schools – Website, Outreach, and Designations (Green Schools Stewardship Act)
DATE:	February 12, 2025
POSITION:	Favorable with Amendments
COMMITTEE:	House Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT:	Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents, supports House Bill 540 **with amendments**.

This legislation directs the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education to update and maintain, by a certain date, maintain a certain website and directs the Association to conduct specific outreach efforts. It requires the Department of Natural Resources, in collaboration with the State Department of Education to establish criteria for designating green schools in the State as green schools mentor schools and requires county boards of education to prominently display a link to a certain website on their website and circulate certain information generally relating to green schools.

The Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) plays a crucial role in promoting environmental literacy and outdoor education throughout Maryland. PSSAM particularly applauds the resources and training it provides to educators to integrate environmental topics into school curricula, and its management of the Maryland Green Schools Program.

This comprehensive legislation touches on many aspects of MAEOE's operations, most of which we do not have any comment or recommendations. However, the bill is very prescriptive in its requirements for local schools systems to regularly post updates to our websites, as well as mandating certain information to be shared with students and staff.

We respectfully request an amendment that strikes p. 6, lines 19-30 in their entirety to be replaced with language that reflects the following: “local boards may, upon receipt of information from MAEOE, update links on their websites and distribute information to teachers and staff as appropriate.”

PSSAM remains committed to focusing on empowering local decision-making to ensure that education policies are relevant, flexible, and reflective of the unique needs of each community. The requested amendments reflect the longstanding acknowledgement that the dissemination of information to school personnel and website content are within the prerogative of the local superintendent and boards of education.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports HB 540 with amendments.**