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BILL: HB 1127
TITLE: Public Schools - Water Safety and Swimming - Instructional Content, Plan, and Reporting
DATE: March 3, 2025
POSITION: Unfavorable
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 public school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 1127.

This bill requires each county board of education to develop certain instructional content on water safety and swimming for public school students in the county on or before July 1, 2026. Such content should be integrated into the health and physical education curriculum for each public school in the county and age-appropriate for students in elementary, middle, and high school students. This bill also requires each county board to develop a plan regarding access to swimming pools and related facilities and submit a copy of the plan to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on or before December 15, 2025.

Local superintendents recognize the importance of water safety and swimming for the health and well-being of Maryland's students. However, PSSAM has a longstanding policy of resisting efforts by the General Assembly to codify curriculum standards, assessments, or graduation requirements. Local superintendents strongly believe that the role of instructional mandates and implementation belongs solely to local boards of education in conjunction with MSDE. Rest assured, PSSAM's opposition to this bill is not an evaluation of the merits of teaching water safety and swimming, but rather opposition to statutorily mandating content standards and additions to curriculum.

The Maryland General Assembly, in creating the MSDE and local boards of education, has delegated to these entities the responsibility of delivering a high-quality statewide system of public education. The State Board establishes State content frameworks, state assessment standards, and minimum state graduation requirements, while each local board and school

system implements 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.

Superintendents are committed to providing students with a comprehensive, well-rounded physical education curriculum that is implemented after proper stakeholder input and review processes.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 1127 and requests an **unfavorable report**.