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BILL: HB 189
TITLE: Public Middle, High, and Charter Schools - Start Time for Instruction
DATE: February 5, 2026
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 local school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 189.

This bill requires, beginning with the 2028-2029 school year, all middle schools in the State to begin instruction no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and all high schools in the State to begin instruction no earlier than 8:30 a.m. The State Board of Education (SBE), by request, may grant waivers from these requirements if they determine that there is a compelling reason for a school to require a different start time. However, a lack of funding to implement the new start times is not a compelling reason for a waiver. Additionally, beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, each local board of education and public charter school must implement a public information campaign to raise awareness of the later start times for middle and high schools, as specified. If requested, SBE must assist with these campaigns. The bill makes additional technical and conforming changes.

Although PSSAM appreciates the intent of HB 189, local superintendents firmly believe that decisions regarding mandates—such as changes to school start times—should be made by local school districts in conjunction with guidance from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). It is important to note that local school systems already have the authority to adjust start times as needed and each district should be allowed the discretion to make decisions that best support its students, families, and communities.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 189 and kindly requests an **unfavorable** report.