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February 18, 2016

The Honorable Sheila E. Hixson
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 474 – Elementary School Students – Daily Physical Activity (Student Health and Fitness Act)

Dear Madam Chair Hixson:

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland **opposes House Bill 474 – Elementary School Students – Daily Physical Activity (Student Health and Fitness Act)**. This bill requires a public school student in elementary school to be provided a daily program of physical activity totaling 150 minutes each; requires that the program of physical activity shall include a minimum of 90 minutes each week; requires minutes not consisting of physical education consist of developmentally appropriate, moderate-to-vigorous activity, including recess; requires that a student's program be consistent with the student's Individualized Education Plan; requires public elementary schools to designate a physical activity leadership team to plan and coordinate opportunities for activities; requires the State Board of Education to adopt regulations necessary to implement the provisions; and provides for extensions for local systems that do not meet the October 1, 2016 compliance date.

Local school systems understand the importance of and fully support physical activity for all students. Schools provide students with safe physical activity opportunities supervised by well-trained, competent and certified staff. However, to implement what is called for in this bill is not practical and would present local school systems with another unfunded mandate. In addition, to accommodate additional physical education within the current instructional day would require reduced instruction in another subject unless the school day was lengthened at a considerable cost for the additional instructional time. The physical education curriculum currently provides teachers with the resources to meet their students' needs. Further, physical education teachers work closely with the adapted physical education instructional specialists to determine the curriculum appropriate for special needs students.

Finally, PSSAM strongly believes that the Maryland State Board of Education and local school boards should retain the responsibility to set curriculum in our school systems. Therefore, for the reasons stated above, PSSAM respectfully opposes HB 474 and urges an unfavorable committee report.

Thank you for your consideration of PSSAM's position. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me by email at pssamed@gmail.com or by cell (410-925-2183).

Sincerely,

Renee McGuirk-Spence
Executive Director, PSSAM