



Renee Spence, Executive Director
9 Trotters Ridge Court, Catonsville, MD 21228
410-925-2183
pssamed@gmail.com

BILL: House Bill 920
TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education - School Personnel - Training Requirement
DATE: February 24, 2017
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: Renee McGuirk Spence, Executive Director, PSSAM
Email: pssamed@gmail.com; Cell: 410-925-2183

House Bill 920 requires the State Board of Education beginning on or before July 1, 2018, specified school personnel to complete training, by a method determined by each county board of education, in specified knowledge and skills required to understand and respond to the social, emotional, and personal development of students.

PSSAM appreciates the intent of this bill. However, we must **oppose** House Bill 920.

Successful teaching and learning must remain the primary focus of teachers. Teachers want all students to succeed and are well prepared to recognize basic education needs in their students. They are dedicated educational professionals who are well attuned to the well-being of their students and often are the first to recognize changes in a student that could indicate behavioral distress. Teachers also work diligently with parents and other school staff professionals to identify any special behavioral needs that a student might need.

Providing teacher staff development is an increasing problem of time management. Last year, the Governor issued an Executive Order that requires local school systems to open schools for student attendance no earlier than the Tuesday following the Labor Day holiday and to conclude no later than June 15 beginning in the 2017-2018 school year. This compressed school year has made it very difficult to provide critical staff development to teachers and school-based staff given the compressed school calendar, legislated school holidays, inclement weather, and other major factors. PSSAM strongly believes that professional development for teachers and school-based staff should not be legislated and must remain under the jurisdiction of local superintendents working with local boards of education and their school communities.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **OPPOSES** House Bill 920.