



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

BILL: House Bill 1268
TITLE: Education – Student Achievement Gap Standard – Establishment (Maryland Student Achievement Act)
DATE: February 28, 2017
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: Renee McGuirk Spence, Executive Director, PSSAM
Email: pssamed@gmail.com; Cell: 410-925-2183

House Bill 1268 requires the State Department of Education to establish a standard to measure and quantify the student achievement gap, identify the student achievement gap between specified student groups, and issue best practices and annual benchmarks to close the student achievement gap between specified groups on or before July 1, 2018; requiring a local school system to document the student achievement gap in the district for the previous 20 years and develop a 5-year strategic plan to close the student achievement gap.

PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 1268. This legislation is not needed or necessary.

Maryland students in grades 3-8 and high school participate in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics. PARCC complements, but does not replace, the existing Maryland School Assessment, which assesses performance in science in grades 5 and 8; the Alternate Maryland School Assessment (for students with disabilities); or the Maryland High School Assessments in Biology and Government. In addition, students take other assessments such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress and College Readiness tests like AP and SAT. Students who are identified as English learners also take an annual English language proficiency assessment. The Maryland Report Card website provides additional data on multiple demographics and graduation rates. All data is disaggregated to include racial groups, ethnic groups, socioeconomic groups, genders, and English language learners.

PSSAM places the highest priority on closing the achievement gap. Working directly with our local school boards, local superintendents put a laser focus on this issue. Our combined vision is to not only close the achievement gap in our public schools, but to eliminate it completely. We work tirelessly to achieve that goal.

Our commitment is assisted by the enormous amount of data collected on every public school and student in our state. Additionally, the Fact Book provides relevant statistics that are important contributing factors. We analyze all available data, research best practices both within our school system and on the state and national level, and develop educational policies and practices that assist our efforts in closing the achievement gap.

In addition, all local school systems must submit annual Master Plans as required under the Bridge to Excellence Act. The Master Plan contain information regarding how we are using our resources to work toward attaining our vision, information to show where we are succeeding and where we still face challenges, and our plans to build on our successes and address those challenges. Closing the achievement gap remains a major component of the focus of our Master Plans.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 1268.