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**BILL:** House Bill 18  
**TITLE:** Task Force to Improve Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Scores for Maryland Public Schools  
**DATE:** February 2, 2017  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means  
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House Bill 18 establishes the Task Force to Improve Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Scores for Maryland Public School Students; requiring the Task Force to identify the best practices of specified local school systems, assess specified needs, design specified plans, and make recommendations regarding specified matters; requiring the Task Force to submit a final report of its findings to the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the General Assembly on or before December 31, 2017.

PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 18 for the reasons listed below.

The College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013 (CCR-CCA) established a number of requirements designed to increase college and career readiness as well as degree completion in Maryland. The intent of the Act is to reduce or eliminate the need for students to enroll in remedial courses in college.

In 2014, the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Implementation Review Workgroup (State Workgroup) was created by the General Assembly under House Bill 1164 (Chapter 246). The State Workgroup held numerous meetings, between July 2014 and February 2015, to accomplish the tasks set forth in the legislation, and also reiterated the commitment to pursue the objectives outlined in the legislation through specific assignments to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) or through collaboration between MSDE and local school systems. The State Workgroup issued its Final Report in March, 2015. The Final Report contains a comprehensive set of recommendations for further analysis and implementation; including several recommendations for further collaboration between MSDE and local boards of education.

In 2015 Maryland implemented the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) state assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics. State, local and school PARCC results for the second year were released last October. Scores on the PARCC Assessment are not being used for student, educator, school, or system-level accountability at this time.

The creation of a Task Force as required by House Bill 18 is ill timed. MSDE and school systems are working hard to address the State Workgroup recommendations issued less than two years ago. In addition, two years of PARCC results does not provide a wealth of data for the Task Force members to deal with the 10 specific areas cited in the this bill. House Bill 18 also requires the Task Force to analyze the technological needs of public schools, including

resources needed to improve PARCC assessments. It is important to note that most local school systems have already addressed their technology issues and are consistently making improvements when needed.

Finally, PSSAM is an organization of educational leaders united in advocating for the success of all students. Together they provide leadership for quality education by addressing issues with one unified voice. PSSAM promotes the highest quality of instruction in all public schools by focusing on rigorous standards and providing innovative programs to prepare all students for college and/or careers of the future. The twenty-four superintendents meet monthly for an entire morning with the State Superintendent. These regular meetings provide the opportunity for all local systems and the State Superintendent to delve into critical issues and jointly find solutions. MSDE has consistently been at the table with PSSAM to address the instructional needs of all Maryland students.

Creation of a Task Force as required in House Bill 18 is unwarranted. In addition to working on the State Workgroup recommendations, PSSAM and MSDE are also effectively collaborating on the issues identified in this bill and will continue to do so without the need for a legislated task force.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **OPPOSES** House Bill 18 and requests an **unfavorable** committee report.