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BILL: House Bill 227
TITLE: Education – High School – Graduation Honor System
DATE: February 9, 2017
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee
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House Bill 227 authorizes a county board of education to establish a high school graduation honor system; requires a county board that establishes a graduation honor system to establish the grade point average required for each level of distinction; and requires that the distinction be printed on the student's official transcript and high school diploma.

PSSAM **opposes** Senate Bill 227.

Local superintendents understand the intent of this legislation. Institutions of higher education utilize the grade distinction of Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and Cum Laude when issuing their individual diplomas from their individual colleges and universities. However, the Maryland State Board of Education awards diplomas to all students who have met the State graduation requirements.

However, local superintendents provide additional recognition for outstanding academic achievement. For example, students in Charles County completing the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Scholars Course of Study, the Maryland Scholars Course of Study, and/or meeting Certificate of Merit requirements receive additional recognition at graduation. CCPS students are also ranked based on the weighted cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) achieved in all coursework taken in high school. The cumulative GPA is the average of all final grades earned in high school, rounded to the hundred-thousandths place. Class rank is recorded on the high school transcript and is acknowledged in academic awards.

PSSAM must continue to advocate for local board of education governance on all issues related to teaching and learning. We strongly believe that it is critical that locally-governed education policies and procedures remain under the authority of local boards of education. Each local school board must have the flexibility to develop individual policies and practices that reflect the specific and diverse needs of their system.

PSSAM again reiterates that we will continue to oppose all attempts to legislate curriculum, courses of study, or graduation requirements. We firmly believe that this role belongs to local boards of education working together with the State Board of Education.

For the reasons noted above, PSSAM **OPPOSES** House Bill 227 and requests an **unfavorable** committee report.