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BILL: House Bill 458
TITLE: Visual Impairments – Requirements for Teacher Training, Student Screening, and Maryland Medical Assistance Program Coverage
DATE: February 14, 2017
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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House Bill 458 requires, on or before July 1, 2018, the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board to require a certificate holder applying for renewal of a certificate as a teacher to complete a course on understanding and recognizing the symptoms of visual impairments; requires the Board to approve a course that meets specified criteria; and requires the Board to adopt specified regulations.

PSSAM appreciates the intent of this legislation. However, we **oppose** House Bill 458.

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. Teachers also work diligently with parents and other school staff professionals to identify any special educational needs that a student might need.

In regard to visual problems, current law requires that all students have vision screenings. We believe that beyond vision screening, identifying specific visual impairments should remain with health care practitioners. These trained professionals have the necessary education and expertise to identify and determine appropriate education supports for students with visual impairments.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **OPPOSES** House Bill 458.