



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

BILL: House Bill 975
TITLE: Digital Equity for All Maryland Students Act of 2017
DATE: February 28, 2017
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: Renee McGuirk Spence, Executive Director, PSSAM
Email: pssamed@gmail.com; Cell: 410-925-2183

House Bill 975 establishes the School Broadband Upgrade Grant Program; providing the purpose of the program is to provide state and local funding for special construction to leverage federal funds for Category 1 and Category 2 services that are available through a specified federal program to install or upgrade Internet access in every public school in the state; and requires the State Department of Education to administer the Program.

PSSAM **supports** House Bill 975.

PSSAM recognizes the value in the establishment of the School Broadband Upgrade Grant Program. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to apply for the funds that are available through this grant program. As specifically stated in Section 7-9B-03 of House Bill 975, the purpose of the fund is to leverage federal funds for Category 1 services and Category 2 services that are available through the federal E-rate program under the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to install or upgrade internet access in every public school in the state.

The infusion of \$9,000,000 in the state budget in fiscal year 2018 and thereafter would greatly assist local school systems with upgrades to their broadband services in a school building or a non-instructional facility that is a part of the school system as well as fiber construction within a school building. The School Broadband Upgrade Grant Program would also financially benefit all local school systems that are currently taking advantage of the E-rate reimbursement and would like to apply for this grant.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM fully **SUPPORTS** House Bill 975.