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BILL: Senate Bill 325  
TITLE: Juvenile Services Education - Modifications  
DATE: February 17, 2016  
POSITION: OPPOSE  
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs  
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Senate Bill 325 requires county boards of education and the State to provide a specified amount to the State Department of Education for specified individuals receiving education services at specified facilities; and requires that teachers and other professional personnel providing educational services at specified facilities be paid an annual salary that is at least equal to the average annual salary of teachers and other professional personnel in the county that provides the highest average annual salary.

PSSAM appreciates the intent of Senate Bill 325. We recognize and support a high quality Juvenile Services Education program for our most vulnerable students. Local school systems continue to work with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Department of Juvenile Services on a smooth transition for students returning to our classrooms.

However, PSSAM **opposes** Senate Bill 325 as an unfunded mandate. Estimates are that local school system reimbursements to MSDE will increase by \$7.3 million in FY 2017. Local school systems continue to struggle with the enormous financial burden that resulted in the loss last year of \$68.1 million from the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) funding. This substantial reduction severely impacted 13 of Maryland's school districts, who are responsible for the education of over 80% of Maryland's students.

Senate Bill 325 would once again place significant financial burden on several of our largest school systems. For example, the fiscal impact on Baltimore City Public Schools would be \$2,150,396. For Prince George's County Public Schools, the fiscal impact would be \$1,382,171. At this time, it would be extremely difficult for local school system budgets to absorb yet another serious reduction in funds while maintaining a quality education program for all students.

Therefore, PSSAM joins MSDE and the Maryland State Board of Education in recommending a short-term workgroup that would study the complex issues surrounding the Juvenile Services Education program. We recommend that the workgroup provide recommendations for a fiscally-balanced course of action that would lead to the better recruitment and retention of quality teachers. We look forward to working together to provide a highly effective education program for all juveniles placed in detention facilities.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **OPPOSES** Senate Bill 325 and requests an **unfavorable** report.