



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

BILL: Senate Bill 201
TITLE: Education – Fire Drill Requirements – State Fire Prevention Code
DATE: February 1, 2017
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
CONTACT: Renee McGuirk Spence, Executive Director, PSSAM
Email: pssamed@gmail.com; Cell: 410-925-2183

Senate Bill 201 requires the State Superintendent of Schools to require each county superintendent of schools to hold fire drills in each public school in accordance with the State Fire Prevention Code.

PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 201.

Local superintendents strongly believe in measures to improve school safety for students, educators, and other school staff that will provide environments that are conducive to teaching and learning. Fire safety is paramount to providing a safe environment. As such, local school systems require fire drills in public schools that are efficiently and effectively conducted on a regular basis.

In addition, providing a safe school environment also requires additional drills to meet other threats to public school safety that are caused by factors within and outside the school. School safety issues arise in the daily operation of school facilities and services such as school buses, science labs, kitchens, and boiler rooms; in the daily administration of student discipline; and in developing and practicing emergency plans to respond to acts of violence and natural disasters.

Following the tragic school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012, the legislature called for a review of all emergency plans and the State Board adopted new regulations to specify the types of emergency drills that all schools must conduct each year.

PSSAM strongly believes that the State Superintendent of Schools should have the authority to provide oversight regarding fire drills in public schools. We have confidence in the existing policies that require strict adherence to conducting mandatory fire drills that are properly balanced with other drills that are critical to maintain school safety within and outside a school building.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 201 and requests a **favorable** committee report.