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BILL: Senate Bill 361
TITLE: Hunger-Free Schools Act of 2017
DATE: February 22, 2017
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation
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Senate Bill 361 alters a specified definition for specified fiscal years to determine the number of students used to calculate a specified grant for schools that participate in a specified federal program; and requires the superintendent of each local school system to report to the General Assembly on or before September 1, 2017.

PSSAM supports Senate Bill 361 with amendment.

We are committed to stamping out hunger for students in our schools. Hunger impedes the achievement of students and affects their general well-being. Local superintendents recognize the importance of and fully support the Hunger-Free Kids Act and the provision that provides the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). The CEP is a component of the 2010 Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act that allows eligible schools to serve nutritious meals, free of charge, to all students. The Provision eases the administrative burden of collecting household meal benefit applications and eliminates the stigma sometimes associated with receiving a free or reduced-price school meal. PSSAM fully supports this legislation that extends the CEP program through 2022.

However, we strongly recommend amending the legislation by deleting section 2 in its entirety. It goes against the original intent of the CEP which is to streamline the administrative quagmire. The reporting requirements are extremely onerous on all systems and our smaller districts do not have the capacity. The Maryland State Department of Education already collects much of the data specified in this section. In addition, the Innovation and Excellence in Education Commission (Kirwin Commission) will also be analyzing this data as commission member delve into multiple components surrounding this issue.

As detailed above, PSSAM **SUPPORTS with amendment** Senate Bill 361.