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BILL: House Bill 1697
TITLE: Education – Commercial Gaming Revenues – Constitutional Amendment
DATE: March 8, 2018
POSITION: Support
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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House Bill 1697 proposes an amendment to the Maryland Constitution to limit the uses of certain revenues to educational opportunities and programs for the children of the State in public schools, the advancement of educators, and the construction of school facilities; requiring the Governor to include in the budget submission certain amounts in certain fiscal years as supplemental funding for certain purposes; requiring that certain funding be in addition to State funding provided for certain grades in public schools in fiscal year 2020; etc.

PSSAM thanks the sponsors of this legislation and fully **supports** House Bill 1697.

During the past several years a top legislative priority for local superintendents has been to support the expansion of Prekindergarten for all Maryland's 4-year old children. We also fully support quality early childhood education for our most vulnerable 3-year olds. As educators, we recognize and validate research that supports early childhood education, including the future impact it will have on our youngest students to stay on track, complete high school, and be college and career ready upon graduation. From a fiscal standpoint, the long-term return on investment is well worth the added expenditure.

PSSAM promotes the highest quality of instruction in our public schools by focusing on and increasing rigorous standards for all our students. We are providing innovative programs to prepare our students to be college or career ready. We are focusing on our career technology education programs to offer our students many options during their high school years. This is the first school year we are offering transition courses to help our students who have lagged behind, all without additional resources. In addition, the number of students who are dually enrolled in high school and college simultaneously has almost doubled with over 7,000 high school students dually enrolled in 2016.

We place the very highest value on our educators and greatly appreciate the fact that House Bill 1697 will afford us the opportunity to support the advancement and professionalization of our educators. Finally, maintaining, renovating, or constructing public schools is an absolute necessity if we are to meet the educational needs of our students.

We are very pleased with the additional funding provided by this legislation that will help support the priorities of local school systems, educators, students, parents, and the community at large. In conclusion, we fully **support** House Bill 1697 and urge a favorable committee report.