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BILL: House Bill 553
TITLE: County Boards of Education – Length of School Year - Adjustments
DATE: February 15, 2018
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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House Bill 553 authorizes a county board of education to extend the length of the school year for up to 5 days without approval from the State Board of Education; and requiring a county board to submit a written application to the State Board for permission to increase the length of the school year for more than a certain number of school days in accordance with a certain provision of law or to decrease the length of the school year.

PSSAM thanks the sponsor and fully **supports** House Bill 553.

Local school superintendents strongly advocate that school-related calendar decisions should be determined locally and based on meeting the academic needs of our students. Meeting the 180-day school calendar regulation is complex for Maryland's twenty-four school systems particularly since the Governor's Executive Order went into effect.

PSSAM greatly appreciates the school calendar adjustment flexibility provided by this legislation. In August 2016, the Governor issued an Executive Order that requires local school systems to open schools for student attendance no earlier than the Tuesday following the Labor Day holiday and to conclude no later than June 15. In addition, State law has designated numerous days as public school holidays. These State mandates have made it increasingly difficult for local school systems to meet the 180 day calendar in a compressed period of time, particularly when school systems must close due to inclement weather. House Bill 553 provides additional flexibility at the end of the school year if needed due to inclement weather closings.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM fully **supports** House Bill 553 and urges a favorable committee report.