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BILL: House Bill 617
TITLE: Education – Assessments – Administration by Public School Employees
DATE: February 15, 2018
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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House Bill 617 authorizes the principal of a public school to select any employee to administer certain assessments.

PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 617.

In order to ensure accountability for student learning and to meet federal and state reporting requirements, the Maryland State Board of Education requires the administration of assessments in schools throughout the state, as referenced in COMAR 13A.03.04. To ensure that tests are properly administered and results accurately reported, the State Board has established policies governing test administration, data reporting, and test procurement.

The Commission to Review Maryland’s Use of Assessments and Testing in Public Schools released a final report in July 2016 that describes recommendations to improve the process in which mandated assessments are administered and used to inform instruction. The State Board of Education was charged to review and consider the Commission’s findings and recommendations; make comments and recommendations related to whether they accept or reject the Commission’s findings and recommendations; and submit a compilation to the Governor and other stakeholders.

Recommendation 3.1 from the Commission was to loosen the restrictions on who can administer, proctor and accommodate State and locally mandated assessments. The State Board of Education reviewed the number of reported testing violations. Data revealed an overall increase in violations from 2011-2016. The Board also reviewed comments submitted by local boards of education which supported the continued use of certificated staff for test administration. As a result, the State Board recommended keeping the current practice of only allowing certificated educators to administer, proctor, and accommodate State and locally mandated assessments.

PSSAM concurs with the response by the State Board of Education and the comments by our local boards of education on this issue. Therefore, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 617 and urges an unfavorable committee report.