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BILL: Senate Bill 548  
TITLE: Education – Students with Reading Difficulties – Screenings and Interventions  
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POSITION: OPPOSE  
COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs  
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Senate Bill 548 requires certain county boards of education to ensure that a certain student is screened to identify if the student is at risk for reading difficulties beginning with the 2019-2020 school year; requiring a county board to use certain screening instruments for certain students; requiring a county board to monitor a certain student for progress for up to 8 weeks; requiring certain county boards to report annually certain information to the State Department of Education; etc.

PSSAM appreciates the intent of this legislation. However, we must **oppose** Senate Bill 548.

Local school systems already have programs and specialists in place to assist students that are struggling with reading. Every school has a reading intervention specialist who has an advanced degree and master's level training in identifying and providing support for students with reading problems. The goal of reading intervention is to empower every reader to employ strategies to be successful with challenging text. Reading intervention instruction targets an area of identified need and is provided in addition to core instruction.

Senate Bill 548 would be very costly for school systems to implement. Current school staff professionals are striving to keep up with an enormous workload. To comply with the intent of this legislation, we would need to hire additional staff such as a school psychologist, a special education teacher, a speech language pathologist, and a reading interventionist to handle the multiple requirements of this legislation. Finally, PSSAM has taken the firm position to oppose all proposed legislation that would result in a fiscal impact to local school systems.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **opposes** Senate Bill 548 and urges an unfavorable committee report.