



BILL: Senate Bill 92
TITLE: Maryland School Overcrowding Reduction Act of 2018
DATE: January 31, 2018
POSITION: Oppose
COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation
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Senate Bill 92 establishes the Public School Facility Construction Innovation Incentive Program to provide incentives to encourage public school systems to pursue innovative public school facility construction projects; requires the Interagency Committee on School Construction to implement the Program; specifies certain percentage increases in the State share of eligible costs for certain projects that are approved to participate in the Incentive Program; exempts alternative financing methods from certain requirements; etc.

PSSAM **opposes** Senate Bill 92. Local superintendents place the highest priority on providing our students with school facilities that will provide them with an environment that supports quality learning. However, Senate Bill 92 negatively alters the current school construction regulations.

It is important to note that Senate Bill 92 is not endorsed by the 21st Century School Facilities Commission (Knott Commission). The Knott Commission was established in 2016 to review existing educational specifications for school construction projects and also evaluate whether those specifications apply to the needs of 21st century schools. Their work has been extensive and they have delved deeply into every issue, including many components addressed in Senate Bill 92. In fact, certain concepts that are included in Senate Bill 92 were incorporated into the Knott Commission's final draft recommendations.

PSSAM fully supports the Knott Commission's final draft recommendations. We believe that Senate Bill 92 may be well-meant, but could actually have unintended consequences resulting in a lower share of capital construction costs. In addition, Senate Bill 92 puts numerous incentives as well as constraints on school construction that could actually lessen the quality of construction, with local school systems facing future consequences in the areas of energy, maintenance, and building performance.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **opposes** Senate Bill 92 and requests an unfavorable committee report.