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BILL: Senate Bill 423
TITLE: Task Force to Study the Impact of Student Cell Phone Use in the Classroom
DATE: February 13, 2019
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
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Senate Bill 423 establishing the Task Force to Study the Impact of Student Cell Phone Use in the Classroom; requiring the Task Force to study the impact of cell phone use in the classroom on student learning and on teacher instruction and whether there are any benefits associated with certain cell phone usage; requiring the Task Force to report its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2019; etc.

PSSAM **opposes** Senate Bill 423.

This bill provides for a Task Force to delve into issues surrounding student cell phone use in the classroom. PSSAM believes that the creation of such a Task Force is not needed. Local school systems have various but well defined rules on cell phone use. The specificity of what is allowed ranges among school systems. For example, Montgomery County recently changed their cell phone usage policy to permit students in fifth grade or lower to carry cell phones. In Prince George's County, principals have the authority to determine the use of cell phones in their schools. In addition, smart phones and hand held devices are often used in classrooms for instructional purposes. Several school systems have implemented one-to-one devices for all students to use.

The bottom line is that, as local superintendents, we must continue to advocate for local board of education governance of teaching and learning. We strongly believe that it is critical that locally governed education policies and procedures remain under the authority of local boards of education. Each local school board must have the flexibility to develop individual curriculum policies and practices that reflect the specific and diverse needs of their system.

For the reasons noted above, PSSAM **opposes** Senate Bill 423 and requests an unfavorable committee report.