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BILL: Senate Bill 734
TITLE: Education – Students With Reading Difficulties – Screenings and Interventions
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COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
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Senate Bill 734 requires each county board of education, beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, to ensure that a certain student is screened to identify if the student is at risk for reading difficulties; requiring a county board, under certain circumstances, to conduct a certain informal diagnostic assessment and provide certain supplemental reading instruction, progress monitoring, and notice and reports to a certain parent or guardian; requiring county boards to provide certain resources on their websites; etc.

PSSAM appreciates the intent of this legislation. However, we must **oppose Senate Bill 734**.

Local school systems already have programs and specialists in place to assist students that are struggling with reading. Each elementary school has practices and procedures to assist 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 734 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 734 and urges an unfavorable committee report.