



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director

**BILL:** House Bill 266  
**TITLE:** Student Education Equity Grant Program - Established (Student Education Equity in Funding Act)  
**DATE:** February 3, 2021  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**COMMITTEE:** House Ways and Means Committee  
**CONTACT:** Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

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This bill establishes the Student Education Equity Grant Program in the State Department of Education to provide grants to eligible students to attend an open public or nonpublic school approved to operate in the State; authorizing students whose assigned school is not open to apply to the Department for a grant to be used for expenses to attend an open school; requiring the Department to establish an application process, distribute grants, enter into certain agreements, provide certain information to students, and use certain funds; etc.

PSSAM **opposes** HB 266. This bill is a massive policy shift from the current operations of public schools in Maryland. While PSSAM recognizes the challenges and frustrations the current pandemic has created for students and families, each local system is also struggling to return students to a safe and in-person learning as soon as possible. Our 24 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are responsible for providing a high-quality education for close to 900,000 students. The investment in our students has reaped great dividends. Thanks to the financial commitment from our elected officials, the Maryland public school system ranks among the most successful in the nation.

This legislation would completely derail LEAs ability to plan for, and provide this high-quality education and could divert state revenue to finance some non-public schools, including tuition. This bill also creeps into a voucher-like program, which has long been opposed by PSSAM and public education advocates in Maryland and across the nation.

Local superintendents strongly believe in local autonomy and authority over our public schools. PSSAM believes that this bill is not needed and diminishes the authority of local superintendents and boards of education.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **OPPOSES** House Bill 266 and requests an **unfavorable** committee report.

*One Voice, One Vision for Maryland's Students*

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