

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 400
Ways and Means

(Delegate Beidle, *et al.*)

Education - Public School Holidays - Presidents' Day and Easter Monday

This bill repeals the requirement that Presidents' Day and the Monday after Easter are mandatory public school holidays. However, a local board of education may designate either (or both) of these days as a public school holiday.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: State finances are not affected.

Local Effect: Repealing two mandatory public school holidays provides local school systems increased flexibility in meeting minimum requirements for the number of school days and school hours in the school year. However, the bill will not materially affect annual operating expenses for public schools. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: Public schools must be open for at least 180 days and 1,080 school hours at elementary and middle schools and 1,170 hours at high schools during a 10-month period. However, a local board of education may apply to the State Board of Education for a waiver from these provisions of State law; the application must describe a demonstrated effort by the local board to comply with State law. In response, the State Board of Education may permit adjustments in the length of the school year, exceptions from the 10-month period requirement, adjustments in the length of the school

day, and schools to be open on holidays. These adjustments may be granted only if normal school attendance is prevented because of natural disaster, civil disaster, or severe weather conditions.

The State has designated several days as public school holidays. They include the following:

- Thanksgiving Day and the day after;
- Christmas Eve through January 1;
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day;
- Presidents' Day;
- the Friday before Easter through the Monday after Easter;
- Memorial Day; and
- primary and general election days for most counties.

The public schools must devote a part of some designated days (*e.g.*, Veterans' Day) to exercises that are appropriate to the day. Presidents' Day is a holiday for State employees.

On August 31, 2016, the Governor issued Executive Order 01.01.2016.09 (later amended by Executive Order 01.01.2016.13) requiring, with few exceptions, the local boards of education to open schools for student attendance no earlier than the Tuesday following the Labor Day holiday and to conclude no later than June 15 beginning in the 2017-2018 school year.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Charles and Montgomery counties; Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

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mm/rhh

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