

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 587
Ways and Means

(Delegate Wilson, *et al.*)

Education - Public School Holidays - Veterans' Day

This bill designates Veterans' Day as a public school holiday. The bill also removes Veterans' Day from the list of days for which a part of the day must be devoted to appropriate exercises. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Local annual expenditures for operating public schools will not be materially affected. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: Some small businesses may realize increased Veterans' Day income during daytime hours.

Analysis

Current Law: 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 and that the school system calendar included from 3 to 10 days to be used to make up days lost. In response, the State board may permit:

- increases or decreases in the length of the school year (in addition to any adjustment made under the authority of local boards to extend the school year for up to five school days beyond June 15);
- 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. After any school system closure, the local school system must notify the State board, within 10 days of reopening, of its plan to make up the missed school days, including the dates of the make-up days.

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 the school year no later than June 15, beginning in the 2017-2018 school year. Under Chapters 34 and 35 of 2018, a local board of education is authorized to extend the school year for up to five school days beyond June 15 without approval from the State board.

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.

If the federal and State observances of a holiday are on different days, the board of education of each county must determine the date of observance for that holiday. The public schools must devote a part of Veterans' Day (among other designated days) to exercises that are appropriate to the day. Veterans' Day (November 11) is a holiday for State employees and is a mandatory bank holiday.

Background: Most required school holidays occur from November through February, when weather-related closures are also relatively frequent. According to the 2018-2019 local school calendars, local school systems scheduled between three and five days of

school closures in November of 2018, including between two and three days at Thanksgiving time and, for all but three counties, one day for the November 6 general election. Veterans' Day (commonly known as Veterans Day) fell on Sunday, November 11, 2018. Talbot County scheduled a closure on the preceding Friday, November 9 and three school systems (Calvert, Caroline, and Prince George's counties) scheduled closures on Monday, November 12.

Local Expenditures: Required closure of public schools on Veterans' Day will somewhat reduce the options of local school systems in setting their school calendars in a manner that complies with State law, thus causing operational impacts for some local school systems. However, the addition of a Veterans' Day school holiday will not alter the minimum number of school days and school hours that public schools must be open and, therefore, will not materially affect annual expenditures for operating public schools.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 626 of 2016 and HB 148 of 2014 received a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee, but no further action was taken on either bill. HB 276 of 2010 received an unfavorable report from the House Ways and Means Committee. Its cross file, SB 410, received an unfavorable report from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Baltimore City Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Talbot County Public Schools; Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

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