



February 28, 2024

Senate Bill 909

Anne Arundel County - Public Schools - Innovative Scheduling Pilot Program

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 909 – Anne Arundel County - Public Schools - Innovative Scheduling Pilot Program. This Bill authorizes the Anne Arundel County Board of Education to establish a pilot program in one or more Anne Arundel County public schools using an innovative scheduling model.

State law currently requires that schools be open each year for a minimum of 180 days and a certain number of hours, 1,080 at the elementary and middle school levels, and 1,170 at the high school level. These requirements – and the need to meet both criteria – place constraints on school schedules that limit programmatic creativity and result in headaches for families. This Bill would enable Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) and the Board to seek a change in this model and move to a system that permits greater flexibility in school scheduling while not reducing instructional time for students.

The flexibility created by passage of this legislation would permit AACPS to pilot innovative scheduling models that have been proven to improve morale and achievement for students and staff. Such an alteration could also eliminate or greatly reduce something most families dislike greatly about the current school calendar: early dismissal days. Those days currently still count toward the 180-day requirement each year, but with calendar flexibility AACPS could explore ways to remove some or all from the calendar. The school calendar for the 2023-2024 school year includes 12 early dismissal days for students. This change in law would enable AACPS to provide students with eight full days of instruction rather than 12 partial days of instructions, which would undeniably benefit students. The structure could also lead to full days of professional development for staff, which would also be full days for families to spend with children. As with any change such as this, it is critical that those affected be engaged, and AACPS has committed to actively engage our students, families, staff, and other stakeholders on any innovative school scheduling pilot program they pursue.

Anne Arundel County supports giving our schools the best chance to implement a schedule that reflects the needs of all of our students, families, and staff, and for these reasons, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 909.