

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 881
Ways and Means

(Delegate Henson, *et al.*)

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. The innovative scheduling model may include an extended school year; year-round school; four-day school week; or any other model approved by the county board. The bill also authorizes any local board of education to explore the use of such innovative school scheduling models, provided that the models do not allow for prolonged lapses in instructional time in public schools. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: State operations and finances are not materially affected.

Local Effect: If Anne Arundel County Public Schools chooses to establish an innovative scheduling pilot program, it can do so using existing resources. As the bill is authorizing in nature, other local school systems are not materially affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: A pilot program in Anne Arundel County established under the bill must meet the minimum hours requirements under current law and operate for no longer than five years, including a one-year planning process and a four-year operating period. During the one-year planning process for the pilot program, the Anne Arundel board must provide notice of the intent to operate the pilot program to the State Board of Education (SBE) and to impacted school employees, the school community, and the employee organization

designated as the exclusive representative of the impacted school employees. Also, during the planning process, the Anne Arundel board must negotiate the relevant issues with the employee organization designated as the exclusive representative of the impacted school employees.

Current Law: The State board must explore the use of innovative school scheduling models, including extended year, year-round schooling, or other school scheduling models that do not allow for prolonged lapses in instructional time, in low-performing or at-risk public schools. The local boards of Baltimore City and Allegany, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties, may operate one or more schools on a year-round basis, provided that the 180-day and the minimum hour requirements are met.

Public schools must be open for at least 180 days and 1,080 school hours at elementary and middle schools or 1,170 hours at high schools during a 10-month period. However, a local board of education may apply to SBE for a waiver from these provisions of State law; the waiver application must describe a demonstrated effort by the local board to comply with State law, that the school system calendar included from 3 to 10 days to be used to make up days lost, and that the modified calendar makes use of these make-up days and extends the school year by 3 days beyond the previously scheduled closing date. In response, the State board may permit:

- increases or decreases 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. 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. Education funding from the State or local sources may not be reduced if there are fewer than 180 school days in any year because of an approved application to SBE for a decrease in the length of the school year.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 909 (Anne Arundel County Senators) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

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

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