

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2000 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**

House Bill 372 (Delegates Gettv and Heller)

Ways and Means

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**Education - Required Number of School Days**

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This emergency bill provides that when public schools are closed during a state of emergency declared by the Governor, those days shall be credited against the 180 school day requirement.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Minimal decrease in local school expenditures for school operation and maintenance, student transportation, and food services. Food service revenues could also decrease by a minimal amount.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Public schools must be open for 180 days and 1,080 school hours during a ten-month period. Under certain conditions (a natural disaster, civil disaster, and severe weather conditions) schools only have to be open for 1,080 school hours.

**Background:** During the 1999-2000 school year, the Governor has declared a state of emergency on two occasions: (1) due to Hurricane Floyd, a state of emergency went into effect on September 15 and was lifted on October 7; and (2) due to a winter storm, a state of emergency went into effect on January 25 (Tuesday) and was lifted on January 27 (Thursday).

So far this school year, the number of school days missed due to inclement weather ranges from two days in Allegany County to ten days in Talbot County. **Exhibit 1** shows the

number of school days missed due to inclement weather as of February 11. Not all of the missed days occurred during a state of emergency. All local school systems had scheduled to be closed on Presidents' Day. However, six local school systems (Calvert, Caroline, Charles, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's) have reported that they will remain open on President's Day, in order to make up for one missed school day due to inclement weather.

On February 1, 2000, the Maryland State Board of Education granted the State Superintendent the authority to provide waivers to local school systems as a result of severe weather conditions affecting school schedules in the 1999-2000 school year. Board members voted to permit the State Superintendent to waive the equivalent of up to two school days due to severe winter weather conditions for January 25 and 26 and for up to two school days due to severe weather conditions for September 16 and 17 resulting from Hurricane Floyd. Local school systems must apply to the State Superintendent to receive a waiver. Requests beyond the four days must be taken to the State board.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Number of Missed School Days Due to Inclement Weather**

School System	Number of Days	School System	Number of Days
Allegany	2	Harford	8
Anne Arundel	7	Howard	7
Baltimore City	5	Kent	8
Baltimore	7	Montgomery	4
Calvert	7	Prince George's	6
Caroline	8	Queen Anne's	8
Carroll	5	St. Mary's	8
Cecil	8	Somerset	7
Charles	7	Talbot	10
Dorchester	7	Washington	6
Frederick	4	Wicomico	7
Garrett	3	Worcester	5

Source: Maryland Association of Boards of Education

**Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** A similar bill was introduced at the 1996 session as HB 1050.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Association of Boards of Education, Executive Department (Governor's Office), Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 16, 2000

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