

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 455

(Senator Brinkley, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Education - Required Number of School Days - State of Emergency

This emergency bill provides that a day when public schools are closed during a state of emergency declared by the Governor must be credited towards the required number of days that schools are in session during a school year.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Local school expenditures could decrease minimally due to potential reductions in the required school calendar.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Public schools must be open for at least 180 days and 1,080 school hours at the elementary and middle school levels, or 1,170 hours at the high school level. Local school systems develop their school calendars based on these requirements.

Background: Following a snowstorm last year, the Governor declared a state of emergency that was in effect from February 16 through February 23. In addition to that snowstorm, several other storms resulted in a large number of cancelled school days during the 2002-2003 school year. Although the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Schools granted waivers for some of the missed days, several school systems were forced to lengthen the school year or eliminate planned holidays for

students in order to comply with State laws governing the number of days that schools must be open.

This school year, the only state of emergency declared by the Governor was in response to Hurricane Isabel, on September 16, 2003. On September 23, 2003, the State Board of Education, at the recommendation of the State Superintendent of Schools, voted to grant all school systems a one-day waiver of the 180-day school-year requirements.

Local Fiscal Effect: Local school expenditures would decrease minimally due to a reduced number of school days. Most school-related costs, such as salaries, textbooks, and technology equipment, would not be impacted by the legislation. However, some variable costs, such as school maintenance, student transportation, and food service, could decrease minimally.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: This bill was introduced last year as SB 735 and received an unfavorable report from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of Boards of Education, Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 12, 2004
mh/hlb

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