

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 163 (Senator Brochin, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Baltimore County - Public High Schools - Adoption of School Schedule

This bill authorizes a public high school in Baltimore County to adopt a school schedule for that school.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2016.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Baltimore County finances may be negatively affected to the extent that high schools choose to implement their own school schedule. The actual effects cannot be reliably estimated and depend on whether high schools choose to alter their school schedule.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: This bill authorizes a public high school in Baltimore County to adopt a school schedule for that school. A change to a school schedule may be initiated by the following stakeholders: (1) the principal; (2) the parent teacher association; (3) the Baltimore County Public Schools administration; or (4) the Baltimore County Board of Education.

Within 60 days after receipt of a written request by a stakeholder, the principal of the public high school must convene a school schedule committee to study and recommend a school schedule. The committee must consist of the following 20 members from the school

community: (1) the principal; (2) one assistant principal; (3) the school scheduler; (4) the guidance counselor or chair of the guidance team; (5) the chair of the special education team; (6) seven teachers; (7) four members of the parent teacher association; and (8) four students.

The seven teachers on the school schedule committee must be elected by a vote of the faculty from a list of nominees submitted anonymously by the school faculty to the parent teacher association. The parent teacher association must facilitate the election of the teacher members of the school schedule committee. The four members of the parent teacher association on the school schedule committee must be appointed by the parent teacher association affiliated with the public high school. The four students on the school schedule committee must be elected by a vote of the student body of the public high school in an election facilitated by the student government of the school.

The school schedule committee must study different types of school schedules to determine which type of schedule would be most effective for the public high school. In making its determination, the committee must (1) gather input from specified stakeholders of the public high school community; (2) hold at least one public meeting at the public high school; and (3) consider issues relevant to the establishment of a school schedule, including the impact the school schedule will have across the local school system; the impact on the academic achievement of all student populations in the school; the impact on extracurricular student activities, including athletics, clubs, societies, and other student organizations; the impact on opportunities for students to take elective classes and specialize in subject areas or tracks; and data and trends from prior school years and other schools in the local school system or outside the local school system.

After consideration of all the relevant and available information, the school schedule committee must make a recommendation on a school schedule. The recommendation of the school schedule committee must be published in writing and sent to specified stakeholders. The parent teacher association is required to facilitate an in-school vote on the recommended school schedule. The school schedule must be adopted if approved by two-thirds of all the members of the faculty and two-thirds of the votes cast at the meeting of the parent teacher association.

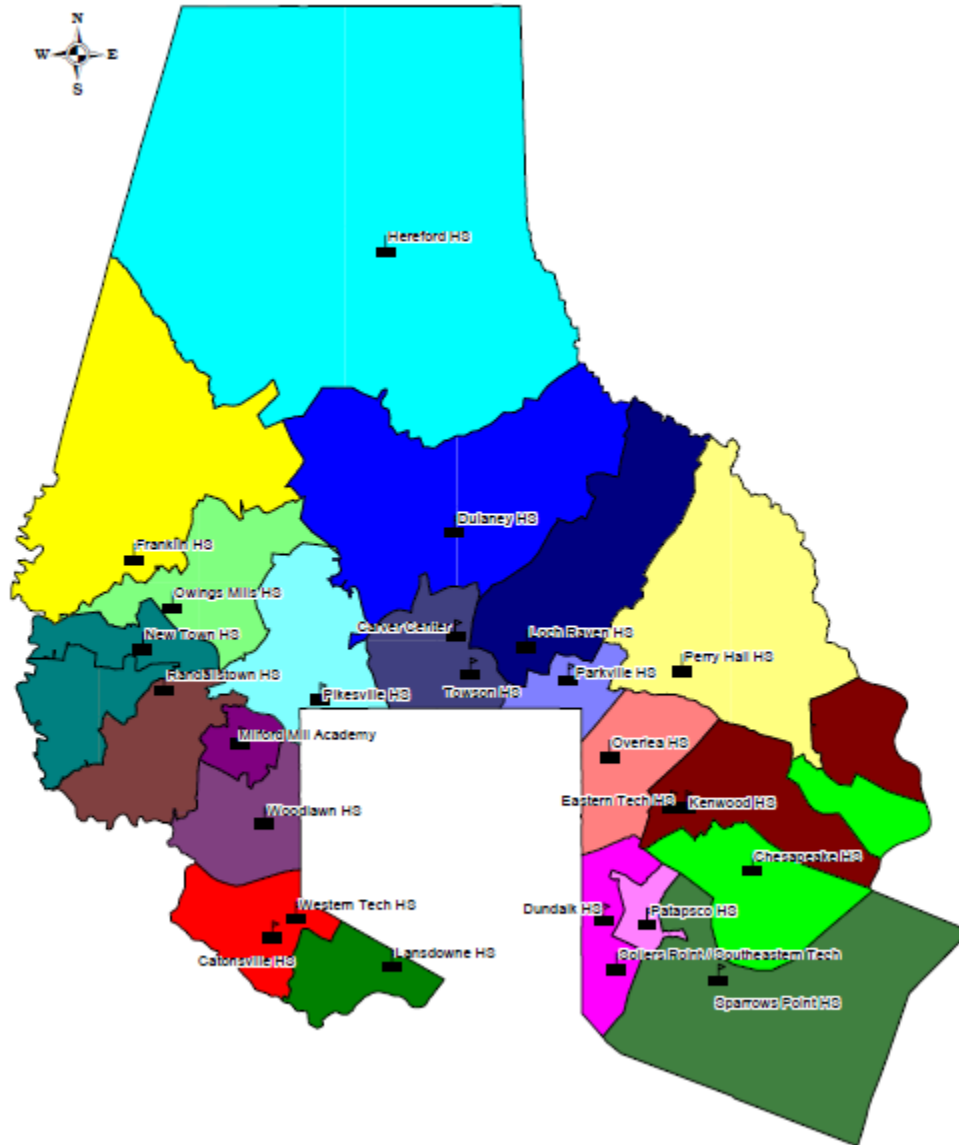
A public high school that adopts a schedule must send a copy of the school's schedule to the county superintendent and the county board of education within 15 days of the date the vote was certified. A schedule adopted by a public high school is effective beginning in the next school year for the entire school year.

Current Law/Background: Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, the Baltimore County Superintendent and Board of Education implemented an eight-period class schedule for all high schools in the county. Previously, high schools in the county typically used either four-period block schedules or seven-period schedules. The Board of Education advises that the primary reason for implementing this schedule change was to allow students to transfer between schools with different schedules without losing credits or the opportunity to take necessary credits. The Board of Education reports that it found that schools that had been on different block schedules, eight-period days, and other variations of these schedules presented scheduling problems to students moving throughout the system. The Baltimore County public school system is a relatively high-poverty school system with 46.3% of students approved for free and reduced-price meals, and mobility is higher among less affluent students than others. The Board of Education reports that one high school, Hereford High School, objected to being required to conform to a system-wide schedule change.

Local Fiscal Effect: Baltimore County finances may be negatively affected to the extent that high schools choose to implement their own school schedule. The actual effects cannot be reliably estimated and depend on whether schools choose to alter their school schedule.

The Baltimore County Board of Education advises that the bill could impact county finances in several ways. Transportation, food, maintenance, and other centralized support services may not be able to be efficiently delivered on different schedules to the 26 high schools in the county (**Exhibit 1**). Baltimore County utilizes tiered transportation services so that school buses can transport students to elementary, middle, and high schools according to different start times. The county may need additional school buses and drivers in order to accommodate different high school schedules. The board advises that school schedules also affect after-school and evening activities' space and programming. Also, there could be significant impacts on bargaining unit contracts, which could be more complex under the bill and involve the expense of mediation and litigation. In addition, the board notes that the bill may have adverse effects on instruction, ranging from the delivery of assessments and course offerings to class sizes, student support services, and special education services.

Exhibit 1 Baltimore County Public Schools – High Schools



Source: Baltimore County Public Schools, Office of Strategic Planning, August 2004

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 123 of 2015 received a hearing in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. Its cross file, HB 407, received a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee. No further action was taken on either bill.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore County, Department of Legislative Services

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