

SENATE BILL 321

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3lr1522
CF 3lr1875

By: **Senator Beidle**

Introduced and read first time: January 27, 2023

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Schools – Length of School Year and Innovative School Scheduling**
3 **Models – Revisions**

4 FOR the purpose of altering the minimum length of school year requirement for pupil
5 attendance during the school year; authorizing county boards of education to explore
6 the use of innovative school scheduling models for public schools in the county; and
7 generally relating to the length of the school year and innovative school scheduling
8 models for public schools.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
10 Article – Education
11 Section 7–103 and 7–103.1
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2022 Replacement Volume)

14 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
15 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

16 **Article – Education**

17 7–103.

18 (a) Except as provided in subsections (b), (e), and (f) of this section, each public
19 school under the jurisdiction of a county board:

20 (1) [(i)] Shall be open for pupil attendance for [at least 180 actual school
21 days and] a minimum of 1,080 school hours during [a 10–month period in] each school year;
22 [or

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (ii) If normal school attendance is prevented because of conditions
2 described in subsection (b) of this section, shall be open for at least 1,080 hours during a
3 10-month period;]

4 (2) Shall be open for pupil attendance a minimum of 3 hours during each
5 school day; and

6 (3) May not be open on Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays in order to meet
7 the 180-day or 1,080-hour requirement of this subsection.

8 (b) [(1) If a county board submits a written application to the State Board that
9 describes a demonstrated effort by the county board to comply with subsection (a) of this
10 section, the State Board may permit:

11 (i) The following adjustments:

12 1. An increase in the length of the school year; or

13 2. A decrease in the length of the school year;

14 (ii) Exceptions from the requirement that the school year be
15 completed within a 10-month period;

16 (iii) Adjustments in the length of the school day; and

17 (iv) Schools to be open on holidays.

18 (2) These adjustments may be granted only if normal school attendance is
19 prevented because of:

20 (i) Natural disaster;

21 (ii) Civil disaster; or

22 (iii) Severe weather conditions.

23 (3) Education funding from State or local sources may not be reduced if
24 there are less than 180 school days in any year because of an approved application under
25 paragraph (1)(i)2 of this subsection.

26 (4)] In case of emergency, the State Board may open schools on holidays.

27 (c) (1) The following days are public school holidays:

28 (i) Thanksgiving Day and the day after;

29 (ii) Christmas Eve and from then through January 1;

- 1 (iii) Martin Luther King, Jr. Day;
- 2 (iv) Presidents' Day;
- 3 (v) The Friday before Easter and from then through the Monday
4 after Easter;
- 5 (vi) Memorial Day; and
- 6 (vii) Primary and general election days.

7 (2) If the federal and State observances of a holiday are on different days,
8 the board of education of each county shall determine which date shall be the date of
9 observance for the public schools within the county.

10 (3) The public schools shall devote a part of at least one day to appropriate
11 exercises for each of the following:

- 12 (i) Washington's Birthday;
- 13 (ii) Lincoln's Birthday;
- 14 (iii) Veterans' Day;
- 15 (iv) Columbus Day;
- 16 (v) Arbor Day;
- 17 (vi) Black History Month, with an emphasis on Harriet Tubman and
18 Frederick Douglass and the contributions they made in the fight against slavery; and
- 19 (vii) Any other day of national significance.

20 (4) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this article, the public schools,
21 in the following counties, may remain open and in session on primary and general election
22 days:

- 23 (i) Calvert;
- 24 (ii) Caroline;
- 25 (iii) Dorchester;
- 26 (iv) Kent;
- 27 (v) Talbot; and

1 (vi) Worcester.

2 (d) Except as provided in subsection (e) of this section, the State Board shall
3 divide the school year into the terms it considers appropriate.

4 (e) (1) The county boards of Allegany, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Howard,
5 Montgomery, and Prince George's counties, and the Board of School Commissioners of
6 Baltimore City, may elect to operate one or more schools within the county or Baltimore
7 City on a year-round basis, provided that [the 180-day and] the minimum hour
8 requirements under this section are met.

9 (2) Nothing in this section precludes a county board from conducting a
10 year-round pilot study or program that is funded by the county board.

11 (f) Publicly funded half-day prekindergarten programs are not subject to the
12 requirements of subsection (a) of this section.

13 (g) Notwithstanding any other law and subject only to this section, each county
14 board annually shall set the start and end dates of the school year for schools in the county.

15 7-103.1.

16 (a) (1) The State Board shall explore the use of innovative school scheduling
17 models, including extended year, year-round schooling, or other school scheduling models
18 that do not allow for prolonged lapses in instructional time, in low-performing or at-risk
19 public schools.

20 [(b)] (2) The State Board shall encourage county boards to use the school
21 scheduling models that are determined to be most effective in enhancing student
22 achievement in low-performing or at-risk public schools.

23 (B) A COUNTY BOARD MAY EXPLORE THE USE OF INNOVATIVE SCHOOL
24 SCHEDULING MODELS, INCLUDING EXTENDED YEAR, YEAR-ROUND SCHOOLING,
25 4-DAY SCHOOL WEEK, OR OTHER SCHOOL SCHEDULING MODELS THAT DO NOT
26 ALLOW FOR PROLONGED LAPSES IN INSTRUCTIONAL TIME IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

27 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
28 1, 2023.