

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 226
Ways and Means

(Delegate Bagnall)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Anne Arundel County – Public Schools – School Schedule Options

This bill authorizes the Anne Arundel County Board of Education to choose to operate all public schools in the county using a scheduling model that eliminates early dismissal days, to allow for less than 180 school days, if the minimal hours of attendance in a school year under State regulations as of July 1, 2025, are met. If the Anne Arundel County board uses a scheduling model that results in schools being open for fewer than 180 days, the board must (1) offer hourly rate school employees an opportunity to make up the lost wages through other duties before the beginning of the next school year and (2) report by June 30, 2026, and 2027, to the State Board of Education and the General Assembly on the operation of schools during the preceding school year that used an alternative schedule – summarizing each day a school operating under an alternative scheduling model was open and the number of hours per day that the school was open with students in attendance. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025, and terminates June 30, 2027.**

Fiscal Summary

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

Local Effect: No direct effect on Anne Arundel County, as the bill is authorizing in nature. If Anne Arundel County Public Schools chooses to operate schools using an alternative schedule during one or both of the two school years authorized by the bill (2025-2026 and 2026-2027), it can do so using existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: 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 the State Board of Education (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 SBE 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.

SBE 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 school 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.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: SB 569 (Anne Arundel County Senators) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 22, 2025
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