

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1386
Ways and Means

(Howard County Delegation)

Howard County - Board of Education - Mandatory School Holidays
Ho. Co. 10-25

This bill requires the Howard County Board of Education to close public schools in the county, including all buildings and offices, in observance of Yom Kippur, as well as the first day of Diwali, Eid Al-Adha, Eid Al-Fitr, Lunar New Year, and Rosh Hashanah, when these holidays begin on a weekday. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill affects only Howard County.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect Howard County finances, as the county advises that the listed holidays are already non-instructional and professional development days, with no student attendance required. However, costs may rise to the extent that the county needs to pay contractual staff for any instructional days added to the 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 elementary and middle schools or 1,170 hours at high schools during a 10-month period. Schools must be open a minimum of 3 hours during each school day and cannot be open on Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays to meet the day or hour requirements. The official public school holidays are:

- Thanksgiving Day and the day after;
- Christmas Eve through January 1;
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day;
- President’s Day;
- the Friday before Easter through the Monday after Easter;
- Memorial Day; and
- primary and general election days.

However, public schools in Calvert, Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Talbot, and Worcester counties may remain open and in session on primary and general election days.

If the federal and State observances of a holiday are on different days, the local board of education for each school system must determine which date public schools will observe the holiday on.

Furthermore, public schools must devote a part of at least one day to appropriate exercises for each of the following:

- Washington’s Birthday;
- Lincoln’s Birthday;
- Veterans’ Day;
- Columbus Day;
- Arbor Day;
- Black History Month, with an emphasis on Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass and the contributions they made in the fight against slavery; and
- any other day of national significance.

Additional Comments: As the bill states that schools will only be closed on the first day of the specified holidays if they fall on a weekday, this bill will not require Howard County to close schools for an additional six days in each school year. The holidays Eid Al-Adha and Eid Al-Fitr can have different start dates depending on the calendar used, and the county will need to determine the correct dates to acknowledge those holidays, but it is estimated that the number of days schools will be closed for the next five years as a result of this bill is as follows:

- Academic Year 2025-2026: six days;
- Academic Year 2026-2027: three days;
- Academic Year 2027-2028: four days;
- Academic Year 2028-2029: five days; and
- Academic Year 2029-2030: four days.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

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

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