

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1390
Ways and Means

(Delegate Howard, *et al.*)

Public Schools - Veterans' Day - Excused Student Absence

This bill requires public schools, notwithstanding any other provision of State education law, to excuse a student's absence from school for observance of Veterans' Day. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill affects only local school system operations.

Local Effect: None. Local school systems can alter attendance policies using existing resources. No effect on revenues.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A child age 5 to 17 must attend public school regularly unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction at an alternative setting (*i.e.*, a private or home school). An individual who has legal custody of a child age 5 to 15 and fails to see that the child attends school is guilty of a misdemeanor. Compulsory attendance does not apply to specified individuals, including, among others, individuals who have obtained a high school diploma or GED, who is married or in military service, or an individual who is severely ill and requires home or hospital instruction.

Absences from school are classified as lawful or unlawful. COMAR specifies the conditions that constitute a lawful absence from school. Among these conditions are (1) death in the immediate family; (2) illness of the student; (3) pregnancy and parenting

conditions; (4) court summons; (5) hazardous weather conditions; (6) work approved or sponsored by the school; (7) observance of a religious holiday; (8) State emergency; (9) suspension; (10) lack of authorized transportation; or (11) other emergencies or circumstances which, in the judgement of the local superintendent or designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school. An absence, including absence for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those cited as lawful are presumed to be unlawful and may constitute truancy.

Veterans' Day is not designated as a public school holiday under current law. State 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, as specified; and any other day of national significance.

Additional Comments: Veterans' Day, November 11, fell on a Tuesday in 2025. According to posted school system calendars, the Department of Legislative Services is aware of six local school systems (in Allegany, Cecil, Charles, Harford, Prince George's, and St. Mary's, counties) that closed schools on Monday, November 10, or Tuesday, November 11, 2025).

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 10, 2026
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