



SB562 PUBLIC SCHOOLS - FLEXIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS - POLICY REQUIREMENTS

March 3, 2020

EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **SB562 Public Schools - Flexible Instructional Days - Policy Requirements**. This bill authorizes a local board of education to develop a policy to 1) require all public schools in the county to initiate flexible instructional days at the direction of the local board or 2) authorize public schools in the county to individually initiate flexible instructional days as determined by the school. The policy must include specified elements and be for up to five days of flexible instruction. A local board may not implement a flexible instructional day policy unless it is approved by the State Board of Education. To assist local boards, the State Board of Education must adopt guidelines and a model policy as specified. A flexible instruction day must count toward the minimum school days required.

Although AACPS appreciates the innovation that this bill would encourage digital learning to make up for lost days from weather or other emergencies, we have concerns that this bill has the unintended consequence that would lead to a greater inequity between school districts and among students within each district. If AACPS desired to take advantage of this opportunity and maintain our commitment to ensure equity, we would be financially obligated to provide devices to teachers and all students. We estimate the cost of implementing this bill to be more than \$20 million. Although we understand that this bill would not mandate districts to come up with a plan, it would allow some districts with the financial resources to do so. This would promote inequity between Maryland's 24 school systems.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on SB562.