



April 6, 2021

Maryland Senate

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

HB1013 General Provisions – Standard Time – Year–Round Daylight Saving Time

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Position: Informational Only

HB1013 came to the attention of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) for its potential impact on student safety and well-being. With the requirement to adopt a year-round standard time that is consistent with Eastern Daylight Time, publically available accounts indicate the sun would not rise until approximately 8:30 a.m. when the days are shortest in winter. HCPSS' earliest school start time is currently 7:45 a.m., which would result in an increased volume of students walking to school or waiting at the bus stop in the dark for sustained periods of time.

What HB1013 does not address is that such a shift in the standard time would likely force schools in Maryland to move school start times later, with potentially significant budget implications. In Howard County, school start times are staggered in order to utilize a smaller pool of busses that make school runs multiple times throughout the morning hours in order to have all students in the classroom by 9:45 a.m. In order to keep start times from extending into the later morning hours, and thus evening upon school closure, additional busses would be needed. Given a current industry shortage of bus drivers as well, the likelihood of having enough human capital to compact start times would also be difficult.

Many school systems throughout the state and nation are working to address the core issue of early school start times. Research by organizations such as the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) recognize “insufficient sleep in adolescents as an important public health issue that significantly affects the health and safety, as well as the academic success, of our nation’s middle and high school students.” In Howard County, multiple members of our Board of Education have expressed an interest in healthy school start times and are currently looking at recommendations to align start times with this body of research. As staff further explores this avenue and the funding to support this shift, we urge our elected officials to consider the immediate impacts of HB1013 beyond just a change in standard time.