



108 Washington Street • P.O. Box 1724 • Cumberland, MD 21501-1724
Telephone (301) 759-2000 • www.acpsmd.org

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Testimony of Allegheny County Public Schools (ACPS) - HB 1129 – Virtual Education Snow Days
Maryland General Assembly

Garrett County and Allegheny County - Public Schools - Virtual Education Days Pilot Program
(Garrett County Delegation and Allegheny County Delegation)

Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony on behalf of HB 1129 – Virtual Education Days Pilot Program. I am providing feedback from our staff at ACPS as to how this bill will benefit our community and the plan that ACPS currently has in place.

For the 2021-2022 school year, the Board voted to allow three “traditional” inclement weather days prior to beginning the virtual snow day platform. ACPS will follow the traditional school schedule until we have exhausted those days and then we will have students keep their devices at home and/or continue to transport their devices on a daily schedule. To date, ACPS has had one inclement weather day during the 2021-2022 school year.

During a virtual learning inclement weather day, all students will receive synchronous instruction for 4 hours and the remainder of the day will be asynchronous. ACPS has a ratio of 1:1 for devices, and more than 90% of students has access to reliable internet. Students in areas without access to the internet will receive an inclement weather day packet. Once the work has been completed within the appropriate timeline, those students will be counted as present.

The expectation of virtual learning will be focused on supplemental work such as extensions and reinforcement of the current curriculum. Each student’s IEP will be implemented in accordance with their individually developed emergency conditions plan, which addresses each student’s specially designed instruction, accommodations and supplementary aids and services.

The virtual platform is more beneficial for the continuity of instruction. This platform would allow students to avoid make-up days at the end of the year; which typically results in lower attendance. Grade 12 students would not miss any instruction if inclement weather days are taught through the virtual platform.

I hope that this information is helpful for the Committee’s consideration, and I would be glad to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeffrey S. Blank".

Jeffrey S. Blank, Superintendent of Schools (ACPS)