



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: SB 321

TITLE: Public Schools - Length of School Year and Innovative School Scheduling Models - Revisions

DATE: February 22, 2023

POSITION: Support

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents, **supports** Senate Bill 321.

Senate Bill 321 alters current law requiring a certain length of school year for student attendance. Additionally, this bill would authorize county boards of education to explore the use of innovative school scheduling models, including an extended year, year-round schooling, a 4-day school week, and other models. However, the bill creates guardrails by ensuring there are no prolonged lapses in instructional time.

Current State law requires that public schools be in session for both 180 days **and** a minimum number of seat hours (1,080 at the elementary and middle school levels, and 1,170 at the high school level). This legislation will allow school systems to meet the minimum number of seat hours required, but removes existing constraints that require these hours be met during a ten-month period over the course of a school year of at least 180 days. To be clear, such a change would *not* mandate that any school system alter current operations in any way. Under this legislation, local school systems will still be required to meet the existing minimum number of seat hours for all students.

The delivery of public education must evolve. If the COVID-19 pandemic taught us one lesson, it is that the traditional model of educating students is not the only way to educate students. We learned that some students can learn and excel in much more creative models and these models deserve more research and consideration.

Maryland's superintendents unanimously agree that implementing flexible scheduling models at the discretion of local systems provides additional creative options that allow for the delivery of a free and appropriate public education that best meets the needs of all Maryland students. Therefore, PSSAM strongly supports this innovative piece of legislation to recognize and explore these new, more flexible models.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 321 and urges a favorable report.