

HB 510_ Public Schools - Length of School Year and

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Position: FAV



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
1217 S. Potomac Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-935-7281
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

BILL: HB 510

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

DATE: February 22, 2023

POSITION: Support

COMMITTEE: House Ways and Means Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents, **supports** House Bill 510.

House Bill 510 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 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** House Bill 510 and urges a favorable report.

Del. Jones - HB510 Testimony (2).pdf

Uploaded by: Dana Jones

Position: FAV

DANA JONES
Legislative District 30A
Anne Arundel County

Ways and Means Committee

Secretary, Women's Caucus

Vice Chair, Anne Arundel
County Delegation



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 161
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3211 • 301-858-3211
800-492-7122 Ext. 3211
Dana.Jones@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Delegate Dana Jones
Before the Ways and Means Committee**

In Support of HB 510

**Public Schools - Length of School Year and Innovative School Scheduling Models -
Revisions
February 22th, 2023**

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

For the record, I am Delegate Dana Jones.

I come before you today to introduce House Bill 510, Public Schools - Length of School Year and Innovative School Scheduling Models - Revisions. This enabling legislation addresses outdated and artificial constraints in the scheduling of the school year for public school students. Currently, State law requires that public schools be open for student attendance for **both** 180 days **and** a minimum number of seat hours **during** a 10-month period. A minimum number of 1,080 student seat hours are required at the elementary and middle school levels, and 1,170 student seat hours are required at the high school level.

House Bill 510 removes the requirements that public schools be open for student attendance for a minimum of 180 days during a 10-month period, but leaves the minimum number of seat hours required in place. This change is necessary in order to provide local school systems with the flexibility to tailor instructional programs and school operations to innovatively best meet the needs of their students but **does not** diminish, in any way, requirements regarding instruction provided to students. The increased flexibility will allow school systems to explore scheduling that can provide better educational outcomes for students.

I want to emphasize that this bill **does not** mandate that a school system alter current operations and **does not** reduce instructional time for students. What it does do is provide local school systems with much needed flexibility to better address their needs of their students and families when creating the school calendar.

I respectfully request a favorable committee report on HB 510.

Dana Jones

Delegate Dana Jones

FINAL - HB510 Length of School Year and Innovative

Uploaded by: Grace Wilson

Position: FAV



HB510 PUBLIC SCHOOLS – LENGTH OF SCHOOL YEAR AND INNOVATIVE SCHOOL SCHEDULING

MODELS - REVISIONS

February 22, 2023

WAYS AND MEANS

SUPPORT

Grace Wilson, Legislative & Policy Specialist (410.440.1758)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) strongly supports **HB510 Public Schools – Length of School Year and Innovative School Scheduling Models – Revisions**. Current State law requires public schools to 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) in a given school year. This bill alters the length of school year requirement for student attendance to require a minimum of 1,080 hours of student attendance each school year. Additionally, this bill authorizes county boards of education to explore the use of innovative school scheduling models, including extended year, year-round schooling, a four-day school week, or other school scheduling models that do not allow for prolonged lapses in instruction time in public schools.

As the Maryland State Department of Education and local school systems across the State seek innovative approaches to educating students through the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint), this rigid and outdated artificial constraint on school year scheduling remains, preventing school systems from exploring innovative instructional programs and school operations that best meet the needs of our students. The Blueprint is all about innovation, and so is this bill. However, it is important to note that this bill **does not force any school system to do anything difference than it does now**.

This bill does allow for flexibility to do things like eliminate early dismissals that are a source of nearly universal consternation among students, families, and staff. It also allows flexibility to add minutes to the school day and actually shorten the school year – creating a longer summer.

This change will provide local school systems with more flexibility to tailor instructional programs and school operations to innovatively best meet the needs of their students, while not diminishing in any way requirements regarding the amount of instruction provided to those students. The flexibility we seek is crucial as we explore the use of new and innovative school scheduling models to continue to combat learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to invigorate education in Maryland.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on HB510.

HB 510.School Calendar Flexibility Based on Hours.

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FAV

BILL: House Bill 510
TITLE: Public Schools - Length of School Year and Innovative School Scheduling Models - Revisions
DATE: February 22, 2023
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, supports House Bill 510 because it would provide much needed flexibility for local school systems to adopt annual school calendars determined to be in the best interests of student learning.

MABE always places a high priority on advocating for continued governance autonomy for local boards of education to set education policy and school budgets which provide educational benefits for all students; and opposition to unfunded mandates. Local boards support the enhanced local school calendar flexibility that House Bill 510 would provide to allow each of Maryland's 24 local school systems to consider options beyond the 180-day strictures of the current law.

On August 31, 2016 Governor Hogan signed an Executive Order mandating a post-Labor Day start for all of Maryland's public schools beginning in 2017. The Order further mandated that that school year end by June 15th. MABE objected to this initiative as contrary to the principle of local governance, and the traditional role of boards of education and their communities in setting school calendars. The State Board of Education responded to the first Executive Order by indicating its willingness to favorably consider waiver requests.

Then, on October 11, 2016, Governor Hogan issued a second, amended Executive Order to forestall the intention of the State Board of Education to consider and grant waivers from the post-Labor Day through June 15 school year based on a local board of education's showing that commencing their academic calendar before Labor Day would provide educational benefit to students. The second Executive Order repealed the previous waiver language and insisted that the State Board follow formal regulatory procedures in adopting waiver criteria. In addition, the Order requires that local boards establish a "compelling justification" for any requested waiver by satisfying all elements stipulated in the Order.

Fortunately, the legislature acted to alleviate these barriers to local decision making on school calendars by authorizing a local board of education to adopt their own start and end dates to the school year. House Bill 510 would further expand the options available to local boards by allowing them to consider innovative scheduling strategies. Such strategies may be designed not only to meet minimum educational requirements but also to facilitate efforts to avoid long gaps in instruction and to align with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future expansions of career and technical education and dual enrollment programs. In these ways, this bill would greatly assist local boards in determining whether and how to adjust their respective local school calendars.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 510.

HB0510 MJM 022223 Testimony - Length of School Yea

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: FAV



Dr. Michael J. Martirano
Superintendent, Howard County Public School System

**Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,
Ways and Means Committee
February 22, 2023**

HB0510: SUPPORT

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

As the Superintendent of the Howard County Public School System, each and every decision I make centers on the educational well-being of over 57,000 students attending our schools. Each year as we put together the puzzle of setting out the school system calendar, the over-arching factor in decision making must always be our responsibility as teachers and administrators to deliver sustained, quality education that delivers an educational experience that results in every student achieving. Equitable opportunity for academic growth over the course of a year in each grade level needs to take priority over counting days in seats.

In the not so distant past, mandated book-ends on our calendar between Labor Day and June 15th caused consternation and frustration from local boards of education all the way down to administrators and teachers. It took away from our ability to build in ample time during the school year for professional development to strengthen instructional skills and collaborate with coworkers on student and school-wide goals. Professional days scheduled prior to students returning to school do not allow staff to meet the evolving instructional needs of students as the year progresses, nor do the traditionally used half days always allow for desired productivity. The limited timeframe also created a longer summer break, adding to the time needed to reacclimatize students to the classroom and refresh what they learned from the previous year.

This legislative body, however, took action to remove the restraints of the then Governor’s executive order and allow school systems to meet the statutorily defined 180 days of instruction within a 10-month period of their choosing. HB0510 is before you today to continue to move the needle forward in giving school systems the flexibility to truly maximize instructional time by meeting the bill’s stated intent to “explore the use of innovative school scheduling models, including extended year, year-round schooling, 4-day school week, or other school scheduling models that do not allow for prolonged lapses in instruction time in public schools.”

Our school system calendar is developed collaboratively with the input of educators, parents, and other school system stakeholders through public participation on a calendar committee and Board of Education of Howard County hearings. That would continue to be the case should HB0510 pass, and any new models are considered.

In a county where poverty levels have nearly doubled over the last 10 years, required special education services continue to rise, and overcoming the learning loss and mental health challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic remains a priority, the Howard County Public School System has made a concerted effort to ensure schools are a hub for the resources needed to remove barriers to student success. This includes expanded meal programs and a model bringing mental health care providers into schools where our most vulnerable families can easily access them during their daily routines. As this role beyond the direct educational scope continues to expand for all local school systems, greater flexibility to consider student access to these and many other essential services would be a benefit.

In my more than 35 years of professional K-12 education experience, I have dealt with the issue of the school calendar at all levels, including at the state level as the West Virginia State Superintendent of Schools. There, we saw the need to look outside the box to find innovative approaches to the school calendar, ultimately gaining legislative reform to reimagine instructional time with the intent of maximizing academic learning. As educators, the local school system has the keenest insight into how and when to effectively deliver educational content.

Maryland is ripe for an overhaul of educational statute and state-wide policy related to the local school calendar. Current limitations caused by the restrictive requirements of the 180-day academic calendar are not only causing great dismay among educators, but holding our state back from being innovative and forward-thinking when it comes to maximizing instructional time to meet student needs. For these reasons, I request a favorable report of HB0510 from this Committee in order to afford local school systems the opportunity to address this issue directly with the citizens and students we serve.

CalvertCounty_FAV_AMEND_HB0510.pdf

Uploaded by: John Norris

Position: FWA



**CALVERT COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

175 Main Street
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678
410-535-1600 • 301-855-1243
www.calvertcountymd.gov

Board of Commissioners
Mark C. Cox Sr.
Catherine M. Grasso
Earl F. Hance
Mike Hart
Todd Ireland

February 17, 2023

The Honorable Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB510 – Public Schools - Length of School Year and Innovative School Scheduling Models - Revisions
Chair Atterbeary:

The Board of County Commissioners for Calvert County writes in **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** to **HB510**. We embrace the enabling nature of this legislation inviting local Boards of Education to be creative, within their approved budget, in developing a schedule to aid with retention. However, we seek amendment to require consideration of the impact on family situations accustomed to the current school schedules prior to any change. An amendment requiring a public hearing, with adequate notice provisions, in advance of any changes, would give a voice for those parents directly impacted by these decisions.

Your thoughtful consideration of this point is sincerely appreciated. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact County Administrator Julian M. Willis at 410-535-1600, extension 2202 or County Attorney John Norris at 410-535-1600, extension 2566. Thank you for your kind consideration of our position regarding this important Bill.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Handwritten signature of Earl F. Hance in blue ink.

Earl F. Hance

Handwritten signature of Mike Hart in blue ink.

Mike Hart, Vice President

Handwritten signature of Mark C. Cox Sr. in blue ink.

Mark C. Cox Sr.

Handwritten signature of Catherine M. Grasso in blue ink.

Catherine M. Grasso

Handwritten signature of Todd Ireland in blue ink.

Todd Ireland

cc: The Honorable Senator Jack Bailey

HB510_MSEA_Lamb_INFO.pdf

Uploaded by: Lauren Lamb

Position: INFO

**Informational Testimony regarding House Bill 510
Public Schools - Length of School Year and Innovative School Scheduling
Models - Revisions**

**House Ways and Means Committee
February 22, 2023**

**Lauren Lamb
Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony regarding House Bill 510, which would alter the length of school year requirement for pupil attendance during the school year and authorize county boards of education to explore the use of innovative school scheduling models for public schools in the county, including extended year, year-round schooling, 4-day school week, or other models that do not allow for prolonged lapses in instructional time in public schools. Though we appreciate the intent of this legislation, we are concerned about its potential consequences for school personnel and students.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Some of the models permitted may result in inadequate support or resources for students and their families. Research on the social and academic impacts of a four-day school week is inconclusive, but significant questions about equity remain. One study from Oregon State University observed a temporary decline in students' academic performance after schools switched to a four-day week, "particularly among minority, low-income, and special needs students."¹ This approach could also result in the needless criminalization of youth: one study of Colorado school districts'

¹Effects of Four-Day School Weeks on Student Achievement: Evidence from Oregon (2019).
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3390191



four-day school week reported an increase in juvenile arrests for “minor offenses such as shoplifting and other petty theft.”² Even for high school students, a weekday without school could mean another day without school meals, disability accommodations, extracurricular activities, or other essential services that public schools provide.

Further, many districts adopt alternative scheduling models as a cost-cutting approach – but costs, in this case, often mean people. A Stanford University study on the fiscal impact of four-day school weeks in Oklahoma found that decreases in spending were “concentrated specifically in food services and transportation expenditures.”³ For essential education support professionals like bus drivers and food service staff, reducing the days in the school week or school year could result in fewer hours and lower wages. MSEA has serious concerns about how this bill’s implementation on the local level could impact compensation and staffing levels.

The school calendar is one of two illegal subjects of collective bargaining in Maryland, meaning that unions representing school employees would not be permitted to negotiate around many of the scheduling models permitted by this bill.⁴ Implementing alternative school scheduling models without the protection of collective bargaining presents serious concerns about financial and logistical impacts to educators and other school employees.

We urge the committee to consider these concerns around workforce and equity impacts while evaluating this legislation.

² Juvenile Crime and the Four-Day School Week (2016).

<https://www.cob.calpoly.edu/undergrad/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/07/paper1606.pdf>

³Effects of Four-Day School Weeks on School Finance and Achievement: Evidence from Oklahoma (2020).

<https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/wp20-02-v032020.pdf>

⁴Maryland Educ. § 6-510(c)(3).

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Laws/StatuteText?article=ged§ion=6-510&enactments=False&archived=False>