



MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

15 West Gude Drive ♦ Suite 100 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850

BILL: House Bill 1169

TITLE: Howard and Montgomery County - Board of Education –
Mandatory School Holidays MC 6-25

DATE: April 1, 2025

POSITION: Oppose

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

CONTACT: Patricia Ursprung, Coordinator, Legislative Affairs

The Montgomery County Board of Education opposes House Bill 1169.

This bill, as amended, requires the Howard and Montgomery County Boards of Education to close schools to observe Diwali, Ed al-Adha, Ed al-Fitr, Lunar New Year, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Juneteenth.

On September 26, 2024, the Montgomery County Board of Education adopted a legislative platform that contains priority issues and ongoing interests. One of the ongoing interests is preserving local autonomy. Based on this platform position, the Montgomery County Board of Education opposes legislation that would infringe on local control and impose unfunded mandates. Bills that fall into this category require specific school system action and may impact areas such as school calendars, school start times, curriculum, testing, procurement, and other operational decision-making. Some of these bills have a known fiscal impact, other times the fiscal impact is unintentional but still present.

House Bill 1169, as amended, infringes on local control because it dictates areas of the school calendar, requiring schools to close to student instruction on specified holidays. While any calendar mandate would be disfavored by the Board, this particular mandate creates an additional difficulty. Some of the identified holidays follow the lunar calendar, meaning the exact date on which the holiday will occur cannot be known until days or weeks before the event. School systems plan the school year calendar a year or more in advance so cannot guarantee an accurate prediction of the first day of the holidays. Finally, the bill also potentially includes an unfunded mandate as these legally mandated closures could result in a substantial fiscal liability for the school system. The significance of the possible unfunded mandate is unknown, and cannot be known until negotiations with our union partners occur, but estimates suggest the fiscal impact could be more than \$14 million in years where each of the specified holidays fall on a weekday.

As a result of this intrusion on local control that possibly results in an unfunded liability for the school system, the Montgomery County Board of Education opposes House Bill 1169.