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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB0569 - Anne Arundel County - Public Schools - School Schedule Options

Mr. Chair, Madame Vice Chair, and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

SB0569 would authorize the Anne Arundel County Board of Education (the Board) to use a scheduling model that eliminates early dismissal days if the requirement under current law that public schools be open for pupil attendance for a minimum of 1,080 hours during a 10-month period is met.

Background

Current law mandates that schools remain open for 180 instructional days, with a minimum of 1,080 school hours per year. While Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) meets the required instructional hours, the district relies on 12 early-dismissal days to fulfill the 180-day requirement.

However, early-dismissal days—particularly those at the end of the school year—often see higher absenteeism rates, as much of the curriculum has already been completed. Attendance drops significantly on these days, and teachers have reported that they provide little educational value. Parents also face difficulties arranging childcare and adjusting work schedules around these partial school days.

As Anne Arundel County continues to address transportation and childcare challenges, greater flexibility in scheduling would allow the school system to maximize classroom instruction while making it easier for working families to plan for childcare needs.

Solution

SB 0569 establishes a **pilot program** in Anne Arundel County, allowing AACPS, with the approval of the Board, to implement a condensed school year model—providing greater scheduling flexibility as long as the 1,080-hour requirement is met.

During an interim workgroup discussion, early-dismissal days emerged as a major concern in the current scheduling system. Many constituents expressed frustration that students are required to

attend school on days when little to no instruction takes place, and attendance numbers confirm that these days see significant declines. Parents have also voiced concerns over the challenges of coordinating childcare around early dismissals.

By eliminating these early-dismissal days, this pilot program would allow AACPS to test a more effective approach to scheduling, enhancing instructional time while reducing disruptions for students and easing the childcare burden on families.

Per the Fiscal Note, SB0569 would not require additional state resources to implement. I am submitting two amendments agreed to by AACPS and the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County (TAAAC) that were approved by the Anne Arundel County House Delegation, ensuring this bill and its House cross-file remain in the same posture.

Families and faculty across AACPS deserve the convenience of a more lenient school schedule, and SB0569 offers that flexibility at little to no cost in instructional time. For these reasons, I respectfully ask for a favorable report on SB0569.