



**Board of Education  
of Howard County**

Jolene Mosley, *Chair*

Linfeng Chen, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*

Andrea Chamblee, Esq.

Jennifer Swickard Mallo

Jacky McCoy

Meg Ricks

Antonia Watts

James Obasiolu  
*Student Member*

William J. Barnes  
*Superintendent,  
Secretary/Treasurer*

**Board of Education of Howard County  
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
February 19, 2025**

**SB0569: FAVORABLE**

**Anne Arundel County - Public Schools - School Schedule Options**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **Anne Arundel County - Public Schools - School Schedule Options** as a precedent for providing calendar flexibility to local school systems.

SB0569 takes the intent of bills introduced during the 2023 and 2024 session (HB0881) to allow for flexibility in school system calendars and shifts to a simplified version available to Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS). Specifically, the bill authorizes AACPS to operate one or more schools within the county using a scheduling model that eliminates early dismissal days as long as a minimum of 1,080 hours are met.

While Education Article § 7-103(e)(1) in current statute allows for school systems, including the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), to operate on a year-round model, the 180-day minimum requirement would still apply. Under Md. Code Regs. 13A.09.10.14 hours are set at:

(4) A school providing an elementary school or secondary school educational program, or both, shall be open for student attendance for a minimum of:

(a) 1,080 hours in a school year for elementary schools and nongraded educational programs; and

(b) 1,170 hours in a school year for secondary schools.

As a legislative priority when seeking flexibility in the way school systems account for instructional time, the Board supports measures such as the intent of SB0569. Allowing a district to count hours instead of days, for instance, would provide a true reflection of overall instructional time, as well as give schools the flexibility to determine how those hours are distributed. Under current law, whether schools open for the minimum three hours, or conduct a full six-hour school day, both count towards one day out of the 180 day requirement. Additionally, half-days are notoriously unproductive for both instructional time and professional development. When counting hours, rather than setting up two half-days of three hours to count towards the 180 day requirement, school systems could provide the same amount of instruction in one full day (six hours) and now have the second full day for productive instruction or professional development.

Maryland is already at the top of the nation-wide range in instructional hours as one of six states that sets a minimum at 1,080 hours regardless of level ([Education Commission of the States, Instructional Time Policies, 2018](#)). This same report notes 22 states either have no minimum day requirements (only hours) or give districts the option to meet either day or hour minimums. Only three other states have a minimum higher than 1,080 hours.

Especially given lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic regarding continuity of learning and lapses in instruction, SB0596 is a timely effort to allow schools to be innovative and forward-thinking when it comes to maximizing instructional time to meet the educational needs of students.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report on SB0569 from this Committee.