



SB569 Anne Arundel County – Public Schools – School Schedule Options

Wednesday, February 19, 2025 - 2:00 pm

EDUCATION, ENERGY, & ENVIRONMENT

SUPPORT

My name is Michelle Fadele and I am a junior at Chesapeake High School, serving as President of the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC). I am testifying today on behalf of the students of Anne Arundel County in support of SB569—Anne Arundel County Public Schools—School Schedule Options. This bill, if passed, would remove the current 180-day requirement, giving Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) the flexibility to reduce or eliminate the 12 early dismissal days. I had the opportunity to participate in the AACPS workgroup for this bill and gained valuable insight from hearing various perspectives on its impact.

Early dismissal days have a substantial impact on both student attendance and instructional time. I recall one particular early dismissal in my Spanish class when, as the bell rang for our quiz, my teacher noticed that half of the class was absent. After a few students trickled in, only about three-quarters of the class was present, and she decided to proceed with the test. This is a scenario that many students experience regularly.

Teachers often plan lessons with the knowledge that a significant portion of the class may either miss school or leave early. This creates a dilemma for teachers the next day, as they must decide whether to revisit the material or move on. For students, this means either reviewing already covered content or missing out on new material. Furthermore, this places significant burdens on families, as they must secure alternative childcare arrangements while they remain at work. Eliminating early dismissals would restore consistency to the learning environment and minimize these disruptions.

The current law creates an unnecessary constraint on our education system. We believe that flexibility in scheduling will allow AACPS to better meet the needs of its students while still maintaining the required instructional time. We, the students of Anne Arundel County, respectfully urge the favorable passing of SB569.

AACPS has supported legislation that would amend the law to require public schools to meet only the minimum number of student seat hours required, providing local school systems the flexibility to innovate and adapt instructional programs. This change would offer a more effective, tailored educational experience for all students.

Therefore, CRASC respectfully requests a favorable committee report on SB569.