

Anne Arundel County _FAV_SB569.pdf

Uploaded by: Ethan Hunt

Position: FAV

February 19, 2025

Senate Bill 569

Anne Arundel County – Public Schools – School Schedule Options

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 569– Anne Arundel County – Public Schools – School Schedule Options. This Bill authorizes the Anne Arundel County Board of Education to establish a pilot program in one or more Anne Arundel County public schools using a school scheduling model that eliminates early dismissal days if the minimum 1,080 hour requirement is met.

State law currently requires that schools be open each year for a minimum of 180 days and a certain number of hours, 1,080 at the elementary and middle school levels, and 1,170 at the high school level. These requirements – and the need to meet both criteria – place constraints on school schedules that limit programmatic creativity and result in headaches for families. This Bill would enable Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) and the Board to seek a change in this model and move to a system that permits greater flexibility in school scheduling while not reducing instructional time for students.

The flexibility created by passage of this legislation would permit AACPS to pilot innovative scheduling models that have been proven to improve morale and achievement for students and staff. Such an alteration could also eliminate or greatly reduce something most families dislike greatly about the current school calendar: early dismissal days. Those days currently still count toward the 180-day requirement each year, but with calendar flexibility AACPS could explore ways to remove some or all from the calendar. The school calendar for the 2023-2024 school year includes 12 early dismissal days for students. This change in law would enable AACPS to provide students with eight full days of instruction rather than 12 partial days of instructions, which would undeniably benefit students. The structure could also lead to full days of professional development for staff, which would also be full days for families to spend with children. As with any change such as this, it is critical that those affected be engaged, and AACPS has committed to actively engage our students, families, staff, and other stakeholders on any innovative school scheduling pilot program they pursue.

Anne Arundel County supports giving our schools the best chance to implement a schedule that reflects the needs of all of our students, families, and staff, and for these reasons, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 569.

SB569 SUPPORT AACPS.pdf

Uploaded by: Grace Wilson

Position: FAV



SB569 ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY – PUBLIC SCHOOLS – SCHOOL SCHEDULE OPTIONS

February 19, 2025

EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

SUPPORT

Grace Wilson, Senior Legislative & Policy Specialist (410.440.1758)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports **SB569 – Anne Arundel County – Public Schools – School Schedule Options**. This bill creates a limited exemption to the State requirement for public schools to be open for student attendance for Anne Arundel County Public Schools only. Currently, State law mandates that schools be open each year for a minimum of 180 days and a certain number of hours (1,080 at the elementary and middle school levels, and 1,170 at the high school level) during a 10-month period each school year. These requirements are arbitrary and outdated and unnecessarily constrain local school system calendars, limiting programmatic creativity and resulting in headaches for families and employees.

In order to meet the dual day and hour requirement for public schools to be open to students, AACPS utilizes early dismissal days. The school calendar for the 2024-2025 school year includes 12 early dismissal days, as did the calendar for the 2023-2024 school year. These days have proven to be disruptive to students, families, and employees. Parents and guardians struggle to find alternative childcare on days schools close early for students, particularly staff members with students in the school system who are required to complete their normal duties after students are released from school.

Moreover, early dismissal days have a negative impact on student attendance, consequently impacting academic performance. AACPS attendance data from the last three years demonstrates that attendance rates on early dismissal days are consistently lower than average attendance on days schools are open for normal hours: in the 2021-2022 school year, attendance rates on early dismissal days were up to 17.23% below average; in the 2022-2023 school year, attendance rates on early dismissal days were up to 14.23% below average; and in the 2023-2024 school year, attendance rates on early dismissal days were up to 14.09% below average.

This fall, AACPS established the Innovative School Scheduling Workgroup (Workgroup) to engage stakeholders in a robust conversation around school scheduling, including evaluating the current school schedule and making recommendations regarding alternative school scheduling models that should be considered by the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County (Board) and AACPS. One alternative model considered by the Workgroup was the elimination of early dismissal days from the school calendar. The Workgroup noted that early dismissal days are a source of frustration for families, caretakers, and employees with their own students in the system who may have to find alternative childcare on days when schools close early. Additionally, the Workgroup recognized that eliminating the use of early dismissal days would provide consistent and quality childcare for families with young students, and consistent scheduling for all students, families, and employees. The Workgroup recommended the removal of early dismissal days from the AACPS school calendar as soon as possible because of the potential benefits to key stakeholders.

This legislation will allow the Board and AACPS to implement the Workgroup's recommendations and to engage key stakeholders, including students, families, employees, partner organizations, and employee bargaining units regarding the reduction or elimination of early dismissal days from future school calendars. Such a change would allow the Board and AACPS to adjust our school calendar to better meet the needs of our school community by providing more consistent instruction and childcare.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on SB569.

SB 569

Uploaded by: Michael Vazquez

Position: FAV

Michael Vazquez
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27 January 2025

Chair, Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary
Vice Chair Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Rooms 130, 131
Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Regarding Maryland General Assembly HB226 – Anne Arundel County – Public
Schools – School Schedule Options

My name is Michael Vazquez, and I am the president of the Anne Arundel County Council of Parent Teacher Associations (AACCPATAs). As a concerned parent of two students in Anne Arundel County Public Schools, as well as being a full-time special educator in the district, I am testifying in support of HB226 and would like to share with you how the early release days in our county have negatively impacted my and other families.

Having two children attend two different schools (elementary and middle school), while also working full time creates quite the dilemma when trying to figure schedules for child care and transportation on a regular day. On a half day, it is nearly impossible for us. We have no immediate family in the area: relatives on both sides of our family have passed away, live in another state, or travel frequently for work and are not regularly available. Private licensed child care facilities will not enroll students just for early release days, and if they do, the cost is prohibitive (\$2400 for after school care for both children), or they only enroll elementary school students. The School Age Child Care

program at my children's schools is a combined \$550, but the program has no openings at either school. For many of the families in my area, even this \$550 is not financially viable. As a special educator, early release days limit, or in some cases eliminate the federally (and state) required support and accommodation times that I and other service providers must give to students on a regular basis.

I felt it is important that I testify due to my unique position as a teacher, parent, and PTA president in AACPS who also served on the creative scheduling committee that met and discussed the pros and cons of this concept. Our foremost concern at each meeting was the impact on students and families at all grade and ability levels. As a whole, the committee felt that eliminating early dismissal days if the minimum 1,080-hour requirement is met would give AACPS the ability to explore more flexible options for primary and secondary education and would benefit those most in need academically and financially.

I believe it would be helpful for the general assembly to allow AACPS to explore one or more school scheduling models that eliminate early dismissal days if the minimum 1,080-hour requirement is met. I personally support the 45-15 schedule that was shared as part of the committees work, but I also know that such a decision ultimately rests with our local board of education and Superintendent Bedell.

Thank you to Chair, Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary and Vice Chair Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins and all members of the Ways and Means Committee for your consideration. A special thanks goes to Delegate Heather Bagnall for proposing this legislation in support of all AACPS families.

Your consideration of these matters and solutions is very much appreciated.

Together in creating value, respect, and inclusion,



Michael Vazquez

SB 569

Uploaded by: Michelle Fadele

Position: FAV



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.

SB 569- Anne Arundel County – Public Schools – Sch

Uploaded by: Nia Callender

Position: FAV



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: SB 569

TITLE: Anne Arundel County – Public Schools – School Schedule Options

DATE: February 19, 2025

POSITION: Favorable

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports** Senate Bill 569.

This bill authorizes the Anne Arundel County Board of Education to operate one or more schools within the county using a scheduling model that eliminates early dismissal days if the minimum 1,080-hour requirement is met.

PSSAM is pleased to take the unusual position to support a local bill. Maryland superintendents have been challenged to “reimagine” public education by the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future and this scheduling model provides an unique opportunity for innovation and creativity. Other local education agencies (LEAs) are eager to watch as AACPS test-drives alternative scheduling for today’s modern and adaptable students and staff.

Current law requires per pupil attendance for at least 180 actual school days and a minimum of 1,080 school hours during a 10-month period in each school year; OR if normal attendance is prevented due to conditions enumerated in law, schools shall be open for at least 1,080 hours during a 10–month period. These longstanding, and inflexible requirements hinder innovative school calendars.

This legislation opens up possibilities for scheduling solutions that meet diverse student and staff needs. Change is difficult, especially change involving school schedules that dominate a family’s ecosystem and daily work/life activities. However, we know that AACPS will go above and beyond to actively involve students, families, staff, and stakeholders in any proposed changes.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 569 and requests a **favorable** committee report.

DG Written Testimony_SB0569.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Gile

Position: FAV

DAWN D. GILE
Legislative District 33
Anne Arundel County

Finance Committee

Chair

Anne Arundel County
Senate Delegation



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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.

SB0569-443024-1.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Gile

Position: FAV



SB0569/443024/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

12 FEB 25
13:08:41

BY: Anne Arundel County Senators
(To be offered in the Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee)

AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 569

(First Reading File Bill)

On page 3, in line 12, after “(F)” insert “(1)”; in the same line, strike “**THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**” and substitute “**IN ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, THE COUNTY BOARD**”; after line 15, insert:

“(2) IF THE COUNTY BOARD ELECTS TO USE A SCHEDULING MODEL THAT ELIMINATES EARLY DISMISSAL DAYS, THE COUNTY BOARD SHALL NEGOTIATE THE RELEVANT ISSUES WITH THE EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION DESIGNATED AS THE EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE IMPACTED SCHOOL EMPLOYEES IN ACCORDANCE WITH §§ 6-406 AND 6-507 OF THIS ARTICLE.”;

and in line 22, after the period insert “It shall remain effective for a period of 4 years and, at the end of June 30, 2029, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.”.

SB0569 Howard Co BOE Testimony 021925 for EEE - AA

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: FAV



**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.