

HEATHER BAGNALL
Legislative District 33C
Anne Arundel County



Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 160
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3406 · 301-858-3406
800-492-7122 Ext. 3406
Heather.Bagnall@house.state.md.us

Health and Government Operations
Committee
Subcommittees

Health Occupations and Long-Term Care

Public Health and
Minority Health Disparities

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 29, 2025

HB226 – Anne Arundel County – Public Schools – School Schedule Options

Good afternoon Madame Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Health and Government Operations/Appropriations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 226.

Current law requires schools to be open 180 actual school days, with a minimum of 1,080 school hours each year. While AACPS meets the instructional time requirement, they currently implement 12 early-dismissal days to meet the school day requirement. Early-dismissal days, especially end-of-year early dismissal days, often have a higher rate of absenteeism in Anne Arundel County; realistically, curriculum has been completed by the time end-of-year early dismissal days are implemented, and teachers have expressed that educational outcomes are not necessarily improved with these days. Parents have also expressed difficulty planning travel and daycare around these early-dismissal days. As Anne Arundel County continues to navigate challenges with transportation and childcare, this flexibility allows the school system to maximize instructional classroom time while meeting the needs of working parents.

HB226 allows AACPS schools, at the behest of the Board, to enact a condensed school year model which allows greater flexibility in school scheduling if they meet the 1080-hour requirement. The current proposal of early dismissal day flexibility was heavily debated in an interim workgroup; it was found that early dismissal days were one of the most notable sore spots of our current scheduling system. Numerous constituents have come forward in support of greater flexibility in scheduling at the end of the year as schools approach summer break, sharing concerns that their students would be better served not having to travel to school for days where minimal instruction is occurring. Eliminating early-dismissal days would go a long way in giving them that flexibility.

Families and faculty across AACPS deserve the convenience of a more lenient school schedule, and HB226 offers that flexibility at little to no cost in instructional time. For these reasons, I respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB226.