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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 (AACCTAs). 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