

**Written Testimony of Susanna Montezemolo, Montgomery County Public Schools Parent
In Opposition to H.B. 1084**

3/24/26

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong opposition to House Bill 1084.

I am a resident of Chevy Chase, Maryland, and a parent of two students in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS): a second grader at Rosemary Hills Elementary School in Silver Spring and an eighth grader at Silver Creek Middle School in Kensington. I also serve as Chair of the Gifted Education Committee for the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations (MCCPTA), though I offer this testimony in my personal capacity.

I testify in strong opposition to HB 1084. I am deeply concerned that this bill would excuse years of poor calendar planning by MCPS and lower expectations for instructional time in a district where students urgently need more time in school, not less.

Extraordinary weather did not cause the calendar challenges MCPS is now facing. These challenges were the predictable result of repeated decisions to reduce instructional days, limit usable spring makeup days, and fail to plan responsibly for foreseeable closures. Other Maryland school districts faced the same winter conditions this year and will be able to meet the state's 180-day requirement. MCPS, by contrast, was correctly denied a waiver by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Rather than correcting its planning failures, MCPS is now asking the General Assembly to change state law on its behalf. As introduced, HB 1084 would have permanently excused MCPS from the state's 180-day requirement through a provision tailored specifically to Montgomery County, fully achieving the district's stated [legislative platform priority](#). The bill has since been modified, but it would still allow MCPS to provide as few as 175 instructional days in both the current and upcoming school years. Even in this revised form, HB 1084 signals legislative acceptance of reduced instructional time and will only encourage MCPS to continue pressing for a permanent exemption.

MCPS's push for less school should give legislators serious pause, as MCPS students are struggling academically. District-wide achievement data show that large numbers of students are not meeting grade-level standards in literacy or math, with especially severe gaps for students receiving free- and reduced-price meals, English language learners, special education students, and students of color. Lost instructional time disproportionately harms these students. Reducing the minimum number of required school days sends exactly the wrong message at a time when academic recovery should be the central focus.

HB 1084 sets a troubling precedent. It signals that if a large district plans poorly, ignores its own contingency days, or fails to align its calendar with operational realities, it can simply appeal to the legislature for relief after the fact. That undermines the authority of MSDE, weakens statewide accountability, and removes incentives for MCPS to improve its calendar planning going forward.

If HB 1084 passes, it would reward poor planning by relieving MCPS of the consequences of its own calendar decisions, rather than requiring the district to address those failures directly. MCPS sets its calendar fully aware of the state's 180-day requirement, yet the district repeatedly has adopted calendars that are unlikely to meet that standard under normal winter conditions. This is a district that fairly regularly closes for less than an inch of snow, and sometimes even for what ends up being a rain event. Most years, MCPS needs at least four weather closure days, yet this year it built only one snow day into the calendar. Removing the consequences of these decisions teaches the district that realistic planning is optional and that state standards will be adjusted after the fact. That undermines accountability and makes future planning problems more likely, not less.

The current situation was avoidable. Over the past decade, MCPS steadily reduced built-in instructional days from 184 to 181. It scheduled too few realistic spring contingency days and then declined to use the ones it had identified. It did not take advantage of state-approved waiver days that other districts used. These were planning choices, not unavoidable emergencies. Students should not bear the consequences of those choices.

The Senate should reject this bill. However, if it does move forward, any relief should be strictly limited to the current school year and paired with clear requirements that MCPS revise future calendars to include at least 184 days, add sufficient contingency days in the spring and use them in the order they occur, and plan in a way that prioritizes students' educational needs.

Education is not a technicality to be waived away. Instructional days represent real learning time for real children. Excusing poor calendar planning will only encourage MCPS to continue this approach in a district where many students are struggling academically and need *more* instructional time, not less.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 1084. Thank you.