

House Bill 1084 – Emergency Bill
Montgomery County – County Board of Education – School Operation Requirements
Written Testimony (Favorable with Amendments)

Submitted by: Evelyn Chung

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

My name is Evelyn Chung. I am a Montgomery County parent and Chair of the Montgomery County Council of PTSAs' ESOL Committee. My testimony today is consistent with the full position of the education committees of the MCCPTA, as outlined in the op-ed linked in my written testimony:

<https://bethesdamagazine.com/2026/03/20/opinion-mcps-school-board-advocating-less-school/>.

As written, HB 1084 shortchanges our students of the bare minimum instructional time needed to meet student achievement goals, allowing Montgomery County Public Schools to provide as few as 175 school days, not just this year but also in the following year.

This bill is only the most recent step in MCPS's systemic reduction of school days. In recent years, MCPS has reduced the number of its instructional days from 184 to 181 and has frontloaded scheduled closures in the earlier part of the year, when teachers and students need consistent daily instruction to establish routines and prepare for May assessments. Half of the 18 weeks before January are four-day weeks.

At the same time, MCPS has begun scheduling its snow makeup days in the fall, when they are not useful for snow emergencies, and in June, after spring assessments when absenteeism is high. The only two spring makeup days this year were March 20, which falls on Eid, and April 15, a grading and reporting day. MCPS has vacillated between using these days and not using them. Why is MCPS scheduling days that it does not intend to use? While neither option is ideal, the nature of emergency planning requires uncomfortable compromises. If MCPS is unwilling to use the days it has scheduled, then it should identify other contingency dates.

As a result, over the past two years, when there have been more than a couple of inclement weather or other closures—which occur almost every year—MCPS has fallen below the 180 instructional-day minimum. Its primary response has been to extend the school year into June, which is one of the least effective options in terms of student learning because of high absenteeism. The state waiver process allows flexible solutions and some grace from the 180-day minimum—so long as the school district shows efforts to make up the lost instructional time. However, for the past two years, MCPS has made itself ineligible for state waivers of the 180-day requirement because it has not used its scheduled makeup days or made other

reasonable adjustments. Unlike other school districts this year, MCPS also did not seek holiday waivers or implement a virtual learning plan.

Instead of addressing its calendar planning issues, MCPS is asking for a special legislative exception that would allow only MCPS to provide fewer instructional days. This is deeply concerning given current outcomes: despite being one of the wealthiest and most highly educated counties in the country, only about half of MCPS third graders meet literacy benchmarks, only about one-third of students pass the state algebra exam, and fewer than half of students taking the SATs meet college- and career-readiness standards in both math and literacy.

Students need consistent daily instruction—not learning compressed into fewer days—especially when Maryland counts lunch, transitions, and testing as “school hours.” Our emergent multilingual learners, in particular, need every opportunity to engage in instruction. Each day in school supports language acquisition and provides access to ESOL services. Currently, due to MCPS’s planning, teachers and students are scrambling to complete course content across all grades before May assessments—doubling up on assignments and rushing through material.

All of the same issues recur in the 2026–2027 calendar, where MCPS has scheduled only 181 instructional days and has only one spring makeup day—again on Eid. As written, HB 1084 gives MCPS a hall pass for next year’s calendar even though it has ample time to fix it. The state waiver process exists to prevent a race to the bottom by local education agencies. Please do not weaken state oversight to excuse a problem that MCPS created.

Thank you for your consideration.