

## Testimony for HB 1084

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

**BILL:** HB 1084

**POSITION:** Unfavorable (Opposed)

**NAME:** Ari Gleicher

**DATE:** March 24, 2026

Chair, Vice-Chair, and members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Ari Gleicher.

**The statutory 180-day school year requirement is not an arbitrary number; it is the absolute floor for educational equity.** In Maryland, we have decided that 180 days is the minimum time required to deliver a constitutional education.

I know this professionally as a former Special Education and IDD Program Director, but I live it every day as the father of a son with Level 3 Autism who attends the Ivymount School through an MCPS placement. For students like my son Jonah, every single day of that 180-day mandate is a clinical necessity. Consistency is his lifeline; regression is the immediate and severe consequence of every 'waiver' day and 'early dismissal' we allow.

MCPS frequently cites the logistical challenges of running door-to-door specialized buses as their primary excuse for system-wide closures. **The cruel irony is that the students who rely on those very buses are the exact same population who need consistent instruction the most.** As a former administrator, I know that the solution to an operational failure is not to change the law to lower the bar; the solution is to fix the operations. The troubling reality is that MCPS has not exhausted every solution to maximize instructional days. We see neighboring and similar-sized districts across the country successfully using **emergency snow bus routes**—where buses stay on pre-treated, primary roads and families meet them at designated stops.

Yet, MCPS has not attempted any types of structural innovations. Instead, their first and only instinct has been to ask this body for a waiver and a change in the law. They are choosing to legislate away their responsibilities rather than solving their logistical hurdles.

Please do not allow our school system to balance its operational shortcomings on the backs of students who cannot afford to lose a single day. I urge an unfavorable report on HB 1084. Thank you.