
TO: Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

BILL: SB0612 – Talbot County – Public Schools – School Schedule Options

DATE: March 11, 2026

POSITION: Oppose

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) respectfully oppose SB0612 – *Talbot County – Public Schools – School Schedule Options* which would allow Talbot County Public Schools to use a scheduling model that would eliminate early dismissal days to allow for less than 180 school days if the minimal hours of attendance are met.

Under current law, Education Article §7-103(a)(1) of the Annotated Code of Maryland, public schools must be open at least 180 school days and a minimum of 1,080 hours over a 10-month school year. The Code of Maryland Regulations requires a minimum of 1,170 hours in high school. ([COMAR 13A.03.02.12](#)). A waiver may be approved by the Maryland State Board of Education in some circumstances ([COMAR 13A.02.02.04](#)). All LEAs are eligible to request such a waiver.

SB0612 leaves in place language requiring at least 180 days and a minimum of 1,080 hours (for elementary and middle grades) and does not address the high school requirement of 1,170 hours. It is not clear whether Talbot County Public Schools would need a waiver from the State Board of the 180-day requirement if a proposed schedule results in 1,080 hours in an elementary school or middle school but fewer than 180 days.

Given these considerations and the larger complexities involved in modifying school calendars, the State Board and MSDE are concerned that further deviations from the 180-day school year could create inconsistencies in instructional time across the State. MSDE is aware that Anne Arundel County has an exception to the 180-day requirement as part of a pilot to eliminate half-days for students, and MSDE is actively monitoring the results of that pilot to inform any future changes to state regulations. The State Board and the Department do not support any other exceptions to the statewide instructional time requirement until the results of the pilot can be studied. While the State Board and MSDE appreciate and support LEAs' efforts to make calendared school days as efficient as possible, consistent expectations for student learning remain critical.

School schedules and calendars should be designed to best meet the instructional needs of the students. As LEAs explore potential calendar modifications, the State Board and MSDE believe it is important to examine this issue holistically and explore relevant models or waiver processes at the State level. Increasing the number of system-by-system approaches to calendar requirements for schools is inefficient and inequitable. The State Board and MSDE are open to continued discussions with the General Assembly and local school systems in the future to identify research-based approaches that reflect local needs while keeping student

learning at the center of decision-making.

For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at 443-571-5461 or Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov.