

**SB612 SUPPORT.pdf**

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Position: FAV



## **SB0612 – TALBOT COUNTY – PUBLIC SCHOOLS – SCHOOL SCHEDULE OPTIONS**

March 11, 2026

EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### **SUPPORT**

Grace Wilson, Director of Legislation & Policy (410.440.1758)

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports **SB0612 – Talbot County – Public Schools – School Schedule Options**. This bill authorizes the Talbot County Board of Education to operate schools within the county using a school scheduling model that eliminates early dismissal days to allow for less than 180 school days if the minimal hours of attendance are met. This bill also requires a school operating under a certain scheduling model to provide certain employees with an opportunity to make up lost wages.

State law currently mandates that schools be open each year for a minimum of 180 days and a certain number of hours, 1,080, at the elementary and middle school levels, and 1,170 at the high school level. These requirements – and the need to meet both criteria – place constraints on school schedules that limit programmatic creativity. AACPS supports legislation amending the law to require public schools to be in session for just the existing minimum number of student seat hours in a given school year. Such a change would provide local school systems with the flexibility to tailor instructional programs and school operations to innovatively best meet the needs of students while not diminishing in any way requirements regarding the amount of instruction provided to those students.

In 2025, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB0226 which permits AACPS to pilot a school schedule that eliminates early dismissal days to allow for less than 180 school days in the school year as long as the minimum number of hours of attendance required under the Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.03.02.12 is met. The implementation of HB226 in Anne Arundel County has already yielded approved student attendance across grade levels and student groups. AACPS supports similar flexibility for other school systems in Maryland.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on SB0612.

# **Letter of Support - Innovative Scheduling Model 3\_**

Uploaded by: Sharon Pepukayi

Position: FAV



**SB 612 Talbot County- Public Schools- School Schedule Options**

**Mar 3, 2026**

**Education, Energy, and The Environment**

**SUPPORT**

The Members of the Board of Education of Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS) and the Superintendent of TCPS **support** Senate Bill 612.

This bill authorizes the Board of Education of Talbot County to establish a pilot program in one or more Talbot County public schools using an innovative scheduling model. The innovative scheduling model may include an extended school year; year-round school; four-day school week; or any other model approved by the county board. The bill also authorizes any local board of education to explore the use of such innovative school scheduling models, provided that the models do not allow for prolonged lapses in instructional time in public schools. Maryland school districts have been challenged to “reimagine” public education by the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future and this pilot provides an ideal opportunity for innovation and creativity. Currently, state law mandates schools to be open for a minimum of 180 days annually, with specific hourly requirements for different grade levels. These rigid requirements hinder programmatic innovation.

With having the one of largest PreK-5 schools in the state with 1,070 students, this legislation opens up endless possibilities for finding scheduling solutions that meet our diverse student needs. However, this journey cannot begin without the legislative change that will enable discussions with students, staff, and school communities. We know that TCPS will go above and beyond to actively involve students, families, staff, and stakeholders in any innovative school scheduling pilot program pursued.

For these reasons, TCPS **supports** Senate Bill 612, and requests a **favorable** committee report.

**Sharon M. Pepukayi, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Emily L. Jackson**  
President, Board of Education

**Amy R. Dodson**  
Vice President, Board of Education

**Deborah L. Bridges**

**Cynthia M. Jurrius**

**Ann C. O'Connor**

**Dyshekia W. M. Strawberry**

**Karla L. Wieland-Cherry**

**SB0612 - State Board & MSDE - Oppose.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Stefan Redding-Lallinger

Position: UNF

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

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

**DATE:** March 11, 2026

**POSITION:** Oppose

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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](mailto:Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov).