

# **SEIU Local 500 - Testimony in Support of HB 1084 2**

Uploaded by: Christopher Cano

Position: FAV



Testimony - SB 1084, Montgomery County - County Board of Education - School  
Operation Requirements MC 14-26

Favorable

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

March 24, 2026

Christopher C. Cano, MPA

Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairman Feldman & Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the  
Environment Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents more than 23,000 education and public service workers including over 10,000 dedicated educational support professionals in Montgomery County Public Schools who ensure our schools operate safely and effectively every day.

HB 1084 provides needed flexibility for Montgomery County Public Schools when responding to unexpected disruptions to the school calendar, such as severe weather or other emergency conditions that prevent normal school attendance like we have experienced in recent weeks. Under current law, schools must meet both a minimum number of school days and a minimum number of instructional hours. This bill allows the Montgomery County Board of Education, under limited and clearly defined circumstances, to meet either the required number of days or the required instructional hours, provided that schools remain open for at least 175 days and that the school system has already exhausted built-in weather closure days.

For the workers we represent, the most important provision of this legislation is the protection it provides for hourly employees. Educational support professionals—including paraeducators, food service workers, building service staff, and other frontline school employees—are often paid hourly and can lose wages when calendar disruptions shorten the school year.

HB 1084 responsibly addresses this concern by requiring the Montgomery County Board of Education to provide hourly employees with opportunities to make up lost wages through additional duties before the next school year. This provision recognizes that when scheduling changes occur, the workers who keep our schools running should not be forced to shoulder the financial burden.

This bill strikes a thoughtful balance between maintaining strong instructional standards for students and protecting the livelihoods of school employees. It also ensures transparency through required reporting to the Maryland State Department of Education and the General Assembly regarding how this flexibility is used.

Educational support professionals are essential partners in the success of our students and school communities. HB 1084 ensures that when school systems must adapt to unexpected circumstances, they can do so in a way that remains fair to the workers who support our students every day.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1084.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA  
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs  
SEIU Local 500

# **HB1084\_Montgomery County Education Association\_FAV**

Uploaded by: David Stein

Position: FAV

12 Taft Ct.  
Rockville, MD 20850  
301-294-6232  
David Stein, President



March 20, 2026

## House Bill 1084

### Montgomery County - County Board of Education - School Operation Requirements

#### Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

#### Position: FAVORABLE

The Montgomery County Education Association **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1084 – Montgomery County – County Board of Education – School Operation Requirements. This Bill authorizes the Montgomery County Board of Education to be open for pupil attendance for a minimum number of actual school days or a minimum of school hours instead of both under certain circumstances, and if passed, would only be in effect through June 30, 2027.

State law currently requires that schools be open each year for a minimum of 180 days and for a certain number of hours: 1,080 at the elementary and middle school levels and 1,170 at the high school level during a ten-month period. This dual mandate places an onerous burden on Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), limiting its ability to preserve the health and safety of its students and families while also meeting state instructional requirements. This Bill would lift the current burden on MCPS students and families without reducing overall instructional time.

There is a clear and compelling rationale to support the passage of this legislation:

- **Time-Bound and Limited:** This bill does not enable MCPS and its Board to forgo the 180 days and 1,080-hour requirement in perpetuity. The bill's provisions sunset on June 30, 2027. MCEA also supports a permanent and state-wide solution to this dual requirement, but this bill has a much more targeted and limited effect.
- **Consistency:** The requirement for minimum days and hours is not consistent in MSDE policy. A good example is the new Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Daily Math Instruction Requirements. MSDE will require a minimum of 60 minutes of daily mathematics instruction for all students in Grades K-8. MSDE does not require a minimum number of hours and days of math instruction, avoiding the dual-day and hour mandate.
- **Past Precedent:** This legislative body supported the passage of HB226 (2025), which enabled Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) to have greater scheduling flexibility by permanently exempting AACPS from MSDE's dual-day and hour mandates. What's good for the goose should be good for the gander.
- **Burden on Local Taxpayers.** The cost to MCPS and its taxpayers under the current statutory regime is burdensome to local taxpayers. Each additional instructional day that MCPS is required to make up costs taxpayers \$2 million.

The Montgomery County Education Association supports giving Montgomery County Public Schools, its students, families, and its educators the flexibility needed to respond to emergencies, while ensuring that instructional commitments are fulfilled. For these reasons, the Montgomery County Education Association respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 1084.

# **HB1084 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Phong Thai Pham

Position: FAV

Greetings to the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee of the Maryland State Senate.

I am Phong Thai Pham, a student at White Oak Middle School, representing all staff and students and their opinion. Over the past few weeks, I have collected sufficient opinions from our staff team, and the student body and I am here to present the data to the committee.

Across students in 6th-8th grade, 42 have responded. The data shows two-thirds majority in supporting the bill, including conditional support with amendments. About 20% had no position, while a smaller group opposed it. Some students that chose "No Position" have reported about not being able to understand the bill enough, and believing that it has no effect on them. This does not mean that it will directly weaken my data though, they just needed some clarity on how it will impact the county and everyone inside it. Students that have voted unfavorably have expressed concerns about their education and how teachers will generally feel more rushed. Some students expressed concerns about their education and pacing also indicated that they feel their current system is fine. This shows that their concerns are not with the current system, but how the new system would impact workload and education in the future. For example, half days being turned into full educational days.

Based on these data and my personal experience, I fully support the bill, particularly if these concerns will be addressed. I urge a favorable report. Thank you for your time.

x 

Phong Thai Pham  
White Oak Middle School

# **HB1084 - Brigid Howe.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brigid Howe

Position: FWA

Brigid Howe  
Written Testimony - HB1084  
Favorable with Amendments

I am writing this in my capacity as a parent to a child in the school system.

I believe that HB1084 is flawed legislation that puts school system expediency ahead of the need for instructional time for children.

While this year's "snowcrete" was unusual in the length of closure that resulted from it, MCPS has made the choice for multiple years to schedule the calendar without enough days to cover even routine winter weather closures, much less an extended one. They have also made the choice to schedule makeup days in the calendar that they appear to have no intention of using. For example, scheduled makeup days in the fall can not address winter weather closures. Scheduled makeup days that fall on days with contractual obligations with the teacher's association are not a real option. Scheduled makeup days on religious holidays have proven not to be realistic options either. This means that the calendar written by MCPS and approved by the Board of Education is essentially fictional, leading them to rely on the kindness of the state to grant waivers in the case of unusual closures.

As a parent I understand the desire to keep the end of the school year in mid-June rather than late-June. My high school student has multiple classes where learning after mid-May will already be suboptimal based on the timing of scheduled assessments.

But MCPS's refusal to follow state mandates, willingness to lose multiple instructional days, and being excused from their obligations to the law and our children is not the answer.

I believe the battle is mostly lost for this year, so I am grudgingly supportive of allowing the system to end the school year on June 18. However, the legislation as currently written allows this exception to be in place for next year, as well. That is foolish.

MCPS must revisit the 26-27 calendar to add instructional days that would allow for at least 2-3 days of closure, ensure that scheduled make-up days are actually realistic, and follow state guidance as to having plans that ensure instructional time is met.

This legislation should be amended to limit its scope to the current school year, and sunset on June 30, 2026, or it should not be passed at all.

**\*HB 1084 Evelyn Chung Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Evelyn Chung

Position: FWA

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.

# Document.PDF

Uploaded by: Ari Gleicher

Position: UNF

## 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.

# **Opinion\_ Why are MCPS and the school board advocat**

Uploaded by: Betsy Tao

Position: UNF

Opinion

## Opinion: Why are MCPS and the school board advocating for less school for our kids?



Bethesda Today photo

As Education Committee chairs for the Montgomery County Council of PTAs, we are concerned that Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and the Board of Education are seeking legislation to permanently decrease required days of instruction, rather than for a one-year reprieve.

[Bethesda Today](#) reported that “state lawmakers are considering emergency legislation that would provide [MCPS] with a way to end the 2025-2026 school year earlier.” But [as introduced](#), HB1084 was far broader; it would have permanently exempted MCPS from the state’s 180-day minimum requirement, eliminating an important guardrail that ensures sufficient instructional time. Since the bill’s introduction, the House of Delegates has [narrowed](#) the legislation to expire after next year

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**Get in the Game**

current bill) was introduced. This proposal is also in the annual legislative priorities of Superintendent Thomas Taylor, the school board, and the Montgomery County Education Association.

The MCPS proposal would change state law solely for MCPS, which would be exempt from Maryland law requiring schools to provide both at least 180 “school days” and a minimum number of “school hours,” or otherwise seek a waiver. Instead, MCPS would only need to meet the school hours requirement, which is especially concerning because unlike many other states, Maryland counts all time in school—including lunch and transitions—toward school hours. MCPS and the school board have not explained whether they considered the impact on student learning before advocating to reduce required school days.

Through HB1084, MCPS would bypass oversight by the Maryland State Department of Education. For two years in a row, the state education department has denied MCPS requests to waive the minimum school days requirement because the district has not adjusted its calendar. Unlike other school districts, MCPS did not use all of its scheduled spring makeup days, secure waivers of otherwise mandatory state holidays, or have the school board approve a virtual learning plan as a last resort for multi-day closures.

We recognize the challenge of balancing cost, staffing needs, teacher planning and grading time, and stakeholder preferences. Nevertheless, calendar planning must be grounded in student learning. Without sufficient instructional time, MCPS cannot fulfill its core mission of ensuring all students are college and career ready. Teachers and students need adequate classroom time to complete curriculum content before spring testing.

Since 2016, MCPS has reduced scheduled school days from 184 to 181. This year, only half of the 18 weeks before January were full five-day weeks. At the same time, MCPS scheduled nearly all contingency days in the fall and early winter—when they are unlikely to be used—or in late June, after testing ends and attendance declines. And they scheduled two spring contingency days they initially decided not to use. These choices do not serve MCPS’s educational priorities and raise the risk that inclement weather will extend the year further into June.

Although MCPS argues that reduced instructional days will lower costs, MCPS students cannot afford to lose time in school:

- Only about half of third graders overall—and about one-third of those receiving free and reduced-price meals (FARMs)—are meeting Maryland’s literacy benchmarks, especially concerning because a new state policy requires students to receive intensive intervention and even repeat third grade if they do not meet milestones (both of which have high costs).
- Fewer than 30% of students overall—and under 10% of FARMs students—pass the state algebra exam.
- Fewer than half of MCPS students taking the SAT—and under 18% of FARMs students—meet college and career readiness standards in both literacy and math.

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Get in the Game

If MCPS—whose mission is to educate our children—is effectively advocating for less school, then we are facing a breach in the social contract and a true crisis of confidence. MCPS and the Board of Education must reset and prioritize the needs of our students.

*MCPS parents Evelyn Chung (ESOL), Michael Cordell (Special Education), Regan Kelly (Curriculum), Susanna Montezemolo (Gifted Education) and Betsy Tao (Technology) are chairs of the MCCPTA education committees. This letter reflects the opinions of the committees and not MCCPTA.*

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**Written Testimony - HB1084 (B. Tao).pdf**

Uploaded by: Betsy Tao

Position: UNF

**House Bill 1084 – Emergency Bill**  
**Montgomery County – County Board of Education – School Operation**  
**Requirements**

*Written Testimony (Unfavorable)*

**Submitted by:** Betsy Tao

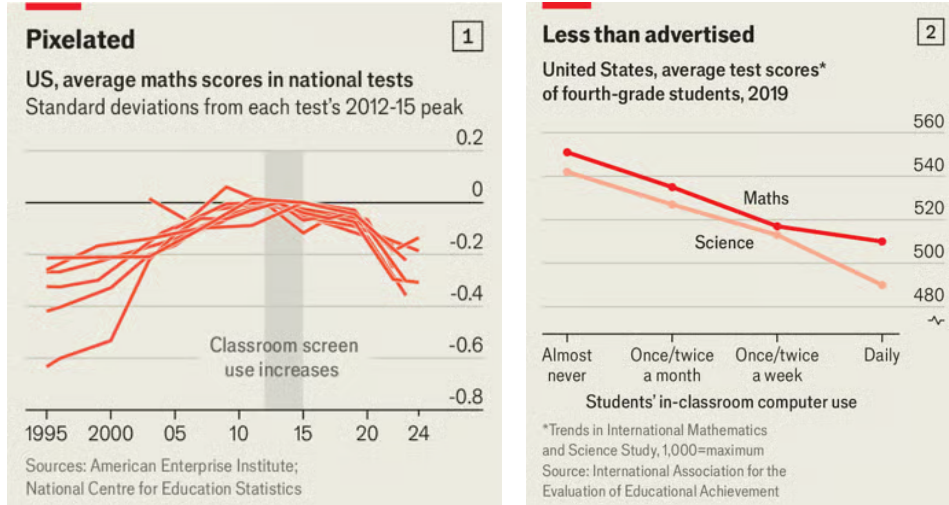
Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

My name is Betsy Tao, I live in Rockville, and I am a parent with two children in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). I currently serve as the President of the Beall Elementary School PTA, a delegate to the Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) for Julius West Middle School PTSA, and I am the Chair of the Technology Committee of the MCCPTA. I am submitting this testimony on my own behalf, and I ask that you issue an unfavorable report for this bill.

House Bill 1084 seeks legislative relief from the need to add additional school days at the end of June due to the number of severe weather closures this year. On its face this looks like a good bill to support, because it's hard to argue with the fact that "snowcrete" caused a significant challenge for school districts, especially one as large as MCPS that needs to ensure that bus routes are safe and school parking lots are cleared. Most families I know are not happy about those additional days in June, two of which are half days. They know that very little will occur on those days, many students will be absent, and vacation and camp plans have already been made.

However, when I myself looked up the original text of the bill, I was surprised to see that MCPS was not seeking emergency relief, it was in fact seeking a permanent exception to Maryland's requirement that schools must be open for a minimum number of days *and* hours, and in fact this permanent exception to the minimum day requirement was in the Superintendent and the Board of Education's [2026 Legislative Platform](#) as a "priority issue".

I was concerned about MCPS seeking an exception to the minimum days requirement because, as a parent who is very involved in county-wide PTA issues, especially relating to the ways that the distraction of personal mobile devices and over-use and abuse of school-issued devices have harmed student learning, I am always keenly aware of the fact that our students are not doing well.

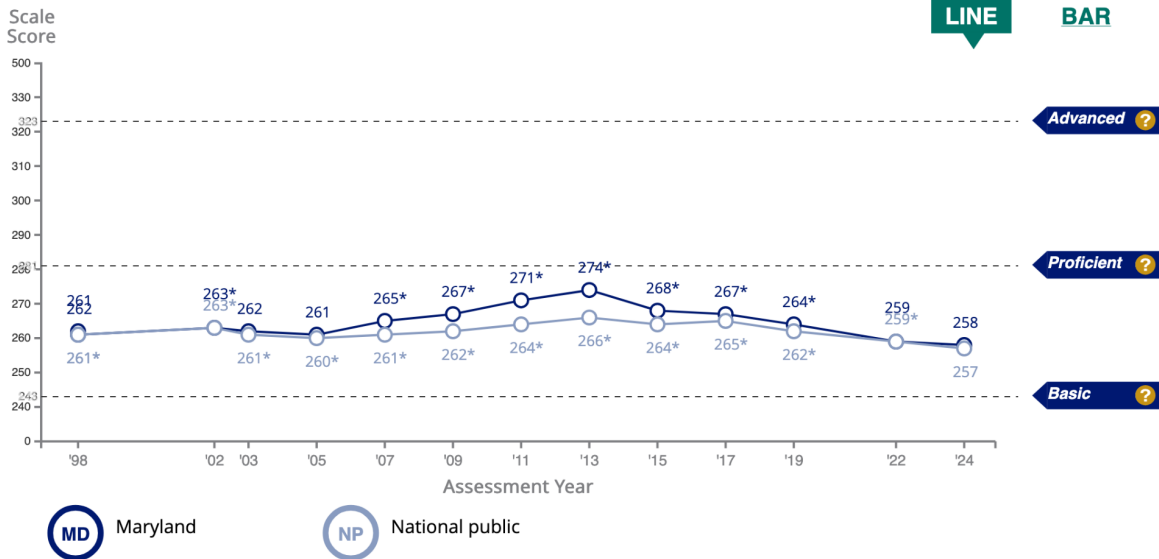


From The Economist: [Ed tech is profitable. It's also mostly useless.](#)

Most parents don't know that the average MCPS student is not on track to be college and career ready, struggles with reaching literacy targets, and will not be proficient in math. Student performance has been in a decade-long decline. From the Maryland state profile of the [Nation's Report Card](#):

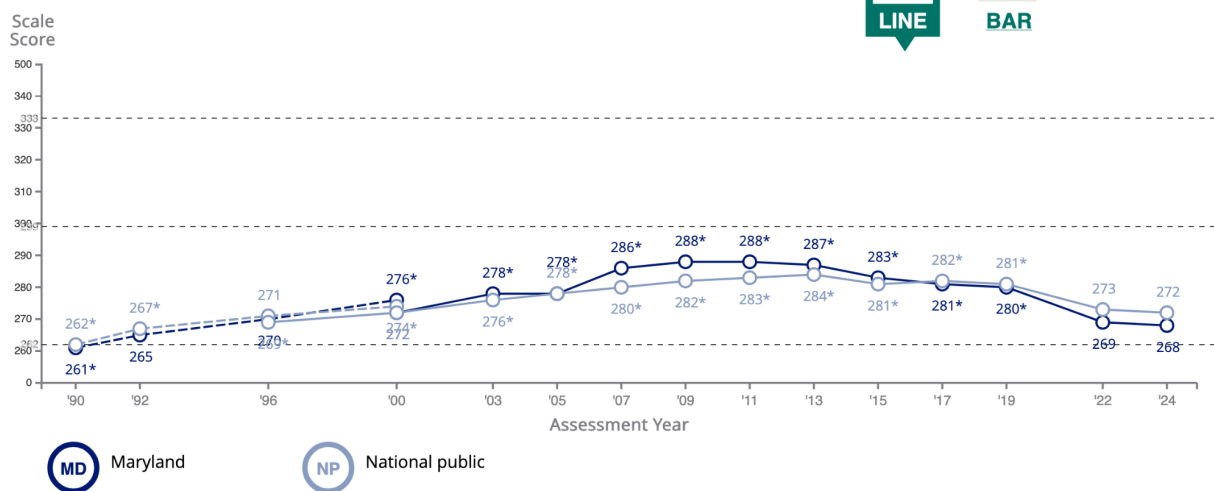
**GRADE 8 | READING**

Average scale scores for grade 8 reading, by All students [TOTAL] and jurisdiction: 1998, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2022, and 2024



GRADE 8 | MATHEMATICS

Average scale scores for grade 8 mathematics, by All students [TOTAL] and jurisdiction: 1990, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2022, and 2024



From all of the research and reading I have done, I am firmly of the belief that one of the main culprits of the alarming decline in student achievement is the over-use of technology. Our students ages 5-8 are on screens for entertainment an average of 3 hours 38 minutes a year, ages 8-12 are on screens 5 and a half hours a day, and ages 13-18 are on screens an average of *8 hours and 39 minutes a day* (American Academy of Pediatrics, [Average Amount of Screen Time for Children and Young Adults](#)). These stats are significantly higher for kids from lower-income, black, and Hispanic backgrounds. **The school day is the only space where many kids have the opportunity to develop cognitive, social and emotional skills outside of screen time.**

Well-resourced families will not be affected by a loss of five school days a year. They spend \$50,000-\$200,000 and beyond on outside enrichment for their children. But most MCPS students depend greatly on every school day we can provide for them.

MCPS claims that other states have hours *or* days requirement. That is true, but it is not an apples-to-apples comparison. Other states' statutes and regulations have additional requirements that Maryland's do not have. For example, Massachusetts's regulations require school committees to "schedule a school year which includes at least 185 school days at each elementary, middle, and secondary school within the school district," "operate the schools within its district at least 180 school days in a school year," and states that "[s]chool committees are encouraged to exceed the minimum number of school days wherever possible, and to offer extended day and extended year programs that expand student learning opportunities." This language signals that Massachusetts

understands the importance and value of school days and encourages school districts to create calendars that reflect its core mission: student learning.

Maryland's statute and regulations is relatively lean compared to other states, but by requiring school districts to adhere to minimum days *and* minimum hours requirements, it provides flexibility to school districts while also signaling the importance and value of school days.

By comparison, MCPS's attempt to seek the flexibility to provide fewer than 180 school days – citing consistently to factors unrelated to student learning – causes me to question where student learning falls in MCPS's calculus, both when it designs and approves its calendar, and in choosing its legislative priorities. In all of its messaging about the calendar, and in its own Legislative Platform document, it does not say one word about how its calendar choices will impact student learning, or whether it has even looked into the issue and factored it in.

Instead, our calendar is filled with non-instructional days for numerous religious and cultural holidays, without an analysis of whether those closures are needed for secular, operational reasons, as Board Policy requires. MCPS and the Board of Education – not the community — plans and approves the calendar. It cannot plan a calendar that prioritizes other factors over student learning, and then shift responsibility to the community for those decisions, or seek legislative solutions as a pass for its failure to adhere to state law.

For all of these reasons, I urge the committee to issue an unfavorable report for House Bill 1084 to send a strong message to MCPS and the Board of Education that student learning must always be the school district's first, second, and third priority.

Thank you for your consideration.

Betsy Tao  
Rockville, Maryland

**HB 1084 Letter of Opposition 2026\_03\_24.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Hannah Oakley

Position: UNF

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

**BILL:** House Bill (HB) 1084 – Montgomery County - County Board of Education - School Operation Requirements MC 14-26

**DATE:** March 24, 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 House Bill (HB) 1084 – *Montgomery County - County Board of Education - School Operation Requirements MC 14-26*, which would authorize Montgomery County Public Schools to have fewer than 180 school days under certain circumstances. The State Board and MSDE appreciate the intent of this legislation in light of the extensive inclement weather this winter.

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](#)). The law contemplates the need to waive these rules under specific circumstances and authorizes the State Board to review and approve such requests. ([COMAR 13A.02.02.04](#)). All LEAs are eligible to request such a waiver.

Given the significant weather disruption this winter, the State Board and State Superintendent proactively solicited requests for calendar exceptions in a letter dated February 27, 2026. At its March 24, 2026, meeting, the State Board will consider all pending requests for waivers of the 180-day school year requirement by LEAs to ensure a consistent and transparent approach for LEAs impacted by inclement weather and related disruptions.

The Board is committed to working collaboratively with LEAs and the General Assembly to identify and implement necessary refinements to the school calendar adoption process and policies governing instructional time and weather-related closures. In addition, the State Board plans to consider a resolution providing clear direction for the development of 2026–2027 school year calendars, including expectations around the use of inclement weather days. Given these ongoing and planned efforts, the State Board believes that HB 1084 is unnecessary at this time.

The State Board and MSDE are concerned about an approach to waivers for school calendar requirements that apply in statute on an LEA-by-LEA basis and the inherent inequity that precedent could set. We look forward to working with members of this committee and others in the General Assembly to review and establish a fair system for all of our LEAs in future school years.

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).

**Testimony HB1084 - 03-24-26.pdf**

Uploaded by: Shana Young

Position: UNF

March 24, 2026

To the members of the Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment:

I am writing in opposition to HB 1084 which authorizes the Montgomery County Board of Education to require public schools within the county to be open for pupil attendance for a minimum number of actual school days or a minimum number of school hours instead of both. This creates a special carve-out for Montgomery County Public Schools, exempting the requirement to make up instructional days lost to weather closures.

As a parent, I do not have interest in adding extra days to the end of the year that will likely not include meaningful instruction. However, we all have a role to play in making our education system the best it can be. Parents advocate for their children's rights and needs and ensure their children are prepared and attend school. Our educators work tirelessly to teach and prepare our students for citizenship and fulfilling lives. I believe that if this bill were passed, the legislature would be neglecting its responsibility to hold our county leaders responsible for making hard decisions in the best interest of children.

This bill overrides the authority of the Maryland State Department of Education and sets a dangerous precedent that state legislators will bail out MCPS from poor planning decisions, encouraging MCPS to continue making scheduling choices without adequate contingency planning or transparency.

This request to meet instructional hours and not days is not reflective of a strategic calendar overhaul and Montgomery County's student outcomes do not indicate that the current calendar is driving rapid improvement in student achievement. MCPS has many tools within its control to ensure that students receive rigorous instruction that meets both the minimum for instructional hours and instructional days, and MCPS should be held accountable to use them.

For example, MCPS has 17 weeks of school before the week of Christmas, and only nine of them are full, five-day weeks of instruction. Frontloading so many days off early in the year increases the pressure put on learning during the months most likely to have weather closures. MCPS could and should create a schedule that maximizes days in school, especially for the first half of the year.

Additionally, MCPS has not created any virtual learning contingencies for weather or other emergencies despite assigning computers to all students. MCPS has the capacity for online learning in case of extended closures and should use it.

This bill places the convenience of adults over the best interests of our children. While I understand the argument that extra days at the end of the year are costly and logistically challenging, this result should prompt our school leaders to reform our system at the local level, not attempt to short circuit both local and state accountability processes that are in place to protect the educational rights of our children.

As for snowstorms, Marylanders cannot stop the weather or an act of God. But, I was taught, God helps those who help themselves. Instead of receiving precedent-setting excuses, Montgomery County should be held accountable to fix what is in its control.

Sincerely,

Shana Young  
MCPS Parent, Silver Spring

# **Testimony -- Opposition to HB 1084.pdf**

Uploaded by: Susanna Montezemolo

Position: UNF

**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.