

TO: House Committee on Ways & Means

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

DATE: April 1, 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.

Given 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 significant inconsistencies in instructional time across the State. MSDE is aware that Anne Arundel County Public Schools has an exception to the 180-day requirement as part of a pilot in statute to eliminate half-days for students, and we are awaiting the report from the first year of the pilot. 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. Increasing the number of system-by-system approaches to calendar requirements for schools at this time is inefficient and inequitable.

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. The State Board and MSDE plan to undertake a review of statute and COMAR regarding school calendar development and instructional time in the interim and look forward to engaging the General Assembly and LEAs in that process 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.