

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 679
Ways and Means

(Delegate Pena-Melnyk, *et al.*)

Public Schools - School Year - Completion Date

This bill requires each public school in the State to annually complete the school year on or before the third Friday in June. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2018.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. If local school systems implement a school year that is a few days longer than is permitted under the executive orders, the net impact on Maryland's economy and, therefore, State revenues is assumed to be minimal.

Local Effect: None. The bill authorizes, but does not require, an extension of a local school system's school year calendar.

Small Business Effect: Small businesses that rely upon early-summer tourism and employ school-aged individuals may be somewhat adversely affected.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: Public schools must be open for at least 180 days and 1,080 school hours at elementary and middle schools and 1,170 hours at high schools during a 10-month period. However, a local board of education may apply to the State Board of Education for a waiver from these provisions of State law; the application must describe a demonstrated effort by the local board to comply with State law. In response, the State Board of Education may permit adjustments in the length of the school year (both increases and decreases), exceptions from the 10-month period requirement, adjustments in the length of the school day, and schools to be open on holidays.

These adjustments may be granted only if normal school attendance is prevented because of natural disaster, civil disaster, or severe weather conditions. The State has designated several days as public school holidays. The public schools must devote a part of some designated days to exercises that are appropriate to the day.

The State has designated several days as public school holidays. They include the following:

- Thanksgiving Day and the day after;
- Christmas Eve through January 1;
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day;
- Presidents' Day;
- the Friday before Easter through the Monday after Easter;
- Memorial Day; and
- primary and general election days for most counties.

On August 31, 2016, the Governor issued Executive Order 01.01.2016.09 (later amended by Executive Order 01.01.2016.13) requiring, with few exceptions, the local boards of education to open schools for student attendance no earlier than the Tuesday following the Labor Day holiday and to conclude the school year no later than June 15, beginning in the 2017-2018 school year. For the 2017-2018 school year, Allegany and Garrett counties both received a waiver from the State Board of Education to the post-Labor Day start date requirement; the waivers were based upon prevailing weather conditions in Western Maryland. The school year began on August 29 for Allegany County and August 28 for Garrett County.

Due to inclement weather, several school systems are close to using up all of the days built into their school calendar for school closures for this school year. Several systems have requested and received waivers from the State board to open school on some days that are State holidays during the remainder of the 2017-2018 school year.

Local Fiscal Effect: While the bill authorizes a local school system to extend its school year calendar by a few days each year, it does not require such an extension. Therefore, the bill does not impose additional costs on local governments. To the extent school systems choose to extend the school year, the following provides an estimate of the additional number of school days that schools may be open due to the bill.

The third Friday in June in a given year can be as early as June 15 or as late as June 21. Therefore, under the bill, if the school year ends on the third Friday, this would entail as few as 11 or as many as 15 school days in June. Compared to the June 15 end of the school year (and assuming no change in the start date for the school year), per the executive orders,

this will result in up to five additional school days, including for the 2018-2019 school year.

After accounting for the 180-day school day minimum as well as mandatory State holidays and election days (for most counties), the bill will allow for a total of as few as 10 and as many as 15 days for local school systems to accommodate any additional holidays (including a spring break), teacher professional development days, and/or school closures due to weather and other exigencies within their respective school years. **Exhibit 1** shows the estimated number of potential school days above the 180-day minimum for school years 2018-2019 through 2024-2025.

Exhibit 1
Estimated Number of Possible School Days Above the 180-day Minimum*

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Current Law</u>	<u>HB 679</u>	<u>Difference</u>
2018-2019	9	14	5
2019-2020	11	15	4
2020-2021	7	10	3
2021-2022	9	11	2
2022-2023	10	11	1
2023-2024	10	15	5
2024-2025	10	15	5

* Assumes the school year begins the day after Labor Day each year and that schools close for election days

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Carroll and Queen Anne's counties; Maryland State Department of Education; *Baltimore Sun*; Department of Legislative Services

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