

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2015 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 849 (Delegate Simonaire)
Ways and Means

Anne Arundel County Board of Education - Public School Holidays - References
in Official Publications (Public School Holiday Protection Act)

This bill prohibits the proper name of an official school holiday from being removed, renamed, or prohibited from being referenced in any official publication, including on a school calendar, of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education or public school under the jurisdiction of the board.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2015.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect Anne Arundel County finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Section 7-103 of the Education Article establishes the following public school holidays: (1) Thanksgiving Day and the day after; (2) Christmas Eve and from then through January 1; (3) Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; (4) Presidents' Day; (5) the Friday before Easter and from then through the Monday after Easter; (6) Memorial Day; and (7) primary and general election days. If the federal and State observances of a holiday are on different days, the board of education of each county must determine the date of observance for the public schools within the county.

Background: In November 2014, the Montgomery County Board of Education voted to eliminate references to all religious holidays on the published calendar for the 2015-2016 school year. The decision followed a request from Muslim community leaders to have the Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha added to the school calendar. Muslim community leaders had been asking Montgomery County school officials for several years to close schools for at least one of the two major Muslim holidays.

Montgomery County schools will still be closed for the Christian and Jewish holidays, as in previous years, and students will still get the same days off, as planned. However, the published school year calendar will not mention any religious holidays by name.

The Anne Arundel County Board of Education reports that it approves school year calendars two years in advance, after input from the Calendar Committee, a group consisting of school system employees and members of the community.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 486 (Senator Simonaire) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel County, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 9, 2015
md/hlb

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