

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 1349  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Bromwell, *et al.*)

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Education - Beginning of School Year - After Labor Day

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This bill requires local school systems in the State to establish a post-Labor Day start date for students, including students in publicly funded prekindergarten programs, beginning with the 2016-2017 school year.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2016.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) finances are not affected. If local school systems implement a post-Labor Day start date of the school year, the net impact on Maryland's economy and, therefore, State revenues is assumed to be minimal.

**Local Effect:** Local school systems can accommodate a shift in the annual school year with existing resources.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful. Small businesses that rely upon late-summer tourism and employ school-aged individuals may benefit. However, small businesses that rely upon early-summer tourism and employ school-aged individuals may be adversely affected.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Public schools must be open for at least 180 days and 1,080 school hours (1,170 hours for high schools) during a 10-month period. However, under certain conditions (*i.e.*, a natural disaster, civil disaster, and severe weather conditions), the State Board of Education may permit a local board of education to make adjustments to the

length of the school day and school year, as well as exceptions to the 10-month period limit.

In case of emergency, the State Board of Education may open schools on holidays. 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.

Labor Day is a holiday for State employees and is a mandatory bank holiday.

**Background:** Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is according to the U.S. Department of Labor a tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country. Local school systems in Maryland are typically closed on Labor Day. In 2015, Labor Day was on September 7; in 2016, it will occur on September 5.

From the 2009-2010 through 2013-2014 school years, every local school system in Maryland started the school year *before* Labor Day. According to the MSDE listing of public school openings and closings, for the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, Worcester County Public Schools opened one day *after* Labor Day. The other 23 school systems opened before Labor Day in both years. In the 2015-2016 school year, 9 school systems opened on August 24, or 10 school days before Labor Day; 3 school systems opened before August 24; and 11 school systems opened on a later date in August. (For some school systems, not all grade levels begin the school year on the same day.)

As shown in **Exhibit 1**, for the 2015-2016 school year, the last school day for Allegany and Garrett counties is scheduled for June 1, and an additional 10 school systems are scheduled to be closed on or before June 10; 4 school systems are scheduled to close the latest in the year, June 17. A post-Labor Day start date would likely have resulted in a closing date of about June 17 for all local school systems.

Per the Code of Maryland Regulations, the fall sports season begins the sixth Saturday following the first full week in July (*i.e.*, before Labor Day). Participating schools may not participate in a regularly scheduled game until at least 20 calendar days have elapsed after

and including the first day of practice. Golf is the only exception to this regulation. Fall sports include cross country, football, field hockey, golf, soccer, and volleyball.

*Task Force to Study a Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools*

Chapter 336 of 2014 established the Task Force to Study a Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools to study the impact of moving the start date of the public school year to after Labor Day on the following areas: (1) the education system, including the academic calendar, planning, administration, and facilities use; (2) the economy; and (3) summer tourism. The task force was required to report its findings and recommendations by June 30, 2014, to the Governor and the General Assembly. On May 19, 2014, the task force voted to recommend a post-Labor Day start date for public schools.

According to testimony presented to the task force, each of the 24 local school systems would oppose any legislation that would remove the autonomy of local school boards to make decisions regarding the school calendar. Local superintendents prefer that the authority to make calendar decisions remain at the local level due to the differing needs of each school system and the need for local flexibility regarding various issues, including unique student populations, geography, inclement weather policies, community business needs, the coordination of students' dual enrollment in college courses, and school system facility concerns related to schools without air conditioning that cancel days because of extreme heat. The Maryland State Education Association expressed concerns regarding the impact of a post-Labor Day start date on inclement weather planning, professional development for teachers, and available instruction time for standardized testing.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Maryland State Department of Education**  
**2015-2016 Public School Openings and Closings**

<b>School System</b>	<b>First Day</b>	<b>MSEA</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	<b>Winter Break</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>Other Closings and Holidays</b>	<b>Last Day</b>
Allegany	Aug 24	Oct 16	Nov 26-27	Dec 24-Jan 1		9/7, 10/1, 1/18, 1/28, 2/15, 3/25, 3/28, 4/26, 5/30	June 1
Anne Arundel	Aug24**	Oct 16	Nov 25-27	Dec 24-Jan 1	Mar 21-28	9/7, 9/14, 9/23, 11/23, 11/24, 1/18, 1/25, 1/26, 2/15, 2/22, 4/26, 5/30	June 17
Baltimore City	Aug 31		Nov 26-27	Dec 24-Jan 1	Mar 25-Apr 1	9/7, 10/15, 10/16,11/6, 1/18, 1/25, 2/15, 2/26, 4/25, 4/26, 5/30	June 13
Baltimore	Aug 24	Oct 16	Nov 26-27	Dec 24-Jan 1	Mar 25-Apr 1	9/7, 9/14, 9/23, 1/18, 1/19, 2/15, 4/26, 5/30	June 17
Calvert	Aug 25	Oct 16	Nov 25-27	Dec 24-Jan 1	Mar 21-28	9/7, 9/23, 10/2, 10/19, 11/11, 1/18, 1/29, 2/10, 2/15, 4/26, 5/30	June 16
Caroline	Aug 24	Oct 16	Nov 25-27	Dec 23-Jan 1	Mar 25-29	9/7, 9/18, 11/11, 1/18, 1/19, 2/3, 2/15, 4/26, 5/30	June 8
Carroll	Aug 31	Oct 16	Nov 26-27	Dec 24-31	Mar 24-29	9/7, 9/14, 9/15, 9/23, 1/1, 1/18, 1/29, 2/15, 4/26, 5/30	June 15
Cecil	Aug 20	Oct 16	Nov 25-27	Dec 21-Jan 1	Mar 25-28	9/4, 9/7, 10/26, 1/15, 1/18, 1/19, 2/15, 2/16, 3/4, 3/24, 3/29, 4/25, 4/26, 5/30, 5/31	June 9
Charles	Aug 31		Nov 25-27	Dec 23-Jan 1	Mar 24-28	9/7, 9/18, 10/12, 11/11, 1/18, 1/29, 2/15, 4/26, 5/30	June 8
Dorchester	Aug 24+	Oct 16	Nov 25-27	Dec 23-31	Mar 24-28	9/7, 9/25, 9/29, 12/8, 1/1, 1/18, 2/15, 2/23, 3/4, 4/26, 5/30	June 10
Frederick	Aug 24	Oct 16	Nov 25-27	Dec23-Jan 1	Mar 21-28	9/7, 9/14, 9/23, 10/30, 1/18, 1/22, 2/15, 2/16, 4/11, 4/26, 5/30	June 9
Garrett	Aug 24		Nov 26-27	Dec 24-31	Mar 21-24	9/7, 10/9, 11/3, 1/1, 1/18, 2/15, 3/25, 3/28, 3/31, 4/26, 5/30	June 1

<b>School System</b>	<b>First Day</b>	<b>MSEA</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	<b>Winter Break</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>Other Closings and Holidays</b>	<b>Last Day</b>
Harford	Aug 27	Oct 16	Nov 26-27	Dec 24-Jan 1	Mar 23-28	9/7, 9/14, 9/23, 1/18, 2/15, 4/26, 5/30	June 10
Howard	Aug 24	Oct 16	Nov 26-27	Dec 24-Jan 1	Mar 29-Apr 1	9/7, 9/14, 9/23, 10/2, 11/25, 1/18, 2/5, 2/8, 2/15, 3/25, 3/28, 4/26, 5/20, 5/30	June 8
Kent	Aug 25#	Oct 16	Nov 25-27	Dec 23-Jan 1	Mar 25-Apr 1	9/4, 9/7, 9/23, 10/15, 1/18, 2/15, 2/16, 5/30	June 14
Montgomery	Aug 31		Nov 26-27	Dec 24-31	Mar 25-Apr 1	9/7, 9/14, 9/23, 10/16, 11/2, 1/1, 1/18, 1/25, 2/15, 3/24, 4/26, 5/30	June 17
Prince George's	Aug 25	Oct 16	Nov 25-27	Dec 23-Jan 1	Mar 29-Apr 4	9/7, 9/14, 10/2, 11/2, 11/11, 1/18, 1/22, 2/12, 2/15, 3/24, 3/25, 3/28, 4/26, 5/30	June 14
Queen Anne's	Aug 31++	Oct 16	Nov 25-27	Dec 23-Jan 1	Mar 24-28	9/7, 10/14, 11/6, 1/18, 1/28, 1/29, 2/12, 2/15, 3/23, 4/8, 5/30	June 15
St. Mary's	Aug 19	Oct 16	Nov 26-27	Dec 21-Jan 1	Mar 21-24	9/7, 9/25, 10/12, 11/11, 11/25, 1/15, 1/18, 2/15, 3/25, 3/28, 4/26, 4/29, 5/30	June 14
Somerset	Aug 24	Oct 16	Nov 26-27	Dec 21-Jan 1	Mar 24-28	9/4, 9/7, 9/28, 11/2, 11/25, 1/18, 1/22, 2/15, 2/29, 4/26, 5/30	June 14
Talbot	Aug 25		Nov 25-27	Dec 21-Jan 1	Mar 23-28	9/7, 10/12, 11/13, 1/18, 1/22, 2/15, 4/26, 5/30	June 10
Washington	Aug 19	Oct 16	Nov 25-27	Dec 24-31	Mar 23-28	9/7, 11/2, 11/3, 1/1, 1/18, 1/19, 2/15, 3/21, 3/22, 4/26, 5/30	June 9
Wicomico	Aug 31*		Nov 25-27	Dec 21-31	Mar 25-28	9/7, 10/16, 1/1, 1/18, 1/25, 1/26, 2/15, 2/29, 4/26, 5/30	June 9
Worcester	Sept 8	Oct 16	Nov 25-27	Dec 23-Jan 1	Mar 25-28	11/6, 1/18, 1/29, 2/15, 4/4, 4/26, 5/30	June 17
SEED School	Aug 24		Nov 25-27	Dec 21-Jan 1	Mar 25-31	9/7/, 9/25, 11/13, 11/23, 11/24, 1/18, 1/29, 2/15, 5/6, 5/30	June 16

MSEA: Maryland State Education Association convention date

\*Wicomico: August 31 Grades 1-6, 9, all grades at Pittsville, Grade 6 only at Mardella, September 1 grades 1-12

\*\*Anne Arundel: August 24 grades 1-5, 6 & 9, August 25 grades 1-12

# Kent: August 25 grades K-6, 6 & 9, August 26 grades K-12

+Dorchester: August 24 grades 1-5, 6 and 9, August 25 grades 1-12

++ Queen Anne's: August 31 grades 1-9, September 1 grades 10-12

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

**State Fiscal Effect:** A report by the Maryland Comptroller and the Board of Revenue Estimates (BRE) dated August 14, 2013, analyzed the impact on the State economy if schools were required to start after Labor Day. BRE projects that a post-Labor Day start date would result in an additional \$74.3 million in direct economic activity and an additional \$7.7 million in new State and local government revenue. The report estimated that 8.5% of the 514,680 Maryland families with school-age children would go on a new day trip or overnight trip in the State, 5.2% would go on a new out-of-state trip, and the remaining families would spend at least one additional day engaging in family activities.

However, the Department of Legislative Services notes that much of the report's estimated direct economic activity – while likely to occur due to the post-Labor Day start date – is unlikely to be *additional* economic activity from the State's perspective. In the report, "local family recreational activities" are responsible for \$52.1 million (70%) in direct economic activity and \$4.1 million (53%) in new State and local government revenue. Family recreational activities are generally defined as close-to-home activities that a family can do over the course of a day, such as going to the movies, hosting a cookout, or attending a baseball game. In the broader context of the State economy and consumer budget constraints, increased recreational spending in August is largely offset by reduced spending during other times and/or on other goods and services.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** SB 767 (Senators Mathias and Rosapepe) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

**Information Source(s):** Comptroller's Office, Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Association of Boards of Education, Department of Legislative Services

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