

# SENATE BILL 848

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CF 2lr2547

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By: **Senator Edwards**

Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2022

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Garrett County and Allegany County – Public Schools – Virtual Education Days**  
3 **Pilot Program**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Virtual Education Days Pilot Program in Garrett  
5 County and Allegany County; authorizing the Garrett County Superintendent and  
6 the Allegany County Superintendent to order a virtual education day instead of  
7 closing a public school under certain circumstances; requiring a principal to notify  
8 students, parents, and school staff of a decision to have a virtual education day;  
9 requiring a school implementing a virtual education day to make certain  
10 accommodations and establish certain methods for students and school staff who do  
11 not have easy access to the Internet or who lack Internet access; providing that a  
12 virtual education day will reduce the number of days incorporated into the school's  
13 calendar for a certain purpose; and generally relating to virtual education days in  
14 Garrett County and Allegany County.

15 BY adding to

16 Article – Education

17 Section 7–103.2

18 Annotated Code of Maryland

19 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

20 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
21 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

22 **Article – Education**

23 **7–103.2.**

24 **(A) THIS SECTION APPLIES ONLY IN GARRETT COUNTY AND ALLEGANY**  
25 **COUNTY.**

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1           **(B) THERE IS A VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAYS PILOT PROGRAM.**

2           **(C) SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (G) OF THIS SECTION, THE GARRETT COUNTY**  
3 **SUPERINTENDENT AND THE ALLEGANY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT MAY ORDER A**  
4 **VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAY FOR THEIR COUNTY INSTEAD OF CLOSING A PUBLIC**  
5 **SCHOOL IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER.**

6           **(D) (1) THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT SHALL NOTIFY THE PRINCIPALS**  
7 **OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTY OF THE DECISION TO ORDER A VIRTUAL**  
8 **EDUCATION DAY FOR THE SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER**  
9 **THE DECISION IS MADE.**

10           **(2) A PRINCIPAL WHO RECEIVES NOTICE OF A VIRTUAL EDUCATION**  
11 **DAY ORDERED UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION IMMEDIATELY SHALL**  
12 **NOTIFY THE STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND SCHOOL STAFF OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF**  
13 **A VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAY.**

14           **(E) (1) A VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAY SHALL CONSIST OF EDUCATION**  
15 **SERVICES, DELIVERED REMOTELY, THAT ARE AS CLOSE AS IS PRACTICABLE TO THE**  
16 **EDUCATION SERVICES THAT WOULD HAVE OCCURRED IN PERSON HAD THE SCHOOL**  
17 **BEEN OPEN.**

18           **(2) A SCHOOL IMPLEMENTING A VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAY SHALL**  
19 **MAKE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND SCHOOL STAFF WHO DO NOT HAVE**  
20 **EASY ACCESS TO THE INTERNET.**

21           **(3) A SCHOOL IMPLEMENTING A VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAY SHALL**  
22 **ESTABLISH A METHOD FOR SENDING ASSIGNMENTS TO STUDENTS AND FOR**  
23 **RECEIVING COMPLETED ASSIGNMENTS FROM STUDENTS WHO LACK INTERNET**  
24 **ACCESS.**

25           **(F) (1) THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT IS ENCOURAGED TO ORDER**  
26 **VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAYS ONLY WHEN THERE IS A LIKELIHOOD OF A WEATHER**  
27 **EVENT REQUIRING SCHOOL CLOSURES FOR MULTIPLE CONSECUTIVE SCHOOL DAYS.**

28           **(2) IF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT DETERMINES IT IS NECESSARY**  
29 **TO ORDER A VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAY FOR MULTIPLE CONSECUTIVE SCHOOL DAYS,**  
30 **THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT SHALL NOTIFY THE GARRETT COUNTY BOARD OF**  
31 **EDUCATION OR THE ALLEGANY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION, AS APPROPRIATE.**

32           **(3) IF A PUBLIC SCHOOL IS ORDERED TO IMPLEMENT A VIRTUAL**  
33 **EDUCATION DAY FOR MULTIPLE CONSECUTIVE SCHOOL DAYS UNDER PARAGRAPH**  
34 **(2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT SHALL ARRANGE, TO THE**

1 EXTENT PRACTICABLE, FOR THE CONTINUED PROVISION OF ALL NORMAL SERVICES  
2 REQUIRED UNDER THIS ARTICLE TO ALL STUDENTS WHO REQUIRE THE SERVICES,  
3 INCLUDING MEAL SERVICES PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBTITLES 6 AND 7  
4 OF THIS TITLE.

5 (G) (1) IF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT ORDERS A VIRTUAL  
6 EDUCATION DAY, THE VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAY WILL REDUCE BY 1 DAY THE  
7 NUMBER OF DAYS INCORPORATED IN THE SCHOOL'S CALENDAR FOR SCHOOL  
8 CLOSURES DUE TO SEVERE WEATHER OR OTHER EMERGENCIES IN THE SCHOOL  
9 YEAR.

10 (2) IF THERE ARE NO DAYS IN A SCHOOL'S CALENDAR FOR SCHOOL  
11 CLOSURES DUE TO SEVERE WEATHER OR OTHER EMERGENCIES IN THE SCHOOL  
12 YEAR REMAINING IN A SCHOOL YEAR, THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT MAY NOT  
13 ORDER A VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAY FOR THE SCHOOL IN THE SCHOOL YEAR.

14 (H) THE GARRETT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE ALLEGANY  
15 COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION EACH SHALL ADOPT A POLICY TO IMPLEMENT THIS  
16 SECTION.

17 (I) ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1, 2024, THE GARRETT COUNTY BOARD OF  
18 EDUCATION AND THE ALLEGANY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION EACH SHALL  
19 SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
20 AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS, IN  
21 ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ON:

22 (1) THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT  
23 ORDERED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAYS;

24 (2) WHETHER THE VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAYS IMPLEMENTED WERE  
25 FOR SINGLE-DAY SCHOOL CLOSURES OR MULTIPLE CONSECUTIVE SCHOOL DAY  
26 CLOSURES; AND

27 (3) THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STUDENT INSTRUCTION ON VIRTUAL  
28 EDUCATION DAYS.

29 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July  
30 1, 2022. It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and 3 months and, at the end of  
31 September 30, 2024, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly,  
32 shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.