

HOUSE BILL 1015

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5lr2016
CF SB 468

By: **Delegates Miller, Alston, Arentz, Boafo, Buckel, Fair, Hornberger, Hutchinson, T. Morgan, Nkongolo, Otto, Pippy, Roberson, Schmidt, Valentine, Vogel, and Wims**

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2025

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Middle, High, and Charter Schools – Start Time for Instruction**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring, beginning in a certain school year, each public middle school
4 and each public high school to begin instruction not earlier than certain times unless
5 granted a waiver by the State Board of Education under certain circumstances;
6 requiring each county board of education and each public charter school to
7 implement a certain public service campaign to raise awareness on sleep deprivation
8 and later school start times; and generally relating to the start time of instruction in
9 public middle, high, and charter schools.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
11 Article – Education
12 Section 7–103
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

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

17 **Article – Education**

18 7–103.

19 (a) Except as provided in subsections (b), (e), [and] (f), **AND (G)** of this section,
20 each public school under the jurisdiction of a county board:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(1) (i) Shall be open for pupil attendance for at least 180 actual school days and a minimum of 1,080 school hours during a 10-month period in each school year; or

(ii) If normal school attendance is prevented because of conditions described in subsection (b) of this section, shall be open for at least 1,080 hours during a 10-month period;

(2) Shall be open for pupil attendance a minimum of 3 hours during each school day;

(3) BEGINNING IN THE 2027–2028 SCHOOL YEAR:

(I) FOR A MIDDLE SCHOOL, SHALL BEGIN INSTRUCTION NOT EARLIER THAN 8 A.M.; AND

(II) FOR A HIGH SCHOOL, SHALL BEGIN INSTRUCTION NOT EARLIER THAN 8:30 A.M.; and

[(3)] (4) May not be open on Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays in order to meet the 180-day or 1,080-hour requirement of this subsection.

(b) (1) If a county board submits a written application to the State Board that describes a demonstrated effort by the county board to comply with subsection (a) of this section, the State Board may **[permit] ALLOW:**

(i) The following adjustments:

1. An increase in the length of the school year; or
2. A decrease in the length of the school year;

(ii) Exceptions from the requirement that the school year be completed within a 10-month period;

(iii) Adjustments in the length of the school day; and

(iv) Schools to be open on holidays.

(2) **[These] THE** adjustments **UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION** may be granted only if normal school attendance is prevented because of:

(i) **[Natural] A NATURAL** disaster;

(ii) **[Civil] A CIVIL** disaster; or

(iii) Severe weather conditions.

(3) Education funding from State or local sources may not be reduced if there are less than 180 school days in any year because of an approved application under paragraph (1)(i)2 of this subsection.

(4) In case of emergency, the State Board may open schools on holidays.

(c) (1) The following days are public school holidays:

(i) Thanksgiving Day and the day after;

(ii) Christmas Eve [and from then] through January 1, **INCLUSIVE**;

(iii) Martin Luther King, Jr. Day;

(iv) Presidents' Day;

(v) The Friday before Easter [and from then] through the Monday after Easter, **INCLUSIVE**;

(vi) Memorial Day; and

(vii) Primary and general election days.

(2) If the federal and State observances of a holiday are on different days, the board of education of each county shall determine which date shall be the date of observance for the public schools within the county.

(3) The public schools shall devote a part of at least one day to appropriate exercises for each of the following:

(i) Washington's Birthday;

(ii) Lincoln's Birthday;

(iii) Veterans' Day;

(iv) Columbus Day;

(v) Arbor Day;

(vi) Black History Month, with an emphasis on Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass and the contributions they made in the fight against slavery; and

(vii) Any other day of national significance.

(4) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this article, the public schools, in the following counties, may remain open and in session on primary and general election days:

- (i) Calvert;
- (ii) Caroline;
- (iii) Dorchester;
- (iv) Kent;
- (v) Talbot; and
- (vi) Worcester.

(d) Except as provided in subsection (e) of this section, the State Board shall divide the school year into the terms it considers appropriate.

(e) (1) The county boards of Allegany, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties, and the Board of School Commissioners of Baltimore City, may elect to operate one or more schools within the county or Baltimore City on a year-round basis, provided that the 180-day and the minimum hour requirements under this section are met.

(2) Nothing in this section precludes a county board from conducting a year-round pilot study or program that is funded by the county board.

(f) Publicly funded half-day prekindergarten programs are not subject to the requirements of subsection (a) of this section.

(G) (1) ON REQUEST BY A COUNTY BOARD, THE STATE BOARD MAY GRANT A WAIVER TO A MIDDLE SCHOOL OR HIGH SCHOOL TO BEGIN INSTRUCTION AT A TIME EARLIER THAN THE TIME SPECIFIED UNDER SUBSECTION (A)(3) OF THIS SECTION IF THE STATE BOARD DETERMINES THAT THERE IS A COMPELLING REASON FOR A SCHOOL TO REQUIRE A DIFFERENT START TIME.

(2) A LACK OF FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR ALIGNING THE START OF INSTRUCTION WITH THE TIMES SPECIFIED UNDER SUBSECTION (A)(3) OF THIS SECTION IS NOT A COMPELLING REASON FOR GRANTING A WAIVER UNDER THIS SUBSECTION.

[(g)] (H) Notwithstanding any other law and subject only to this section, each county board annually shall set the start and end dates of the school year for schools in the county.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) Beginning in the 2026–2027 school year, and concluding before the start of the following school year, each county board of education, including Baltimore City, and each public charter school shall implement a public information campaign to raise awareness of:

(1) the health, safety, and academic impacts of sleep deprivation on middle and high school students;

(2) the student benefits of a later school start time; and

(3) local strategies that will be used to implement the new start time.

(b) The public information campaign shall be targeted toward each school's community, including parents, teachers, school administrators, coaches, and other interested parties and shall provide an opportunity for feedback.

(c) The State Department of Education shall assist a county board of education or a public charter school with implementation of the public information campaign if the county board or public charter school requests assistance.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2025.