



Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: February 23, 2010
SUBJECT: School System Modifications due to Severe Weather Conditions

PURPOSE:

- 1) To consider up to a five-day (5) waiver of the 180-day school year requirement for all Maryland school systems due to the extraordinary inclement weather that affected the State of Maryland on December 19, 2009 through December 21, 2009 and again on February 5, 2010 and continued through February 16, 2010;
- 2) To request that the State Board grant authorization to the State Superintendent of Schools to approve individual requests from local school superintendents to make adjustments in the school calendar due to emergency closings due to severe weather conditions.

BACKGROUND:

Education Article §7-103(a) requires that schools be open for student attendance 180 actual days. Section §7-103(b) of the Education Article gives the State Board of Education the authority to make adjustments to the length of the school year. Such adjustments may be granted if normal school attendance is prevented because of natural disaster; civil disaster; or severe weather conditions.

The conditions for granting a waiver of the 180-day school year requirement are specified in COMAR 13A.02.01.04 and include the following:

1. The school system demonstrates they have made sufficient effort in providing instruction through calendar planning and modifications; and
2. Natural or civil disasters or severe weather conditions are sufficiently significant to warrant a waiver of days.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Weather conditions this school year have been unprecedented. Never before has the State of Maryland been impacted by two historic snow/ice storms in one school year. The Governor declared a State of Emergency on December 19 through December 21, 2009 and again on February 5 through February 16, 2010 due to the severe weather conditions. At this point, most if not all of the local school systems have exceeded the days in their calendar to be used as make-up days. (See attached chart)

Local school superintendents are sensitive to the amount of instructional time that has been lost due to these weather challenges and have agreed to provide calendar modifications to enhance instructional time for the students. Merely extending the school year into late June, however, without calendar modifications, will likely create other hardships for students and staff.

At the December 2009 State Board of Education meeting, you granted me the authority to approve requests from individual school systems to be open on State holidays. Three (3) school systems made the request to be open on President's Day, Monday, February 15, 2010. Two school systems were successful in opening their schools. One school system, of the three, remained closed due to severe weather conditions. All other school systems remained closed.

ACTION:

I am requesting the State Board of Education to approve up to a five-day (5) waiver for school systems making a written request for this waiver;

I am requesting the State Board of Education to grant me the authority to approve written requests from local school superintendents for a waiver of up to five (5) school days for students. In the request for a waiver, the superintendent will explain the efforts the school system will be making to make up as much instructional time as possible by modifying the school calendar, and by extending the school year, if possible.

NSG:bc

SCHOOL SYSTEM CLOSURES
December 21-23, 2009 and February 8-16, 2010
***Opened On President's Day (2/25)**
**** Opened on Prof. Development Day**

School System	Dec 21, 2009	Dec 22, 2009	Dec 23, 2009	Feb 8	Feb 9	Feb 10	Feb 11	Feb 12	Feb 16	Emergency days in calendar	# days closed 08/09 - 2/19/10
Allegany	Closed	2 hour delay	Open	Closed	Closed	Prof dev	Closed	Closed	Prof dev	8 days added to end	8
Anne Arundel	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	4 days included in cal.	10
Baltimore City	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	5 days added to end	9
Baltimore	Closed	Closed	2 hr. delay	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	7 days included in cal.	8
Calvert	Closed	Closed	Winter Break	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hour	5 days included in cal.	9
Caroline	Winter Break	Winter Break	Winter Break	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	4 days included in cal.	8
Carroll	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Prof dev	5 days included in cal.	8
Cecil	Closed	Closed	Winter Break	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hour	7 days added to end	8
Charles	Winter Break	Winter Break	Winter Break	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hour	4 days included in cal.	7
Dorchester	Winter Break	Winter Break	Winter Break	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	1 hour	5 days include in cal.	9
Frederick	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	5 days included in cal.	12
Garrett	Open	Open	Open	2 hr. delay	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	5 days included in cal.	14
Harford	Closed	Closed	2 hour delay	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	4 days added to end /2 days identified in cal.	8
Howard	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	5 days added to end	8
Kent	Closed	Closed	Winter Break	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	5 days included in cal.	8
Montgomery	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hour	4 days included in cal. Will add 5 days if nec.	9
Prince George's	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Prof dev	Closed	4 days added to end	9
Queen Anne's	Winter Break	Winter Break	Winter Break	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	90 min	5 days added to end *OPEN 2/15 **2/16	7
St. Mary's	Closed	Closed	Winter Break	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	1 hour	5 days included in cal. Other days identified	10
Somerset	Winter Break	Winter Break	Winter Break	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	1 hour	3 days included in cal.	7
Talbot	Winter Break	Winter Break	Winter Break	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Open	Days added to end *OPEN 2/15	8
Washington	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hour	8 days included in cal.	8
Wicomico	Closed	Closed	Winter Break	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hour	5 days added to end	11
Worcester	2 hrs delay	Open	Winter Break	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hour	3 days included in cal.	9