



Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Schools

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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education

**FROM:** Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D. *L. Lowery*

**DATE:** January 27, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Request from a Local School System for a Calendar Modification

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**PURPOSE:**

- 1) To consider approving the request made by Dr. Janet S. Wilson, Superintendent, Garrett County Public Schools, to open schools for student attendance on Monday, April 6, 2015 (the Monday after Easter).
- 2) To request that the State Board grant authorization to the State Superintendent of Schools to approve additional requests from local school superintendents that may be made for the remainder of the school year to open schools on holidays.

**BACKGROUND:**

State law requires that schools be open for student attendance 180 actual days and 1,080 hours in a 10-month period. (The high school is defined as 1,170 hours.) In 1995, Section 7-103 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, was amended to include that "if normal school attendance is prevented because of conditions described in subsection (b) of this section (natural disaster, civil disaster or severe weather conditions), schools shall be open for at least 1,080 school hours during a ten-month period in each school year." Schools are not normally allowed to be open on holidays to meet these requirements. Section 7-103 however, specifies the procedure and conditions under which the State Board may grant waivers to the 180-day requirement. Subsection (b) (iv) provides the State Board with the authority to grant permission to local boards of education to open schools on holidays because of closures related to severe weather conditions.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

By letter dated January 15, 2015, Dr. Wilson requested permission to open schools on Monday, April 6, 2015, the Monday after Easter.



Members of the State Board of Education  
January 27, 2015  
Page 2

Dr. Wilson indicates that Garrett County has already experienced severe winter weather this year resulting in seven school closures. Schools were closed on November 26, 2014, December 23, 2014, January 6, 2015, January 7, 2015, January 8, 2015, January 9, 2015 and January 12, 2015. Garrett County has identified eight emergency closing days in their calendar. Last year, Garrett County Public Schools were closed for a total of 20 days due to inclement weather.

**ACTION:**

Requesting approval of the request made by the Superintendent of Garrett County Public Schools to be open on Monday, April 6, 2015 due to school closures because of severe weather conditions.

Requesting the State Board of Education to grant to the State Superintendent of Schools the authority to approve additional requests from local school superintendents this school year to open schools on holidays if needed due to school closures that are a result of severe weather conditions.

LML/BC

Attachment



**Members of the Board of Education**

Mr. Matthew A. Paugh, President  
Mrs. Charlotte A. Sebold, Vice-President  
Mr. Thomas A. Carr, Associate Member  
Mrs. Cynthia M. Downton, Associate Member  
Mrs. Monica L. Rinker, Associate Member  
Adriana Fratz, Student Board Member

*Superintendent of Schools*  
Dr. Janet S. Wilson

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January 15, 2015

Dr. Lillian Lowery  
Maryland State Superintendent of Schools  
200 W. Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Dr. Lowery:

To date, Garrett County Public Schools has closed seven (7) days due to weather too severe for the safe transport of our students. These days include November 26 and December 23, 2014 and January 6, 7, 8, 9, and 12, 2015.

At its January 13, 2015 Garrett County Board of Education meeting, the Board voted to use four (4) spring break days built into the school calendar as makeup days. These days include March 30, 31 and April 1 and 2.

Additionally, the Board of Education voted to request permission from the State Board of Education to use Monday, April 6, 2015 as a possible make-up day. The Board approved an additional motion to use the April 6, 2015 only in the event that school system closures exceed ten (10) days by Friday, February 13, 2015. The remainder of the days missed will be added to the end of the school calendar.

We appreciate your attention to this request and your continued support of Garrett County Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Janet S. Wilson, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

cc: Mr. William Cappe, Education Program Specialist  
Mrs. Barbara Baker, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services  
Mr. Tim Thornburg, Director of Human Resources and Employee Relations  
Dr. Phil Lauver, Supervisor of Pupil Services  
Garrett County Board of Education