

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF KENT COUNTY****5608 BOUNDARY AVENUE * ROCK HALL, MARYLAND 21661 * PHONE 410-778-7113
FAX # 410-778-2350****OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
KAREN M. COUGH, Ed.D.**

February 5, 2014

Mr. William Cappe
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Re: Statewide Mandate for Start of School Year

Dear Mr. Cappe,

The Kent County Public Schools (KCPS) opposes a statewide mandate to begin the school year after Labor Day. School calendars reflect the unique needs of each community; therefore, local autonomy must remain intact to afford us that option. KCPS involves many stakeholders throughout the development of our school calendar; therefore, the final recommendation is a product of community "wants" and "needs" of the school system. The marriage of all these priorities is a time intensive task as we must consider time allocation for academic planning, professional development to unpack the new standards, scheduled holidays, and flexibility for inclement weather, which has been very challenging this year.

In order for KCPS to maintain these priorities, our school year would have to be extended until the end of June, due to a later start. In my community, parents would be equally upset about having to delay their vacations because of a statewide mandate. It is very important for each school system to be afforded the autonomy to decide what is best for their community of learners. Therefore, I urge the Task Force to reject any recommendation that would place these decisions in the hands of those who are not familiar with our communities needs.

Thank you for your leadership and facilitation of the work of the Task Force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen M. Couch".

Dr. Karen M. Couch
Superintendent of Schools

SUCCESSFUL LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS