



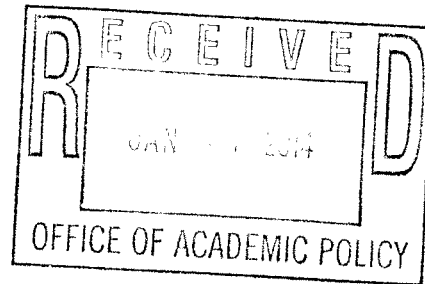
Charles County Public Schools

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Kimberly A. Hill, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

January 31, 2014

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



Dear Mr. Cappe:

It is important for school districts to retain the authority to set school operational calendars. School calendars are best developed at a local level where the dates are arranged to accommodate the unique community preferences, school programs and instructional needs.

Charles County Public Schools conducts a comprehensive three-month calendar development process, including community engagement. Parents are provided calendar suggestions during the Board of Education review process and invited to comment as well as fill out a calendar survey. The local preference of the Charles County community has consistently been to open schools before Labor Day.

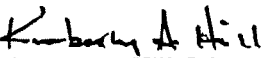
The Board of Education of Charles County approves its calendar more than a school year in advance, and the operational calendar for 2014-2015 has already been vetted by the Charles County community, approved by the Board of Education and communicated to our parents, staff and community. The 2014-2015 school year begins Monday, August 25, 2014, five days before Labor Day. We are already in the process of presenting the suggested 2015-2016 calendar to the Board of Education.

Unpredictable weather, from hurricanes in September to snow in January, often alters our calendar despite the inclusion of four additional days beyond the required 180-day school year. Already this school year, we have lost five instructional days due to inclement weather. Our school year ends June 18, but starting after Labor Day would have pushed that closing to June 25. Making up days at the end of the school year does not accommodate our staff training needs or mandated testing windows; the timing is not conducive to providing the best learning environment for our students.

I believe our students are ready to go back to school by the end of August. We begin fall sports, band and other practices in mid August, and more than 40 percent of students are already reporting to school each day well before the first classes are held. Starting before Labor Day gives students the chance to get a full week of classes in before the Labor Day weekend.

Changing the school start date to after Labor Day would have a detrimental impact on our students, staff, families and local community. Most of all, it impedes our commitment to teaching and learning and our ability to provide the best instructional opportunities for our students.

Sincerely,


Kimberly A. Hill, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

It's all about teaching and learning.

24-hour information line: 301-934-7410