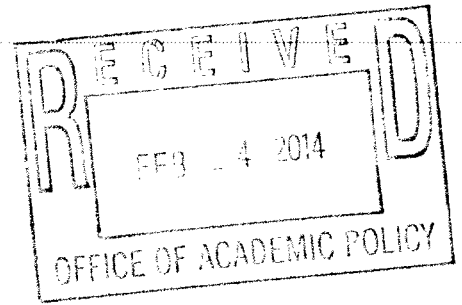




HARFORD COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Inspire • Prepare • Achieve

Barbara P. Canavan, Superintendent of Schools
102 S. Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, Maryland 21014
Office: 410-838-7300 • www.hcps.org • fax: 410-893-2478



February 3, 2014

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

Dear Mr. Cappe:

The Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) opposes any legislative or regulatory initiatives which would have the effect of reducing local board governance in matters such as setting the school calendar. HCPS has a calendar committee made up of a variety of community and school system stakeholders which examines calendar options to better meet the instructional needs of our students.

HCPS sees five primary advantages to maintain an earlier start to the school year:

- Aligns the HCPS calendar with local colleges and universities for better access for students who participate in dual enrollment courses (taking a college class while in high school).
- Provides more instructional time for teachers and students before the PARCC and MSA/HSA testing.
- Ever increasing numbers of high school students are taking the national Advanced Placement tests. The College Board sets the dates these tests are administered in the spring, not the local school system. A school calendar starting before Labor Day allows our students to have more pretest instructional time.
- Gives greater scheduling flexibility in case of a large number of weather-related closings.
- Ends the school year a week earlier in June. Proponents of measures to start school after Labor Day argue that it will boost the state tourism industry and tax revenue. However, for some families with school-age children, a vacation in mid-June or July is far more feasible than one in the last week of August. By that time, our high school students are immersed in sports, band, orientations and numerous other school activities.

I want to thank you and the Labor Day Task Force for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Joseph B. Priata, C.O.A. for,

Barbara P. Canavan
Interim Superintendent of Schools