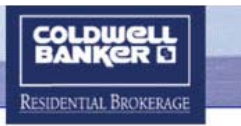




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Poll To Gauge Opinion On Post-Labor Day School Start

Posted on **03/20/2014** by **DispatchAdmin**

OCEAN CITY – Although legislation to mandate Maryland public schools start after Labor Day has been tabled for this year, efforts remain underway to gauge the public sentiment on the matter.

At last week's Tourism Commission meeting, Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Melanie Pursel acknowledged the task force studying a post-labor day start date for Maryland public schools will not have its report complete in time for the legislature to review this year, but an initiative is being forwarded to conduct an opinion poll to see what Marylanders think about the proposal.

"It is really exciting," Pursel said. "It will be a valid and reliable opinion poll working with a company that is reputable, so David Reel with Maryland Hotel and Lodging Association put out a bid to receive proposals ... and what they are looking at is polling a considerable size, about 1,000 Marylanders on how they feel about it because that has been the big push back — what does the general population think, what do teachers think, what do parents think, what do Marylanders think."

According to Pursel, it will cost around \$20,000 to conduct a poll questioning Maryland residents' opinion on whether public schools should be mandated to start after Labor Day.

"It is very, very important that we get it done ... we feel confident it is going to come out with a favorable report but we never know," she said.

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BERLIN — Local authorities remain on the scene this afternoon investigating a suspected "murder-suicide" on Williams Street in Berlin. The Berlin Police Department received an initial call this morning at 8 for a shooting. The Worcester County Bureau of Investigation (WCBI) responded to the scene at 603 Williams Street as well as the Md. State Police Homicide Unit. Worcester County ...

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OCEAN CITY – A fresh

spark may come to the 4th of July fireworks show downtown this summer as the new Caroline Street Comfort Station opens an opportunity to test out a “pyromusical” display. The Recreation and Parks Department’s Special Events division has been working to bring new and exciting events to Ocean City as well as modernizing current events, ...

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Eighteen students in Worcester Technical High School’s Biomedical Science and Pre-Engineering programs recently conducted a community partnership project involving redesigning a new emergency department waiting room for AGH. Some of the students are pictured above presenting the concept to AGH officials earlier this month.



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Last month, the Worcester County Board of Education voted to return to a post-Labor Day start of Sept. 2, 2014 making Worcester County Public Schools (WCPS) the only school system in Maryland to start classes after Labor Day.

The debate over when the school year should begin has raged in Worcester since it became the last school system to begin classes before Labor Day back in the 2009-2010 school year.

Opponents have argued that the early start hurts resort businesses since they lose their student workers before the end of the busy summer season as well as the fact families cut short their vacation seasons. Proponents have countered that the extra time is needed to prepare for exams and that an earlier last day is better for students and parents.

The Board of Education’s stance is differs from Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jerry Wilson, who, along with every other superintendent in Maryland, favors continuing with the pre-Labor Day start date.

Wilson defended his stance earlier in February in a meeting with the Ocean City Economic Development Committee (EDC), noting that parent surveys have shown support for longer holiday breaks and an earlier last day of school, both of which necessitate a pre-Labor Day start.

But Board of Education President Rothermel was adamant in his belief that Worcester should break with the rest of the state. He acknowledged that parental surveys don’t display an overwhelming demand for a later starting school year but felt not everyone was voicing their opinion.

The most recent school calendar survey received 73 parental comments supporting classes beginning post-Labor Day. Those comments represent about 5 percent of the 1,448 survey returns for 2014. Of the calendars proposed for parents to review, none of those created by the school system included a post-Labor Day school start. However, there was space left for comments allowing parents to write about any topic they wanted.

This article was written by [DispatchAdmin](#), [Joanne Shriner](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

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