

# **Task Force to Study a Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools**

## **Materials of Interest September 17, 2013 Meeting**

### **2013 Legislative Session**

#### **Chapter 336 (SB 963) Task Force to Study a Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools**

Statute that establishes the task force including its purpose, the participants, and the date (June 30, 2014) by which the report must be submitted to the governor.

#### **SB 936: Department of Legislative Services Fiscal and Policy Note**

Document provides a fiscal summary and analysis of the bill.

### **Current Statutes and Regulations Regarding School Calendar**

#### **Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §7-103**

This statute requires each public school under the jurisdiction of a county board to be open for 180 school days and a minimum of 1,080 school hours in a 10-month period. It further stipulates the minimum hours per day and prohibits schools from opening on weekends or holidays. The Statute further provides a provision for Local School System's (LSS's) to apply to the State Board of Education for waiver of these requirements in the event of a natural disaster, civil disaster or severe weather conditions.

#### **COMAR 13A.02.01.04 Length of the School Year.**

This regulation states that LSS must be open for a minimum of 180 days per year and provides the process for applying for a waiver of the 180-day requirement.

#### **COMAR 13A.03.02.12 General Provisions.**

This regulation sets forth the school year requirements for secondary schools as 180 school days and 1,170 hours. It also including requirements for transfer students, notices to parents/guardians and students, and grading and reporting.

### **Additional Information Regarding Public School Calendars and Labor Day**

#### **Chart, 2013-2014 Public School Opening and Closing Dates**

This chart provides the opening and closing dates of each of the 24 LSS's.

- Earliest Opening Date: August 19<sup>th</sup> (Frederick and Prince George's County)
- Latest Opening Date: August 27<sup>th</sup> (Talbot)
- Earliest Closing Date: May 30<sup>th</sup> (Allegany)
- Latest Closing Date: June 18<sup>th</sup> (Howard)

### **Chart, Public School Start and End Dates: Ten Years of Historical Data**

This chart provides a ten-year summary of the opening and closing dates dating back to 2004-2005 school year.

- 2004-2005: Four (4) LSS's opened post-Labor Day (Baltimore City, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester)
- 2005-2006 through 2007-2008: Two (2) LSS's opened post-Labor Day (Somerset and Worcester)
- 2007-2008 through 2008-2009: One (1) LSS opened post-Labor Day (Worcester)
- 2009-2010 through 2013-2014: Zero LSS open post-Labor Day

### **Chart, School System Closures December 2009 – February 2010**

This chart provides a sample of the number of days LSS's had to modify their existing calendars to meet the 180-day requirement inclusive of any waivers that were granted by the Maryland State Board of Education due to natural disaster, civil disaster or severe weather conditions. In the most extreme cases: Allegany had to add 8 days to the end of the year and Garrett was closed for 17 days.

### **Article, Labor Day in United States**

This article provides a historical perspective on Labor Day and indicates what day in September Labor Day falls on from 1990-2020. The earliest date is September 1<sup>st</sup> and the latest possible date is September 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Air Conditioning in Maryland Public Schools**

#### **Chart, Maryland Public Schools Air Conditioning Survey**

This chart provides a summary of percentage of schools with and without air-conditioning for each of the 24 LSS's. Seventeen (17) LSS's have 100% of their schools air-conditioned. Allegany, Baltimore, Cecil, Garret, Harford, and Wicomico Counties and Baltimore City do not have all of their schools air-conditioned.

### **Studies Regarding a Post-Labor Day Start date for Maryland Public Schools**

#### **Economic Impact of a Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools, Bureau of Revenue Estimates, August 14, 2013**

Study highlighting the benefits to Maryland's economy and families if schools were required to start after Labor Day. It reports that 8.5 of Maryland families with school aged children would take either a new day trip or overnight trip in Maryland, another 5.2% would take a new out-of-state trip, and the remaining families would devote at least one additional day to family activities. It also reports that Maryland would actualize \$74.3 million in direct economic activity.

## **Various Newspaper Articles Concerning Task Force to Study a Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools**

### **“Mathias Seeks Task Force to Study Later School Start,” The Dispatch, February 22, 2013**

News article announcing Senator Mathias’s introduction of and support for legislation to study a post-Labor Day start time. Highlights the impact felt by local business of losing potential business in August when schools start before Labor Day.

### **“Start school after Labor Day, Md. Is urged,” The Baltimore Sun, August 16, 2013**

News Article reporting on Comptroller Peter Franchot’s release of the August 14, 2013 study entitled “Economic Impact of a post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools.” Highlights the economic impact of a later start date and includes statements from business owners regarding the effect on their businesses under the current calendar system.

### **“One week and counting,” The Baltimore Sun, August 19, 2013**

Editorial disagreeing with Franchot’s report that starting school after Labor Day would have substantial economic rewards for Maryland. This editorial criticizes the methodology used in Franchot’s report, indicates that such a change would place a considerable burden on the public schools, and asks why this report only targets public schools when colleges and universities also begin before Labor Day. Finally, it proposes that the more important issue is whether or not Maryland is educating its students to their high potential and hints at the benefits to year-round schooling. Finally it concludes with the notion that our sole focus of public education should be on better outcomes for students.

### **“Starting School after Labor Day has serious benefits,” The Baltimore Sun, August 21, 2013**

Letter to the editor from Peter Franchot, Comptroller of Maryland concerning the Sun’s August 18, 2013 editorial, “One week and Counting.” Mr. Franchot expresses his disappointment with the editorial citing it mocked serious educational policy changes that would benefit families, small business, and the economy. He further cites the Sun’s own website that indicates that 88% of its readers support a post-Labor Day Start. He also reiterated the financial gains and increased family time that Marylanders would benefit from.

### **“Shorter school summer break is better policy,” The Baltimore Sun, August 21, 2013**

Letter to the editor from Barbara Payne Shelton, educational consultant and adjunct faculty at Towson University concerning the August 15, 2013 article, “Post-Labor Day school start pushed as economic benefit.” Ms. Shelton expresses her dismay at Franchot’s suggestion of a post Labor-Day start date citing that his report gave no indication that families would take more vacations, that no consideration was given to the economic impact on families who need to find additional child care, and most importantly that no attention was paid to the children’s education. She further indicated that research indicates that students lose knowledge during the summer vacation and as such if we are to improve our educational system we should be discussing shortening the length of the summer break.

**“Saving summer at the expense of student learning,” The Washington Post, August 21, 2013**  
Editorial opposing a post-Labor Day start citing the costs of a later start date greatly outweigh the benefits. The editorial cites that summer vacation contributes to the achievement gap between low-income students and their middle-class and affluent peers and identifies that Baltimore’s lower-income students would like suffer more from Franchot’s proposed calendar change.

**“Franchot gains O’Malley’s support on school start,” The Baltimore Sun, August 21, 2013**  
News Article reporting that Franchot’s campaign to start schools after Labor Day has received the cautious support of Governor Martin O’Malley. O’Malley’s spokesperson further indicated that O’Malley wants to wait to act until after the task force makes its recommendations but that he realizes that tourism is important to Maryland economy.

**“Post-Labor Day school start merits investigation,” The Baltimore Sun, August 22, 2013**  
Letter to the editor from David D. Reel, President and CEO of the Maryland Hotel and Lodging Association; Kathleen T. Snyder, President and CEO of the Maryland Chamber of Commerce; and Thomas B. Riford, President and CEO of the Hagerstown and Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau concerning the August 19, 2013 Baltimore Sun editorial, “One week and counting.” This letter emphasizes the importance of this task force and asks the editorial board of the Baltimore Sun to allow the Task Force to issue its findings before “prejudging an issue that can have a profound effect on the economy and education system of Maryland.”

**“Franchot’s school proposal doesn’t hold water,” The Baltimore Sun, August 22, 2013**  
Letter to the editor from David Shauck, Teacher Baltimore County Public Schools concerning the August 15, 2013 article “Post-Labor Day school start pushed as economic benefit.” This letter disagrees with Franchot’s plan to start schools after Labor Day citing the 180 school day requirement, which would require schools to remain open later in June. Mr. Shauck indicates that under Franchot’s plan businesses would be impacted in June and children in schools without air condition may also be affected.

**“Our say: Delaying school’s start a backward-looking idea,” Capital Gazette, August 23, 2013**  
Editorial criticizing Franchot’s report citing the families already have sufficient time to vacation, that trimming holidays and teacher preparation days from school calendars to meet the 180-day requirement will not be received well by school systems and teacher unions, and that the anticipated revenue is minimal. Finally the editorial recommends reducing the duration of summer vacation to eliminate the need for re-teaching that occurs in the beginning of each school year due to students loss of academic skills.

**“Let summer last,” The Star Democrat, August 26, 2013**

Editorial supporting Franchot’s policy change to require Maryland public schools to start after Labor Day. Article cites that this delayed start date would benefit to Maryland families, small businesses and tourism, and states that this proposal could be a win-win for the educational system and the economy.

**“Year-round school would benefit kids, economy,” The Baltimore Sun, August 27, 2013**

Letter to the editor from Elizabeth Heubeck, Freelance writer, concerning Comptroller Peter Franchot’s recently released report suggesting a later school start. This letter disagrees with Franchot’s plan stating that families are not “in the frame of mind” to take a vacation the week before Labor Day; she proposes that they are in fact preparing for the start of school. Ms. Heubeck goes further to propose a drastic change to make school year-round, with a greater number of shorter breaks throughout the 12-month period. She further stipulates that if teachers were not spending the first several week of school reviewing what was forgotten over the summer, that perhaps it would help the United States be better positioned to complete with our global counterparts.

**“Summer programs needed to boost student achievement,” the Baltimore Sun, August 27, 2013**

Letter to the editor from Matthew Boulay, Chairman of the National Summer Learning Association, concerning Comptroller Peter Franchot’s recently released report and Governor O’Malley’s Support of it in “Franchot gains O’Malley’s support on school start.” Mr. Boulay argues that the issue is not when school starts but assuring that all children have access to meaningful summer experiences; citing research completed by Johns Hopkins University and Baltimore City Public Schools which demonstrated that children that do not have stimulating experiences over the summer suffer significant academic loses. He challenges policymakers to research the need for strong summer programming to reduce the achievement gap and dropout rate while strengthening our families, communities, and workforce.

**“Don’t reject out of hand a post-Labor Day start for schools,” The Baltimore Sun, September 4, 2013**

Letter to the editor from Senator Jim Mathias, representing Somerset, Worcester, and Wicomico counties and Delegate Wendell Beitzel, representing Allegany and Garrett counties, concerning the August 19, 2013 editorial “One week and counting.” This letter expresses disappointment that The Sun did not allow the task force to opportunity to study this issue and release its report prior to providing their opinion. Furthermore, it emphasizes the economic impact that Maryland could experience, that families would have more time together, and that some students and teachers rely on additional summer income to support their families.