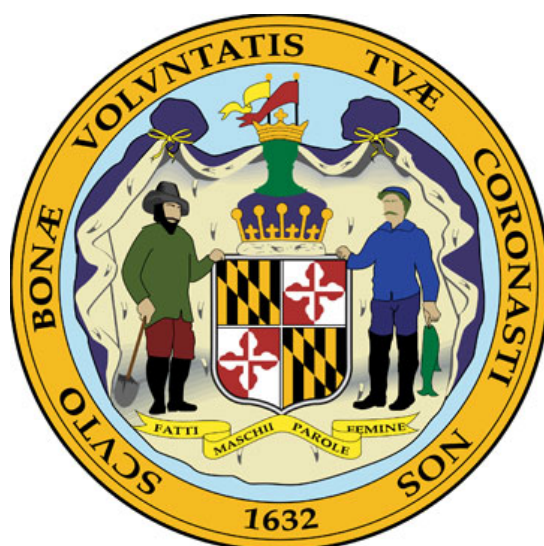


Task Force to Study a Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools

Appendix IX



June 2014

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

Materials of Interest February 5, 2014 Meeting

Materials of Interest by Speaker

Mr. Ryan Burbey, President, Harford County Education Association

Mr. Randy Mickens, Organizational Specialist, Lobbyist Maryland State Education Association

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

“Lowery says school districts need autonomy on start of school year,” Baltimore Sun, January 7, 2014

Article reports that Dr. Lillian Lowery, stated at the January 7th Task Force meeting that local school systems (LSS) should be allowed to determine when to start their school year calendar. She further indicated that LSSs currently have the autonomy to determine when to begin their school year based on the unique needs of their communities and that no one precludes LSSs from starting after Labor Day. She further indicated that today’s weather illustrated the unique needs of Maryland’s twenty-four 24 LSSs; 1/3 of the schools were closed, 1/3 of the schools were delayed, and 1/3 of the schools were open. Dissenting opinions indicated that pushing the start date back would benefit tourism and education through tax revenue; that it was about money. Finally, the article indicated that if the Task Force members support a post Labor Day start date, Del. Healy is ready to sponsor that measure.

“Critics questions proposed Howard school calendar,” Baltimore Sun, January 10, 2014

Article provides information regarding the proposed changes to Howard County Public Schools Calendar Changes for the 2014-2015 school year. Parents and teachers are upset with the proposal to eliminate two (2) half days before the Thanksgiving break and moving parent teacher conferences earlier in the month. Furthermore, this calendar change was not what the calendar committee, comprised of more than three (3) dozen administrators, teachers, and community members, had recommended. A Howard County school system spokesperson indicated that attendance data from 2012, which indicated that about ten (10) percent of the student population was absent on the half days, was used to make this decision.

“Baltimore-area school districts running out of school days,” WBAL-TV, January 22, 2014

News clip highlighting the possibility of LSSs needing to extend their school calendars to meet the 180-day requirement. Counties mentioned included:

Anne Arundel County: Has used all four (4) of its snow days. Any more school closures will mean a longer school year.

Baltimore County: Has used four (4) of its seven (7) snow days

Carroll County: Has used four (4) of its five (5) snow days

Harford County: Has used four (4) of its seven (7) snow days

Howard County: Has used four (4) of its five (5) snow days

Baltimore City: Does not build in snow days to the calendar. The school system just tacks days onto the end of the year. Baltimore City Public Schools have used five (5) snow days.

“Let’s stop whining about school snow closures,” The Washington Post, January 23, 2014

Article reports that some Washington area school districts are under criticism for closing schools as a result of recent snow storms. Many feel that school closures were unnecessary. It is reported that school systems don’t like closing schools as it creates huge scheduling problems. These decisions are made for the safety and well being of students.

“Days after the snow, school delays continue,” The Washington Post, January 23, 2014

Article reports that several suburban school systems are continuing to open two (2) hours late because of icy roads and frigid temperatures. Prince George’s County Schools were quoted as choosing to err on the side of caution.

“Schools out again, but just wait until June,” The Star Democrat, January 23, 2014

Article reports that Talbot, Caroline, Kent, and Dorchester Counties are closed again with many of the mid-shore counties having had the entire week off due to a combination of weather and the Martin Luther King holiday. Article indicates that many students may not be so happy about this time off come the summer when many LSS calendars will need to be extended to meet the 180-day requirement. Counties mentioned include:

Dorchester County: Five (5) snow days are built into the calendar with the school year ending on June 10, 2014. Including today (1/23/14), the system has used six (6) days. Any additional days will extend the year past June 10th.

Talbot County: There are zero (0) days built into the calendar for snow days, therefore, as of today (1/23/14) the end of school has changed from June 10th to June 18th.

Queen Anne’s County: Has used four (4) of its five (5) snow days. In the past when the school system has used more days, they usually give up scheduled days off such as Presidents Day, spring break, and Memorial Day to make up the difference.

Caroline County: Has used four (4) snow days. Any more snow days and the school year could possibly extend into the week of June 16th. A final decision about the last day of school is usually made in late March or early April.

Chart, December 2013 and January 2014 Inclement Weather Days

This chart provides information for each LSS regarding the original closing date, the number of days built into their calendars for inclement weather, and the number of days each LSS has been closed in December and January of this academic year.

Calendar Information Regarding School Year Start Dates Across the United States of America

2011-2012 School Start Dates Map

This map indicates the following:

- States where majority of schools begin prior to August 15th : **Eleven (11) [one (1) with enforced law]**
- States where majority of schools begin August 16th to August 31st : **Thirty (30) [five (5) with enforced law]**
- States where majority of schools begin September 1st or later: **Nine (9) [four (4) with enforced law]**
- States with **Actively Enforced** School Start Date Law: **Ten (10)**

States with School Start Date Laws – Updated July 31, 2012

Document lists the states that have school calendar laws and provides a brief summary of each law. Please note that there are five (5) more states listed on this document than indicated on the map. This discrepancy is because two (2) of the five (5) have waiver provisions that are widely used, thus the law is not actively enforced; one (1) does not go into effect until the 2014-2015 school year and does not allow a school to start before the 3rd Monday in August; another one requires all schools to start on the same day and that date is set by the State Department of Education and that state starts before August 15th; and the last state just enacted the “Flexible School Calendar Act,” which states that schools may not begin earlier than fourteen (14) days before Labor Day.

Required School Days, Instructional Hours Required Yearly and School Start Dates

For purposes of this Task Force, members should pay attention to the final column which provides data for each state on the 2011-2012 Start Dates per market Data Retrieval. This column is broken down into three subcategories for each state: percentage of schools that start prior to August 15th, percentage that start August 15th – August 31st, and those that start after September 1st. It is the supporting data for the aforementioned map.

Follow Up to State Calendar Requirements in States Reported on in Documents provided by Mr. Thomas Noonan, CEO, Visit Baltimore

At the end of the January 7, 2014 meeting, one Task Force member questioned the accuracy of the Texas report provided by Mr. Noonan, indicating it was her understanding that Texas schools had one of the earliest start dates in the country. As a result, the following documents have been provided to give clarification on the current regulatory requirements for each of the states mentioned in the reports shared.

Report Title: “An Economic Analysis of the Changing School Start Date in Texas”

Report Date: **December 2000**

State(s) Studied: Texas

Report Conclusion: Uniform School Start Date for Texas was recommended

Current Regulations Require: “School District many not begin instruction for students for school year before the fourth Monday in August.” Exceptions include: beginning instruction before the fourth Monday in August if the district operates a year-round system. There are several caveats pertaining to school enrollment, financing with local funds at multiple campuses, multiple campuses undergoing comprehensive reform; and a majority of students at multiple campuses are educationally disadvantaged. (Regulations included in packet)

Report Title: “South Carolina Early School Start Dates and the South Carolina Travel and Tourism Industries: An Analysis of Economic & Tax Revenue Impacts”

Report Date: **August 2002**

State(s) Studied: South Carolina

Report Conclusions: Earlier school start dates have been associated with lower tourism activity in August and schools are incurring higher utility costs in August.

Current Regulations Require: “...opening date for students must not be before the third Monday in August except for schools operating on a year round modified calendar.” (Regulations included in packet)

Report Title: "Impact of a Uniform School Year on Florida's Economy"

Report Date: **January 2003**

State(s) Studied: Florida

Report Conclusions: It was determined that there was not any currently available data that indicated starting schools later would benefit the state's economy and the committee recommended against enacting uniform school start date or calendar at this time.

Current Regulations Require: "...opening date for schools in district may not be earlier than fourteen (14) days before Labor Day each year." (Regulations included in packet)

Report Title: "Post Labor Day School Start Dates in Tennessee: An Analysis of the Economic and Tax Revenue Impacts on Tennessee Travel and Tourism Industry"

Report Date: **January 2008**

State(s) Studied: Tennessee

Report Conclusions: It is anticipated that extending the summer would generate \$189 million in tourist spending, \$73 million in statewide payroll, and create more than 2600 jobs.

Current Regulations Require: No regulatory requirements

Report Title: "Do families vacation more in the summer when school starts after Labor Day?"

Report Date: **July 2012**

State(s) Studied: Minnesota, Virginia, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa

Report Conclusions: Findings indicated families were 50% more likely to take a two (2) night or more trip in August or September if there was a post-Labor Day start date.

Current Regulations Require:

- **Minnesota:** "...a district must not commence an elementary or secondary school year before Labor Day..." Exceptions include: districts can begin before Labor Day to accommodate construction projects of \$400,000 or more; if the district has an agreement with a district that qualifies under the construction clause; or if the district agrees to the same schedule in an adjoining state. (Regulations included in packet)
- **Virginia:** "Each local school board shall set the school calendar so that the first day students are required to attend school shall be after Labor Day." The law includes a waiver if the district can certify that it meets one (1) of the four (4) good cause requirements. The good cause requirements include: weather related instances, an instructional program being offered is dependent upon a program in another district that qualifies for a waiver; school district is providing an innovative or experimental program; or a school district is surrounded by other districts that are opening before Labor Day. (Regulations included in packet)
- **Michigan:** "...Schools are prohibited from holding classes before Labor Day." Exceptions include year round programs; intermediate programs that meet certain requirements; and public high schools that operate grades 6-12 at a single site that aligns its curriculum with Advanced Placement courses and ends its second semester concurrently with the Advanced Placement exams. (Regulations included in packet)

- **Wisconsin:** "...No public school may commence the school term until September 1." The school board of a district may apply for a waiver for extraordinary reasons. (Regulations included in packet)
- **Iowa:** "...school shall begin no sooner than a day during the calendar week in which the first day of September falls but no later than the first Monday in December. However if the first day of September falls on a Sunday, school may begin on a day during the calendar week which immediately proceeds the first day of September." (Regulations included in packet)

Articles Related to Each of the States Mentioned in the Reports Provided by Mr. Thomas Noonan, CEO, Visit Baltimore

TEXAS

"Texas schools' later start means big savings on utilities," Pearland News, August 21, 2008

Article reports that in the first year since a delayed start date, schools have saved millions in August utility bills. School system representatives say some of the savings were erased by extra days in May and June but did not provide figures. Texas Association of School Boards believes that each school district should have a say in setting its calendar. Others argue that school calendars should be driven by academics, not finances..."

"School Start Dates," Texas Association of School Boards, Governmental Relations 2012

Article summarizes the over two (2) decades long debate the Texas legislature and school districts have been having concerning the authority to set the school year calendar. School districts want to begin in early August to maximize instructional days before statewide assessments, and the tourism industry wants to postpone the start to after Labor Day to maximize summer tourism and student workforce availability. Over the past two (2) decades, the law has continued to flip flop back and forth. It is anticipated that with new assessment and accountability requirements, the legislature will have to look at the positive and negative effects of a late August start date again.

SOUTH CAROLINA

"School start date has no bearing on tourism," the Gaffney Ledger, February 18, 2013

Article reports that the uniform start date for public schools that went into effect in 2007 has not increased tourism according to a study completed by the Olde English Consortium. That study reported that the occupancy data showed "little correlation exists between school start dates and hotel occupancy in the summer months, and is a net negative." The Executive Director further stated, "We believe that the start dates of schools have no bearing on the strength of the tourism industry and that elected school boards should make that decision representing their community." The report further indicated that the law was changed to boost tourism with little concern for its impact to the students.

MINNESOTA

“Area Boards Want State OK to Start School Before Labor Day B.P Smith, Lawmakers Back Early Start to Improve Academics,” Belle Plaine Herald, January 28, 2014

Article reports that a group of Minnesota school districts are pushing for legislation to permit them to begin before Labor Day. They believe students would benefit academically from the increased time in class to improve their academic performance and prepare for statewide exams. Smith supports a district’s right to start school year as it sees fit and not by a formula that was partially rooted in an agrarian tradition. Furthermore, Senator Kevin Dahle was quoted as saying, “I believe local school districts, with community input, should have the final say in those decisions.” Others also have indicated that they believe at-risk students will significantly benefit academically from an earlier start.

“Minnesota’s school start date spurs fights,” Star Tribune, January 20, 2013

Article reports that more schools across Minnesota are petitioning to begin their school year before Labor Day. This action is causing dissent between the tourism industry and the school leaders who want students to have more academic time to prepare for state and national exams. Fifty-nine (59) school districts have won approval to have one or more of their schools start before Labor Day that is up from twenty-one (21) in 2003. Edina Superintendent was quoted as saying, “being locked in an agrarian calendar is not going to serve our state well, I recognize the value of tourism. But we have to put our kids first.”

VIRGINIA

“VA. Senate panel protects post-Labor Day school law,” The Roanoke Times, February 14, 2013

Article reports that the Senate Education and Health Committee rejected two (2) House Bills that would have allowed school districts to determine when their school calendar can begin. It was reported that this year, seventy-eight (78) of Virginia’s one hundred and thirty-two (132) or 59% school divisions have waivers to open school before Labor Day.

“Delegates offer new approaches to Labor Day school Debate,” Richmond Times Dispatch, Monday, February 3, 2014

Article reports that two delegates have offered alternative paths to give schools flexibility from Virginia’s mandate that schools start classes after Labor Day. The House Education Committee advanced three (3) proposals with two (2) taking a very different approach to flexibility. These proposals include:

- 1) Allowing schools to set their own start dates but requires LSSs to give students a five-day weekend for the Labor Day holiday;
- 2) Allowing schools the option to shift to a year round calendar; and
- 3) Allowing a division to open a school early if that school has failed to achieve full accreditation, the entire division could set its own calendar if more than 15% of all of its school have failed to achieve full accreditation

WISCONSIN

“Lawmakers Propose Changes in Mandatory School Start Law,” WUWM News Radio, June 26, 2013

Article reports that some Republican lawmakers want public schools to set their own start dates. Rep. Jim Ott indicated that, “current state mandate means public schools hold classes well into June when students can miss out on jobs and camps.”

Furthermore, he indicated that school superintendents are requesting to have the flexibility to determine their school calendars. Those against this change come from Wisconsin’s tourism community expressing concerns over lower restaurant sales and fewer family vacations.

Neighborhood News Service Milwaukee, September 16, 2013

Article reports that Milwaukee Public Schools and districts across the state are supporting bills to allow school districts to begin their school year before September 1st, pitting the tourism industry against the school systems. School system officials believe that students need more academic time to prepare for state and national tests. Tourism supporters argue that there has been more valuable family time, more tax revenues, and more seasonal jobs for students. Seventeen (17) school districts won state approval to start school prior to Labor Day.

Information Regarding Maryland Occupancy Rates

“Maryland hotels improve revenue, occupancy rates in 2012,” The Baltimore Business Journal, March 28, 2013

Article reports that the Maryland Office of Tourism Development indicated that Maryland hotels and inns saw more business in 2012. Lodging revenue across the state increased 3.4% in 2012 and the demand for rooms increased 1.3%. Washington County made the largest gains with a 9.3% increase in room demand, 12.1% increase in room revenue, and 11.1% increase in hotel occupancy. Allegany, Calvert, Charles, and Montgomery Counties were the only ones that saw drops in demands for rooms.

Lowery says school districts need autonomy on start of school year

Superintendent doesn't want statewide mandate to start after Labor Day

January 07, 2014 | By Joe Burris, The Baltimore Sun

http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2014-01-07/news/bs-md-ar-labor-day-start-20140107_1_labor-day-task-force-school-districts

Maryland State Superintendent of Schools Lillian Lowery said Tuesday that school districts across the state should be allowed to determine for themselves when to start classes after summer break, whether it's before or after Labor Day.

Lowery said districts now have the autonomy to start the school year when they see fit and she doesn't want a statewide initiative mandating a post-Labor Day start for all districts.

The superintendent spoke in Anne Arundel County at a meeting of a task force considering starting the school year after Labor Day. The Task Force to Study a Post Labor Day Start Date was created by Gov. Martin O'Malley and the General Assembly during last year's Annapolis session to study whether the tourism industry would get a boost if public schools start after Labor Day.

Greg Shockley, chairman of the Maryland Tourism Development Board, said pushing back the start of school would not only benefit tourism, but also education through tax revenue.

"It's about money," said Shockley, owner of Shenanigan's Bar & Grille in Ocean City. "I know you're reluctant to tinker, just as I'm reluctant to tinker with my business, but sometimes you have to take that step."

State school districts must have 180 days of instruction and include certain holidays on the school calendar. Though districts in Maryland can choose to start after Labor Day, none currently do.

The task force meeting at the West County branch library in Odenton was held a day before the start of this year's legislative session — and on one of the coldest days on record in the state. Lowery said school openings Tuesday illustrate the need to give districts autonomy: About one-third of schools were open, one-third had delayed starts and one-third were closed.

"That was a local decision, and they had to look at the needs that were unique to their counties before making a decision," Lowery said. "No one precludes anyone from making a decision to open after Labor Day. ... We believe that the local jurisdictions should have the flexibility to make those decisions."

Members of the task force include Del. Anne Healey of Prince George's County and Sen. James Mathias, who represents Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester counties. The two Democrats had pressed the tourism issue during the 2013 session. Healey had sponsored legislation calling for a statewide post-Labor Day start, but lawmakers chose instead to form the task force.

The group is slated to submit its final report in June, but Healey said the work could be wrapped up as early as February, which would allow legislation to be crafted for the 2014 legislative session, which runs until April 7.

If the task force supports changing the statewide start date to after Labor Day, Healey said, she's ready to sponsor a measure.

"If the task force supports it, then I would be happy to move forward," she said.

www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/howard/ellicott-city/ph-ho-cf-school-calendar-0116-20140110,0,3692409.story

baltimoresun.com

Critics question proposed Howard school calendar

By Sara Toth, stoth@tribune.com

3:05 PM EST, January 10, 2014

A proposed change in next year's Howard County academic calendar has some teachers and parents riled, and they came to the Board of Education Thursday, Jan. 9 to criticize the plan. advertisement

Last month, Howard County Public School System central office staff put forth Superintendent Renee Foose's proposed 2014-15 calendar. For the first time in years, the proposal eliminates two half-days before Thanksgiving break and moves fall parent-teacher conferences to earlier that month. As a result, there would be only 13 instructional days in November, and only one full, five-day week.

That's not what the committee of more than three dozen administrators, teachers and a community members had recommended, said teacher and calendar committee member Bernadette Bechta.

In Foose's proposal, students would have the Monday and Tuesday of the first two weeks of November off — the first two for professional development and Election Day, and the second week for full-day parent-teacher conferences. They would have the Wednesday before Thanksgiving off, as has historically been the case, but instead of two half-days on that Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving, they would be in school the entire day.

The committee's proposal has students off school the first Monday and Tuesday in November as well, but keeps parent-teacher conferences on two half-days before Thanksgiving break.

Bechta tried to deliver an independent committee report during the appointment slot in the agenda for the Howard County Education Association, but was shut down by Board Chairwoman Ellen Giles because a public hearing was scheduled for the same evening on the same topic.

Four teachers yielded their three-minute allotment to Bechta so she could deliver her report, outlining the importance of half-days to teachers and the flexibility those conference days offer parents.

Bechta said she found it "bothersome" that Foose and her cabinet did not include the committee's recommendations in the proposal. Foose said the priorities in her proposal and those of the committee were "of course" the same, and deferred further questions to Caryn Lasser, the system's coordinator of strategic planning and chair of the committee.

"Everyone was looking at what was best for the students," Lasser said. "Our priorities were to meet the instructional needs of our students. That is at the center of the academic calendar."

Lasser said the committee was an advisory one, and she had made it clear to committee members that there was "no guarantee" that there would not be differences between their recommendations and Foose's.

A full or half day off of school can make it "miserably difficult" for parents to find child care for their

students, said Judy George, and if a full day of conferences means those meetings can't take place at night, that's another problem.

"I want you to understand we really need that later time," she said. "I can't afford to take time off in the middle of the day. ... I want you to know how difficult some of these proposals are on normal people."

Giles said that even with conferences during the day, parents could still meet with teachers during the evening, but teachers in the audience said that would be unlikely. Besides, Bechta said, half-days are crucial to teachers, who use the time to grade midterms.

A key factor in deciding to eliminate as many half-days from the schedule as possible, Lasser said, was absenteeism.

In 2012, 3,611 students were absent from the half-day of school on the Monday before Thanksgiving. The very next day, 5,405 students were absent — about 10 percent of the entire student population, Lasser said.

"We looked at the data," she said. "From the parents on the committee, we learned they were much more likely to send their kids on a full day. They would be less inclined to pull their kids out on a full day rather than a half-day."

Another factor, Lasser said, is the availability of pre-kindergarten and RECC programs, which can't be offered on half-days. Eliminating half-days means those programs could be offered more consistently.

The board votes on the proposed academic calendar Thursday, Jan. 23.



Baltimore-area school districts running out of snow days

Anne Arundel County schools use all built-in snow days

UPDATED 10:43 AM EST Jan 23, 2014

BALTIMORE -

Some students are probably getting a little worried about the school year running into their summer break.

All of the local school systems have used at least four snow days so far this school year.

[Check the status of your school closing here.](#)

Crews are out in force trying to make sure area schools will be open for business on Thursday.

WBAL-TV 11 News caught up with a crew at Poly-Western High School Wednesday morning.

It's their job to get all the sidewalks cleaned off and the parking lots plowed so it's safe for students and teachers to return to the classroom, so how many school snow days are left?

For students in Anne Arundel County, all four snow days built into the school calendar have been used. Any more days used will mean a longer school year for them.

Baltimore County has also used four snow days, but the school system built seven days into the school calendar, which means three snow days remain.

In Carroll County, one snow day is left as the school system built a total of five days into its calendar and used four of them already.

In Harford County, three days remain. Schools there have used four of the seven days built into their calendar.

Howard County schools have used four of their five their built-in snow days.

Baltimore City handles snow days differently. City school officials don't build snow days into their schedule. They just tack any days used to the end of the year. So far, Baltimore City students have used five snow days.

The state requires all students to attend 180 days of school. The individual school systems have the option of making the school year longer.

Let's stop whining about school snow closures

By Valerie Strauss, Updated: January 23 at 6:54 pm

Some Washington area school districts are suddenly the target of criticism for keeping schools closed after Tuesday's snowstorm.

A Post colleague over at the [great Weather Gang blog](#), in fact, wrote about Fairfax County's decision to stay closed Thursday after officials decided that some of the roads and walkways were still too dangerous for parents and kids to use. The blog post said in part:

President Obama implied [Washingtonians were weather wimps](#) in 2009. Fairfax County is proving itself to be a poster child for such a characterization.

Really?

It wasn't just Fairfax that stayed closed Thursday: Prince William County schools were too. Loudoun County schools are closed all week, and mid-term exams have been canceled. Other districts are opening on Friday, but with two-hour delays.

School districts don't actually like closing schools. It creates huge scheduling problems and other sorts of headaches they would rather avoid. They do it when they think that it is the wiser course of action for kids who sometimes have to come to school in the dark, from rural areas, at long distances. Sometimes they may be too cautious, but erring on that side of the risk equation is far preferable than the other.

Here's a statement Fairfax issued explaining its decision:

FCPS' primary concern is always student safety when making a decision about opening schools. We consider all the methods of transportation that FCPS students use to get to school: school buses, walking to schools or bus stops, parent drivers, and student drivers. The decision-making process especially considers those teenagers who drive to high schools in the early morning hours before it is light, those students who walk, and those students waiting at bus stops. There are also many students who attend schools, centers, or programs that are long distances from their homes.

In addition to main arteries such as I-66 and I-495, the county's transportation system also includes narrow, winding roads in still relatively rural parts of the county such as Clifton and Great Falls. Fairfax County encompasses approximately 400 square miles and road conditions can vary significantly in different parts of the county. Yesterday and last evening, FCPS transportation supervisors traveled the routes our buses would traverse and inspected bus stops and the pathways walkers would be taking and found that throughout Fairfax County there were still considerable areas that were unsafe and treacherous. While VDOT has done an outstanding job with the main arteries, there are continuing safety concerns with secondary roads and sidewalks.

We are hopeful that the additional time will give road crews, homeowners associations, and private citizens the opportunity they need to clear roads and sidewalks so that students may safely return to school.

It makes sense to me.

The Weather Gang's Jason Samenow also wrote:

I don't care if you're driving a school bus, a smart car or limousine, driving on an inch of compacted snow is totally doable.

That seems to make sense, too, except when I was driving in the District on Thursday on a road that had a thin covering of snow but a whole lot of ice, the car slipped and slid. Good thing I was going very slow.

There are a lot of considerations that go into deciding whether to close schools or not, including where bus drivers, teachers and other staff live. Parents may not think Fairfax is transparent enough with the way it makes its closing decisions, and they may be correct. But I don't know why school districts should become the target of derision when they make a call to close a school for weather-related reasons.

If you really want to whine about something, how about:

- a) Underfunded schools
 - b) Underpaid teachers
 - c) Too many standardized tests
 - d) Boring curriculum
- etc.

© The Washington Post Company

The Washington Post

[Back to previous page](#)

Days after the snow, school delays continue

By [Ovetta Wiggins](#), Published: January 23

Several suburban public school systems will open two hours late on Friday because of icy roads and frigid weather.

“Since the temperatures will be about the same as [Thursday] morning, we wanted to err on the side of caution,” said Max Pugh, a spokesman for Prince George’s County schools.

In addition, public schools in Fairfax and Prince William counties, along with Manassas city schools, will also impose the two-hour delay.

Pugh said school officials are concerned about students walking to bus stops before daybreak and high school students driving to school on icy roads.

The delay “will give it time to warm up a little more . . . give us more time to resalt areas,” Pugh said.

Some school districts in the Washington region have come under fire over closing school days after [Tuesday’s snowstorm](#).

[Loudoun County officials](#) decided Wednesday to shut down school through the end of the week and cancel midterm exams. Farther afield, public schools in Stafford, Fauquier and Spotsylvania counties will also be closed.



Sponsored Links



Online Financial Aid Info

Grants, Scholarships, Student Loans May Be Available if You Qualify.
www.educationconnection.com



Online Degree Programs

Get Matched with & Explore Your Education Options. Get Started Today.
www.DegreeSearch.org



Women’s Boots On Sale!

Up to 70% Off. Shop from Hundreds of Styles. Limited Time Only.
zulily.com

[Buy a link here](#)

School's out again, but just wait until June

By **CHRIS POLK** and **HENLEY MOORE** cpolk@stardem.com hmoore@stardem.com | **Posted:**
Thursday, January 23, 2014 8:30 pm

EASTON — School is out again tomorrow for Talbot, Caroline, Kent and Dorchester counties, and there is a 90-minute delay today in Queen Anne's County with no morning pre-kindergarten.

Many Mid-Shore students have had an entire week off, but they may not be as joyful when they find themselves sitting in a hot classroom for more days in June than they anticipated.

According to Maryland law, the school year must be at least 180 days long.

Dr. Henry Wagner, superintendent of Dorchester County Schools, said five snow days had been built into the schedule, with a last day of school on Tuesday, June 10.

Dorchester County will have six snow days this year, including tomorrow. They had a snow day in December, one earlier this January, and four this week.

“After today, any full snow day off will extend the last day of school past June 10,” Wagner said Thursday.

In Talbot County, the original last day of school was Wednesday, June 11, but the weather has changed all that. Talbot declared a snow day on December 10, January 3, and three days this week.

This week Talbot students have had an entire week off, including Monday and Tuesday for a holiday and teacher-in-service day.

There were no snow days built into Talbot's schedule, so as of tomorrow, the last day of school has been extended to Wednesday, June 18.

There have also been six days when there has been a 90-minute delay, but those still count as full school days, according to the law.

Jeff Straight, spokesman for Queen Anne's County Public Schools, said the school system has used four snow days as of Thursday, and with five snow days built into the calendar, the last day of school for them is still tentatively Thursday, June 12.

Straight indicated that he thought it more than likely that all five snow days will be used and possibly more, but the school system usually tries to keep the last day of school constant.

In the past, Queen Anne's County schools have used scheduled days off for Presidents Day, spring break and Memorial Day to make up the difference.

Caroline County's last day of school is tentatively a half-day on Friday, June 13.

Students in Caroline stayed home one day in December due to the threat of inclement weather.

This week they were off from school for Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday holiday on Monday and also on Tuesday for an in-service teacher day.

Caroline students were out of school Wednesday through today for inclement weather and county schools will be closed again tomorrow.

That makes a total of four snow days for Caroline. Any more and the last day of school could possibly extend into the week of June 16.

An exception could be granted if Gov. O'Malley declares a weather-related "State of Emergency."

In that case, a school system can request a waiver for those special circumstances and the state can grant an exception that the lost school day does not need to be made up.

"Usually we don't make a final decision until the end of March or beginning of April," Tina Brown said about the final determination of the last day of school. Brown is the assistant superintendent of instruction for Caroline County Public Schools.

For youngsters who have cabin fever or whose parents need to work, the YMCA of the Chesapeake in Easton offers a "school's out" day program on those emergency snow days.

The cost is \$25 for members and \$40 for non-members.

"We try to open up as quickly as possible for the parents that need to get to work," Jennifer Ainsworth said, who is chief operating officer of the YMCA of the Chesapeake.

Young people need to bring their lunch and will need to fill out paperwork and get signatures releasing them to swim and take part in activities.

"We try to keep them busy and warm so their parents don't have to worry and can go about their day," Ainsworth said.

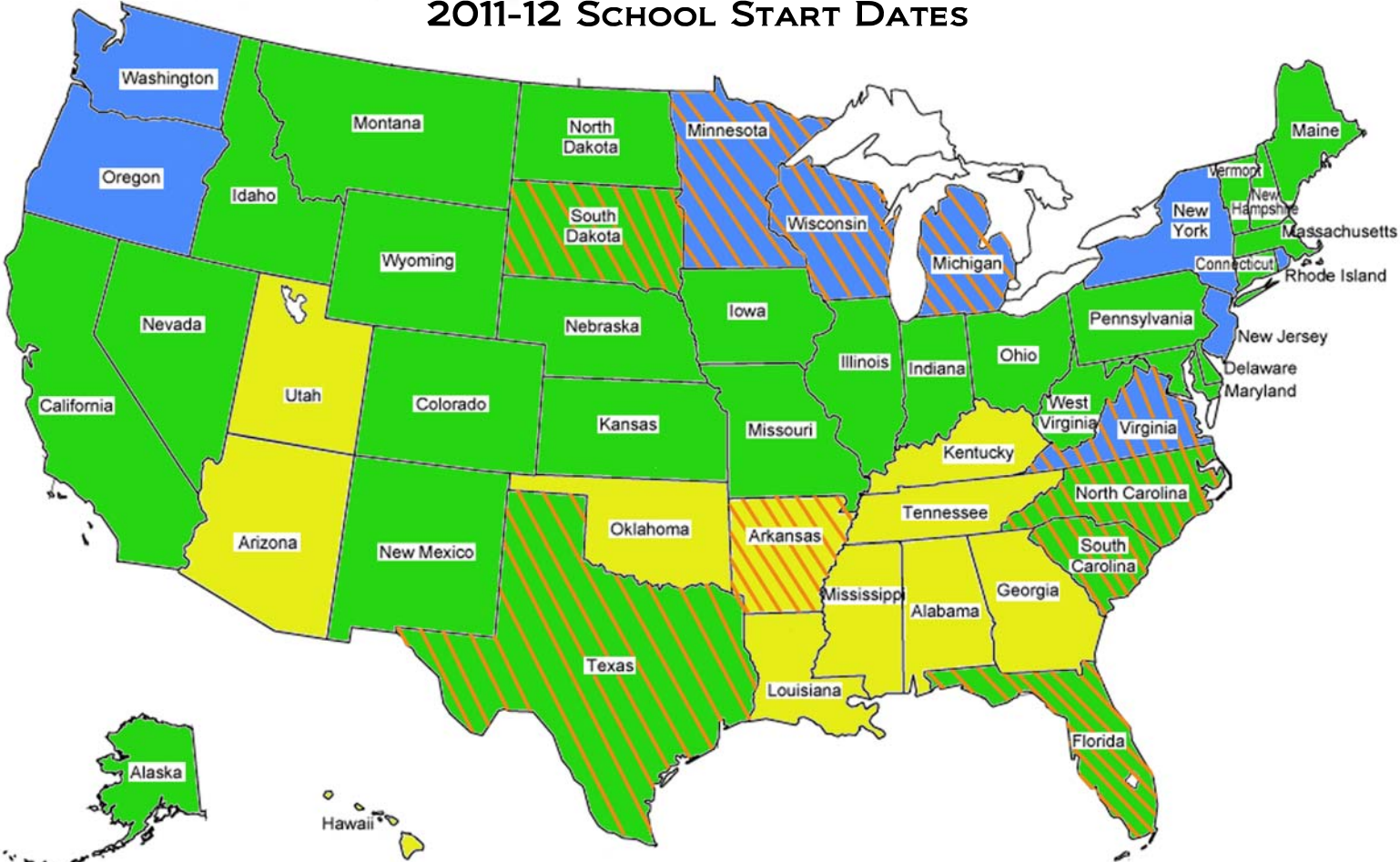
Rock climbing, swimming and indoor games are part of the program.





The Easton branch is the only location where the program is offered on snow days, but on holidays it is planned at several other branches of the YMCA of the Chesapeake.

December 2013 and January 2014 Incident Weather Days

System/last day	Inclement weather	12/9/13	12/10/13	1/3/14	1/6/14	1/7/14	1/10/14	1/21/14	1/22/14	1/23/14	1/24/14	1/27/14	1/28/14	1/29/14	1/30/14
Allegany 5/30	12 days	Closed	Closed	Closed	Mt. Ridge	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hr del	Closed	2 hr del	2 hr del	2 hr del	2 hr del
Anne Arundel 6/17	4 days	2 hr del	Closed	Closed	Normal	Normal	Normal	Closed	Closed	2 hr del	2 hr del	Normal	Normal	Closed-PD	Closed-PD
Balto. City 6/16	5 days	Closed	Closed	Closed	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	Closed	Closed	2hr. del	Normal	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	
Baltimore Co 6/17	5 days	Closed	Closed	Closed	Normal	2 hr del	2 hr del	Closed	Closed-PD	2 hr del	Normal	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	
Calvert 6/12	7 days	2 hr del	Closed	Closed	Normal	Normal	Normal	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hr del	Normal	Normal	Closed-PD	2 hr del
Caroline 6/13	4 days	2 hr del	2 hr del	Winter	Normal	Normal	Normal	Closed-PD	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hr del	Closed	Closed	2 hr del
Carroll 6/12	5 days	Closed	Closed	Closed	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	Closed	Closed-PD	2 hr del	Normal	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	
Cecil 6/6	6 days	Closed	Closed	Closed		Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hr del	2 hr del	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	
Charles 6/12	4 days	2 hr del	Closed	Winter		Normal	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hr del	Normal	Normal	Normal	Closed	
Dorchester 6/10	5 days	Al. Closed	Closed	Closed		Normal	Normal	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hr del	Closed	Closed	Closed
Frederick 6/11	5 days	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hr del	Normal	2 hr del	Closed	Closed	2 hr del	Normal	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	
Garrett 6/3	6 days	Closed	2 hr del	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hr del	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hr del
Harford 6/9	6 days	Closed	2 hr del	Closed		Closed	2 hr del	Closed-PD	Closed	2 hr del	2 hr del	Normal	Closed	Closed	Normal
Howard 6/18	5 days	Closed	Closed	Closed	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	Closed-PD	Closed	2 hr del	Normal	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	
Kent 6/13	4 days	2 hr del		Closed		2 hr del	Closed	Closed-PD	Closed	Closed	Closed	90 min	Closed	Closed	2 hr del
Montgomery 6/12	4 days	Closed	Closed	Closed	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	Closed-PD	Closed	2 hr del	Normal	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	
Pr. George's 6/6	4 days	2 hr del	Closed	Closed	Normal	2 hr del	Normal	Closed	Closed	2 hr del	2 hr del	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	
Queen Anne 6/12	5 days	90 min	Closed	Closed	Normal	Normal	2 hr del	Closed-PD	Closed-PD	Closed	Closed	90 min	Normal	Closed	90 min
St. Mary's 6/12	5 days	2 hr del	Closed	Closed	Normal	2 hr del	Closed	Closed-PD	Closed-PD	Closed	Closed	Normal	Normal	Closed	2 hr del
Somerset 6/12	3 days			Winter		Normal		Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed-PD	Normal	Normal	Closed	Closed
Talbot 6/11	0 eoc	90 min	90 min	Closed		Normal	Normal	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	2 hr del	Closed	Closed	2 hr del
Washington 6/12	5 days	Closed		Closed		Closed		Closed-PD	Closed	2 hr del	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	
Wicomico 6/6	5 days	Normal	Normal	Winter	Normal	Normal	Normal	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed-PD	Normal	Closed	Closed	Closed
Worcester 6/12	3 days	Closed	Normal	Winter	Normal	Normal	Normal	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Normal	Normal	Closed	Closed
SEED	5 days		Normal	Winter	Normal	Normal	Normal	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Normal	Normal	Closed	Closed

2011-12 SCHOOL START DATES



-  - MAJORITY OF SCHOOLS BEGIN PRIOR TO AUGUST 15TH
-  - MAJORITY OF SCHOOLS BEGIN AUGUST 16TH TO AUGUST 31ST
-  - MAJORITY OF SCHOOLS BEGIN SEPTEMBER 1ST OR LATER
-  - STATE WITH ACTIVELY ENFORCED SCHOOL START DATE LAW

States with School Start Date Laws – Updated July 31, 2012

State	Summary of Law	Additional Information and Link to Law
Wisconsin	Academic instruction may start any time after September 1. <i>(Effective Date: 2002-03 school year.)</i>	State law §118.045 (1) and(3) prohibits schools from beginning student instruction before September 1 unless the a waiver is received for “extraordinary reasons”_ http://docs.legis.wi.gov/search/results?q=118.045+%283%29+&filter=doctype%3Astatutes
North Carolina	Academic instruction may start any time after August 25. Law allows waivers for earlier starts based on past bad weather days. <i>(Effective Date: 2005-06 school year.)</i>	§ 115C 84.2. School calendar. (d) Opening and Closing Dates. – Local boards of education shall determine the dates of opening and closing the public schools under subdivision (a)(1) of this section. Except for year round schools, the opening date for students shall not be before August 25, and the closing date for students shall not be after June 10. On a showing of good cause, the State Board of Education may waive this requirement to the extent that school calendars are able to provide sufficient days to accommodate anticipated makeup days due to school closings. A local board may revise the scheduled closing date if necessary in order to comply with the minimum requirements for instructional days or instructional time. For purposes of this subsection, the term "good cause" means that schools in any local school administrative unit in a county have been closed eight days per year during any four of the last 10 years because of severe weather conditions, energy shortages, power failures, or other emergency situations. http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter_115c/qs_115c-84.2.html State law changed in 2012 to require 185 instructional days to be scheduled within the same calendar parameters.
Michigan	Academic instruction may start any time after Labor Day. <i>(Effective Date 2006-07 school year.)</i>	380.1284b (page 191) http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-451-of-1976.pdf
Texas	Academic instruction may not begin until the 4 th week of August. <i>(Effective Date: 2007-08 school year.)</i>	Texas Education Code § 25.0811 sets a school start date of no earlier than the 4th Monday in August for student instruction. http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.25.htm#25.0811
Virginia	Academic instruction may begin after Labor Day. Law also includes a provision that allows school districts to seek a waiver to begin earlier if they meet a certain number of bad weather days in previous years.	Virginia Education Code § 22.1-79.1 sets a post Labor Day school start date for all public K-12 schools with waivers given for school districts with large number of weather closures. http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+22.1-79.1
South Carolina	Effective April 8, 2006, Governor Sanford signed into law House Bill 4429 establishing a uniform start date for all public schools. Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, the opening date for students must not be before the third Monday in August, except for schools operating on a year-round modified school calendar.(Page 5 of link)	SECTION 59-1-425. http://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t59c001.php
Florida	Academic instruction may not begin earlier than 14 days prior to Labor Day. <i>(Effective Date: 2007-08 school year.)</i>	Florida law §1001.42 sets a school start date no earlier than 14 days before Labor Day. Academically High Performing Districts are exempt. http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=1000-1099/1001/Sections/1001.42.html

Minnesota	Academic instruction may start any time after Labor Day. (Effective Date: 2006-07 school year.)	Minnesota Education Code 120A.40 sets a post Labor Day School Start date. (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=120A.40)
South Dakota	School board can set date but voters can contest start date if earlier than the day after Labor Day.	§13-26-9 . School board decision on opening day of classes. A decision by a school board to schedule the opening day of classes before the first Tuesday following the first Monday in September may be referred to a vote of the qualified voters of the school district by the filing of a petition signed by five percent of the registered voters in the school district, based upon the total number of registered voters at the last preceding general election. The board in scheduling the opening day of classes shall allow sufficient time for the referendum process authorized in this section. (http://legis.state.sd.us/statutes/DisplayStatute.aspx?Type=Statute&Statute=13-26-9)
Arkansas	Law amended in 2011 to allow schools to begin student instruction during the week in which August 19 th falls. Prior to change law prohibited instruction earlier than August 19 th .	A.C.A. § 6-10-106 6-10-106. Uniform dates for beginning and end of school year. (a) (1) (A) In each school year, the first day of the school year for student attendance in the public elementary and secondary schools of the State of Arkansas shall begin: (i) On or after the Monday of the week in which August 19 falls; (ii) Not earlier than August 14; and (iii) Not later than August 26. (B) The date for beginning the school year shall be determined by the board of directors of the school district. (C) Labor Day shall be celebrated as a school holiday in all the school districts of the state, and school shall not be held on that date. (2) The Department of Education may grant a school district a waiver to begin school on an earlier or later date if the department determines that there exists a material and substantial reason for the school district to begin on an earlier or later date due to very exceptional or emergency circumstances such as a contagious disease outbreak, inclement weather, or other acts of God. (http://law.justia.com/codes/arkansas/2010/title-6/subtitle-2/chapter-10/6-10-106/)
Iowa	Iowa Code 279.10 sets a school start date no earlier than the week in which September 1 st falls. The law does include a waiver which has been applied very loosely. Thus, current law has no merit.	Iowa Code 279.10 Law states: "The school year shall begin on the first day of July and each regularly established elementary and secondary school shall begin no sooner than a day during the calendar week in which the first day of September falls but no later than the first Monday in December. However, if the first day of September falls on a Sunday, school may begin on a day during the calendar week which immediately precedes the first day of September. School shall continue for at least one hundred eighty days, except as provided in subsection 3, and may be maintained during the entire calendar year." (http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/cool-ice/default.asp?category=billinfo&service=iowacode&ga=83&input=279#279.10)
Missouri	School year may begin no earlier than ten calendar days before the first Monday in September. Waiver option available and widely used.	Section 171.031.2 (http://www.moga.mo.gov/statutes/C100-199/1710000031.HTM)
Hawaii	Hawaii requires a common school calendar for all public schools; start dates, holidays, vacation days and end date are the same for all K-12 public schools in the state. The calendar is set by the Department of	(http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2004/Bills/HB1360_.htm)

	Education.	
Mississippi	HB 707 passed the Mississippi Legislature in 2012 and was signed into law by the Governor. The law will take effect with the 2014-15 school year and requires no K-12 public school begin student instruction earlier than the third Monday in August.	HB 707 as signed by the Governor
Alabama	Law passed in May of 2012 and went into effect for the 2012-13 school year. All K-12 public school districts are required to offer 1,080 instructional hours to students beginning no earlier than 14 days before Labor Day and ending no later than the Friday before Memorial Day. Law changed 180 day minimum instructional day requirement to the hourly equivalent thereof.	Flexible School Calendar Act of 2012

Required School Days, Instructional Hours Required Yearly and School Start Dates

State	Number of School Days Required	Length of School Day	Total Instructional Hours Per School Year	2011-12 Start Dates Per Market Data Retrieval		
				Prior to August 15th	August 15 th to 31 st	September 1 st or later
Alabama	180	6 hours	1080 hours	93%	7%	0%
Alaska	170	1 st – 3 rd Grades: 4 hours	1 st – 3 rd Grades: 680 hours	.02%	99%	.04%
		4 th – 12 th Grades: 5 hours	4 th – 12 th Grades: 850 hours			
Arizona	180	NA	Kinder: 356 hours Grades 1-3: 712 hours Grades 4-6: 890 hours Grades 7-8: 1000 hours 9-12 students must enroll in at least 4 subjects that meet at least 720 hours	96%	4%	0%
Arkansas	178	6 hours a day or 30 hours per week	1068	A.C.A. § 6-10-106 Uniform dates for beginning and end of school year. (a) (1) (A) In each school year, the first day of the school year for student attendance in the public elementary and secondary schools of the State of Arkansas shall begin: (f) On or after the Monday of the week in which August 19 falls;		
California	180/175 (Through the 2014-2015 school year schools are allowed to shorten the school year by five days without fiscal penalty.)	Kinder: 3 hours Grades 1-3: 3.83 hours Grades 4-12: 4 hours	Kinder: 600 hours Grades 1-3: 840 hours Grades 4-8: 900 hours Grades 9-12: 1080 hours	23%	54%	22%
Colorado	160	NA	Half-day Kinder: 435 hours Full-day Kinder: 870 hours Grades 1-5: 968 hours	23%	73%	4%

				Grades 6-12: 1056 hours				
Connecticut	180	5 hours. Districts may count up to 7 hours per school day towards the total required for the school year.	Half-day Kinder: 440 hours Grades 1-11: 1060 hours Grade 12: 1032 hours	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours	--	68%	32%	
Delaware	NA	District option, must be at least 31.5 hours a week.	Kinder: 440 hours Grades 1-11: 1060 hours Grade 12: 1032	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours		88%	12%	
Florida	180	5 hours	Grades K-3: 720 hours Grades 4-12: 900 hours	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours				Florida law §1001.42 sets a school start date no earlier than 14 days before Labor Day. Academically High Performing Districts are exempt.
Georgia	180	Kinder – 3: 4.5 hours Grades 4-5: 5 hours Grades 6-12: 5.5 hours	Kinder – 810 hours Grades 4-5: 900 hours Grades 6-12: 990 hours	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours	93%	6%	.16%	
Hawaii	180 days	Kinder – 5: 6 hours Grades 6-12: 6.5 hours	Grades K-6: 915 hours Grades 7-12: 990 hours	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours	100%	--	--	
Idaho	NA	NA	Kinder: 450 hours Grades 1-3: 810 hours Grades 4-8: 900 hours Grades 9-12: 990 hours	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours	.04%	80%	19%	
Illinois	176 days	Kinder – 1: 4 hours Grades 2-12: 5 hours	Kinder – 1: 704 hours Grades 2-12: 880 hours	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours	9%	76%	14%	
Indiana	180 days	Grades 1-6: 5 hours Grades 7-12: 6 hours	Grades 1-6: 900 hours Grades 7-12: 1080	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours	37%	63%	0%	
Iowa	180 days	Grades 1-12: 5.5 hours or 27.5 hours per week	990 hours	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours	5%	95%	.015%	
Kansas	Grades K – 11: 186 days Grade 12: 181 days	NA	Kinder: 465 hours Grades 1-11: 1116 hours Grade 12: 1086 hours	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours	19%	78%	2%	
Kentucky	175 days	6 hours	1062 hours	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours	79%	21%	--	
Louisiana	177 days	6 hours	1062 hours	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours	80%	20%	--	
Maine	175 days	NA	NA	Grades 6-12: 1056 hours	.03%	60%	40%	

Maryland	180 days	6 hours	1080 hours	0%	100%	--
Massachusetts	180 days	NA	Kinder: 425 hours Grades 1-5: 900 hours Grades 6-12: 990	16%	51%	47%
Michigan	170 days	NA	1098 hours	Michigan §380.1284b (page 191) Academic instruction may start any time after Labor Day.		
Minnesota	NA	NA	Kinder: 425 hours Grades 1 – 6: 935 hours Grades 7-12: 1020 hours	Minnesota Education Code 120A.40 sets a post Labor Day School Start date.		
Mississippi	180 days	5.5 hours	990 hours	99%	.03%	--
Missouri	5-day week: 174 4-day week: 142	5-day week: 3 hours 4-day week: 4 hours	1044 hours	Section 171.031.2: School year may begin no earlier than ten calendar days before the first Monday in September. Waiver option available and widely used.		
Montana	NA	NA	Half-day Kinder: 360 hours Grades K-3: 720 hours Grades 4-12: 1080 hours	--	90%	10%
Nebraska	NA	NA	Kinder: 400 hours Grades 1-8: 1032 hours Grades 9-12: 1080 hours	24%	76%	.01%
Nevada	180 days	Kinder: 2 hours Grades 1-2: 4 hours Grades 3-6: 5 hours Grades 7/12: 5.5 hours	Kinder: 360 hours Grades 1-2: 720 hours Grades 3-6: 900 hours Grades 7/12: 990 hours	--	99%	.05%
New Hampshire	180 days	Grades 1-5: 5.25 hours Grades 6-12: 5.5 hours	Grades 1-5: 945 hours Grades 6-12: 990 hours	--	68%	32%
New Jersey	180 days	4 hours	720 hours	--	1%	99%
New Mexico	180 days	Half-day Kinder: 2.5 hours Full-day Kinder: 5.5 hours Grades 1-6: 5.5 hours Grades 7-12: 6 hours	Half-day Kinder: 450 Full-day Kinder: 990 hours Grades 1-6: 990 hours Grades 7-12: 1080 hours	47%	53%	--
New York	180 days	Half-day: 2.5 hours Full-day K: 5 hours Grades 1-6: 5 hours Grades 7-12: 5.5 hours	Half-day: 450 hours Full-day K: 900 hours Grades 1-6: 900 hours Grades 7-12: 990 hours	--	.02%	100%

North Carolina	180 days	5.5 hours	990 hours	§ 115C-84.2. School calendar. The opening date for students shall not be before August 25, and the closing date for students shall not be after June 10.		
North Dakota	175 days	Grades K-6: 5.5 hours Grades 9-12: 6 hours	Grades K-6: 962.5 hours Grades 9-12: 1050 hours	--	100%	
Ohio	182 (includes two professional development days and up to four days for parent conferences and reporting)	Grades K-6: 5 hours (including 2 15-minute recesses) Grades 7-12: 5 hours (excluding lunch and recess)	910 hours	1%	93%	6%
Oklahoma	180 days	6 hours	Grades 1-6: 900 hours Grades 7-12: 1080 hours	54%	46%	.017%
Oregon	Na	NA	Kinder: 405 hours Grades 1-3: 810 hours Grades 4-8: 900 hours Grades 9-12: 990 hours	.015%	17%	83%
Pennsylvania	180 days	Kinder: 2.5 hours Grades 1-8: 5 hours Grades 9-12: 5.5 hours	Kinder: 450 hours Grades 1-8 hours: 5 hours Grades 9-12 hours: 5.5 hours	.002%	69%	31%
Rhode Island	180 days	Kinder: 2.75 hours Grades 1-12: 5.5 hours	Kinder: 495 hours Grades 1-12: 990 hours	--	46%	54%
South Carolina	180 days	6 hours	1080	SECTION 59-1-425. The opening date for students must not be before the third Monday in August, except for schools operating on a year-round modified school calendar. (Page 5 of link)		
South Dakota	NA	NA	Kinder: 437.5 Grades 1-3: 875 Grades 4-12: 962.5	§13-26-9. School board decision on opening day of classes. A decision by a school board to schedule the opening day of classes before the first Tuesday following the first Monday in September may be referred to a vote of the qualified voters of the school district by the filing of a petition signed by five percent of the registered voters in the school district, based upon the total number of registered voters at the last preceding general election. The board in scheduling the opening day of classes shall allow sufficient time for the referendum process authorized in this section.		
Tennessee	180 days	65. hours	1170 hours	97%	3%	--
Texas	180 days	7 hours	1350 hours	Texas Education Code § 25.0811 sets a school start date of no earlier than the 4 th Monday in August for student instruction.		

Utah	180 days	NA	Kinder: 450 hours Grade 1: 810 hours Grades 2-12: 990 hours	5%	95%	--
Vermont	175 days	Kinder: 2 hours Grades 1-2: 4 hours Grades 3-12: 5.5 hours	Kinder: 350 hours Grades 1-2: 700 hours Grades 3-12: 962.5 hours	--	72%	28%
Virginia	180 days	5.5 hours	Kinder: 540 hours Grades 1-12: 990 hours	Virginia Education Code § 22.1-79.1 sets a post Labor Day school start date for all public K-12 schools with waivers given for school districts with large number of weather closures.		
Washington	180 days	NA	Kinder: 450 hours Grades 1-6: 1000 hours Grades 7-12: 1080 hours	.025%	27%	73%
West Virginia	180 days	5.5 hours	990 hours	--	98%	2%
Wisconsin	180 days	NA	Kinder: 437 Grades 1-6: 1050 Grades 7-12: 1137	State law §118.045 (1) and(3) prohibits schools from beginning student instruction before September 1 unless the a waiver is received for "extraordinary reasons"		
Wyoming	180 days	NA	NA	--	93%	7%

Education Commission on the States/Number of Instructional Days/hours in the School Year/August 2011:
<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/95/05/9505.pdf>

South Carolina Legislative Online - Code of Laws Title 59 - Education Chapter 1. General Provisions

SECTION 59-1-425. Beginning and length of school term; make-up days; instructional days.

(A) Each local school district board of trustees of the State shall have the authority to establish an annual school calendar for teachers, staff, and students. The statutory school term is one hundred ninety days annually and shall consist of a minimum of one hundred eighty days of instruction covering at least nine calendar months. However, beginning with the 2007-2008 school year the opening date for students must not be before the third Monday in August, except for schools operating on a year-round modified school calendar. Three days must be used for collegial professional development based upon the educational standards as required by Section 59-18-300. The professional development shall address, at a minimum, academic achievement standards including strengthening teachers' knowledge in their content area, teaching techniques, and assessment. No more than two days may be used for preparation of opening of schools and the remaining five days may be used for teacher planning, academic plans, and parent conferences. The number of instructional hours in an instructional day may vary according to local board policy and does not have to be uniform among the schools in the district.

(B) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the contrary, all school days missed because of snow, extreme weather conditions, or other disruptions requiring schools to close must be made up. All school districts shall designate annually at least three days within their school calendars to be used as make-up days in the event of these occurrences. If those designated days have been used or are no longer available, the local school board of trustees may lengthen the hours of school operation by no less than one hour per day for the total number of hours missed or operate schools on Saturday. Schools operating on a four-by-four block schedule shall make every effort to make up the time during the semester in which the days are missed. A plan to make up days by lengthening the school day must be approved by the Department of Education before implementation. Tutorial instruction for grades 7 through 12 may be taught on Saturday at the direction of the local school board. If a local school board authorizes make-up days on Saturdays, tutorial instruction normally offered on Saturday for seventh through twelfth graders must be scheduled at an alternative time.

(C) The General Assembly by law may waive the requirements of making up missed days or, by law, may authorize the school board of trustees to forgive up to three days missed because of snow, extreme weather conditions, or other disruptions requiring schools to close. A waiver granted by the local board of trustees of the requirement for making up missed days also must be authorized through a majority vote of the local school board.

(D) If a school is closed early due to snow, extreme weather conditions, or other disruptions, the day may count towards the required minimum to the extent allowed by State Board of Education policy.

(E) The instructional day for secondary students must be at a minimum six hours a day, or its equivalent weekly, excluding lunch. The school day for elementary students must be at a minimum six hours a day, or its equivalent weekly, including lunch.

(F) Elementary and secondary schools may reduce the length of the instructional day to not less than three hours for not more than three days each school year for staff development, teacher conferences, or for the purpose of administering end-of-semester and end-of-year examinations.

(G) Priority during the instructional day must be given to teaching and learning tasks. Class interruptions must be limited only to emergencies. Volunteer blood drives as determined by the principal may be conducted at times which would not interfere with classroom instruction such as study period, lunch period, and before and after school.

(H) The State Board of Education may waive the school opening date requirement pursuant to subsection (A) of this section on a showing of good cause or for an educational purpose. For the purposes of this section:

(1) "Good cause" means that schools in a district have been closed eight days per year during any four of the last ten years because of severe weather conditions, energy shortages, power failures, or other emergency situations.

(2) "Educational purpose" means a district establishes a need to adopt a different calendar for a:

(a) specific school to accommodate a special program offered generally to the student body of that school,

(b) school that primarily serves a special population of students, or

(c) defined program within a school.

The state board may grant the waiver for an educational purpose for that specific school or defined program to the extent that the state board finds that the educational purpose is reasonable, the accommodation is necessary to accomplish the educational purpose, and the request is not an attempt to circumvent the opening date set forth in this subsection. Waiver requests for educational purposes may not be used to accommodate system-wide class scheduling preferences. Nothing in this subsection prohibits a district from offering supplemental or additional educational programs or activities outside of the calendar adopted under this section.

HISTORY: 2006 Act No. 260, Section 1, eff April 8, 2006.

Sec. 25.0811. FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION. (a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August. A school district may:

(1) begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August if the district operates a year-round system under Section 25.084; or

(2) begin instruction for students for a school year on or after the first Monday in August at a campus or at not more than 20 percent of the campuses in the district if:

(A) the district has a student enrollment of 190,000 or more;

(B) the district at the beginning of the school year provides, financed with local funds, days of instruction for students at the campus or at each of the multiple campuses, in addition to the minimum number of days of instruction required under Section 25.081;

(C) the campus or each of the multiple campuses are undergoing comprehensive reform, as determined by the board of trustees of the district; and

(D) a majority of the students at the campus or at each of the multiple campuses are educationally disadvantaged.

(b) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), a school district that does not offer each grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 and whose prospective or former students generally attend school in another state for the grade levels the district does not offer may start school on any date permitted under Subsection (a) or the law of the other state.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2006, 79th Leg., 3rd C.S., Ch. 5, Sec. 9.03, eff. May 31, 2006.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 909, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2006, 79th Leg., 3rd C.S., Ch. 5, Sec. 9.02, eff. May 31, 2006.

Acts 2006, 79th Leg., 3rd C.S., Ch. 5, Sec. 9.03, eff. May 31, 2006.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 708, Sec. 1, eff. June 15, 2007.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 277, Sec. 1, eff. June 17, 2011.



MDE Recommends

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND GRADES

The sections of the *Revised School Code* that address this issue are contained in the Michigan Compiled Laws under MCL 380.1147, 380.1284, 380.1284b, 380.1561-380.1599 and the *State School Aid Act* under MCL 388.1701.

Age of Attendance

The law in Michigan governing compulsory attendance requires a parent, legal guardian, or other person having control or charge of a child age six to sixteen to send the child to school during the entire school year, except under the limited circumstances specified in subsection (3) of section 380.1561. The exceptions include, but are not limited to, sending the child to a state-approved, nonpublic school or educating the child at home in an organized educational program. Although the compulsory school attendance law does not apply to children under the age of six, a child who is at least five years of age by December 1 of the school year and is a resident of a school district which provides kindergarten work is entitled to enroll in the kindergarten [MCL 380.1147].

Enforcement and the Attendance Officer

Attendance officers are employed by an intermediate school district or local school district. The attendance officer has the powers of a deputy sheriff within the school district while performing official duties and pursues cases of nonattendance which are reported to him or her by the proper authority. The attendance officer, upon receiving notice of that fact, must give written notice either in person or by registered mail requiring the child to appear at school on the next regular school day following receipt of notice and to continue in regular and consecutive attendance in school. If the parent or legal guardian fails to comply with the notice, the attendance officer must make a complaint against that individual in the proper court for refusal or neglect to send the child to school. The court then issues a warrant and proceeds to hear and make a determination in the case. The law also states that a parent or legal guardian who fails to comply with the compulsory school attendance section of the *Revised School Code* is guilty of a misdemeanor [MCL 380.1571-380.1599].

Attendance Exceptions

A child is not required to attend a public school in the following cases:

- C A child who is attending regularly and is being taught in a state approved nonpublic school, which teaches subjects comparable to those taught in the public schools to children of corresponding age and grade, as determined by the course of study for the public schools of the district within which the nonpublic school is located.
- C A child who is being educated at the child's home by his or her parent or legal guardian in an organized educational program in the subject areas of reading, spelling, mathematics, science, history, civics, literature, writing, and English grammar.



MDE Recommends

Michigan Department of Education
Office of Government Services
And Customer Satisfaction Program
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 373-6534
Toll Free 1-888-323-4231
Fax (517) 373-7113
Web Site Address:
<http://www.state.mi.us/mde/off/csat>

- C The child who has graduated from high school or has fulfilled all requirements for high school graduation [MCL 380.1561].

Local Attendance Policies

Local boards of education have the authority to adopt attendance policies addressing the number of days a student may lose due to illness or other causes. Although the law does not mandate that school district policies distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, the State Board of Education has taken the position that districts should make this distinction.

Attendance and Grades

In a matter related to school attendance and grades, the Michigan Attorney General issued an opinion cited as 1978 OAG 5414 that states that the compulsory school attendance law recognizes an educational value in regular attendance at school. The opinion states that classroom attendance instills a concept of self-discipline, exposes a student to group interactions with teachers and fellow students, and enables a student to hear and participate in class discussion and other related learning experiences. Based on these considerations, the Attorney General concluded that a school district may consider attendance in determining a student's grade in a course.

Pupil Days and Hours of Instruction

To qualify for state aid without a penalty, a local school district provides to each pupil the required minimum number of days and hours of instruction in a school year. The state superintendent may approve waivers as allowed for by law. The *State School Aid Act* establishes a minimum of 180 days and 1,098 hours of pupil instruction. This is an increase of 51 hours over the 1999-2000 school year [MCL 388.1701].

Beginning in the 2000-2001 school year, school districts have the option of counting toward the 1,098 hours of pupil instruction requirement up to 51 hours of teacher professional development time [MCL 388.1701(11)].

Section 388.1701(6) of the *State School Aid Act* allows the state superintendent to waive the minimum number of days of pupil instruction for a district if the district has adopted an experimental school year schedule and the experimental school year schedule provides the required minimum number of pupil instruction hours and is consistent with all state board policies on school improvement and restructuring [MCL 388.1701(6)]. The state superintendent may also waive the minimum instructional time requirement for a department-approved alternative education program [MCL 388.1701(10)].

School Calendar

The board of a school district or public school academy must determine the length of a school term and ensure that there are a minimum number of pupil instruction days and hours in a school year. The local school board has the authority to establish the school calendar, including the starting date of a school year. In 1999, legislation (1999 PA 141) was enacted to prohibit



MDE Recommends

public schools from holding classes on the Friday before Labor Day [MCL 380.1284b]. The provisions of the law would not apply in a district where a collective bargaining agreement providing a complete school calendar was in effect as of May 1, 1999, if that school calendar did not comply with the law. The prohibition, however, against holding classes on the Friday before Labor Day would apply in that district after the terms of the collective bargaining agreement expired.

Michigan Department of Education
Office of Government Services
And Customer Satisfaction Program
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 373-6534
Toll Free 1-888-323-4231
Fax (517) 373-7113
Web Site Address:
<http://www.state.mi.us/mde/off/csat>

This information is provided as a service of the Michigan Department of Education and is distributed with the understanding that the Department is not engaged in rendering legal advice. Those individuals desiring or requiring legal advice should seek the services of an attorney.

Final February 2002

- [22.1 Education \(/22.1/\)](#)
- [7 General Powers and Duties of School Boards \(/22.1/7/\)](#)
- [§ 22.1-79.1 Opening of the school year; approvals for certain .□.□. \(/22.1-79.1/\)](#)

§ 22.1-79.1

Opening of the school year; approvals for certain alternative schedules.

A. Each local school board shall set the school calendar so that the first day students are required to attend school shall be after Labor Day. The Board of Education may waive this requirement based on a school board certifying that it meets one of the good cause requirements of subsection B.

B. For purposes of this section, “good cause” means:

1. A school division has been closed an average of eight days per year during any five of the last 10 years because of severe weather conditions, energy shortages, power failures, or other emergency situations;
2. A school division is providing, in the school year for which the waiver is sought, an instructional program or programs in one or more of its elementary or middle or high schools, excluding Virtual Virginia, which are dependent on and provided in one or more elementary or middle or high schools of another school division that qualifies for such waiver. However, any waiver granted by the Board of Education pursuant to this subdivision shall only apply to the opening date for those schools where such dependent programs are provided;
3. A school division is providing its students, in the school year for which the waiver is sought, with an experimental or innovative program which requires an earlier opening date than that established in subsection A of this section and which has been approved by the Department of Education pursuant to the regulations of the Board of Education establishing standards for accrediting public schools. However, any waiver or extension of the school year granted by the Board of Education pursuant to this subdivision or its standards for accrediting public schools for such an experimental or innovative program shall only apply to the opening date for

those schools where such experimental or innovative programs are offered generally to the student body of the school. For the purposes of this subdivision, experimental or innovative programs shall include instructional programs that are offered on a year-round basis by the school division in one or more of its elementary or middle or high schools; or

4. A school division is entirely surrounded by a school division that has an opening date prior to Labor Day in the school year for which the waiver is sought. Such school division may open schools on the same opening date as the surrounding school division.

C. Individual schools may propose, and local school boards may approve, pursuant to guidelines developed by the Board of Education, alternative school schedule plans providing for the operation of schools on a four-day weekly calendar, so long as a minimum of 990 hours of instructional time is provided for grades one through twelve and 540 hours for kindergarten. No alternative plan that reduces the instructional time in the core academics of English, mathematics, social studies, and science shall be approved.

History

1986, c. 587; 1998, c. 702; 2003, c. 724; 2010, cc. 49, 88; 2011, cc. 216, 387.

MINNESOTA STATUTES AND CODES**Section 120A.40 School Calendar** Listen**120A.40 SCHOOL CALENDAR.**

(a) Except for learning programs during summer, flexible learning year programs authorized under sections 124D.12 to 124D.127, and learning year programs under section 124D.128, a district must not commence an elementary or secondary school year before Labor Day, except as provided under paragraph (b). Days devoted to teachers' workshops may be held before Labor Day. Districts that enter into cooperative agreements are encouraged to adopt similar school calendars.

(b) A district may begin the school year on any day before Labor Day:

(1) to accommodate a construction or remodeling project of \$400,000 or more affecting a district school facility;

(2) if the district has an agreement under section 123A.30, 123A.32, or 123A.35 with a district that qualifies under clause (1); or

(3) if the district agrees to the same schedule with a school district in an adjoining state.

History:

Ex1959 c 71 art 7 s 12; 1967 c 890 s 2; 1974 c 326 s 15; 1978 c 764 s 89; 1985 c 51 s 1; 1987 c 258 s 7; 1990 c 562 art 8 s 33; 1991 c 265 art 9 s 57; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 1998 c 397 art 6 s 117; art 11 s 3; 1998 c 398 art 6 s 29; 1999 c 241 art 9 s 2; 1Sp2005 c 1 art 4 s 31; 2009 c 96 art 1 s 2

WISCONSIN STATUTES AND CODES**118.045 Commencement of school term.**

 Listen

118.045

118.045 Commencement of school term.

118.045(1)

(1) Except as provided in subs. (2) and (3), beginning in the year 2000, no public school may commence the school term until September 1.

118.045(2)

(2) Subsection (1) does not prohibit a school board from doing any of the following:

118.045(2)(a)

(a) Holding athletic contests or practices before September 1.

118.045(2)(b)

(b) Scheduling in-service days or work days before September 1.

118.045(2)(c)

(c) Holding school year-round.

118.045(3)

(3) A school board may commence the school term before September 1 in any school year if the school board requests the department to allow it to commence the school term before September 1 and the school board includes reasons with its request. The department may grant a request only if it determines that there are extraordinary reasons for granting it. The department shall promulgate rules to implement and administer this subsection.

118.045 - ANNOT.

History: 1999 a. 9; 2001 a. 16.

118.045 - ANNOT.

Cross Reference: See also ch. PI 27, Wis. adm. code.

279.10 SCHOOL YEAR -- BEGINNING DATE -- EXCEPTIONS --
PILOT PROGRAMS.

1. The school year shall begin on the first day of July and each regularly established elementary and secondary school shall begin no sooner than a day during the calendar week in which the first day of September falls but no later than the first Monday in December. However, if the first day of September falls on a Sunday, school may begin on a day during the calendar week which immediately precedes the first day of September. School shall continue for at least one hundred eighty days, except as provided in subsection 3, and may be maintained during the entire calendar year. However, if the board of directors of a district extends the school calendar because inclement weather caused the district to temporarily close school during the regular school calendar, the district may excuse a graduating senior who has met district or school requirements for graduation from attendance during the extended school calendar. A school corporation may begin employment of personnel for inservice training and development purposes before the date to begin elementary and secondary school.

2. The board of directors shall hold a public hearing on a proposal prior to submitting it to the department of education for approval.

3. The board of directors of a school district may request approval from the department of education for a pilot program for an innovative school year. The number of days per year that school is in session may be more or less than those specified in subsection 1, but the innovative school year shall provide for an equivalent number of total hours that school is in session.

The board shall file a request for approval with the department not later than November 1 of the preceding school year. The request shall include a listing of the savings and goals to be attained under the innovative school year subject to rules adopted by the department under chapter 17A. The department shall notify the districts of the approval or denial of pilot programs not later than the next following January 15.

A request to continue an innovative school year pilot project after its initial year also shall include an evaluation of the savings and impacts on the educational program in the district.

Participation in a pilot project shall not modify provisions of a master contract negotiated between a school district and a certified bargaining unit pursuant to chapter 20 unless mutually agreed upon.

4. The director of the department of education may grant a request made by a board of directors of a school district stating its desire to commence classes for regularly established elementary and secondary schools prior to the earliest starting date specified in subsection 1. A request shall be based upon the determination that a starting date on or after the earliest starting date specified in subsection 1 would have a significant negative educational impact.

Section History: Early Form

[R60, § 2023, 2037; C73, § 1724, 1727; C97, § 2773; S13, § 273; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, § 4226; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, § 279.10]

Section History: Recent Form

83 Acts, ch 17, § 1, 3, 4; 85 Acts, ch 6, § 1, 2; 86 Acts, ch 1245, § 1467; 88 Acts, ch 1087, § 1; 88 Acts, ch 1259, § 1; 90 Acts, ch 1272, § 68; 94 Acts, ch 1020, § 1
Referred to in § 256.20, 256F.4, 257.17, 299.1, 299.4

The Florida Senate

2011 Florida Statutes

Title XLVIII	Chapter 1001
K-20 EDUCATION CODE	K-20 GOVERNANCE
	Entire Chapter

1001.42 Powers and duties of district school board.— The district school board, acting as a board, shall exercise all powers and perform all duties listed below:

(1) **REQUIRE MINUTES AND RECORDS TO BE KEPT.**—Require the district school superintendent, as secretary, to keep such minutes and records as are necessary to set forth clearly all actions and proceedings of the school board.

(a) *Minutes, recording.*—The minutes of each meeting shall be reviewed, corrected if necessary, and approved at the next regular meeting, provided that this action may be taken at an intervening special meeting if the district school board desires. The minutes shall be kept as a public record in a permanent location.

(b) *Minutes, contents.*—The minutes shall show the vote of each member present on all matters on which the district school board takes action. It shall be the duty of each member to see to it that both the matter and his or her vote thereon are properly recorded in the minutes. Unless otherwise shown by the minutes, it shall be presumed that the vote of each member present supported any action taken by the district school board in either the exercise of, violation of, or neglect of the powers and duties imposed upon the district school board by law or rule, whether such action is recorded in the minutes or is otherwise established. It shall also be presumed that the policies, appointments, programs, and expenditures not recorded in the minutes but made and actually in effect in the district school system were made and put into effect at the direction of the district school board, unless it can be shown that they were done without the actual or constructive knowledge of the members of the district school board.

(2) **CONTROL PROPERTY.**—Subject to rules of the State Board of Education, control property and convey the title to real and personal property.

(3) **ADOPT SCHOOL PROGRAM.**—Adopt a school program for the entire school district.

(4) **ESTABLISHMENT, ORGANIZATION, AND OPERATION OF SCHOOLS.**—Adopt and provide for the execution of plans for the establishment, organization, and operation of the schools of the district, including, but not limited to, the following:

(a) *Schools and enrollment plans.*—Establish schools and adopt enrollment plans that may include school attendance areas and open enrollment provisions.

(b) *Elimination of school centers and consolidation of schools.*—Provide for the elimination of school centers and the consolidation of schools.

(c) *Adequate educational facilities for all children without tuition.*—Provide adequate educational facilities for all children without payment of tuition.

(d) *Cooperate with school boards of adjoining districts in maintaining schools.*—Approve plans for cooperating with school boards of adjoining districts in this state or in adjoining states for establishing school attendance areas composed of territory lying within the districts and for the joint maintenance of district-line schools or other schools which are to serve those attendance areas. The conditions of such cooperation shall be as follows:

1. **Establishment.**—The establishment of a school to serve attendance areas lying in more than one district and the plans for maintaining the school and providing educational services to students shall be effected by annual resolutions spread upon the minutes of each district school board concerned, which resolutions shall set out the territorial limits of the areas from which children are to attend the school and the plan to be followed in maintaining and operating the school.

2. **Control.**—Control of the school or schools involved shall be vested in the district school board of the district

in which the school or schools are located unless otherwise agreed by the district school boards.

3. Settlement of disagreements.—In the event an agreement cannot be reached relating to such attendance areas or to the school or schools therein, the matter may be referred jointly by the cooperating district school boards or by either district school board to the Department of Education for decision under rules of the State Board of Education, and its decision shall be binding on both school boards.

(e) *Classification and standardization of schools.*—Provide for the classification and standardization of schools.

(f) *Opening and closing of schools; fixing uniform date.*—Adopt policies for the opening and closing of schools and fix uniform dates; however, beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, the opening date for schools in the district may not be earlier than 14 days before Labor Day each year.

(g) *Observance of school holidays and vacation periods.*—Designate the observance of school holidays and vacation periods.

(h) *Career classes and schools.*—Provide for the establishment and maintenance of career schools, departments, or classes, giving instruction in career education as defined by rules of the State Board of Education, and use any moneys raised by public taxation in the same manner as moneys for other school purposes are used for the maintenance and support of public schools or classes.

(i) *District school boards may establish public evening schools.*—Have the authority to establish public evening schools.

(j) *Cooperate with other agencies in joint projects.*—Cooperate with other agencies in joint projects.

(k) *Planning time for teachers.*—May adopt rules for planning time for teachers in accordance with the provisions of chapter 1012.

(l) *Exceptional students.*—Provide for an appropriate program of special instruction, facilities, and services for exceptional students as prescribed by the State Board of Education as acceptable in accordance with the provisions of s. [1003.57](#).

(m) *Alternative education programs for students in residential care facilities.*—Provide, in accordance with the provisions of s. [1003.58](#), educational programs according to rules of the State Board of Education to students who reside in residential care facilities operated by the Department of Children and Family Services.

(n) *Educational services in detention facilities.*—In accordance with the provisions of chapter 1006, offer services to students in detention facilities.

(5) PERSONNEL.—

(a) Designate positions to be filled, prescribe qualifications for those positions, and provide for the appointment, compensation, promotion, suspension, and dismissal of employees, subject to the requirements of chapter 1012. A district school board is encouraged to provide clerical personnel or volunteers who are not classroom teachers to assist teachers in noninstructional activities, including performing paperwork and recordkeeping duties. However, a teacher shall remain responsible for all instructional activities and for classroom management and grading student performance.

(b) Notwithstanding s. [1012.55](#) or any other provision of law or rule to the contrary and consistent with adopted district school board policy relating to alternative certification for school principals, have the authority to appoint persons to the position of school principal who do not hold educator certification.

(6) STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS.—Adopt policies establishing standards of ethical conduct for instructional personnel and school administrators. The policies must require all instructional personnel and school administrators, as defined in s. [1012.01](#), to complete training on the standards; establish the duty of instructional personnel and school administrators to report, and procedures for reporting, alleged misconduct by other instructional personnel and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student; and include an explanation of the liability protections provided under ss. [39.203](#) and [768.095](#). A district school board, or any of its employees, may not enter into a confidentiality agreement regarding terminated or dismissed instructional personnel or school administrators, or personnel or administrators who resign in lieu of termination, based in whole or in part on misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student, and may not provide instructional personnel or

school administrators with employment references or discuss the personnel's or administrators' performance with prospective employers in another educational setting, without disclosing the personnel's or administrators' misconduct. Any part of an agreement or contract that has the purpose or effect of concealing misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student is void, is contrary to public policy, and may not be enforced.

(7) **DISQUALIFICATION FROM EMPLOYMENT.**—Disqualify instructional personnel and school administrators, as defined in s. [1012.01](#), from employment in any position that requires direct contact with students if the personnel or administrators are ineligible for such employment under s. [1012.315](#). An elected or appointed school board official forfeits his or her salary for 1 year if:

(a) The school board official knowingly signs and transmits to any state official a report of alleged misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student and the school board official knows the report to be false or incorrect; or

(b) The school board official knowingly fails to adopt policies that require instructional personnel and school administrators to report alleged misconduct by other instructional personnel and school administrators, or that require the investigation of all reports of alleged misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators, if the misconduct affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student.

(8) **STUDENT WELFARE.**—

(a) In accordance with the provisions of chapters 1003 and 1006, provide for the proper accounting for all students of school age, for the attendance and control of students at school, and for proper attention to health, safety, and other matters relating to the welfare of students.

(b) In accordance with the provisions of ss. [1003.31](#) and [1003.32](#), fully support the authority of each teacher and school bus driver to remove disobedient, disrespectful, violent, abusive, uncontrollable, or disruptive students from the classroom and the school bus and the authority of the school board to place such students in an alternative educational setting, when appropriate and available.

(9) **COURSES OF STUDY AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.**—Provide adequate instructional materials for all students in accordance with the requirements of chapter 1006.

(10) **TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS.**—After considering recommendations of the district school superintendent, make provision for the transportation of students to the public schools or school activities they are required or expected to attend; authorize transportation routes arranged efficiently and economically; provide the necessary transportation facilities, and, when authorized under rules of the State Board of Education and if more economical to do so, provide limited subsistence in lieu thereof; and adopt the necessary rules and regulations to ensure safety, economy, and efficiency in the operation of all buses, as prescribed in chapter 1006.

(11) **SCHOOL PLANT.**—Approve plans for locating, planning, constructing, sanitating, insuring, maintaining, protecting, and condemning school property as prescribed in chapter 1013 and as follows:

(a) *School building program.*—Approve and adopt a districtwide school building program.

(b) *Sites, buildings, and equipment.*—

1. Select and purchase school sites, playgrounds, and recreational areas located at centers at which schools are to be constructed, of adequate size to meet the needs of projected students to be accommodated.

2. Approve the proposed purchase of any site, playground, or recreational area for which district funds are to be used.

3. Expand existing sites.

4. Rent buildings when necessary.

5. Enter into leases or lease-purchase arrangements, in accordance with the requirements and conditions provided in s. [1013.15\(2\)](#), with private individuals or corporations for the rental of necessary grounds and educational facilities for school purposes or of educational facilities to be erected for school purposes. Current or other funds authorized by law may be used to make payments under a lease-purchase agreement. Notwithstanding any other statutes, if the rental is to be paid from funds received from ad valorem taxation and the agreement is for a period greater than 12 months, an approving referendum must be held. The provisions of such contracts, including

building plans, shall be subject to approval by the Department of Education, and no such contract shall be entered into without such approval. As used in this section, "educational facilities" means the buildings and equipment that are built, installed, or established to serve educational purposes and that may lawfully be used. The State Board of Education may adopt such rules as are necessary to implement these provisions.

6. Provide for the proper supervision of construction.
7. Make or contract for additions, alterations, and repairs on buildings and other school properties.
8. Ensure that all plans and specifications for buildings provide adequately for the safety and well-being of students, as well as for economy of construction.

(c) *Maintenance and upkeep of school plant.*—Provide adequately for the proper maintenance and upkeep of school plants, so that students may attend school without sanitary or physical hazards, and provide for the necessary heat, lights, water, power, and other supplies and utilities necessary for the operation of the schools.

(d) *Insurance of school property.*—Carry insurance on every school building in all school plants including contents, boilers, and machinery, except buildings of three classrooms or less that are of frame construction and located in a tenth class public protection zone as defined by the Florida Inspection and Rating Bureau, and on all school buses and other property under the control of the district school board or title to which is vested in the district school board, except as exceptions may be authorized under rules of the State Board of Education.

(e) *Condemnation of buildings.*—Condemn and prohibit the use for public school purposes of any building that can be shown for sanitary or other reasons to be no longer suitable for such use and, when any building is condemned by any state or other government agency as authorized in chapter 1013, see that it is no longer used for school purposes.

(12) FINANCE.—Take steps to assure students adequate educational facilities through the financial procedure authorized in chapters 1010 and 1011 and as prescribed below:

(a) *Provide for all schools to operate 180 days.*—Provide for the operation of all public schools, both elementary and secondary, as free schools for a term of 180 days or the equivalent on an hourly basis as specified by rules of the State Board of Education; determine district school funds necessary in addition to state funds to operate all schools for such minimum term; and arrange for the levying of district school taxes necessary to provide the amount needed from district sources.

(b) *Annual budget.*—Cause to be prepared, adopt, and have submitted to the Department of Education as required by law and rules of the State Board of Education, the annual school budget, such budget to be so prepared and executed as to promote the improvement of the district school system.

(c) *Tax levies.*—Adopt and spread on its minutes a resolution fixing the district school tax levy, provided for under s. 9, Art. VII of the State Constitution, necessary to carry on the school program adopted for the district for the next ensuing fiscal year as required by law, and fixing the district bond interest and sinking fund tax levy necessary for districts against which bonds are outstanding; and adopt and spread on its minutes a resolution suggesting the tax levy provided for in s. 9, Art. VII of the State Constitution, found necessary to carry on the school program adopted for the district for the next ensuing fiscal year.

(d) *School funds.*—Require that an accurate account is kept of all funds that should be transmitted to the district school board for school purposes at various periods during the year from all sources and, if any funds are not transmitted promptly, take the necessary steps to have such funds made available.

(e) *Borrow money.*—Borrow money, as prescribed in ss. [1011.12-1011.16](#), when necessary in anticipation of funds reasonably to be expected during the year as shown by the budget.

(f) *Financial records and accounts.*—Provide for keeping of accurate records of all financial transactions.

(g) *Approval and payment of accounts.*—Implement a system of accounting and budgetary control to ensure that payments do not exceed amounts budgeted, as required by law; make available all records for proper audit by state officials or independent certified public accountants; and have prepared required periodic statements to be filed with the Department of Education as provided by rules of the State Board of Education.

(h) *Bonds of employees.*—Fix and prescribe the bonds, and pay the premium on all such bonds, of all school employees who are responsible for school funds in order to provide reasonable safeguards for all such funds or

property.

(i) *Contracts for materials, supplies, and services.*—Contract for materials, supplies, and services needed for the district school system. No contract for supplying these needs shall be made with any member of the district school board, with the district school superintendent, or with any business organization in which any district school board member or the district school superintendent has any financial interest whatsoever.

(j) *Purchasing regulations to be secured from Department of Management Services.*—Secure purchasing regulations and amendments and changes thereto from the Department of Management Services and prior to any purchase have reported to it by its staff, and give consideration to the lowest price available to it under such regulations, provided a regulation applicable to the item or items being purchased has been adopted by the department. The department should meet with educational administrators to expand the inventory of standard items for common usage in all schools and postsecondary educational institutions.

(k) *Protection against loss.*—Provide for adequate protection against any loss or damage to school property or loss resulting from any liability for which the district school board or its officers, agents, or employees may be responsible under law. In fulfilling this responsibility, the district school board may purchase insurance, to be self-insured, to enter into risk management programs managed by district school boards, school-related associations, or insurance companies, or to have any combination thereof in any area to the extent the district school board is either authorized or required by law to contract for insurance. Any risk management program entered into pursuant to this subsection shall provide for strict accountability of all funds to the member district school boards and an annual audit by an independent certified public accountant of all receipts and disbursements.

(l) *Internal auditor.*—May employ an internal auditor to perform ongoing financial verification of the financial records of the school district. The internal auditor shall report directly to the district school board or its designee.

(m) *Financial and performance audits.*—In addition to the audits required by ss. [11.45](#) and [218.39](#), may contract with an independent certified public accountant to conduct a financial or performance audit of its accounts and records retained by it and paid from its public funds.

(13) RECORDS AND REPORTS.—Provide for the keeping of all necessary records and the making of all needed or required reports, as follows:

(a) *Forms, blanks, and reports.*—Require all employees to keep accurately all records and to make promptly in the proper form all reports required by law or by rules of the State Board of Education.

(b) *Reports to the department.*—Require that the district school superintendent prepare all reports to the Department of Education that may be required by law or rules of the State Board of Education; see that all such reports are promptly transmitted to the department; withhold the further payment of salary to the superintendent or employee when notified by the department that he or she has failed to file any report within the time or in the manner prescribed; and continue to withhold the salary until the district school board is notified by the department that such report has been received and accepted, provided that when any report has not been received by the date due and after due notice has been given to the district school board of that fact, the department, if it deems necessary, may require the report to be prepared by a member of its staff, and the district school board shall pay all expenses connected therewith. Any member of the district school board who is responsible for the violation of this provision is subject to suspension and removal.

(c) *Reports to parents.*—Require that, at regular intervals, reports are made by school principals or teachers to parents, apprising them of the progress being made by the students in their studies and giving other needful information.

(14) COOPERATION WITH OTHER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARDS.—May establish and participate in educational consortia that are designed to provide joint programs and services to cooperating school districts, consistent with the provisions of s. 4(b), Art. IX of the State Constitution. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules providing for the establishment, funding, administration, and operation of such consortia.

(15) ENFORCEMENT OF LAW AND RULES.—Require that all laws and rules of the State Board of Education or of the district school board are properly enforced.

(16) SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM.—Assume such responsibilities and exercise such powers and perform such

duties as may be assigned to it by law or as may be required by rules of the State Board of Education or, as in the opinion of the district school board, are necessary to ensure school lunch services, consistent with needs of students; effective and efficient operation of the program; and the proper articulation of the school lunch program with other phases of education in the district.

(17) PUBLIC INFORMATION AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM. —

(a) Adopt procedures whereby the general public can be adequately informed of the educational programs, needs, and objectives of public education within the district, including educational opportunities available through the Florida Virtual School.

(b) Adopt rules to strengthen family involvement and empowerment pursuant to s. [1002.23](#). The rules shall be developed in collaboration with school administrators, parents, teachers, and community partners.

(c) Develop and disseminate a parent guide to successful student achievement which addresses what parents need to know about their child's educational progress and how they can help their child to succeed in school.

(d) Develop and disseminate a checklist for parents to assist parents in becoming involved in their child's educational progress.

(e) Encourage teachers and administrators to keep parents informed of student progress, student programs, student attendance requirements pursuant to ss. [1003.26](#), [1003.27](#), [414.1251](#), and [984.151](#), and availability of resources for academic assistance.

(18) IMPLEMENT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY. — Maintain a state system of school improvement and education accountability as provided by statute and State Board of Education rule. This system of school improvement and education accountability shall be consistent with, and implemented through, the district's continuing system of planning and budgeting required by this section and ss. [1008.385](#), [1010.01](#), and [1011.01](#). This system of school improvement and education accountability shall comply with the provisions of ss. [1008.33](#), [1008.34](#), [1008.345](#), and [1008.385](#) and include the following:

(a) *School improvement plans.* — The district school board shall annually approve and require implementation of a new, amended, or continuation school improvement plan for each school in the district.

(b) *Public disclosure.* — The district school board shall provide information regarding the performance of students and educational programs as required pursuant to ss. [1008.22](#) and [1008.385](#) and implement a system of school reports as required by statute and State Board of Education rule which shall include schools operating for the purpose of providing educational services to youth in Department of Juvenile Justice programs, and for those schools, report on the elements specified in s. [1003.52](#)(19). Annual public disclosure reports shall be in an easy-to-read report card format and shall include the school's grade, high school graduation rate calculated without GED tests, disaggregated by student ethnicity, and performance data as specified in state board rule.

(c) *School improvement funds.* — The district school board shall provide funds to schools for developing and implementing school improvement plans. Such funds shall include those funds appropriated for the purpose of school improvement pursuant to s. [24.121](#)(5)(c).

(19) LOCAL-LEVEL DECISIONMAKING. —

(a) Adopt policies that clearly encourage and enhance maximum decisionmaking appropriate to the school site. Such policies must include guidelines for schools in the adoption and purchase of district and school site instructional materials and technology, the implementation of student health and fitness standards, staff training, school advisory council member training, student support services, budgeting, and the allocation of staff resources.

(b) Adopt waiver process policies to enable all schools to exercise maximum flexibility and notify advisory councils of processes to waive school district and state policies.

(c) Develop policies for periodically monitoring the membership composition of school advisory councils to ensure compliance with requirements established in s. [1001.452](#).

(d) Adopt policies that assist in giving greater autonomy, including authority over the allocation of the school's budget, to schools designated with a grade of "A," making excellent progress, and schools rated as having improved at least two grades.

(20) OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS. — Adopt policies allowing students attending schools that have been

designated with a grade of “D” or “F” pursuant to s. [1008.34](#) and that are in one of the two lowest-performing categories pursuant to s. [1008.33](#) to attend a higher-performing school in the district or any other district in the state, in conformance with s. [1002.38](#) and State Board of Education rule.

(21) **AUTHORITY TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.**—May declare an emergency in cases in which one or more schools in the district are failing or are in danger of failing and negotiate special provisions of its contract with the appropriate bargaining units to free these schools from contract restrictions that limit the school’s ability to implement programs and strategies needed to improve student performance.

(22) **SCHOOL-WITHIN-A-SCHOOL.**—In order to reduce the anonymity of students in large schools, adopt policies to encourage any large school to subdivide into schools-within-a-school that shall operate within existing resources in accordance with the provisions of chapter 1003.

(23) **FLORIDA VIRTUAL SCHOOL.**—Provide students with access to courses available through the Florida Virtual School and award credit for successful completion of such courses. Access shall be available to students during and after the normal school day and through summer school enrollment.

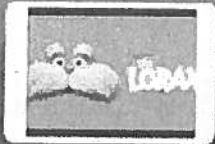
(24) **EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS.**— A district school board may not enter into an employment contract that requires the district to pay from state funds an employee an amount in excess of 1 year of the employee’s annual salary for termination, buyout, or any other type of contract settlement. This subsection does not prohibit the payment of earned leave and benefits in accordance with the district’s leave and benefits policies which were accrued by the employee before the contract terminates.

(25) **ADOPT RULES.**—Adopt rules pursuant to ss. [120.536](#)(1) and [120.54](#) to implement this section.

History.—s. 55, ch. 2002-387; s. 3, ch. 2003-118; s. 29, ch. 2003-391; s. 27, ch. 2004-41; s. 3, ch. 2004-255; s. 8, ch. 2004-333; s. 71, ch. 2004-357; s. 11, ch. 2006-74; s. 9, ch. 2008-108; s. 2, ch. 2009-3; s. 6, ch. 2009-59; s. 2, ch. 2009-144; s. 198, ch. 2010-102; s. 2, ch. 2011-128; s. 2, ch. 2011-175.

Disclaimer: The information on this system is unverified. The journals or printed bills of the respective chambers should be consulted for official purposes.

Copyright © 2000- 2014 State of Florida.



THOUSANDS OF MOVIES
AND TV SHOWS IN YOUR HAND.

NETFLIX

TRY ONE MONTH

[Subscribe to the Houston Chronicle](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Obits](#) | [Place an Ad](#) | [La Voz](#)

Wednesday January 15, 2014

[Home](#)

[Local](#)

[US & World](#)

[Sports](#)

[Business](#)

[Entertainment](#)

[Lifestyle](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Neighborhoods](#) > [Pearland news](#)

Texas schools' later start means big savings on utilities

Schools' later start is saving big bucks

Since mandate, energy bills have fallen by millions

By Jennifer Radcliffe | August 21, 2008

Comments 0

E-mail

Print

Share 1

Tweet 0

0

A New Carport For You

www.carport.com

Free delivery and installation and guaranteed best prices!

Texas public school leaders may still be fuming about the legislative mandate that delayed the start of the school year until the last week of August, but advocates point to lower utility bills as a sign that lawmakers made the right choice.

In the first year, schools statewide appear to have saved millions of dollars in August utility bills. The Houston Independent School District's monthly payment to Reliant Energy, for example, dropped almost \$200,000 between August 2006 and August 2007. Officials attribute about \$66,000 of the savings to lower electricity costs.

HISD spends about \$57 million a year on electricity, meaning \$66,000 is a slight savings, officials said. And they said some of the savings probably were erased by extra days in May and June, but they couldn't provide the figures.

Some districts reported using half as much energy in August 2007 as in past Augusts, according to records provided by some of Texas' largest school systems.

And the later start date has been popular among parents, who remember an era when the school year started after Labor Day.

"I'm happy to see Texas schools saving money," said Sen. Eddie Lucio Jr., D-Brownsville. "The fourth Monday in August is really, in my opinion, family-friendly, and it's putting money in our classrooms."

Cheap Joes® Official Site

cheapjoes.com

See The Latest Deals & Offers. Fine Art Supply Experts. Shop Now!

Garcinia Cambogia Warning

consumersguides.com

Shocking! Here's What Happened When We Tested

Haircuts for Older Women

hair.stylebistro.com

The best celebrity inspired hairstyles for older women.

Districts used waivers

Before the law took effect last year, most Texas school districts got waivers to start the year in early or mid-August. School districts adamantly opposed the later start date, saying it didn't allow enough time to prepare students for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills or to administer final exams before Christmas break.

They're even discounting the apparent savings on utility bills.

"I can't say the delayed start date didn't have an effect, but there's obviously other variables," HISD controller Ken Huewitt said.

Searching for Texas School Start Date 2013?

San Antonio parent Tina Bruno, head of the Coalition for a Traditional School Calendar, said she's not surprised that school officials are dismissing the savings.

"The school districts were so against having a uniform start date that they're not ever going to admit there's any benefit," Bruno said. "When you look at August-to-August utility bills, there were savings, even though electricity rates went up. This was a smart move."

Indeed, the Texas Association of School Boards is discussing lobbying the Legislature to reverse the law when it convenes in January. Each school district should have a say in setting its calendar, officials said.

"The tourism industry pushed very hard — and successfully — to move the school start date later in the year to no sooner than the last Monday of August," said TASB spokesman Dax Gonzalez. "The argument was that cities would benefit from increased sales taxes. ... Meanwhile, districts have less time to prepare for TAKS, and midyear holidays must be truncated or eliminated altogether."

School calendars should be driven by academics, not finances, said John Brooks, head of the University of North Texas' principal certification program.

"I really think the Legislature would be well-advised to give local boards the opportunity to set their start times," he said.

75 degrees for students

But the new law also keeps children at home during one of the hottest times of the year. With electric rates climbing quickly, Pasadena school district spokeswoman **Candace Ahlfinger** said she's sure that bills would have been higher under the old calendar.

The district keeps thermostats at 75 degrees when students are in the building and 80 degrees when they are not.

Like most suburban Houston districts, Pasadena has added new schools and is experiencing higher rates — other factors that would have further inflated August utility bills.

State Rep. **Rob Eissler**, R-The Woodlands, said he's not surprised that districts, even those that are financially strapped, aren't celebrating the savings. They don't like being told what to do, he said.

"I understand why they're not happy. I do. But in the Legislature, you have to look at the bigger picture," he said. "If you can subtract some August days from your air conditioning bill, you can't help but to save money."

jennifer.radcliffe@chron.com

Airport Jobs (Hiring)

thecareerhop.com

Earn \$19-\$24/Hour. No Experience Required. 14 Positions Available

3 Early Signs of Dementia

www.newsmax.com

Doctor: Know These 3 Warning Signs You're About to Suffer Dementia

COPD Life Expectancy

inquirehow.com/COPD

Do You Have COPD? Learn About The Stages & Life Expectancy Of COPD

Contribute to this story: [Send us a tip](#) | [Suggest a Correction](#)

Comments 0 |

E-mail |

Print

Share 1

Tweet 0

0



Jennifer Radcliffe | Education Reporter
[Email Me](#)



Exclusively on HoustonChronicle.com

Subscriber? It's yours!



School Start Date

For more than two decades, the Texas Legislature and school districts have been wrestling over the authority to set the school year calendar. School districts want to start early in August in order to maximize the number of instructional days available before the state assessments are administered in December, March, and May. The tourism industry wants to postpone the start of school until after Labor Day in order to maximize summer tourism and the availability of a high school labor force during the summer months.

Passed in 2006, current law prohibits school districts from starting school before the fourth Monday in August, unless they operate on a year-round basis. In 2011, the Legislature created a narrow exception, allowing certain campuses in Houston ISD that are undergoing comprehensive reform and serve a majority of economically disadvantaged students to start on or after the first Monday in August.¹

Background

In 1984, House Bill 72 prohibited Texas schools from starting before September 1. Six years later, the Legislature repealed the uniform school start date and allowed school boards to establish a local school start date as long as the required number of instructional days were preserved.²

In 1995, the Legislature substantially revised the laws governing public education but preserved school board control over the school start date. In 1997 and again in 1999, legislation to establish a September 1 uniform school start was filed but did not pass.

In short, between 1990 and 2001, school districts determined when school would start and end. Most schools started in early to mid-August.

The tourism industry continued to argue for a uniform, post-Labor Day school start date. In 2001, the Legislature prohibited schools from starting earlier than the third week of August but allowed districts to apply to the commissioner of education for a waiver upon meeting certain public notice and hearing requirements. Contending that the waiver provision had rendered the uniform start date meaningless, in 2006, the Legislature prohibited Texas schools from starting before the fourth Monday in August, unless the district operates a year-round school system, and eliminated waivers.

Challenges Posed by the Uniform School Start Date

Texas school districts must provide 180 instructional days per school year. Staff development and holidays (not including winter break) account for 20 school days during a typical school year. School boards must juggle those legal requirements along with the state's instructional mandates and local communities' demands to develop a school calendar that maximizes the amount of instructional time available for students.

¹ Texas Education Code (TEC) § 25.0811.

² TEC § 25.081 requires districts to provide at least 180 instructional days per school year, except under certain prescribed circumstances, such as a year-round school year or when the education commissioner reduces the number of required instructional days due to a disaster that causes schools to close.

Starting school in late August makes it difficult to achieve fall and spring semesters of roughly equal length, which is academically optimal. To achieve this, school boards typically are forced to shorten the Thanksgiving and/or Christmas break or end the fall semester in January, after the winter break. None of those choices increase the amount of meaningful instructional time for the following reasons:

- Reducing or eliminating Thanksgiving or Christmas break interrupts family vacations and are thus, not acceptable choices to many parents. .
- Alternatively, ending the fall semester in January reduces the number of instructional days available during the spring semester. This disadvantages students who take a one-semester course in spring, as they have fewer days of instruction before their end-of-course test. It also disadvantages students enrolled in a two-semester course, as the more rigorous part of the course is presented during the spring semester.

Postponing the state testing dates until later in May to provide more instructional days is not a viable alternative. The Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exam schedules are set nationally. Further, the Texas Education Agency has little flexibility in the state assessment testing dates because of subsequent statutory deadlines that are dependent upon students' results on those tests.

State law requires districts to provide remedial instruction and multiple retesting opportunities for students who do not pass the state assessments. Accommodating those mandates within a school year that begins in late August is generally not possible, thus forcing districts to provide summer school. Districts receive no state funding for summer school.

The current uniform school start date creates a misalignment between school district calendars and the calendars of the local community colleges and universities where students and teachers enroll in summer and dual-credit courses.

83rd Legislative Session

Whether school boards or the tourism industry should control when school starts is a perennial debate. However, the new state assessment and accountability laws will make it necessary once again for the Legislature to consider the positive and negative effects of the late August uniform school start date.

School start date has no bearing on tourism

By SCOTT POWELL Ledger Staff Writer spowell@gaffneyledger.com
The Gaffney Ledger, February 18, 2013

A uniform start date of late August for school districts in South Carolina has not increased tourism since the law went into effect in 2007, according to a study released Friday by the Olde English Consortium.

Local school districts were able to choose their own opening date for schools until a state law went into effect for the 2007-2008 school year.

Citing the tourism industry's concerns about early school start dates, state lawmakers created a uniform start date for all 85 school districts. The law now mandates schools cannot open before the third Monday in August.

Cherokee County students will start classes Aug. 20 for the 2013-2014 school year, which is the earliest time allowed under state law.

State law was changed after the Travel and Tourism Industries issued a Morse Report that argued earlier start dates in schools created shorter summers and were a factor in declining August hotel occupancy rates from 1997-2002. The tourism report suggested school calendars were a factor in a decline in tourism indicators.

"We believe that the start dates of schools have no bearing on the strength of the tourism industry and that elected school boards should make such decisions representing their community," Olde English Consortium Executive Director Michael Fanning said.

The OEC released a report Friday that examined hotel occupancy rates and other tourism data since the uniform school start date took effect. The nonprofit education group serves school districts in Cherokee, Chester, Clover, Fairfield, Lancaster and York, and the University of South Carolina at Lancaster.

Before the uniform start date, the OEC found hotel occupancy rates declined in August from 64.6 percent in 2005 to 63.7 percent in 2006. This was offset by a hotel revenue increase in May when the occupancy rates went from 62.4 percent in 2005 to 64.1 percent in 2006.

South Carolina hotel occupancy rates were 1.1 percent behind national figures (63.2 percent vs. 64.3 percent) between 2005- 2007. Since the uniform start date took effect in 2008, the OEC found the gap in hotel occupancy rates between May and August has more than doubled to 2.6 percent.

"The August tourism boom predicted by the Morse Report has simply not taken shape," Fanning added. "The occupancy data suggests that little correlation exists between school start dates and hotel occupancy in the summer months, and is a net negative."

The Olde English Consortium has shared its research study with a group of lawmakers, including state House Reps. Dennis Moss and Steve Moss. Fanning said the consortium hopes the study will lead lawmakers to consider changing the uniform start date law.

The “third Monday” legislation resulted in the 2012-2013 school year having the latest start date in the past six years, as school districts across South Carolina could not start classes before Aug. 20. If left unchanged, the start date would be pushed back even further in August of 2016.

“This change has made it virtually impossible for schools across the state to complete the first semester prior to winter break and has reduced the number of instructional days before students take high-stakes standardized testing in the spring,” Fanning said. “The law changed in an effort to boost tourism with little concern for its impact to students and the educational process in South Carolina.”

spowell@gaffneyledger.com

Belle Plaine Herald

1/28/2014 3:39:00 PM

Area Boards Want State OK to Start School Before Labor Day

B.P.'s Smith, Lawmakers Back Early Start to Improve Academics

When the Belle Plaine School Board met in a planning retreat earlier this month, improving academic performance and implementation of a 1 to 1 technology plan to help students earn better grades were among the main topics.

But another idea for improving academic performance and grades on standardized tests is starting school earlier than the traditional day after Labor Day.

One of the ways to improve performance on statewide mandated tests could involve more time preparing for the exams through starting school before the holiday weekend. Just how early the districts may ultimately want to start the school year before the traditional end-of-summer holiday weekend is to be determined.

A group of school districts in the Minnesota River Valley south and southeast of Belle Plaine and the Minnesota River Conference is pushing for legislation to permit them to start before the Labor Day holiday. This would give students time to get back into the swing of things academically after the summer break and prepare for the exams.

Currently, state law prohibits schools to begin before Labor Day without a state OK.

The Minnesota Department of Education has required windows of time during which the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) can be administered. School officials believe additional time preparing students for those exams – be it a few days or a week or two – could help improve scores.

Change the Law

Area school districts in the Minnesota River Valley, including St. Peter, Le Sueur-Henderson and Tri-City United, are supporting legislation permitting them to start before Labor Day when the legislature returns to St. Paul later this month.

Smith likewise supports the district's right to start the school year when it wants to and not by a formula at least partially rooted in agrarian tradition.

Sen. Kevin Dahle, DFL-Northfield, has supported legislation allowing districts to start school at a date of their selection. Dahle, a teacher when the legislature is not in session, said strong opposition comes from lobbyists representing the state's tourism industry.

"I believe local school districts, with community input, should have the final say in those decisions," Dahle said.

Rep. Kelby Woodard, R-Belle Plaine, also supports the idea of districts being able to select their own start date. His district includes portions of southern Scott and eastern Le Sueur counties, including Le Center.

"I am optimistic that this change can be made in the next session," he said, "but the odds

are not good due to the strong opposition of groups such as the resort owners.”

St. Peter School District Superintendent Rich Olson, Le Sueur-Henderson Superintendent Rich Hanson and TCU Superintendent Teri Preisler see the start date as a matter of local control districts are pursuing legislatively. They are supporting legislation that permits local school districts to select their own start dates.

Smith agrees with the idea of local control. Although the Belle Plaine School Board has not formally taken a position on the legislation. Smith believes it is a potential benefit for academic performance and improved test scores.

With board approval, Belle Plaine could start the school year before Labor Day even if the other districts in the SouthWest Metropolitan Learning Cooperative decided to follow tradition and start after Labor Day.

Keith Kottke, superintendent of the Springfield, Minn. School District said scores on MCA II and MCA III standardized exams have seen improvement since the district and its 610 students in kindergarten through 12th grades began starting the school year two weeks before Labor Day. The district is in its fourth year of an early opening day.

In 2010, half the Springfield district’s seventh-graders were proficient in the MCA II math exam. Last year on the MCA III math tests, 72 percent of the district’s seventh-graders achieved proficiency. The district finished just ahead of the state average in the MCA III exam in science. Its overall proficiency rate jumped from 39 to 63 percent since 2010. The district has also seen its rate of graduation slowly increase, from 87 percent of the Class of 2010 to 93 percent of the Class of 2013.

Kottke also believes the at-risk students significantly benefit academically from an earlier start.

Part of the improvement on exams is that overall academics are the result of more time for staff professional developments. The Springfield School District works with neighboring school districts.

Proponents say another facet of starting earlier is the alignment of a school calendar. An earlier start could potentially allow the semester to end at the holiday break in December. Currently, the semester ends just after students return from the holiday break. The earlier start also aligns better for students earning college credits through post-secondary enrollment option (PSEO) and college in the schools (CIS) courses.



Minnesota's school start date spurs fights

Article by: KELLY SMITH

Star Tribune

January 20, 2013 - 9:49 PM

More schools across Minnesota are petitioning to begin their school year before Labor Day, pitting the tourism industry parents against schools that want to give students more time to prepare for crucial state and national exams.

Parents in Northfield quashed a proposal last week to start school Aug. 13, saying it would conflict with the State Fair programs like 4-H. In Edina, more than 200 parents are protesting a calendar shift to start in August that will be discussed this week, saying it infringes on valuable family time. And in Le Sueur, schools are preparing for a similar fight this month.

Nationwide, Minnesota is one of only three states that mandate the post-Labor Day school start. Education lobbyists have said they'll push again at the State Capitol this year to let school districts adopt their own calendars. Given the perennial debate, some school leaders say it's about time.

"To be locked in an agrarian calendar is not going to serve our state well," Edina Superintendent Ric Dressen said, citing the competitive nature of education. "I recognize the value of tourism. But we have to put our kids first."

Across Minnesota, 59 school districts won state approval to have one or more schools start before Labor Day this year. That's up from 21 in 2003, according to data from the state Department of Education.

State statute requires the post-Labor Day start. To get state approval to be exempt, a district has to submit a waiver for learning-related reasons such as having a four-day school week or needing an earlier start on spring construction projects \$400,000 or more.

Tourism vs. test prep

In Wisconsin and Iowa, schools aren't supposed to start before Sept. 1, but in Iowa, about 98 percent of districts have waivers to start in August. (While the Minnesota State Fair runs late August through Labor Day, Wisconsin's state fair starts the first week of August and Iowa's often starts the second week.)

"It's always a contentious issue for schools," said Kirk Schneidawind of the Minnesota School Boards Association, which is pushing again this year to change the statute. "And that's where the debate should be had. School boards should be able to set a start time for their school district."

A 2008 survey by his group showed that 72 percent of school districts would start before Labor Day (Sept. 2 this year) if given the option. But if that happens, Dan McElroy, who represents the state advocacy group for resorts and campground owners, counters that it would mean higher costs to consumers because the 10-week prime period for resorts would be shortened. His group and several others including the State Fair are preparing to fight this year to keep the law in place.

"It is highly disruptive to the economy to go away from that tradition," he said of the decades-old post-Labor Day school start.

Last year, a University of Minnesota Tourism Center study concluded that starting school before Labor Day decreases the chances by 50 percent that families will take a trip in August or September, and 30 percent across the summer. And at the State Fair, officials expect a drop in attendance if more schools start in August.

In Northfield, nearly 300 people signed a petition and some 50 parents and students lobbied last week against the early start proposal. While tourism officials project economic losses associated with an August start, Northfield Superintendent Chris Richardson counters that there's no research showing a benefit to schools' starting after Labor Day.

"There's really no educational philosophy or research behind that to say that's the right start date," said Richardson, who pushed for the Aug. 13 start to split the semesters evenly by the winter holidays.

Edina parents rally

In Edina this week, parents are rallying in hopes of preventing the district's proposal. District leaders are meeting Wednesday to discuss possibly postponing the August start date. As of now, the proposal lists a start date of Aug. 26 in 2013, but a decision won't come until the school board meets Jan. 28. If it's approved, the district would apply under the construction exemption, citing upgrades to things like ventilation and parking lots.

The number of school days would stay the same and the change would keep Edina's calendar in line with nearby private schools, including Breck, Blake and Benilde-St. Margaret's. Dressen added that the extra week of preparation could boost standardized and advanced-placement (AP) test scores.

"I personally think it's a better time of learning in the middle of August than June," he said. "We compete nationally and school districts throughout the United States start in August. Having five extra days [before tests] would be a value for learning."

Study: Early start helps

A 2008 study looking at the effect on Wisconsin schools of starting in August or September showed that the extra time to prepare for exams did boost math scores among fourth-graders.

But Edina parents like Roger Erny aren't convinced. With three elementary students, Erny said it's not fair to alter a calendar for the district's 8,300 students just to address the 1,000 high school students who take the AP exams and already score on tests.

"You're impacting 100 percent of families with school-age children, but you're only doing it for 10 percent of the population," Erny said.

The district has gotten more than 100 e-mails from parents, mostly against a pre-Labor Day start, and a petition asking to keep summer family time has gathered more than 200 signatures. Parent Chris Rofidal said he could be swayed to support the proposal if the year had fewer vacation days and ended before Memorial Day so his family would have at least one holiday book-ending the summer.

"Labor Day is like your last swan song; it's your last chance to go to the cabin," said Rofidal, who has two daughters in the district. "Minnesota summers are pretty precious."

Kelly Smith • 612-673-4141 Twitter: @kellystrib

© 2014 Star Tribune

The Roanoke Times

Va. Senate panel protects post-Labor Day school law

RICHMOND – To the relief of tourist destinations like Virginia Beach, state law specifying a post-Labor Day start to the school year appears safe for another year.

The Senate Education and Health Committee Thursday rejected two House of Delegates bills that would have allowed school divisions to determine when the school calendar can commence.

Existing law specifies that school divisions must start the instructional year after Labor Day, though localities can receive waivers.

Thursday, the Senate committee spiked two bills – HB 1319 and HB 1467 – to give school divisions more say in when they welcome back students from summer break.

Del. Don Merricks, R-Pittsylvania County, offered HB 1319 to allow exempt the cities of Danville and Martinsville as well as Pittsylvania and Henry counties from the Labor Day rule.

Sen. Steve Newman, R-Lynchburg, reminded Merricks that despite the failure of his bill the Senate budget included language to renew for another year state Labor Day waivers granted to local school divisions.

This year, 78 of Virginia's 132 school divisions have waivers to open schools before Labor Day, according to the state Department of Education.

Legislation proposed by Del. Thomas "Tag" Greason, R-Loudoun County, was more expansive – his HB 1467 would have given school divisions across the state freedom to set their own start dates.

Both were defeated in the committee which recently killed SB 1099 from Sen. Ralph Smith, R-Bedford County, to strike the Labor Day language from the law.

Todd Jackson, February 14, 2013

<http://blogs.roanoke.com/politics/2013/02/14/va-senate-panel-protects-post-labor-law/>

Delegates offer new approaches to Labor Day school debate

BY OLYMPIA MEOLA

Richmond Times-Dispatch | Posted: Monday, February 3, 2014 4:57 pm

Members of the House of Delegates are trying new ways to approach a perennial debate.

Two lawmakers have offered paths to give schools flexibility from Virginia's mandate that schools start classes after Labor Day.

For years, education groups have lined up on one side of the debate, arguing that a quality education should trump dollars and cents and that starting earlier would allow more instructional time ahead of high-stakes tests.

In the other corner are the tourism, travel and retail associations, which argue that taking a bite out of the end of summer could sap hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity.

The House Education Committee on Monday advanced three proposals, two that take a different approach.

Del. Chris Stolle, R-Virginia Beach, wants to allow a division to open a school early if that school has failed to achieve full accreditation. The entire division could set its own calendar if more than 15 percent of all of its schools have failed to achieve full accreditation status.

Stolle has said his House bill 577 would give schools the option to shift to a year-round calendar.

"We've talked a lot about actually taking schools away from localities," Stolle told a subcommittee last week. "We need to give them the tools to function without going through unnecessary steps to get that done."

House bill 610, brought by Del. Roxann L. Robinson, R-Chesterfield, would allow schools to set their own start dates but requires that they give students a five-day weekend for the Labor Day holiday.

Schools could either close the Thursday before Labor Day through the holiday or close the Friday before through the day after Labor Day.

Representatives of chambers of commerce and the tourism industry have told lawmakers that they prefer how the state currently handles the school calendar.

If school divisions want to start before Labor Day they can request a waiver from the Department of Education for a “good cause,” which can include weather closings or if the schools share a program with another school that has a waiver.

Schools may also seek a waiver if they have an innovative program, including a year-round schedule, but the program must require an earlier opening date.

Kristian Havard, director of government affairs for the Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association, has noted that an early start for students means that teachers would go back even earlier and possibly also athletic teams, bands and others.

“Once school starts, it’s the traditional end to summer” she said Monday.

A study sponsored by the University of Minnesota Tourism Center that looked at travel patterns in five states, including Virginia, found that family trips of two-plus nights away from home dropped by 50 percent in August or September when schools started before Labor Day.

Del. Thomas A. “Tag” Greason, R-Loudoun, has House bill 333, which would give all school divisions the flexibility to set their own calendar. It also passed the Education committee on Monday.

Grace Dwyer, a Chesterfield County resident and student at Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School, asked the House Education Committee on Monday to support Robinson’s legislation.

She said the earlier start would give students more time to prepare for tests such as the Advanced Placement exams in May.

“It would make us more competitive with the private school students who have a lot more time to study for the AP exams in May for high school level and for the June SAT ... it would put us at a much higher level to compete with them,” she said.

Efforts to dump the post-Labor Day start date have failed in the past. Gov. Terry McAuliffe said last week on WRVA radio that he would be open to having certain struggling schools open year-round as a corrective measure, but that he did not generally support schools opening before Labor Day because of the multimillion-dollar economic impact it would have on the state’s tourism industry.

The House Education panel also passed House bill 1229 to delay the A-F school grading system to Oct. 1, 2015 and House bill 720 requiring schools to have a private, designated area for employees who are mothers to express milk for their child.

<http://wuwm/post/lawmakers-propose-changes-mandatory-school-start-law>

[Listen Live](#)

[Fresh Air](#)

[Schedule](#)

[Contact Us](#)



[Economy & Business](#)
[Boston Store Will Stay at Grand Avenue for Four Years, Pending City Support](#)



[Politics & Government](#)
[Congresswoman Owen Moore Blasts Republicans, But Compliments Rep. Paul Ryan](#)



[Books & Community](#)
[A City-Wide Book Club? New Wauwatosa Program Fosters Reading and Community](#)

Politics & Government

1:00 AM WED JUNE 26, 2013

Lawmakers Propose Changes in Mandatory School Start Law

By [MARTI MIKKELSON](#)

Debate over when the school year begins has resurfaced at the state capitol.

[Listen](#)

A couple Republican lawmakers want public schools to set their own start dates.

Right now, Wisconsin law prohibits them from beginning before September.



Credit bcdxlt, flickr

School districts should decide when classes start, according to Rep. Jim Ott.

[Enlarge image](#)

He says the current state mandate means public schools hold classes well into June – when students can miss out, on jobs and camps. Then the fall semester doesn't begin until after Labor Day.

"Many schools have a lot of activities going on, in some cases it seems like half the students are already back in the middle of August, whether it's for football or some other sport or activity the schools do and there's no reason why they should wait until after September 1 to commence classes," Ott says.

Ott says superintendents in his district have requested flexibility. He predicts the idea will win bipartisan support. At least one Democrat already favors the Republican plan - Rep. Mandela Barnes of Milwaukee.

"It's good to see the boomerang in policy coming back to local control because this session my Republican colleagues have gone against the grain with the local control mantra," Barnes says.

Barnes could foresee urban districts opting to start classes in late August, after many summer activities end, while districts dependent on farming and tourism might select a later start date.

Ed Lump says that's the problem – changes in parts of the state could cut short Wisconsin's profitable tourism season. Lump is president of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association.

"It would eliminate two or three of the best weeks and best weather that Wisconsin usually has from the tourism calendar. There's no question this will put a damper on restaurant sales because when school starts, family vacations stop and families are a big part of the travel business in Wisconsin," Lump says.

Lump says he fought hard to get the mandatory September start date through the Legislature in 2000.

"And it really hasn't caused any problems that we can see and we know at that time and I think still today that

it's very popular with parents that school start after the first of September," Lump says.

Lump notes that a couple attempts to change the law since 2000 went nowhere. The soonest the Legislature could consider Rep. Ott's proposal is September, because lawmakers are on summer break.

TAGS: [WUWM News](#) [Wisconsin lawmakers](#) [Wisconsin school start dates](#) [Jlm](#)
[Ott](#) [Mandela Barnes](#)

Neighborhood News Service Milwaukee

Scottie Lee Meyers, September 16, 2013

Milwaukee Public Schools and districts across Wisconsin are supporting bills to begin their school year before Sept. 1, pitting the powerful tourism industry against school administrators who want to give students more time to prepare for state and national tests.

The current law, enacted in 2002, prohibits public school districts from starting classes before Sept. 1. The Department of Public Instruction can approve a school board's request to start before the date only if it demonstrates "extraordinary reasons."

The new legislation, Assembly Bill 267, and its companion, Senate Bill 228, proposed by state Rep. Jim Ott (R-Mequon) and Sen. Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) respectively, would eliminate the prohibition and restore a school board's power to decide its own start date. If passed, the law would go into effect beginning the 2014-15 school year

Students start school on Sept. 4, 2012. (Photo by Kenya Evans)

"I have yet to hear from anyone associated with schools, whether administrators or board members, say that giving control over the start date back to local boards is not a good thing," Ott said.

The new legislation has received a warm welcome in Milwaukee. MPS spokesman Tony Tagliavia said as the district looks to improve student achievement, it believes start dates should not be determined by a sweeping state mandate.

"Local control over setting school start dates is something we have pushed for in the legislature and we are grateful that lawmakers are taking a look at this issue," Tagliavia stated in an email

State Sen. Lena Taylor co-sponsored the bills. Eric Peterson, Taylor's chief of staff, said the start date restriction has been a "long-burning fuse" for school officials, who have repeatedly tried to repeal it

State lawmakers from both parties have tried twice before to lift the start date restriction, but both times the legislation failed to reach the floor for a vote. The Assembly bill is in the transportation committee, and the Senate bill is being reviewed by the tourism committee, where it has died in the past

Because of the bipartisan support, Peterson thinks the third time's a charm. Ott isn't as optimistic.

"I'd say the chances of the bills passing are not real high," Ott said, adding that at the very least, he hopes the legislation will get a public hearing.

Tourism industry influence

Wisconsin's tourism industry says the Sept. 1 school start date law has meant more valuable vacation time for families, more tax revenues for the state and its communities and more seasonal jobs for high school students.

The Tourism Federation of Wisconsin, a lobbying coalition for the state's tourism industry, said in a memo that in 2012 visitors spent \$3.3 billion between July and September, which is \$600 million more than they did between April and June.

“Removing the Sept. 1 school start date would clearly lead to less revenue for Wisconsin businesses during this peak season and less income for employees at a time when the economy is still recovering,” the memo states.

Tourism industry representatives say that the current law still allows local school boards and districts the flexibility to set their school calendar — selecting holiday breaks, staff development days and make-up snow days.

School administrators across the state say that many students involved in sports are already on campus in mid-August, and the mandatory September start date challenges districts to squeeze in 180 days of instruction into the academic calendar.

But maybe most importantly, an earlier start date allows students more time in the classroom before state and national exams in October. The Department of Public Instruction, which supports the new bills, had no data that shows a correlation, one way or the other, between school start dates and student performance.

Joe Quick, a government relations specialist for the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, said support for the bill will likely differ in tourist and non-tourist areas, and restoring local control at the individual school board level is important.

“It’s important that the decision is made locally to reflect what the interests and needs are of the local community. Saying every district must start after Sept. 1, there’s just no rhyme or reason to it,” Quick said.

Across Wisconsin, 17 school districts — some of which are individual charter schools, and all of which are located in Milwaukee County — won state approval to have one or more schools start early last school year, according to DPI records.

Two MPS high schools, Ronald Wilson Reagan College Preparatory and Rufus King International School, were granted waivers this year because of their participation in the international baccalaureate program.

Before 2002, the vast majority of Wisconsin’s school districts started classes in August. DPI records show that fewer than 15 percent of districts chose to start classes in September for the 2001 academic year.

Most MPS students started school this year on Sept. 3. In 2001, the year before the law changed, classes commenced on Aug. 23.

www.milwaukeeens.org

From the **Baltimore Business Journal**

:<http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/news/2013/03/28/maryland-hotels-improve-revenue.html>

Mar 28, 2013, 11:56am EDT

Maryland hotels improve revenue, occupancy rates in 2012

Report shows demand for hotel rooms in the state strengthened



[Sarah Meehan](#)

Reporter- *Baltimore Business Journal*

[Email](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Google+](#)

Hotels and inns across Maryland saw a few more heads in beds in 2012, a new report from the **Maryland Office of Tourism Development** shows.

Lodging revenue across the state increased 3.4 percent in 2012, according to the bi-annual Maryland Lodging Monitor, based on data from Smith Travel Research. The report did not disclose specific dollar amounts.

The demand for rooms also increased 1.3 percent across the state, and overall occupancy rates rose 0.5 percent.

Hotel occupancy in Maryland was consistent with the country's 61.4 percent occupancy rate and the 61.8 percent regional occupancy rate. Baltimore City, Allegany, Baltimore, Cecil, Dorchester, Prince George's, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico and Worcester counties all saw higher occupancy rates over 2011.

The average room rate in Maryland was \$113.23 in 2012, higher than the national average of \$106.10 and lower than the \$116.61 regional average.

Washington County made the largest strides with a 9.3 increase in room demand, 12.1 percent increase in room revenue and 11.1 percent increase in hotel occupancy.

However, the percentage increase Maryland saw in lodging revenue was half that of the 7.3 percent national increase in room revenue.

Both the number of hotel rooms available and demand for them increased in overall Maryland during 2012, according to the report. Allegany, Calvert, Charles and Montgomery counties were the only counties that saw drops in demand for rooms since 2011.

Sarah covers hospitality/tourism, minority business, marketing and new media