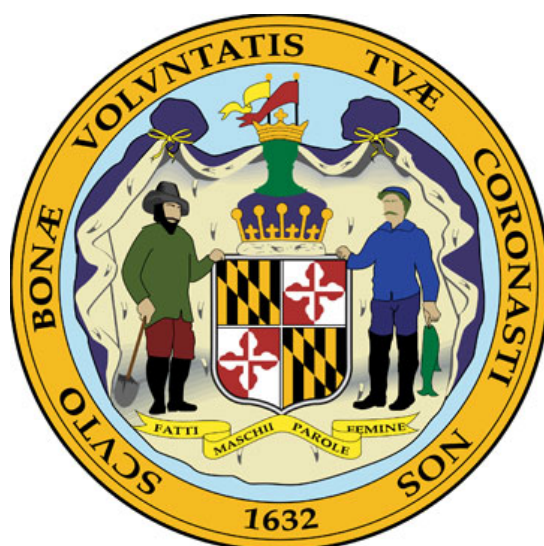


Task Force to Study a Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools

Appendix X



June 2014

Task Force to Study a Post-Labor Day Start Date for MD Public Schools
Minutes
March 24, 2014

Welcome: William Cappe, Chairman of the Task Force called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM with a quorum present. Mr. Cappe welcomed Task Force members and observers to the meeting.

Attendance: Eleven of the nineteen members were present at the start of the meeting with a total of fifteen members present by the end of the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Cappe asked if after reviewing the minutes were there any changes to the minutes as presented. Since there were no changes the chair entertained a motion to approve the minutes as presented. A motion was made and seconded, and the minutes were approved by a voice vote. The approved minutes will be posted to the MSDE website.

Review of Materials: Sarah Spross reviewed with members important materials contained in their handouts:

- Worcester County *Dispatch* articles 1) dated February 6, 2014 which discusses Superintendent Jerry Wilson's opposition to changing the school calendar to a post-Labor Day start date. He said parent surveys indicate they are satisfied with the calendar now than when the school had a post-Labor Day start date; and 2) February 20, 2014 discusses the county's Board of Education vote to begin school after Labor Day for 2014. This is an example of current law allowing local school systems control over their calendar.
- Ryan Burbey suggested implementing a pilot program to the Task Force. Since Worcester County voted to begin school after Labor Day in 2014, it could possibly be considered for a pilot program.
- A chart outlining December through March inclement weather closings for all local school systems in 2013-2014.
- Task Force member Hale Harrison provided a link to the Visit Maryland website which includes the 2013 Tourism Development Annual Report.

Today's meeting provides the three work groups an opportunity to meet and discuss possible recommendations. Work groups will be given twenty minutes to present their findings to the full Task Force for discussion and questions at 2:30 PM. For the final report, work groups should submit their findings and recommendations via the thumb drive provided to each committee. That information should be submitted to Mr. Cappe via email by April 7th prior to the April 23rd meeting in order for the Task Force members to begin reviewing all information for the final report.

It was suggested as the work groups collect information to formulate their findings and recommendations they should refer to the original bill that outlines the charge of the Task Force. Additionally, should a motion be made at a future meeting, work groups can tailor their findings to support the motion. Mr. Cappe indicated he spoke with the Governor's office and it was reiterated that the Task Force's recommendation(s) should be "crisp" and supported by the work group findings.

A question was asked if local school systems requested a waiver in order to open Easter Monday. Mr. Cappe indicated five schools had asked and were granted that waiver. Mr. Cappe also advised that the State Board of Education will be meeting tomorrow, March 25th, to entertain the subject of waivers for this school year. A concern was voiced by the State Board of Elections in regard to the school year ending in late June since there is a primary election on June 25 and many schools are used as polling places and, therefore, are closed to students.

As one member suggested the system is designed to be malleable. There will always be outliers to contend with each year. Last year was the first time in forty years that Garrett County had a spring break. Each system deals with their hurdles and has done well. The shifting of five days shouldn't be that monumental – it won't change the face of education.

Someone asked if it would be helpful for the Task Force to review the last four years of closures since this year is such an anomaly; however, the 2009-2010 school closures are almost a mirror image to this year's closures. Mr. Cappe will share that information at the next Task Force meeting.

The work groups began meeting at approximately 1:26 PM.

The full Task Force reconvened at 2:30 PM and the following presentations were made by each small group:

Work Group 1 – Education

- Recommend that school systems should move forward to make sure 75% of facilities have air conditioning. Those school systems with less than 75% of their buildings with air conditioning would be exempt from the post-Labor Day start date until 2017 (Garrett County, Baltimore City and Baltimore County school systems).
- Recommend the state be able to amend the law in order to withdraw Easter Monday as a holiday.
- Request that local school systems submit their 2015-2016 (originally asked for 2014-2015 calendar) calendars for a post-Labor Day start date by May 15, 2014 in order for the work group to review any impact such a change may cause.
- Request that MSDE develop and implement a scientific statewide survey concerning a post-Labor Day start date.
- Request that local school systems allow unions to negotiate that teachers obtain professional development via experiences beyond the school provided professional development that contribute to their professionalism as instructors. Teachers could do this by showing proof of attendance and/or written description of the training, how students will benefit from their training, and how the teacher's instruction will improve.

Discussion:

- Garrett County's climate is much different from the rest of the state so it may not need to air condition its facilities. Therefore, it may not be appropriate to include Garrett County in this recommendation. It was suggested that Baltimore City's 10 year plan may be able to address the air conditioning situation. A question was asked about paying for air conditioning.

- Most school system calendars have been approved for the 2014-2015 school year. One member stated that to review/change future calendars even creating a calendar for the Task Force, the entire calendar committee would have to assemble. By reviewing this calendar with a post-Labor Day start date, the work group can look at professional development dates and spring break dates. With the start date mandated to post-Labor Day, the work group could look at how the schools propose to condense their calendars to meet regulations and parent demands.

Mr. Cappe indicated school districts do not have to comply with requests from the Task Force. For the 2015-2016 school year, Labor Day does not start until September 7 which could factor in a variety of other issues. Anne Arundel County has a tentative calendar for the 2015-2016 school year, and it is listed on their website. Most school districts post future calendars on their websites. Members can go to the MSDE website and click on the local school systems to review future calendars posted.

It was reiterated again that the Task Force is not asking the schools to condense their calendar but to shift days. The concern again was brought up about the academic calendar and AP test dates as these dates are determined by the ETS and are not subject to change. It was suggested other states with post-Labor Day start dates have dealt with this situation, and it apparently has not impacted test scores.

- A scientific survey would benefit the Task Force as a whole, but realistically there is no funding provided for the Task Force. This would be a costly endeavor and time is limited.
- Teachers do outside professional development via college and university courses taken to meet certification requirements.

Work Group 2 - Economy

- The group has developed an outline in which to present their final submission. It will discuss the legislation, the three areas of study, what the group was tasked to do, and a synopsis of resources and speakers that affected their recommendation(s).
- They are continuing to gather statewide data and will be constructing a map of the state to show how the state will be affected economically including such areas as Annapolis, Havre de Grace, battlefields, state parks, farming, agriculture, gaming, the horse industry, seafood industry, etc. They are looking for at least one item in every county and common theme(s) that may be common throughout the state.
- They are culling facts from the resources provided to the Task Force and from other outside sources.
- They will also cite opposing points-of-view.
- The focus to stay on the economy has been difficult as it is sometimes hard to separate the economy from tourism.
- Other issues to be considered include employment opportunities for teachers and students, impact on tourism and other industries.

Discussion:

- The work group asked Task Force members if there were any other areas that could be affected by the economic impact of a post-Labor Day start date they had not considered.
- It was suggested the group look at the economics of families. For example if the school year is extended will this affect a family's ability to transport students, afford summer school and other summer enrichment programs to make up for lost days.
- It was commented that the bigger push in these discussions for a post-Labor Day start date has been for industry and no one is paying attention to students and families.
- Rather than generating more new taxes and fees, a post-Labor Day start date could generate extra revenues which could be earmarked for education.

Work Group 3 – Tourism

They are:

- Compiling and scanning documents for their final report as they continue to review data, and the comptroller's office has information broken down by year as well as monthly concerning revenue generated from taxes.
- Reviewing Mr. Noonan's reports from South Carolina and Tennessee and the University of Michigan study on families and vacations.
- Reviewing information from Smith Travel for occupancy rates of hotels both monthly and weekly.
- Reviewing information concerning the Baltimore Aquarium and 6 Flags.

Once they have consolidated the numbers and compiled the data, they will make their recommendations.

Discussion:

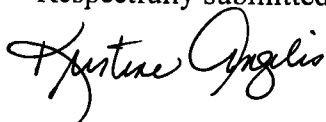
- Is the group looking at the Montgomery County corridor? The Smith Travel can be used to look at how tourism affects all counties.

Other Business:

- The next meeting of the Task Force will be April 23, 2014.
- Group recommendations/reports should be submitted to Mr. Cappe by April 7th so it can be presented and discussed at the next meeting. All items discussed during the meetings is public information; however, the written recommendations and report are confidential until the Governor's office reviews the information and releases it.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded at 3:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Kristine Angelis, Ph.D.
Administrator