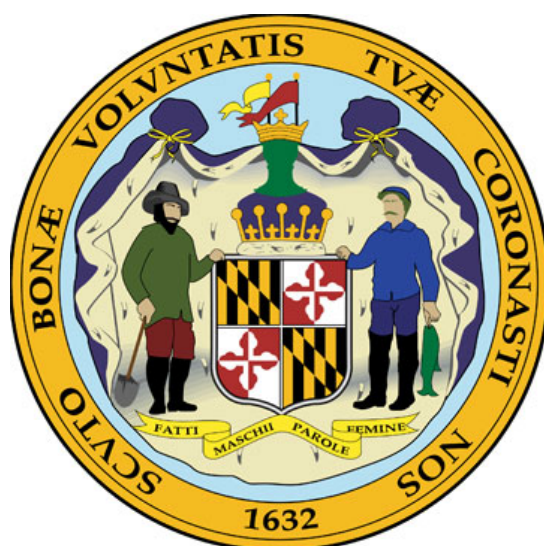


# Task Force to Study a Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools

## Appendix XXI



June 2014

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

## **Materials of Interest Following May 19, 2014 Meeting**

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

#### **“Md. Panel Recommends Post-Labor Day School Start,” WJZ, May 20, 2014**

Article reports that at the Task Force recommended a post-Labor Day start date for Maryland public schools citing it was good for students and the states bottom line. Report cites that critics are concerned that about the school year now ending later since school are required to operate for 180 days.

#### **“Updates – The Big Q: Should Harford County Public Schools Start After Labor Day?,” the Dagger Press, May 21, 2014**

Article reports that at the Task Force plans to recommend a post-Labor Day start date for Maryland public schools. I reports that Supports believe that the change will boost economic activity and generate added tax revenue; and detractors are concerned about loss of local control over school calendars. Article also includes the following statement from Barbara Canavan, Superintendent Harford County Public Schools, “I support the state superintendent’s position that local school districts should be granted autonomy regarding the start of school year. The post Labor Day start to school is replete with, but not limited to, complications pertaining to instruction, student assessments, professional development opportunities and preserving traditional family time throughout the school year for all member of our school community.” Finally it contains several comments regarding individuals support or opposition to a post-Labor Day start date.

#### **“All MD Public School Could Be Forced to Start School after Labor Day,” WMDT, May 24, 2014**

Article reports that at the Task Force recommended a post-Labor Day start date for Maryland public schools. Comptroller Peter Franchot, a support of a post-Labor Day start date is quoted as indicate that there, “...would be about \$80 million in new economic activity...”

#### **“Local school priorities, not nostalgia, should set MD.’s academic calendar,” The Washington Post, June 3, 2014**

The editorial board reports that the task force has recommended public schools not be allowed to open until after labor day. They cite Comptroller Peter Franchot as a strong supporting due to his belief that extending the summer vacation could result in \$74 million in economic activity. Editorial Board of the Washington Post disagrees with the idea of a post-Labor Day start date. They propose that more instructional time and year round schooling has been successful especially for at-risk students. However they don’t believe just anyone should be making these decisions but state, “The school calendar should be shaped by educators in conjunction with their communities rather than politicians in Annapolis with nostalgic notions of summer.” Furthermore they believe that Maryland would be taking a step backwards if it, “Allows business interests, not children’s needs, to dictate school decisions.”

**“State mandate for pre-labor Day opening is overreach,” The News Post, May 25, 2014**

The editorial board reports that the task force has recommended public schools open after Labor Day. They indicate that those in favor of the idea include Comptroller Peter Franchot and David Reel, President and Chief Executive of the Maryland hotel and Lodging Association. Both who cite economic gain as the driving factor for the recommended change. Naysayers include those from the public school community including the MSEA and the State Superintendent. Both who believe school systems should maintain the authority to decide when their calendar start and express concerns about inclement weather planning, teacher professional development, and potential negative impact on test scores.

**“School should have never started before Labor Day to begin with [Letter],” The Baltimore Sun, May 26, 2014**

Letter from Carolyn Jones writes questioning why the school systems decided to begin before Labor Day. She also questions why 6<sup>th</sup> graders are in middle school and writes that she believes our children are growing up too fast. She concludes by stating that, “The people we have in office making decisions are not looking at the whole picture.”

**“Starting the school year after labor day [Poll],” The Baltimore Sun, May 26, 2014**

Poll asking the question:

“Should the start of the school year be delayed until after Labor Day in the hopes it will raise more state tourist revenue, as a task force is expected to recommend, despite opposition from all but one Maryland School districts?”

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure”

As of May 28, 2014 (1374 responses)

- Yes (492 responses)
  - 36%
- No (871 responses)
  - 63%
- Not Sure (11 responses)
  - 1%

**“Starting school later could generate an extra \$7.7 million for Maryland’s coffers,” The Washington Times, June 3, 2014**

Article reports that the Task Force voted to recommend a post-Labor Day start date for Maryland Public Schools. It reports that studies show that an extra week of summer vacation could generate \$74.3 million dollars. Peter Franchot, MD Comptroller is quoted as saying, “I believe it would improve the quality of life of parents and families with young children, and I think it’s a mistake, a well-intentioned one, to start school earlier because kids benefit from having a full summer. In opposition of this decision, Task Force member Ms. Mary Jo Richmond is reported as saying that she sees the value in more money for the State but isn’t convinced that it will be good for schools.

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**Local**

# Md. Panel Recommends Post-Labor Day School Start

May 20, 2014 11:20 PM

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**Christie Iletto**  
Christie Iletto joined WJZ's News Team in the fall of 2012. She...[Read More](#)

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (WJZ) — The summer travel season kicks off in just a few days and it's expected to be one of the biggest in years. Now there's a new plan to extend summer vacation for Maryland public schools. It's getting cheers from students and it could bring big [money](#) to the state.

Christie Iletto has more on how it might work.

The first bell could soon ring a little later for Maryland's 24 public [school](#) districts—in fact, right after Labor Day.

"I would like more time off," said student Brian Tita.

This week, a state task force pushed for a later start date statewide, arguing it's good for [students](#) and the state's bottom line.


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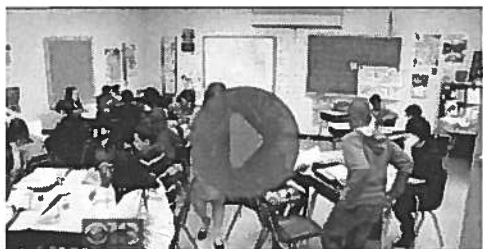
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Breakfast Cafe in Ocean City relies heavily on student workers in the summer. Worcester County schools just announced students will go back after Labor Day.

"It's not just Ocean City [or] western Maryland," said State Comptroller Peter Franchot. "It's also areas in Baltimore that benefit."

A state report shows a post-holiday start would directly pump \$74.3 million into Maryland, including \$3.7 million in new wages and \$7.7 million in tax revenue.

"We can spend more days off and rest a little bit," said Nicole Amaya.

It's winning with students but some teachers aren't sold.

"I think it's good the way it is," said teacher Meredith Anderson.

Critics are concerned about finishing the year later, if there's a later start. The state mandates 180 days in the school calendar.

"The bad weather showed us this concern about the schedule is not particularly strong," said Franchot. "If they took two days from Christmas, two days from spring vacation, three days from field trips—right there, you got almost enough days to start after Labor Day."

It's an issue that still has a ways to go before any changes are made to your student's first bell of the school year.

The issue could then become part of legislation proposed in next year's legislative session.

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- 10:00 PM CSI: Crime Scene Investigation
- 11:00 PM Eyewitness News at 11
- 11:35 PM Late Show with David Letterman

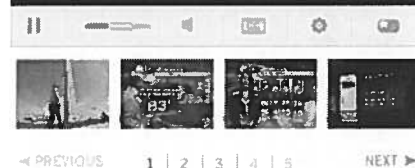
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**Did Ray Rice's News Conference Help Or Hurt Him In The Court Of Public Opinion?**

- Help.
- Hurt.
- Not Sure.

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**JLeland** • 7 days ago  
Easy to see where today's priorities are; more vacation, shorted school days and summer jobs. Anybody actually learning anything?

**hdatontodo** • 7 days ago  
I would prefer a shorter Easter and Christmas break to accomplish this instead of having the school year run until the end of June.

**Anne** • 7 days ago  
I say do it! It's all relative. MD is not the only state with mandatory 180 days. Besides it amounts to one week later means one week longer. How about cutting back on teacher professional days? Two days a year was all I had growing up. Not these 3, 4, 5 day weekends which amounted to longer than what spring break would have been had we not had the winter we had.

**Todd** • 7 days ago  
start school later, gets out later

**JR** • 7 days ago  
At one time it did start after Labor Day.....why they changed it I will never know.

**BaltimoreHun** → JR • 7 days ago  
I agree 100%!  
  
One explanation are all the so-called Staff Development days. Most teachers avoid those thing like the plague.  
  
BTW, I was in school in the '50s and our winters were worse with poorer snow removal. We still started after Labor Day and got out the first or second week in June.



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# UPDATED – The Big Q: Should Harford County Public Schools Start After Labor Day?

MAY 21, 2014 BY THE DAGGER

24 COMMENTS

After studying the potential impact on the economy, summer tourism and public education, a state task force reportedly plans to recommend that Maryland public schools start the school year after Labor Day. If enacted, the move would delay the customary first day of school by about a week in many Maryland school systems, including Harford County Public Schools. Because the state currently requires 180 days of instruction, the later start date could also mean a later end to the school year each June.

Supporters of the statewide initiative, including Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot, have said that the move would boost economic activity and generate added tax revenue. Detractors, including some local superintendents, have decried the loss of local control over school calendars that must incorporate inclement weather make up days, established testing dates, and



professional development days for teachers.

Jillian Lader, HCPS manager of communications, did not immediately respond to The Dagger’s request for a comment from Superintendent Barbara Canavan.

By law, the state task force must present its findings and recommendations no later than June 30th for further consideration by Gov. Martin O’Malley and state legislators.

Do you agree or disagree with a recommendation that would delay the start of school in Harford County until after Labor Day?

UPDATE: On May 22, 2014, Jillian Lader, HCPS manager of communications, provided the following statement from Superintendent Barbara Canavan:

“I support the state superintendent’s position that local school districts should be granted autonomy regarding the start of school year. The post Labor Day start to school is replete with, but not limited to, complications pertaining to instruction, student assessments, professional development opportunities and preserving traditional family time throughout the school year for all members of our school community.”

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### COMMENTS



Jason says  
[May 22, 2014 at 7:01 am](#)

That’s the way it used to be. They added too many days to the school year.

[Reply](#)

Well-loved.  10  1





Jason says

[May 22, 2014 at 7:07 am](#)

Having it start the day after memorial day leaves NO QUESTION as to when the first day is. It was easier to remember. It made more sense. Why we change anything that already works is beyond me. CHANGE IT BACK! 1st Day school SHOULD be the day after Labor day. There is no sense in what we do now having day 1 be on a Wednesday. or a Thursday. IN this instance the year will always start on a Tuesday. That way it was for years...

[Reply](#)

Well-loved.  13  2





James cook says

[May 22, 2014 at 7:31 am](#)

Since I, like the majority of people have no children in public school the only effect this has on me is I would spend my labor day weekend vacation in a state where schools have gone back, The outer banks are lovely that time of year the prices are off season and all the kids are gone. What is not to like?

[Reply](#)

Hot debate. What do you think?  5  3



Lauren brown says

[May 22, 2014 at 11:10 am](#)

You actually believe that the majority of people don't have children in public school?!

[Reply](#)

 5  2



Cdev says

[May 22, 2014 at 1:13 pm](#)

The prices go down in the OBX because it is Hurricane season!

[Reply](#)

5 1



James cook says

[May 22, 2014 at 3:38 pm](#)

Hurricane season starts on June first ya big dummy.

[Reply](#)

0 5



Please MOFO says

[May 22, 2014 at 8:02 am](#)

Any extra days those big long yellow stank wagons are off the road is a blessing.

[Reply](#)

Hot debate. What do you think? 5 8





SJSB says

[May 22, 2014 at 8:16 am](#)

I HATE the idea. Most states are going away from that schedule. I don't see how it is going to increase tax revenue? I came from a state that started in mid August and ended at the end of May (Snow days were then added at the end, so sometimes we went into the first week of June). Plus we had 1 week off in October and approx. 2 weeks for Christmas (and not as many as those random days off here and there). You could get great vacation rates at the end of May and beginning of June too. Plus the kids were

ready to go back by August and are ready to get out at the end of May/beginning of June. For some reason, your summer seems longer when you get out at the end of May. If you don't get out of school until late June, you can't vacation until July/August...it can be very hot! The only added tax revenue would be from the people of Maryland because everyone else is back in school. Maryland gets plenty of our money now...everything does not need to be based on how much more they can suck from us!!! Because of this...we do not plan on staying in MD!

[Reply](#)

Hot debate. What do you think?  5  5



Brian says

[May 22, 2014 at 8:22 am](#)

Though I like the idea of starting school after Labor Day (as a teacher and a parent) I am not sure it is the great boost it is being billed as. The fact is the kids still have to go to school 180 days, so this will mean one of two things. One would be the school year would just extend into June more then it currently does. Second would be that Christmas break and/or Spring Break would have to be shortened.

I listened to Peter Franchot on WBAL Radio this morning and like most politicians he was long on talk but short on answers. We asked about the fact it would push the school year more into June he simply said look at the calendar there is a way to get the 180 days in, without of course offereing any concrete sololutions. When pushed on it he mumbled something about Christmas and Spring break being shortened, again no real ideas just talk. He was a disappointment because in theory I think this idea is good, but he did nothing to help me defend the idea.

I know we use to do this when we were kids and all I get it. Until someone can show me on the calendar how it works, it is just talk that sounds good but is not actionable.

Plus one other thing that may be the point that gets me in trouble with some of you but here goes. I thin education workd best when the decisions are made at a local level. I think President Obama and his Common Core approach to education is awful and one of the reasons why is because it comes from a federal level which I think is wrong. Well the same applies here, I do not see what role at all the state has in telling local school districts how to shape their calendar.

Go ahead fire away, just try to do it with facts and ideas instead of nonsense that is so oftern displayed in this forum.

[Reply](#)

Well-loved.  8  1



Cdev says

[May 22, 2014 at 2:01 pm](#)

Fact : Obama did not create Common Core

Fact: Common Core has voluntarily been adopted by states

[Reply](#)

Hot debate. What do you think? 4 9



Meteoric Rhetoric says

[May 22, 2014 at 2:17 pm](#)

CDEV, he didn't say Obama created Common Core, he said it's his approach, which it is. In order to get Race to the Top funds (an Obama initiative) you had to show how you were going to align to Common Core.

[Reply](#)

Well-loved. 8 1



Original Observer says

[May 25, 2014 at 11:25 pm](#)

IIRC, Race to the Top was a GW Bush initiative. Obama merely reduced it to an absurdity by linking Common Core to it. But I never started a school year before Labor Day; and graduation was always in early June when I was in government schools in Harco. I don't see the big deal against resetting. The only thing you get from starting in August is more days in ridiculous heat, which is a major concern still in too many HCPS classroom buildings.

[Reply](#)

2 0



Brian says

[May 22, 2014 at 8:24 am](#)

Man does my spelling suffer when I use my fat thumbs on my cell phone while sitting at the red lights.

[Reply](#)

Hot debate. What do you think? 5 3



Shining up the whistle says

[May 22, 2014 at 10:01 am](#)

Texting while driving, huh? What school is your employment location?

[Reply](#)

Hot debate. What do you think? 4 6



Brian says

[May 22, 2014 at 10:34 am](#)

This is the way it used to be. Why it ever changed I have no idea. Starting after Labor Day just makes sense. Families can get one more long weekend in on a vacation, and kids in 4-H and FFA can be at the State Fair and not be missing any class time. If the “teachers in service days” are eliminated, that tenured teachers don’t attend any way, and make school weeks actually 5 days there would not be any need for a longer school year.

[Reply](#)

Well-loved. 11 1





jean says

[May 22, 2014 at 11:30 am](#)

I feel this would be great and give the kids a little more summer. I never went until after Labor Day when I attended Harford County schools many moons ago. It

would also let those that participate in the State Fair a little more leeway with their 4-h projects. Maybe they could eliminate some of the in service day. What do these meetings really do?

[Reply](#)

Well-loved.  10  0



Cindy Mumby says

[May 22, 2014 at 2:24 pm](#)

This story has been updated with a statement from Superintendent Barbara Canavan.

[Reply](#)

 2  0



Really??? says

[May 22, 2014 at 4:51 pm](#)

Like many of the older generation, I remember when school started after Labor Day, and final exams were that first week of school. You had Thanksgiving and that Friday off; you had about two weeks for Christmas Break, and the Thursday before Easter off until the Monday after Easter. Now, in our politically correct times, you have to refer to them as 'Winter Break' and 'Spring Break,' or else you risk offending someone.

There are many reasons now why the school year is longer. First, it is now stipulated by contract that teachers must work between 5 – 10 days more than the 180 days for students, depending on which school district you are in. Secondly, more religious holidays have been added in – when I was in public school as a student, you knew who the religious students were and weren't, teachers that cared would not schedule major assignments due or examinations on these days, and students were good about bringing in absentee notes. There were the occasional days off at the end of the marking period so that teachers could finalize and submit grades.

Honestly, the only way I could see starting school after Labor Day without running too far into June, is if the school systems would eliminate some of those Professional Development Days and cut down on the number of religious holidays built into the

calendar. Sadly, I don't see this happening

[Reply](#)

 2  0



Brian Makarios says

[May 22, 2014 at 5:13 pm](#)

Like many of the older generation, I too remember when schools taught the basic parts of speech, how to multiply using facts one had to memorize, along with basic skills such as how to address a mailing envelope. But alas, those days are gone.

[Reply](#)

 5  1





Hank says

[May 22, 2014 at 5:48 pm](#)

I wish they'd go to a year round school schedule with 1-2 weeks off between marking periods (which can be timed to more or less coincide with the traditional Christmas and spring breaks) and then 4-6 weeks off in the summer between school years. The major things that would need to be figured out are how to run summer school and every school would need functioning air conditioning.

Study after study after study talks about how much knowledge students forget over the 2.5 month break in the summer and how the first couple weeks (sometimes even the entire first month) of the school year are frequently used to reteach concepts that were taught the previous year (and forgotten by the average student.) This would help alleviate that problem, families would have more options of when to vacation, etc.

[Reply](#)

Hot debate. What do you think?  6  5



hashy says

[May 22, 2014 at 6:21 pm](#)



or better yet how about we just assign summer work every summer?

[Reply](#)

 1  2



hashy says

[May 22, 2014 at 6:20 pm](#)

Wouldn't make any difference for HarCo. We get out that Thursday for a jewish holiday anyway. Just keep it the way it is.

[Reply](#)

 0  3



Jon C. Duddlewiser says

[May 22, 2014 at 7:08 pm](#)

Blip, blap, flip, flap. Here's a no brainer, just don't send your kid to school until after labor day if it effects your vacation or other plans.

Don't reply to me about a letter saying your child wont pass. I know it, you know it, they know it, it's bullshit. With all the parental complaints that come in faster than ink cartridges can be replaced, political correctness, decreased student enrollment, and otherwise, the biggest dysfunction ever, they can't afford to have "Repeat offenders" of the same grade anymore.

[Reply](#)

 3  1

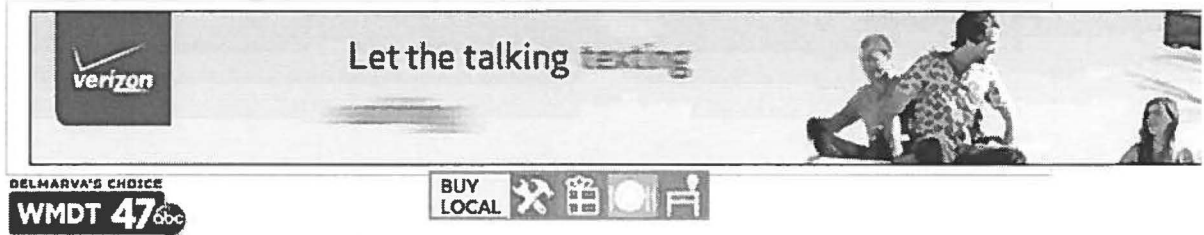


Evelyn Ishmael says

[May 24, 2014 at 11:18 am](#)

The one issue that hasn't been addressed is "What's good for students?"

The answer, or at lest the discussion, should guide the decision about when to start



## All MD Public Schools Could Be Forced To Start School After Labor Day

Posted: May 20, 2014 5:24 PM EDT  
Updated: May 24, 2014 5:23 PM EDT  
By Jemie Lee - email

MARYLAND - All Maryland public school students could be heading back to school a little later. This after a state appointed task force voted 11 - 4 in favor of a post-Labor Day start. The task force will recommend the change to the governor and general assembly during the next session.

"Once they come back from summer, then they don't want to go to school already. Then having a break, then having to go back after Labor Day is pretty inconsistent. It's like a start, stop, start, stop kind of thing. So I think it will be nice," Alyssa Cannon of Salisbury, Md. said.

As for this fall Worcester County is the first and only school system in Maryland that will start on September 2nd. Proponents saying it will help boost the tourism industry on the shore. Last year, the Comptroller's Office conducted an economic impact study on the possibility of a later start date.

"We found that there would be about \$80 million in new economic activity based on moving the school day," Comptroller Peter Franchot said.

But a later start date also means a later end date.

"Last winter was kind of intense--a lot of snow days. So kids could possibly be going to school until mid-June or something, so that would suck too," Abigail Rickwood of Salisbury, Md. said.

A sacrifice others seem willing to make.

"Yeah, that's fine. No problem with that at all," Cannon said.

The economic impact study found that the post-labor day start date would generate more than \$14 million for Ocean City.

The Maryland Department of Education says the task force will complete a report sometime in the next month.

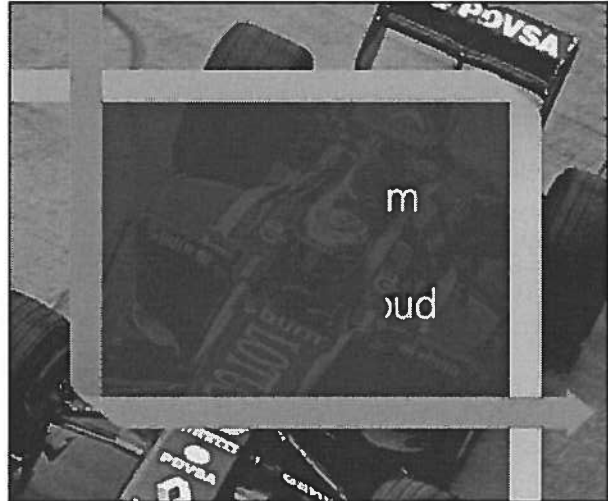
# The Washington Post

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## Local school priorities, not nostalgia, should set Md.'s academic calendar

By **Editorial Board**, Published: May 25

LOCAL SCHOOL districts in Maryland weigh many factors in determining when to start their school years. What's the window for state, local and advanced placement testing? When is the best time to conduct professional staff development? Essentially, school officials want to create an optimal learning environment. One thing they don't — and shouldn't have to — consider is maximizing tax revenue from Ocean City.



A task force convened by the Maryland General Assembly has recommended that the state's public schools not be allowed to open until after Labor Day. The driving motivation behind the change, which would require legislation or an executive order, is to boost the state's tourism industry. Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot (D), a strong supporter of extending summer vacation into September, said the change could result in more than \$7.7 million in additional tax revenue and \$74.3 million in new economic activity. His main concern, Mr. Franchot told The Post's Donna St. George, is "the quality of interaction between family and their kids, which is jeopardized by this creep of starting school earlier and earlier. If we keep going in that direction, it will be July when we start school."

Actually, that doesn't strike us as necessarily a bad idea, considering the educational advantages to be gained from increased instruction time and the success some school districts have had with year-round schooling, particularly in helping at-risk students. But we wouldn't impose that view, either. The school calendar should be shaped by educators in conjunction with their communities rather than politicians in Annapolis with nostalgic notions of summer. It is telling that all the local superintendents and the state teachers association, in rare unanimity, oppose taking this issue out of the hands of the districts. "Requiring all local educational agencies to conform to the same schedule would not be conducive to the diverse needs of the twenty-four (24) districts in the state of Maryland," Prince George's school chief Kevin M. Maxwell wrote to the head of the state task force.

Maryland, which likes to trumpet its success in student achievement, would be taking a step back if it allowed business interests, not children's needs, to dictate school decisions. We urge Gov. Martin O'Malley (D) to make short shrift of this ill-advised proposal.

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## State mandate for pre-Labor Day opening is overreach

News-Post Editorial Board | Posted: Sunday, May 25, 2014 2:00 am

Should Maryland school districts' academic calendars be subject to economic considerations? More specifically, should a post Labor Day start of the school year be mandated by the state?

A task force established last year by the General Assembly this week voted 11-4 to recommend that Maryland schools open after the traditional end-of-summer Labor Day holiday.

As reported in a Tuesday Baltimore Sun story, this year most districts will begin their school years Aug. 26 — a week before Labor Day.

Who's in favor of this return to a post Labor Day kick-off of the school year? Leading the charge is Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot. According to him, a recent economic-impact study showed that the proposed later start date means big bucks for Maryland's economy and tax coffers — \$7.7 million in additional tax revenue and \$74.3 million in economic activity.

Worcester County, home to Ocean City, a favorite venue for Labor Day celebrants, has already moved this year's school start to Sept. 2 — a move that pleased Franchot.

Who else favors this proposal? How about David Reel, president and chief executive of the Maryland Hotel and Lodging Association. In its story on this subject, The Washington Post quoted Reel as saying, "It's good economic sense in terms of generating revenue from the state." As evidence he cited Virginia's law prohibiting schools from starting before Labor Day without a state waiver — aptly dubbed the "Kings Dominion law."

But there are naysayers, as well, particular within the public school community, who cite a variety of downsides to the proposal.

One of them, Adam Mendelson, Maryland State Education Association spokesman, raised concerns about inclement weather planning, teacher professional development, and potential negative impact on test scores.

For the most part, however, the biggest general concern among school officials seems to be the loss of local control that this mandate would result in. That group includes State Superintendent of Schools Lillian M. Lowery, who said school districts should have the authority to decide whether their calendars started before or after Labor Day.

Baltimore County schools chief Dallas Dance said the dictate would “significantly harm local control and require school systems to extend the school year into the latter part of June or shorten winter and spring breaks, which are important to families.”

A range of economic and educational pros and cons have been advanced by a number of people, many of them officials of the state or local school jurisdictions. We suspect that there is some validity to most of them.

We don't think, however, that the state should be telling local school districts that they cannot begin their school year's until after Labor Day. Let each district set its own start date after examining the merits and demerits of a post-Labor Day beginning.

While Worcester County may want to take advantage of the big Labor Day weekend, Frederick County may see the matter differently.

The state exercises enough control over local matters as it is, including education. Forbidding school districts a pre-Labor Day opening, for whatever reason, would be a flagrant overreaching of state authority and an unwarranted infringement of local autonomy.

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**School should have never started before Labor Day to begin with [Letter]**

2:00 PM EDT, May 26, 2014

Regarding your article on delaying the opening of schools until after Labor Day, I have lived in Baltimore all my life, and we always went to school after Labor Day. It was the signal of end of summer days and the start of a new school year ("Task force recommends starting school after Labor Day," May 20).

Given the changes to the school system over the years I wonder who are these people that make changes that don't make sense. Why did they change it to begin with? If it's not broken don't fix it.

Who, for example, decided to put sixth-graders in with middle school. That's been a disaster. Whoever came up with that idea should have been fired.

We are rushing our children to grow up too fast, and it has caused a lot of heartache and headache for parents. I am so thankful that my children have graduated and are out of school because the people that we have in office making decisions are not looking at the whole picture.

Carolyn Jones, Baltimore

## **Starting the school year after Labor Day [Poll]**

Should the start of the school year be delayed until after Labor Day in the hopes it will raise more state tourist revenue, as a task force is expected to recommend, despite opposition from all but one of Maryland's school districts?

- Yes (492 responses)

36%

- No (871 responses)

63%

- Not sure (11 responses)

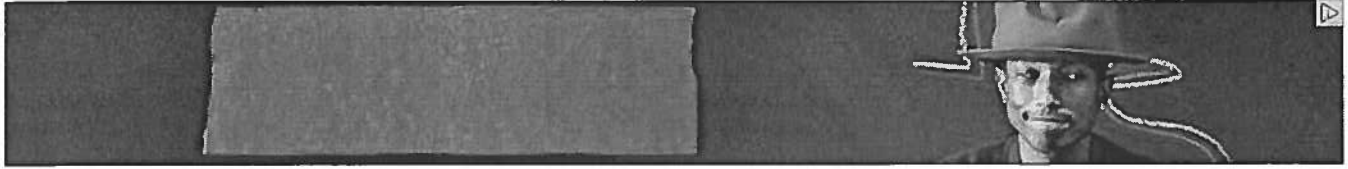
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1374 total responses

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Read more: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/second-opinion-blog/bal-starting-the-school-year-after-labor-day-poll-20140521,0,7033838.poll#ixzz332IygTNI>





## The Washington Times

June 3, 2014

# Starting school later could generate an extra \$7.7 million for Maryland's coffers

By Crystal Hill

Maryland officials, contemplating millions of dollars lost each year in vacation tourism revenue, are joining other states in reconsidering school start dates that have crept earlier into the summer in recent years.

Comptroller Peter V.R. Franchot has called for a post-Labor Day start to classes, saying his studies show an extra week of summer vacation could generate \$74.3 million from tourism and put an additional \$7.7 million in state coffers.

"The tourist industries in the state are quite diverse, and there would be increased economic activity that would be pulled back into the school system," said Mr. Franchot, a Democrat. "The study we did showed a direct increase in economic activity when vacations were being taken after August, and our report did not even include the indirect economic benefits."

The conclusion comes after a decades-long creep away from the traditional agrarian calendar in which academicians considered the benefits of year-round schooling. Now debates similar to that in Maryland are playing out around the country, with legislatures caught between the economic interests of their states and the educational needs of their students.

In Maryland, a task force was assembled last year to study the implications of a post-Labor Day starting date for public schools. The task force voted 11-4 in favor of a later starting date and recommended to Gov. Martin O'Malley that the state implement a law that will mandate the later start.

Mr. Franchot's report looked at three of Maryland's major tourist destinations - Ocean City, Baltimore and Deep Creek Lake - and concluded that each would increase substantially in economic profit. The comptroller also says that an extended break will give students more time to spend with their families and prevent businesses from losing their temporary workers - often high school students - before the summer ends.

"I believe that it would improve the quality of life of parents and families with young children, and I think it's a mistake, a well-intentioned one, to start school earlier because kids benefit from having a full summer," Mr. Franchot said.

Passing such a law would make Maryland one of just a few states to require a later start. Many states give their districts flexible options in when to start and finish, contingent upon meeting a 180-day requirement.

The Worcester County Board of Education recently decided to push back its start date to Sept. 2 for the 2014-2015 year despite its superintendent's objections. Mr. Franchot sees Worcester's decision as emblematic of where the state is headed.

The tourism industry has been one of the driving forces behind September starting dates in places like Michigan and Virginia, where the law requires schools to start after Labor Day unless they obtain a waiver from the state. The laws are lobbied for and championed by tourism officials and business owners who benefit from August earnings.

In Virginia, legislation is introduced virtually every year to reconsider what is called the "King's Dominion law," named for the state's popular theme park. Gov. Terry McAuliffe, a Democrat, supports the later start to school, citing the impact tourism has on the economy.

More schools in Michigan, however, have been requesting waivers to start in mid-August, with some teachers advocating the year-round schedule.

Other states, like Pennsylvania, have most of their schools starting before Labor Day with very few exceptions. In nearly every post-Labor Day dispute, the discussion remains fixed on the economic gains instead of student learning.

Before the Maryland task force came to a vote, local superintendents sent letters to the state Department of Education expressing strong opposition against any legislation that would threaten their district's autonomy. The letters stated the importance of each district exercising its own judgment according to its diverse needs and the interest of its students.

Mary Jo Richmond, a Frederick County educator and a member of the Maryland State Education Association who sat on the task force, said starting after Labor Day will harm professional development for teachers and students. Ms. Richmond, one of the four members who voted against the recommendation, sees the value in more money for the state but isn't convinced that it will be good for schools.

"We just have to look at ways to make sure there is really economic benefit and make sure that schools are on the receiving economic end," Ms. Richmond said. "There's no report that says that schools will benefit."

Research isn't clear about whether a post-Labor Day start affects students academically. Dave Marcotte, a professor at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County, said summer learning loss and inadequate preparation for standardized testing are major factors.

"With the state testing schedule, schools that start early have an advantage," Mr. Marcotte said. "In the state of Wisconsin, schools started moving their start dates up in order to do better on standardized tests. The state had to restrict the early start dates because the schools were creeping up into early August."

While summer learning loss has had little impact on students from middle- and upper-income families, Mr. Marcotte said lower-income children suffer the most from long gaps between school years. If the summer is longer than 10 weeks, wealthier children from families with higher educated parents are rarely affected, Mr. Marcotte said, but lower income students tend to lose the educational gains made during the year.

But Tina Bruno, executive director of the Coalition for a Traditional School Year, which lobbies for later start dates, said starting later in the year curbs high cooling costs that are often most expensive in August.

"The money that is spent simply on cooling costs could fund summer programs," Ms. Bruno said.

"August is one of the hottest months of the year. When Texas schools decided to start later in the year they saved millions of dollars [in utility costs]. That's funding summer reading packets and other resources for students."

Whether the task force's recommendation will result in new legislation being passed is yet to be determined. The bill would need to pass the state legislature and be signed into law by the governor.

Mr. Franchot said he respects the arguments for district autonomy, but thinks the benefits far outweigh the costs.

"Local control is important to me, but I think the state should put its foot down and say, 'Let summer be summer,'" he said.

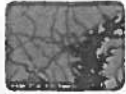
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# School should have never started before Labor Day to begin with [Letter]

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## 3 Early Signs of Dementia

by bayocw@nes.com

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

2:00 p.m. EDT, May 26, 2014

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Carolyn Jones, Baltimore

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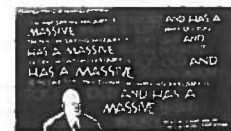
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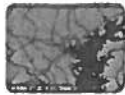
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- Yes
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