



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.

DATE: April 14, 2020

SUBJECT: Request from the Charles County Public Schools for a Calendar Modification

PURPOSE:

To consider the waiver request to open school on the Friday before Easter, the Monday after Easter, and Primary Election Day as school closure make-up days for the 2019-2020 school year.

BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Education Article §7-103 requires schools to be open for student attendance for 180 days and closed on the following public school holidays: Thanksgiving Day and the day after; Christmas Eve and from then through January 1; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Presidents' Day; the Friday before Easter and from then through the Monday after Easter; Memorial Day; and primary and general election days. Subsection (b) (iv) provides the State Board the authority to permit schools to open on holidays if normal school attendance is prevented because of natural disaster, civil disaster, or severe weather conditions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The closure of schools starting on March 16, 2020 to slow the spread of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in school communities around the State creates challenges for local school systems to meet the 180-day school year statutory requirement. While school systems deliberate the best ways to make up lost instructional time, some may want to consider opening schools on holidays. The request submitted by Charles County Public Schools on April 7, 2020 asks for a waiver to use April 10, 2020, the Friday before Easter, April 13, 2020, the Monday after Easter, and June 2, 2020, Primary Election Day, as school closure-make-up days.

ACTION:

It is being requested that the Maryland State Board of Education approve the waiver to open school on April 10, 2020, the Friday before Easter, April 13, 2020 the Monday after Easter, and June 2, 2020, Primary Election Day, for Charles County Public Schools as school closure make-up days for the 2019-2020 school year.

Members of the Maryland State Board of Education

April 14, 2020

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Attachment: Waiver Request from Charles County Public Schools.



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Board of Education of Charles County

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April 7, 2020

Brigadier General Warner I. Sumpter (Ret.)
President, Maryland State Board of Education
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Board President Sumpter:

On behalf of Charles County Public Schools (CCPS), I am requesting permission under Section 7-103(b) of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, for our school system to open as appropriate for student instruction on three school holidays, specifically the Friday before Easter (April 10, 2020), the Monday after Easter (April 13, 2020), and Primary Election Day (June 2, 2020).

CCPS has made a demonstrated effort to satisfy the legal mandate that its schools are open for students for 180 days in the 2019-2020 school year. The school calendar adopted by the Board of Education of Charles County included 180 school days, as well as several inclement weather days. Unfortunately, the Governor's State of Emergency that unexpectedly closed public school buildings in Charles County and throughout the state starting on March 16, 2020, and continuing at least through April 24, 2020, has necessitated a request to allow the school system to remain open for instruction on the three school holidays to help satisfy the 180-day mandate.

CCPS recognizes that the lengthy school closure may also require a separate request for a waiver of school days. That request, if needed, will be filed at a later time.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Virginia R. McGraw
Chairperson

cc: Dr. Karen Salmon
Members, Board of Education of Charles County
Dr. Kimberly A. Hill, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools