



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 Washington County Public Schools for a Calendar Modification-Addendum #2

PURPOSE:

To consider the waiver request to open school on the Friday before Easter and the Monday after Easter 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 Washington County Public Schools on April 9, 2020 asks for a waiver to use April 10, 2020, the Friday before Easter, and April 13, 2020, the Monday after Easter, 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, and April 13, 2020, the Monday after Easter, for Washington 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

Page Two

Attachment: Waiver Request from Washington County Public Schools.

Dr. Boyd J. Michael
Superintendent

April 9, 2020

Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-2595

Dear Dr. Salmon:

In accordance with the Code of Maryland Administrative Regulations, the Washington County Board of Education adopted a calendar for the 2019-2020 school year, which identifies potential make-up days to be used as student days when calendar modifications become necessary. As you are aware, the COVID-19 pandemic is a natural disaster, and as such meets the requirement for approval of a waiver.

At the April 7, 2020, public business meeting, our Board considered the need to update the current school calendar and voted to request a waiver of certain provisions of COMAR, which includes the use of holidays (April 10 and 13, 2020) as student days. With implementation of the distance learning plan, all students in grades 3-12 and teaching staff have a device, and the youngest learners, in prekindergarten through grade two, have custom-made learning packets mailed to homes to ensure students continue learning on those days. With the infrastructure in place, quality instruction can continue throughout the school closure.

On behalf of the Washington County Board of Education, I respectfully request that you exercise your authority, granted by the State Board of Education, to issue a waiver of the holidays and to count the days of April 10 and 13 as student days towards the current 180-day requirement.

Respectfully,



Boyd J. Michael, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Copy: Washington County Board of Education Members
April Bishop, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent, WCPS
Dara Shaw, Ph.D., Executive Director, Office of Research, MSDE
Teresa Dantzler, Ombudsman, MSDE