

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., Interim State Superintendent of Schools 

DATE: April 30, 2024

SUBJECT: Request from Garrett County Public Schools for a Calendar Modification

Purpose

To consider the request to waive one day of student attendance for Garrett County Public Schools for the 2023-2024 school year. Garrett County Public Schools requests to end the school year on Friday, June 7, 2024, after 179 days instead of Monday, June 10, 2024.

Background

Education Article §7-103 requires that schools be open for student attendance for 180 days. The State Board of Education has the authority to adjust the length of the school year by granting waivers of the 180-day requirement. Such adjustments may be granted if normal school attendance is prevented due to a natural disaster, civil disaster, or severe weather conditions.

The conditions for granting a waiver of the 180-day school year requirement are specified in Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.02.01.04 and include the following:

1. The local education agency has demonstrated that they have made sufficient effort in providing instruction through calendar planning and modifications; and
2. Natural disasters, civil disasters, or severe weather conditions are sufficiently significant to warrant a waiver of days.

The conditions required for a waiver application are specified in COMAR 13A.02.01.04 (C) and include the following:

3. The local education agency developed a calendar which included days to be used to make-up days lost. Depending upon past experience, this number could range from three to ten days; and
4. The local education agency has modified its calendar by scheduling school on make-up days provided in the original calendar and by extending the school year three days beyond the previously scheduled closing date.

In considering applications for waivers, the State Board of Education may waive the final day needed to complete the 180-day schedule if that day falls on a Monday (COMAR 13A.02.01.04D(2)(a)).

Executive Summary

Garrett County Public Schools have ten (10) inclement weather days built into their 2023-2024 school calendar, with four (4) days identified at the end of the calendar. Garrett County Public Schools were closed on November 28, 2023, January 10, 2024, and January 16, 2024, due to inclement weather. Accordingly, the last day of the 180-day instructional requirement will be on Monday, June 10, 2024. Consistent with COMAR 13A.02.01.04D(2)(a), the one-day waiver will allow school to end on Friday, June 7, 2024.

Action

Request that the Maryland State Board of Education approve the request to waive one day of the 180-day instructional requirement for Garrett County Public Schools ending the 2023-2024 school year on Friday, June 7, 2024, at 179 days consistent with COMAR 13A.02.01.04D(2)(a).

Attachments

Waiver Request from Garrett County Public Schools.



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Interim Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Brenda E. McCartney

April 10, 2024

Dr. Carey M. Wright, Interim State Superintendent of Schools
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-2595

Dear Dr. Wright,

In accordance with COMAR 13A.02.01.04, I am respectfully requesting a waiver of one (1) student attendance day for all GCPS students for the 2023-2024 school year as currently the final student date is scheduled for Monday, June 10, 2024.

Additionally, GCPS will be undergoing a school renovation and a grade-band alignment change on the southern end of the county beginning with the 2024-2025 school year. Broad Ford Elementary School will move to a PK-6 model (currently PK-5th grade) and Southern Garrett High School will move to a 7-12 grade (currently 9-12th grade). At the end of the school year, the staff will be moving to their new locations.

Due to the extensive renovation and the movement of the Southern Middle School and Broad Ford Elementary School staff, I am requesting another student waiver day, Friday, June 7, 2024, be granted for the Southern Middle School and Broad Ford Elementary School students. This day will provide staff members time to prepare for the move to their future location for the 2024-25 school year.

In summary, I am requesting a waiver of the 180-day requirement to permit Southern Middle School students and Broad Ford to attend school for 178 days in the 2023-24 school year due to this renovation, and the remainder of Garrett County students to attend 179 days in the 2023-24 school year. Thank you, in advance, for your timely response to this request which will allow effective planning for the remainder of this busy school year.

Respectfully,

Brenda E. McCartney, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

cc: Garrett County Board of Education Members