

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DATE: December 2, 2003

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

SUBJECT: Proposed Revision to School Calendar, 2003-2004

ORIGINATOR: Mr. Douglas Neilson, Chief Communications Officer, Communications

RESOURCE

PERSON(S): Mr. Alonza Williams, Director, Office of Communications

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Education of Baltimore County accept the proposed revision to the 2003-04 school calendar.

Recommendation For Revision to the 2003-2004 School Calendar

The Baltimore County Public Schools Calendar Committee, at the request of the Board and Superintendent Hairston, met on October 28 and again on November 13. The purpose of these meetings was to look at all of the options available on the current school year calendar to recoup the instructional time lost during Tropical Storm Isabel. Members of the committee who were unable to attend the November meeting were provided the opportunity to express their position either verbally or in writing.

The committee discussed the loss of classroom instruction time and how it would affect classroom instruction and the administration of the Maryland School Assessment tests scheduled for February. It was the consensus of the Calendar Committee that reclaiming one day during the month of February (the Professional Development day scheduled for February 13, 2004) would have no affect on teacher/student preparation for MSA tests, to be administered starting on Wednesday, February 25 for Grades 3, 6, and 10 Reading (The Reading and Math tests continue through March 4).

In the attached memo to all local school superintendents dated September 23, 2003, State Superintendent Dr. Nancy Grasmick granted all school systems a one-day waiver for Friday, September 19, 2003 based on the State of Emergency declared by Governor Robert Erhlich during Tropical Storm Isabel. In her memo, Dr. Grasmick stated that local school systems should make appropriate adjustments to their school calendars before requesting additional waivers for lost days.

It was the consensus of the committee to make no changes to the existing 2003 – 2004 school year calendar. The committee's decision was based on when the Board adopted the current calendar; it included seven "snow" or inclement weather days. The committee felt that if and when the seven "snow" days were used, any additional days needed to comply with the State's mandated 180 days of classroom instruction time could be made up at the end of the school year. Additionally, with the last day of school scheduled for Wednesday, June 16, 2004, the calendar was structured to allow the flexibility of extending the school year by up to two days without extending into the next week.

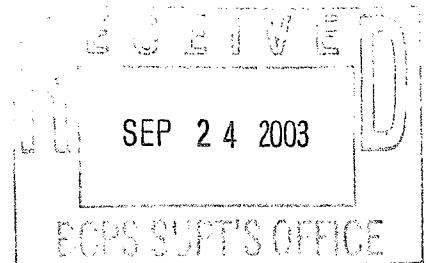
By following the Calendar Committee's recommendation, the system would have five (5) inclement weather days available for use during the remainder of this school year.



Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

200 West Baltimore Street - Baltimore, MD 21201 - 410-767-0100 • 410-333-6442 TTY/TDD

TO: Local School Superintendents
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools
DATE: September 23, 2003
RE: Waiver of Attendance for Friday, September 19, 2003



The State Board of Education, after discussing the Superintendent's recommendation, voted to grant to all school systems a one-day waiver of the 180-day school year requirement based on severe weather conditions and the State of Emergency declared by the Governor for Friday, September 19, 2003.

Waiver Requests for System-wide Closing

Letters requesting other system-wide waivers should be submitted to the State Board of Education near the end of the school year. This will allow your local school system to make appropriate adjustments to the school calendar and determine the number of days for which to request the waiver.

Waiver Requests for Individual School Closings

The following information was contained in the memo you received on September 9, 2003 with information regarding the closing of individual schools:

COMAR 13A.02.01.04B states "the closing of individual schools does not require a waiver by the State Board of Education but may be granted by permission of the State Superintendent of Schools upon request of the local superintendent of schools." This provision requires school superintendents to write a letter to Dr. Grasmick requesting a waiver for the closing of individual schools as soon as possible after the closing has occurred. The letter should outline the cause of the school closing and the number of days the school will be closed. Contact Mr. William Cappe in the Communications and Strategic Planning Office at 410-767-0480 if you have questions or need assistance.

Thank you for your continued efforts to provide for the safety of our children and our school communities. Please contact Dr. Peiffer at 410-767-0473 if you have questions or need assistance as you deal with weather-related issues in the coming days.

NSG: ss