

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

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

DATE: March 26, 2024

SUBJECT: Request from Queen Anne's County Public Schools for a Calendar Modification

Purpose

To consider the request to waive one day of student attendance for Queen Anne's County Public Schools for the 2023-2024 school year. Queen Anne's 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

Queen Anne’s County Public Schools were closed on January 10, and January 16, 2024. Queen Anne’s County Public Schools received a waiver to open schools on Presidents’ Day as an inclement weather make-up day. 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 Queen Anne’s 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 Queen Anne’s County Public Schools.



QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Where Our Future Begins

March 12, 2024

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.
Interim State Superintendent of Schools
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear Dr. Wright:

I am writing to request a waiver of COMAR 87-103 requiring schools to be open for pupil attendance at least 180 school days. Queen Anne's County Public School is requesting to be closed for students on Monday, June 10, 2024. Although students missed school for inclement weather, students attended school on Presidents Day. This resulted in the last day for students falling on a Monday. If this waiver is granted, the last day for students would be Friday, June 7, 2024.

I believe this adjustment to our school calendar would be beneficial for student attendance, as the current last day would be a half-day on a Monday. In addition, the negative impacts of poor attendance on that Monday would result in a waste of significant funds associated with a typical day of school, especially transportation.

It is important to note that if this waiver is granted, Queen Anne's County Public Schools will still have students in session for over the required 1,080 hours this school year.

Your consideration is appreciated. If you have any questions or need additional information, I can be reached at patricia.saelens@qacps.org.

Very truly yours.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia Saelens".

Dr. Patricia Saelens, Superintendent
Queen Anne's County Public Schools

cc: Teresa Dantzer, Ombudsman, MSDE
Helen Bennett, QACPS Board President
QACPS Executive Team