



IMPACT OF GOV. LARRY HOGAN'S EXECUTIVE ORDER ON ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS CALENDAR

On August 31, 2016, Gov. Larry Hogan announced an executive order that requires all school systems in Maryland to start their school year after Labor Day and end the school year by June 15, beginning in the 2017-2018 school year. While there may well be some legal and legislative efforts to alter this, it is important for all school system stakeholders to understand the impact of this double-ended squeeze, and how it will affect the school calendar beginning next year.

According to the 2017-2018 current school year calendar, found [here](#), the school year would begin for students on August 21, 2017, and end on June 11, 2018, inclusive of five days built in for emergency closings. Moving the start to September 5, 2017, the day after Labor Day, would require Anne Arundel County Public Schools to provide 10 additional days of instruction for students between that date and June 11, 2018, if the final day of the school year was not moved.

One of the biggest issues, however, involves the instructional disadvantage at which AACPS students would be placed when compared to other students across the nation. Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exams, along with SAT, ACT, and PARCC assessments, are administered either on specified dates or within specified windows. Shifting the start of the school year to after Labor Day inherently reduces the amount of time available to prepare students for these exams and assessments, and may well leave more of our students on the outside looking in with regard to college acceptances and scholarship opportunities.

There are also many logistical issues to consider.

Within the current 2017-2018 school year calendar, the following days cannot currently be converted to instructional days because of state or federal requirements that schools be closed:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day through New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Presidents Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Memorial Day

Within the current 2017-2018 school year calendar, schools must be closed on the following days in accordance with one or more of AACPS' negotiated agreements:

- Friday after Thanksgiving (November 24, 2017)
- Teacher workday between semesters (January 22, 2018)

Within the current 2017-2018 school year calendar, the Board has the option to open schools on the following days on which they are currently scheduled to be closed (9 days):

- Parent-Teacher Conference Days (October 19, 2017; December 1, 2017; and March 2, 2018)
- MSEA Convention Day (October 20, 2107)
- Wednesday preceding Thanksgiving (November 22, 2017)
- The four days preceding Good Friday, designated as Easter/Spring break (March 26-29, 2018)

There are several other factors to keep in mind when considering potential calendar changes for 2017-2018 and beyond:

- Opening school on the MSEA Convention day would cause significant staffing issues as the negotiated agreement allows all Unit I members to attend the convention. It would also bring significant additional costs because of the number of substitute teachers needed.
- The school year contains 181 instructional days, one more than the 180 required by the state. A reduction to 180 days would eliminate the ability to close high schools on the day of their graduations and allow staff to be present at those ceremonies.
- Ninety days are needed prior to the end of the first semester. A post-Labor Day start, by definition, pushes back the semester break.
- Yom Kippur occurs in a weekend in 2017, but will occur in weekdays in future years and, following current protocol, AACPS would be closed.
- Primary and General Election days in election years would add to the number of days on which AACPS is closed.
- There are additional holiday closings necessitated by negotiated agreements when days like Christmas Eve fall on a weekend.

In summary, though, the key logistical issue for the Board and Superintendent to wrestle with is this: A post-Labor Day start and mandated June 15 finish to the school year makes it mathematically impossible to convert the required number of days needed to school days solely within the existing 2017-2018 school year calendar. Even if all nine of the available days listed above were converted to school days, the end of the 2017-2018 school year would need to be pushed back at least one day (there would be four total days available at the end of the year to use before the June 15 deadline). Those additional days would need to be used if the Board wishes to keep Parent-Teacher Conference days, keep schools closed on the day preceding Thanksgiving, or add days back to Easter/Spring break.

Additional days would be required in election years, and in all years in which Yom Kippur falls on a school day.