MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Preparing World-Class Students

Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed.D.
Interim State Superintendent of Schools

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

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed.D.

DATE: April 24, 2012

SUBJECT: Request from Two Local School Systems for a Calendar Modification

PURPOSE:

1) To consider the requests made by Dr. Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent, Howard County Public Schools and Dr. Carol A. Williamson, Superintendent, Queen Anne's County Public Schools, to waive the last day of school for students in their respective school systems, which falls on Monday, June 11, 2012.

2) To provide the authorization to the Interim State Superintendent of Schools to approve additional requests from local school superintendents that may be made for the remainder of the school year to waive the last day of school, if the final day needed to complete the 180-day schedule falls on a Monday.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

By letter dated March 28, 2012, the Superintendent for the Howard County Public School system requested a waiver of one (1) school day, Monday, June 11, 2011. Dr. Cousin states that the opening day for Howard County Public Schools was delayed by one day due to Hurricane Irene. This one-day delay resulted in the last day of school for students falling on Monday, June 11, 2012. This is scheduled as a half-day. Dr. Cousin states that approval of this request to waive the last day of school will enable the school system to save funds, especially in utility and transportation costs.

By letter dated April 12, 2012, the Superintendent for Queen Anne's County Public School system requested a waiver of one (1) school day, June 11, 2012. Dr. Williamson states the system closed for one day due to Hurricane Irene. Because they did not have any other school closings due to inclement weather, when they reduced their calendar by four days for the unused inclement weather days, the last day of school fell on Monday, June 11, 2012. This is scheduled as a half-day. Dr. Williamson indicates that approval of this request to waive the last day of school will result in a cost savings for transportation costs and operating costs for the school system. She also states that returning to school for a partial day on Monday will result in a very high absentee rate.

In accordance with COMAR 13A.02.01.04(C)(2)(a), the State Board of Education may waive the final day needed to complete the 180-day schedule if that day falls on a Monday.

ACTION:

Requesting approval of the requests made by the Superintendent of Howard County Public Schools and the Superintendent of Queen Anne's County Public Schools to waive one (1) day of student attendance, Monday, June 11, 2012, in accordance with COMAR 13A.02.01.04(C)(2)(a).

Requesting the State Board of Education provide the Interim State Superintendent of Schools with the authorization to approve additional requests from local school superintendents to waive the final day to complete the 180-day schedule if that day falls on a Monday.

BJS:bc

Attachments:
Letter from Dr. Sydney L Cousin
Letter from Dr. Carol A. Williamson

HOWARD COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent
410-313-6674

RECEIVED

Per _____

March 28, 2012

Dr. Bernard J. Sadusky
Interim State Superintendent of Schools
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Dr. Sadusky:

I am requesting a waiver of the 180-day school year requirement for the Howard County Public School System. Opening day for the 2011-2012 school year was postponed one day, our only weather-related closing, because of the arrival of Hurricane Irene. This one-day delay placed our last day of school on Monday, June 11, which is scheduled as a half-day. The waiver of this last day of attendance will save the school system a considerable amount of money in utilities and transportation costs.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

S. L. Cousin

Sydney L. Cousin
Superintendent of Schools

SLC:kc

c: Board of Education

27709

Queen Anne's County Public Schools
Preparing World-Class Students Through Everyday Excellence

202 Chesterfield Avenue Centreville, MD 21617 410-758-2403 www.qacps.org

April 12, 2012

Dr. Bernard Sadusky
Interim Superintendent of Schools
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Dr. Sadusky:

At our April 4 Board meeting, it is customary for us to have our Board adjust our school year calendar to reflect the use/lack of use of the five calendar days built into our calendar for inclement weather. This year we only experienced one day of inclement weather for Hurricane Irene. We had no snow days; a first for us in many, many years. Unfortunately, the reduction of four days from our current end date of June 15, has students coming back to school for a half day on June 11, a Monday.

Each day we run 77 buses at the cost of $20,700.00 per day. We have 25 employees working 200 hours to ensure students get to and from school safely. Diesel is up $1.10 cents a gallon above our base and we are paying $202,400.00 beyond our contract for the fuel adjustment through March this school year. During this time of a depressed economy, our Board is concerned about the cost of running buses for that day. Our last day is traditionally a 1:00 p.m. dismissal and staff, administrators and our Board believe that having to return to school for a partial day on a Monday will most likely result in a very high absentee rate.

We have closely tracked hours missed due to fog delays and as of April 12, 2012 we have the remaining balances above required MSDE hours:

- Elementary – 130 hours
- Middle – 152 hours
- High School – 30 hours

We are confident that these balances will be sufficient for any delays encountered for the remainder of the school year.

As I'm sure you are aware, Queen Anne's County government rebased our budget by a 10% reduction last year and we had to make many reductions in our school system. We are trying to be excellent stewards of our money and we are concerned that many dollars would be wasted by bringing students into school on that Monday.

Our Board members voted unanimously to have me write you and request that that last day for students be Friday, June 8, 2012. That would mean we would have only been in session for 179 days this school year, and for that we need your approval.

Respectfully,

Carol A. Williamson

Carol A. Williamson, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Queen Anne's County

cc: Queen Anne's County Board of Education Members
Mr. Thad Kalmanowicz, Director of Operations