



Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

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

TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: December 10-11, 2009
SUBJECT: Request from a Local School System for a Calendar Modification

PURPOSE:

- 1) To consider the request made by Dr. Wendell D. Teets, Superintendent, Garrett County Public Schools, to open schools on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents' Day and/or Easter Monday. Dr. Teets has provided a very detailed schedule to make up days, prior to using these three holidays.
- 2) To request that the State Board grant authorization to the State Superintendent of Schools to approve additional requests from local school superintendents that may be made for the remainder of the school year to open schools on holidays.

BACKGROUND:

State law requires that schools be open for student attendance 180 actual days and 1,080 hours in a 10-month period. (The high school is defined as 1,170 hours.) In 1995, Section 7-103 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, was amended to include that "if normal school attendance is prevented because of conditions described in subsection (b) of this section (natural disaster, civil disaster or severe weather conditions), schools shall be open for at least 1,080 school hours during a ten-month period in each school year." Schools are not normally allowed to be open on holidays to meet these requirements. Section 7-103 however, specifies the procedure and conditions under which the State Board may grant waivers to the 180-day requirement. Subsection (b) (iv) provides the State Board with the authority to grant permission to local boards of education to open schools on holidays because of closures related to severe weather conditions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

By letter dated October 27, 2009, Dr. Teets requests permission to open schools on: Monday, January 19, 2010 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day); Monday, February



16, 2010 (Presidents' Day); and/or Monday, April 5, 2010 (Easter Monday), due to anticipated school closures because of severe weather conditions.

Dr. Teets indicates that Garrett County will open schools on Monday, November 30, 2009, part of the scheduled Thanksgiving holiday, as a potential first make-up day. The next three potential make-up days will be Wednesday, June 2, 2010, Thursday, June 3, 2010 and Friday, June 4, 2010. If additional days are needed due to inclement weather, Dr. Teets requests to convert January 18, 2010, February 15, 2010 and April 5, 2010 from holidays to days open for student attendance. If additional days are needed to complete the school calendar, Garret County will add Monday, June 7, 2010 and Tuesday, June 8, 2010 to the end of the school year.

Presently, the Garrett County Public School calendar includes five (5) make-up days; June 2, 2010 through June 8, 2010.

ACTION:

Requesting approval of the request made by the Superintendent of Garrett County Public Schools to open schools on February 15, 2010 and/or April 5, 2010, as needed due to school closures because of severe weather conditions.

Requesting denial of the request by the Superintendent of Garret County Public Schools to open schools on January 19, 2010.

Requesting the State Board of Education to grant to the State Superintendent of Schools the authority to approve additional requests from local school superintendents this school year to open schools on holidays if needed due to school closures that are a result of severe weather conditions.

NSG:bc

Attachment



BOARD OF EDUCATION OF GARRETT COUNTY

40 South Second Street
Oakland, Maryland 21550

RECEIVED

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301-334-8900
301-895-3163
fax: 301-334-7621
<http://www.ga.k12.md.us/>

Wendell Teets, Ed. D.,
Superintendent

October 27, 2009

Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Dr. Grasmick:

I am requesting action by the State Board to permit Garrett County Schools to convert Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, and Easter Monday to instructional days, if needed, due to the potential number of days of school missed for inclement weather. We would not convert any of the requested days pending the actual number of additional days missed prior to each holiday. The Garrett County Board of Education, our employees, and citizens believe very much that all available holidays should be converted, if necessary.

We have a number of make-up days built into our calendar. If we miss any days prior to November 9, we will have our first make-up day on November 30, which is now a day off for Thanksgiving. The next three make-up days will be June 2, 3, and 4, 2010. If we have missed additional days, we are requesting the next three make-up days to be Martin Luther King Day (January 18), President's Day (February 15), and (April 5) Easter Monday. We would decide by January 4, if we would convert Martin Luther King Day. If we missed additional days from January 4-17, we would move on to President's Day as the next day to convert. We would then extend the school year in June for additional days after the above requested conversion days are utilized. If approved, and the unlikely event that we would have school on Martin Luther King Day or President's Day, our schools will provide activities in observance of said days.

Thank you for your consideration. We do not desire to convert these holidays, but we also do not want to attend school late into June due to the need for critical instructional time prior to testing. I do not believe people in the rest of the state are really aware of the weather conditions we deal with in Garrett County and the number of days we are in school with snow falling and on the roads. We have great bus drivers and highway roads workers, but we still must cancel school, as necessary, due to the weather.

If I can be of additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration as we strive to provide a quality and timely education for our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wendell Teets".

Wendell Teets, Ed. D.
Superintendent

cc: Ervin Fink, Executive Director of Administration

