



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 17-18, 2008
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 Presidents' Day and/or Easter Monday. Garrett County has already used two of their five make-up days.
- 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:

In his letter, the Superintendent for the Garrett County Public School system has advised that due to severe weather conditions in November/December, schools have been closed for two (2) days already. Dr. Teets requests permission to open schools on: Monday, February 16, 2009 (Presidents' Day); and/or Monday, April 13, 2009 (Easter Monday) due to additional anticipated school closures because of severe weather conditions.



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The Garrett County Public School calendar includes five (5) make-up days; Tuesday, June 2, 2009, Wednesday, June 3, 2009, Thursday, June 4, 2009, Friday, June 5, 2009 and Monday, June 8, 2009.

ACTION:

Requesting approval of the request made by the Superintendent of Garrett County Public Schools to open schools on February 16, 2009 and/or April 13, 2009, as needed due to school closures because of severe weather conditions.

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

Wendell Teets, Ed. D., Superintendent

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

December 15, 2008

Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of School
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Dr. Grasmick:

I am requesting action on the December State Board Meeting agenda to permit Garrett County Schools to convert 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.

To date, we have already missed two days of school with over forty (40) inches of snow fallen which is a high accumulation for this early in the year. It seems like we are having snow daily resulting in several two hour delays. We have attended school on days with over eight (8) inches of snow. I hope this weather pattern does not continue until April. However, from past experience, it does not look good this winter. We will add the two current days missed to the end of our calendar in June.

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 you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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

Wendell Teets, Ed. D.
Superintendent

cc: Ervin Fink, Executive Director of Administration