



Nancy S. Grasmick
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: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: March 23, 2010
SUBJECT: Private Nonpublic School Modifications due to Severe Weather
Conditions

PURPOSE:

- 1) To consider up to a five-day (5) waiver of the 170-day school year requirement for all private nonpublic schools approved under COMAR 13A.09.09 due to the extraordinary inclement weather that affected the State of Maryland on December 19, 2009 through December 21, 2009 and again on February 5, 2010 and continued through February 16, 2010;
- 2) To request that the State Board grant authorization to the State Superintendent of Schools to issue a waiver of up to five (5) days for these schools due to severe weather conditions.

BACKGROUND:

COMAR 13A.09.09.10B. (2) (attached) requires that private nonpublic schools be open for student attendance 170 actual days. The regulations governing the private nonpublic school do not contain an express waiver provision for the Superintendent. In addition, the power to waive school days that the State Board delegated to the Superintendent on February 23, 2010 specifically addressed public schools, not nonpublic schools.

To date, the Department has received numerous phone calls regarding the provision for a waiver of the 170-day school year requirement. The Department has received letters requesting a waiver of the 170-day school year requirement thus far. Attached is a letter from the Association of Independent Maryland Schools (AIMS) submitted on behalf of its approximately 120 member schools and a letter from the Mountain Christian School as examples of the types of request that have been received to date.

If the Board takes action to grant the State Superintendent authority to issue a waiver of up to five days, each nonpublic school would be required to submit a written statement to the Department indicating the number of days it will be using. Because the private nonpublic schools must answer directly to the parents and students who pay tuition, we expect that accountability will affect the number of days for which a school will request a

waiver. Therefore, the Department will accept the number of days requested, up to five, at face value and will not review the school's make-up days and instructional schedule.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Weather conditions this school year have been unprecedented. Never before has the State of Maryland been impacted by two historic snow/ice storms in one school year. The Governor declared a State of Emergency on December 19 through December 21, 2009 and again on February 5 through February 16, 2010 due to the severe weather conditions. Although the private nonpublic schools have scheduled additional days for inclement weather, as required by COMAR 13A.09.09.10B. (4), most if not all of the schools have exceeded the days in their calendar to be used as make-up days.

Administrative Heads of the private nonpublic schools are sensitive to the amount of instructional time that has been lost due to these weather challenges. However, merely extending the school year into late June, without calendar modifications, will likely create other hardships for students and staff.

ACTION:

I am requesting the State Board of Education to approve up to a five-day (5) waiver for private nonpublic schools;

I am requesting the State Board of Education to grant me the authority to issue a waiver of up to five (5) school days for students in those private nonpublic schools that submit a written statement indicating the number of days they will be using.

Attachments: COMAR 13A.09.09.10B.
Letter from AIMS
Letter from Mountain Christian School

NSG:bc

Try Another Page | Return to Main COMAR Search Page

13A.09.09.10

.10 Administrative Practices.

A. Schedule of the School Day.

(1) A school shall have a written schedule that states the beginning and end of the school day and the specific time periods during the school day when the required areas of instruction are implemented.

(2) A school shall give annually to parents or legal guardians of prospective and enrolled students the written schedule of its school day.

B. Calendar of the School Year.

(1) A school shall have a written calendar that states the specific days and the total number of days for the implementation of its educational program.

(2) The calendar for a kindergarten, elementary school, or secondary school shall provide for at least 170 days for the implementation of the educational program.

(3) When a student enrolls and annually thereafter, a school shall give its written school year calendar to parents or legal guardians of each student.

(4) A school shall include 3 to 5 additional school days, based on local weather patterns, in its school year calendar to ensure that the 170-day school year requirement is met.

C. Admissions.

(1) A school shall have a written policy regarding the criteria for admission to the school that at a minimum shall be consistent with §C(3) of this regulation, as applicable.

(2) A school shall give to parents or legal guardians of prospective students its written policy regarding the criteria for admission to the school.

(3) Kindergarten.

(a) A child shall be 5 years old on or before September 1 of a school year to be age-eligible for admission during that school year to a kindergarten program approved under this chapter.

(b) A school may adopt policies and procedures permitting a 4-year-old child to be admitted to kindergarten, upon request by the parent or guardian, if the school determines that the child demonstrates capabilities warranting early admission.

D. Public Relations Information. The public relations information of a school, by whatever means provided, shall be accurate and may not be erroneous or misleading, either by actual statement, omission, or reasonable inference.



ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT MARYLAND SCHOOLS

890 Airport Park Road, Suite 103
Glen Burnie, MD 21061-2561
410-761-3700 (Baltimore)
301-858-6311 (Washington)
Fax 410-761-5771
www.aimsmd.org
info@aimsmd.org

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

February 17, 2010

Executive Director
Ronald S. Goldblatt

Presidents
Thomas J. Reid
St. Paul's School

Vice Presidents
Peter A. Barrett
St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School

Treasurer
Kirk Evans
St. Paul's School, Retired

Assistant Treasurer
Brenda Robinson
Green Acres School

Secretary
Karen Cumberbatch
Sandy Spring Friends School

Trustees
Tim Fish
McDonogh School

Elizabeth Legenhausen
St. James Academy

Julie C. Lewis
Sheridan School

Andrew D. Martire
Calvert School

Matthew Micciche
Friends School of Baltimore

Maureen Walsh
The Bryn Mawr School

D. John Watson, Ph.D.
West Nottingham Academy

Stuart Work
Washington Episcopal School


Dear Dr. Grasmick,


We are writing on behalf of our member schools in AIMS and MANSEF to request that you and the State Board of Education forgive a minimum of 3 days of the total number normally required of nonpublic schools.

Although our schools have scheduled additional days for inclement weather, as required by law, many have now lost five to six days due to the recent snow storms. We have urged our schools to make up the days whenever possible. However, this is not always practicable: extending the year further into June would cut into camp revenues; and at most schools, families have long-standing travel plans for spring vacation, which makes shortening that period very difficult. Furthermore, if days are not forgiven, nonpublic special education facilities will need to coordinate transportation for the additional days, which will have a financial impact on local school systems.

To our knowledge, we have never before made a request like this, nor do we consider this a precedent for the future. In a year of extraordinarily fierce winter weather, for which no one could have planned, we hope you will be able to give our schools this relief.

Sincerely,


Ronald S. Goldblatt
AIMS Executive Director

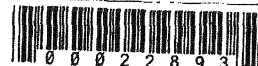

Dorie Flynn
MANSEF Executive Director

Received

FEB 18 2010

Nonpublic School
Approval Branch, MSDE

CC: Sarah Spross
Jodi King



1824 Mountain Road
Joppa, MD 21085

Mountain

410-877-7333
410-879-1450
Fax 410-877-4151

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
FAITH KNOWLEDGE SERVICE LEADERSHIP

March 1, 2010

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

Dear Dr. Grasmick:

Mountain Christian School is a private Christian school located in Harford County. Our 2009-2010 school calendar reflected 174 total student days, allowing for the possibility of four inclement weather closures. Due to snow closures required in December and February; MCS has been closed a total of seven days, reflecting a four day deficit.

Having originally planned a six-day Easter/Spring break, I would like to cancel three of the Easter/Spring break days (March 29, 30 & 31). This will leave a total of 169 days. I respectfully request that MCS be considered for a waiver of one instructional day.

I appreciate your consideration of this waiver request. Attached is our original school calendar. Please advise if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,



Nadine Wellington
Director of School Ministries

Received

MAR 03 2010
Nonpublic School
Approval Branch, MSDE



2009-2010 MCS SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

August 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August

- 17 Brooms Bloom - MCS Family Ice Cream Night
- 20 New Teachers Orientation
- 24 All Teachers Report
- 26 New Parent Orientation
- 27 MCS Open House 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

February 2010

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

September

- 2 First Day of School
- 7 SCHOOL CLOSED - LABOR DAY
- 11 6th Grade at Harford Glen
- 15 Back to School Night Grades K-5 6:30 p.m.
- 16 Back to School Night Grades 6-8 6:30 p.m.
- 25 SCHOOL CLOSED - PROFESSIONAL DAY
- 30 PTF Dinner Meeting 6:30 p.m.

September 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

March 2010

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

October

- 2 Progress Reports - Term 1
- 29 End of 1st Mk. Pd.
- 30 SCHOOL CLOSED - PROFESSIONAL DAY

October 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November

- 5 Evening Parent-Teacher Conferences 5-8 p.m.
- 6 CLOSED-Parent/Teacher Conference Day
- 11 MCS Open House
- 25 SCHOOL CLOSED - THANKSGIVING BREAK 11/25-27

April 2010

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

December

- 11 Progress Reports - Term 2
- 18 MCS Christmas Concert
- 22 12:00 Dismissal - Merry Christmas!
- 23 SCHOOL CLOSED/CHRISTMAS BREAK 12/23-1/3

November 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

January

- 4 SCHOOL REOPENS - HAPPY NEW YEAR!
- 14 End of 2nd Mk. Pd.
- 15 SCHOOL CLOSED - PROFESSIONAL DAY
- 18 SCHOOL CLOSED - MLK DAY
- 22 Report Cards - 2nd Mk. Pd.

May 2010

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

February

- 12 SCHOOL CLOSED - PROFESSIONAL DAY
- 15 SCHOOL CLOSED - PRESIDENTS' DAY
- 22 ACSI Accreditation Team Visit 2/22-2/26
- 26 Progress Reports - Term 3

December 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

March

- 3 MCS Open House
- 19 End of 3rd Mk. Pd.
- 26 Report Cards - 3rd Mk. Pd.
- 29 SCHOOL CLOSED-EASTER BREAK 3/29-4/5

June 2010

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

April

- 12 Standardized Testing Week 4/12-4/16
- 28 7th Grade Retreat 4/28-4/30
- 29 8th Grade Retreat 4/29-4/30
- 30 Progress Reports - Term 4

January 2010

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

May

- 12 MCS Spring Concert & Fine Arts Show
- 21 SCHOOL CLOSED - PROFESSIONAL DAY
- 28 Field Day
- 31 SCHOOL CLOSED - MEMORIAL DAY

June

- 4 8th Grade Graduation 1:00 p.m.
- 8 Kindergarten Celebration 9:00 a.m.
- 9 LAST DAY FOR STUDENTS
Report Cards
- 10 MCS STAFF IN-SERVICE DAYS 6/10 & 6/11

Revised 9/16/09

(Added progress report dates)

Received
MCS
Nonpublic School
Approval Branch, MSDE