Chairman Kaiser and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity today to discuss HB679. I am Bob Mosier, Chief Communications Officer for Anne Arundel County Public Schools, here to offer a few remarks on behalf of our Superintendent, Dr. George Arlotto.

Almost every plan ever conceived is tweaked and refined after it is implemented. That’s the nature of progress – to take theory into reality and then adjust to make things even better.

And that’s why HB679 is so critical to school systems.

Ask almost any parent or child if they want a longer summer and you’ll be greeted with an emphatic “YES!” Anne Arundel County is no exception.

What we heard from Anne Arundel County parents over the longer summer, however, was also angst over increased summer camp costs and worry about added child care bills. In a county with more than 30 percent of our students on free and reduced-price meals, we also heard dismay over additional full weeks without school breakfast and lunch.

The Governor’s Executive Order unintentionally, I believe, created a difficult rigid box into which school systems have to now cram their calendars. As Labor Day slides from year to year, there is no movement of the mandated June 15 end date.

HB679 fixes that and provides the best of both worlds – a post-Labor Day start and an end date that makes school calendars manageable. Interestingly, June 15 is, in fact, the third Friday in this year’s school calendar. Under this bill, the last day of class could never be any later than June 21.

Understanding the slide of Labor Day is very important. In 2020, for example, Labor Day falls on September 7 – four days after this year. Yet without this legislation, schools will still have to close by June 15. Where will those four days come from? What will school systems cut?

HB679 avoids those family-unfriendly decisions, and will allow school systems like ours to go back and see if we can restore things like a weeklong Easter/Spring Break and make other calendar adjustments.

This legislation is a win-win, and we urge you to vote favorable on it.

Thank you.