



HB587 EDUCATION - PUBLIC SCHOOL HOLIDAYS - VETERANS' DAY

February 21, 2019

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

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The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County opposes **HB587 Education - Public School Holidays - Veterans' Day**. This bill designates Veterans' Day as a public school holiday. The bill also removes Veterans' Day from the list of days for which a part of the day must be devoted to appropriate exercises.

While this bill is well-intentioned and AACPS supports honoring our veterans for their service and sacrifice, school systems around the State are currently constrained with the school calendar as a result of the 2016 Executive Order issued by Governor Hogan which requires all public schools to begin the school year no earlier than the Tuesday immediately following Labor Day and end no later than June 15. The parameters set forth in the Executive Order have required most, if not all, school systems in the State to rewrite their school calendars in order to squeeze the mandated 180 days of instructional days between Labor Day and June 15. In the 2017-2018 school year, AACPS cut 10 days from our calendar as compared to the 2016-2017 school year. Spring Break was shortened from six days to three days, the number of inclement weather days were reduced from five to three, and parent-teacher conference opportunities were cut from three to two. The 2018-2019 school calendar resulted in additional reductions. Adding another public school holiday would result in yet another lost day of instructional time for our students and will make the school calendar even more difficult for school systems to navigate.

AACPS recognizes the importance of Veterans' Day. Currently, AACPS links teachers to vetted materials to integrate appropriate instruction regarding State and federally recognized holidays, including Veterans' Day. Many of our schools implement a "whole-school" approach to the recognition of Veterans' Day and some secondary schools are utilizing social studies classes to honor Veterans' Day.

Accordingly, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB587.