



Renee McGuirk Spence, Executive Director
9 Trotters Ridge Court, Catonsville, MD 21228
410-925-2183
pssamed@gmail.com
www.pssam.org

BILL: House Bill 437
TITLE: County Boards of Education – Length of School Year – Start and End Dates
DATE: February 14, 2019
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: Renee McGuirk Spence, Executive Director, PSSAM
Email: pssamed@gmail.com; Cell: 410-925-2183

House Bill 437 repeals a provision of law that authorized a county board of education to extend the length of the school year for up to 5 school days beyond June 15 without approval from the State Board of Education; and requires each county board to set the start date and end date of the school year for the public schools in the county each year.

PSSAM thanks the sponsors and fully **supports** House Bill 437.

Local school superintendents strongly advocate that school-related calendar decisions should be determined locally and based on meeting the academic needs of our students. Meeting the 180-day school calendar regulation is extremely complex for Maryland's twenty-four school systems particularly since the Governor's Executive Order went into effect. PSSAM greatly appreciates the school calendar independence given to local school boards that is provided by this legislation.

In August 2016, the Governor issued an Executive Order that requires local school systems to open schools for student attendance no earlier than the Tuesday following the Labor Day holiday and to conclude no later than June 15. In addition, State law has designated numerous days as public school holidays. These State mandates have made it increasingly difficult for local school systems to meet the 180-day calendar in a compressed period of time, particularly when school systems must open after Labor Day and close no later than June 15. House Bill 437 recognizes that local school boards should rightfully have the authority to determine the start date and end date of the school year for the public schools in their individual school systems.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM fully **supports** House Bill 437 and urges a favorable committee report.