

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 1174  
Ways and Means

(Howard County Delegation)

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**Howard County - Board of Education - Mandatory School Holidays**  
**Ho. Co. 11-26**

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This bill requires the Howard County Board of Education to close public schools in the county for student attendance, starting in the 2027-2028 school year, in observance of Yom Kippur and Juneteenth, as well as the first day of Diwali, Eid Al-Adha, Eid Al-Fitr, Lunar New Year, and Rosh Hashanah. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill only affects the Howard County public school system.

**Local Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect Howard County school finances, as most of the listed holidays are already noninstructional and professional development days, with no student attendance required. However, costs may rise to the extent that the local school system needs to pay contractual staff for any instructional days added to the school calendar.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Public schools must be open for at least 180 days and 1,080 school hours at elementary and middle schools or 1,170 hours at high schools during a 10-month period. Schools must be open a minimum of 3 hours during each school day, and cannot be open on Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays to meet the day or hour requirements.

The official public school holidays are:

- Thanksgiving Day and the day after;
- Christmas Eve through January 1;
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day;
- President's Day;
- the Friday before Easter through the Monday after Easter;
- Memorial Day; and
- primary and general election days.

However, public schools in Calvert, Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Talbot, and Worcester counties may remain open and in session on primary and general election days.

If the federal and State observances of a holiday are on different days, the local board of education for each school system must determine which date public schools will observe the holiday on.

Furthermore, public schools must devote a part of at least one day to appropriate exercises for each of the following:

- Washington's Birthday;
- Lincoln's Birthday;
- Veterans' Day;
- Columbus Day;
- Arbor Day;
- Black History Month, with an emphasis on Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass and the contributions they made in the fight against slavery; and
- any other day of national significance.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** As the bill states that schools will only be closed on the first day of the specified holidays, this bill will not require the local school system to close schools for an additional seven days in each school year. The holidays Eid Al-Adha and Eid Al-Fitr can have different start dates depending on the calendar used, and the local school system will need to determine the correct dates to acknowledge those holidays, but it is estimated that the number of days schools will be closed as a result of this bill is as follows:

- Academic Year 2027-28: four days;
- Academic Year 2028-29: five days;
- Academic Year 2029-30: four days; and
- Academic Year 2030-31: four days.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 1169 of 2025.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Howard County; Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 6, 2026  
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