

November 7, 2017

Dear Members of the MCPS Board of Education:

In recent weeks, MCEA has provided you with results of our survey of members regarding the 2018-19 instructional calendar, and the Policy Committee has heard testimony from several teachers. In addition, you each have graciously received visits from our members and discussed, among other topics, ways to meet student instructional preparation needs in designing the 2018-19 calendar. We are grateful for these opportunities to discuss ways to create the best calendar possible, and we understand the difficulty you face due to the limitations Governor Hogan has placed on the length of the school year.

Last week, MCEA's Board of Directors met to review the four proposals currently being considered by the Board of Education, and agreed to share our recommendations with you. Of the four plans, we find the Policy Committee's Proposal A to be the calendar that will best meet the needs of our students, our community, and our staff.

We believe Proposal A provides the most time to honor the family traditions of our diverse county. Also, the pairing of early release days throughout the year gives us the opportunity to schedule longer instructional blocks, so that meaningful learning in all subjects can occur on those paired days. Finally, although it eliminates the full day of student instructional preparation time that is included in the superintendent's proposed calendar, Proposal A provides educators with blocks of time throughout the year to plan, grade, and provide meaningful feedback to students and parents.

We would, however, recommend the following adjustments to Proposal A:

- 1) Move the full week of Spring Break to coincide with the week of Passover (April 20-27).
- 2) Add an early release day for grades K-12 on November 13 to provide adequate time for both student instructional planning and parent conferences.
- 3) Color code January 25 and April 1 early release days in teal (as are January 28 and April 2) to indicate that these also are afternoons when telework grading and planning would be possible.
- 4) Change the initials "PD" to "SP" to make clear that the early release time is to be used for student instructional preparation, not professional development.

Thank you for seeking feedback from MCEA educators as you work to maximize learning for our students in the coming year. We welcome further opportunities to help you consider ways to provide an excellent education for all our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Vice President

cc: MCEA Board of Directors; Jack Smith