



The Education Policy and Leadership Center

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EPLC EDUCATION NOTEBOOK

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The EPLC Education Notebook (current and past editions) also is available by visiting the EPLC website at <http://www.eplc.org/category/education-notebook/>.

PENNSYLVANIA POLICYMAKERS

The Pennsylvania **House of Representatives** and **Senate** will reconvene in voting session on **Monday, November 18** at 1:00 PM.

House of Representatives

On November 12 the **House Education Committee** held a **hearing on adult literacy**. Testifiers spoke of the value of adult literacy programs and the broad range of services the programs provide. **Minority Chairman James Roebuck** (D-188) suggested that the term “adult learning” more accurately reflects what the organizations do.

Donald Block, executive director of the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, said the Council offers writing, math, and computer skills to serve those who need to complete the GED or high school equivalency exam, as well as other programs to teach English as a second language, or job-related skills like interviewing and resume writing. There is also a career planning component to the Council's work. Block emphasized the economic benefits of educating adults so that they can find work or advance to a higher level of work.

Kim Rossman, president of the Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education (PAACE), explained that state funding for literacy programs has decreased, yet the demand for services has increased. She noted data of the decreased numbers of adult and family literacy providers and participating adults. Rossman pointed out that adult literacy programs are valuable not only because jobs are requiring more complex skills but also because parents need to be educated to support the education of their children in the school system.

Both Rossman and **JoAnn Weinberger**, chair of the Public Policy Committee for PAACE, spoke about the new GED tests that begin in 2014. The impending new tests are another cause for increased demand of adult literacy programs. If a person has completed some, but not all, of the current GED exams, they have until the end of 2013 to do so or their scores will expire along with the current version of the test. The new exams in language arts and math will be based on the Common Core standards.

Weinberger offered four policy recommendations:

- Pennsylvania should make adult and family literacy a priority.
- Additional resources must be found. Technology that Pennsylvania is already using through distance learning in the adult and family literacy programs can be expanded. PAACE suggests a model out of Washington state known as iBest, where a learner can work towards an industry certification and/or Associate's degree while studying for the GED.
- The School Code Section 4.72 should be amended to allow for new options for adults to attain the Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma.
- The Interagency Coordinating Council should be rejuvenated, and support cross-agency collaboration.

Samuel Johnson, representing Consol Energy, is a volunteer board member for the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council. Johnson gave the business perspective of the value of adult literacy programs in upgrading the skills of those already in the workforce who may lack a high school diploma.

Two program graduates, **Patrick Sykes** and **Jackie Smith**, shared their stories on how adult education programs prepared them for the GED which helped them obtain a more promising future.

View online the **written testimony** provided to the Committee:

- [Donald Block](#), executive director, Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council
- [Kim Rossman](#), president, Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education (PAACE)
- [JoAnn Weinberger](#), chair, Public Policy Committee, PAACE
- [Samuel Johnson](#), director of water asset development, Consol Energy
- [Patrick Sykes](#), program graduate
- [Jackie Smith](#), program graduate
- [Department of Education](#)

Video of the hearing can be found on the House Republican Caucus [website](#).

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The 317th meeting of the State Board of Education (SBE) was held in Harrisburg November 13 and 14.

Chairman Larry Wittig opened the November 13 meeting with a welcome to **two new members** of the SBE who were confirmed by the Senate on October 1: **Secretary of the Commonwealth Carol Aichele**, who will serve on the Council of Basic Education, and **Craig Snider**, who will serve on the Council of Higher Education. Wittig also announced Jim Grandon as the new chair of the Council of Higher Education. In his opening comments, Wittig noted that the Board is celebrating its 50th anniversary this month. The SBE was established in 1963.

The **Council of Higher Education** received a **report from Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education Jill Hans**. Hans updated the Council on the transition process to consolidate school counselor certifications, and discussed what outreach and support the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education is providing in regard to the GED tests which will expire at the end of the year. The Council then received an update from **Christine Zuzack** from the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency on the **Act 101 Program**. Zuzack highlighted how the program is funded, student

and institutional eligibility, the program services, and the outcome data available. She noted that the Act 101 program has seen diminished funding and a loss of three participating institutions for 2013-2014.

The **Council of Basic Education** received a brief **report from Acting Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education Rita Perez**. She reminded everyone of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) Annual Standards Aligned System (SAS) Institute scheduled for December 8 – 11 in Hershey. **Tamalee Brassington**, PDE, then gave a **presentation on the Academic Standards for Business, Computer and Information Technology**.

On November 14 the **State Board for Vocational Education** received a **report from Lee Burket**, director of the **Bureau of Career and Technical Education**. She reported on the supplemental and competitive equipment grants, and the ongoing adult accreditation process with the U.S. Department of Education. Burket also gave a report from the Vocational-Technical Education Committee's November 13 meeting. On behalf of the Committee she requested the Board's future consideration of the Schuylkill Technical Center's accreditation application and the Mifflin County School District's petition seeking single district Career and Technical Center status.

Following the adjournment of the Board for Vocational Education, the **State Board of Education** was called into order. Acting Secretary of Education **Dr. Carolyn Dumaresq** provided the Board a **report of PDE activities**. She said the Department has been busy preparing for the November 21 Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) hearing on the final-form Chapter 4 regulations. She noted there are six new cyber charter school applications before PDE; hearings on these applications will be held November 15 – 22. Dumaresq also provided statistics on the recently launched teacher evaluation system and School Performance Profile (SPP). Currently there are 3,003 buildings displayed on the SPP site. Due to coding errors on the Keystone Exams, 555 buildings chose to suppress data. Dumaresq said the coding issue experienced this year was due to the transition from PSSA to Keystone exams; not every student took the Keystone exam as an end of course exam; therefore their scores should not have been contributed to growth, but may have been coded incorrectly and counted. PDE anticipates the site to be fully operational with complete data in early December. So far there have been over 132,000 visits to the SPP site, with 28% of users identifying themselves as teachers.

Carolyn Angelo, executive director of the **Professional Standards and Practices Commission**, was not present to provide the Board with the **report of the Commission**, but a written copy of her report was circulated. The report contains a summary of the 25 discipline cases considered during the Commission's September 16 meeting. It also states that currently the Department's Office of Chief Counsel has 689 active educator discipline cases, with more than 160 designated as high priority because they involve allegations of sexual abuse or physical abuse of children. The Commission's next meeting is November 18, at which time they will consider 26 cases.

The last item on the agenda to discuss was the **proposed Chapter 18 (financial recovery) regulation**.

Chairman Larry Wittig explained that Chapter 18 of Title 22 was created to comply with Act 141 of 2012 which established an Early Warning System for financially distressed school districts. Act 141 requires the Department of Education to establish the guidelines that would determine a district to be in financial recovery status. Act 141 directs the SBE, within two years of the enactment, to promulgate regulations that establish criteria the Secretary of Education may consider in declaring a school district in financial recovery status and determining whether a district is in moderate or severe recovery status. Proposed Chapter 18 sets forth the criteria the Secretary may consider, and provides the distinguishing language between moderate and severe recovery status.

To fulfill Act 141's requirements, the Board was directed to convene an Advisory Committee. The Committee met throughout the fall of 2012 and adopted a recommendation for the SBE's consideration in December 2012. During the January 10, 2013 State Board meeting, the Board approved the proposal of Chapter 18, which reflected the Committee's recommendation, and effectively initiated the regulatory review process.

During the review process the Governor's Office requested modifications be made to guard against overreaching criteria or that which replicated efforts of the Department or other agencies. At that time, the Board withdrew the proposed regulations and subsequently made amendments which are reflected in the draft that was considered by the Board on November 14.

In contrast to the earlier version of the proposed regulation, the revised Chapter 18 proposal reflects a reduction in the number of criteria the Secretary may consider. Proposed Chapter 18 as approved by the Board in January contained 27 criteria the Secretary may consider; 15 items determined by Act 141, and 12 additional items determined by the SBE Advisory Committee. Proposed Chapter 18 as amended and presented to the Board on November 14 contains 19 criteria the Secretary may consider; 15 items determined by Act 141, and four additional items from the Board. Dr. Dumaresq explained to the Board the reason for each of the nine items the Department determined should be deleted. Then the Board **voted its intention to adopt Chapter 18 (financial recovery) as amended**, with an additional change made to §18.7 (b) to reflect what was discussed during the meeting. §18.7 (b) as amended stated the Secretary of Education shall issue a declaration of severe recovery status if the financial conditions of the school district indicate that the school district may be unable to fulfill the required 180 days of instruction. The change discussed during the meeting and approved would delete "may be" and replace it with "is or is reasonably unlikely to be." The Board's approval of the amended proposed Chapter 18 begins the regulatory review process that will include opportunities for public comment and legislative review.

The Board then moved to **approve the Academic Standards for Business, Computer and Information Technology**. They also **adopted** three resolutions: **Resolution Honoring Edward Sheehan** for his work on the SBE from April 2008 – October 2013; **Resolution Expressing Appreciation to the Pennsylvania Association of Student Councils** for their continuing support of the Student Leadership Program; and **Resolution Expressing Appreciation to Highmark**, who has generously funded a \$20,000 grant to sustain the Student Leadership Program which provides for student representation on the Board.

The next meeting of the State Board of Education will be January 8 – 9 in Harrisburg.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA)** on November 14 announced that **Dr. Emilie Lonardi** has been named the **2014 Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year**.

Dr. Lonardi is the superintendent of the West York Area School District, where she has served in that role for the past 16 years. She is the Region 12 representative to the PASA Board of Governors, and PASA's representative on the board of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association. She is also an adjunct professor in the education leadership departments of Penn State Harrisburg and York College.

The National Superintendent of the Year Program was established 27 years ago by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) to honor outstanding public school superintendents. The Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year is selected by a PASA panel of school administrators. Nominees are evaluated on how they demonstrate leadership, communication skills, professionalism and community involvement.

As the Pennsylvania honoree, Dr. Lonardi and 49 other state honorees will be recognized in February during the AASA National Conference on Education in Nashville.

EPLC NEWS

- The November “**Focus on Education**” episode discussed **Special Education: Student Rights and Services**. [Click here](#) to watch the episode. The panel, moderated by EPLC President Ron Cowell, included Maureen Cronin, executive director of The Arc of Pennsylvania; Kay Lipsitz, director of the Parent Education Network; and Linda Rhen, assistant professor of special education at Penn State Harrisburg and former director of special education in the Pennsylvania Department of Education. **The hour long program produced by EPLC and PCN is broadcast on PCN at 9:00 p.m. on the 2nd Wednesday of every month.** PCN also typically repeats the episode at later times each month.

Previous episodes can be viewed online [here](#). Topics we have covered thus far in 2013 are school violence, student testing, the work of school boards, how schools are funded, the dropout crisis, parents as advocates, and arts education.

To learn more, visit [PCN's "Focus on Education" web page](#). Information about sponsorships available for the show can be obtained by contacting Ron Cowell at 717-260-9900 or at cowell@eplc.org.

- EPLC is recruiting **current undergraduate or graduate students to serve as part-time interns** beginning January or May of 2014 in the downtown Harrisburg offices. **One intern will support education policy work including the Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign. The second intern position will support the work of the Pennsylvania Arts Education Network.** Ideal candidates have an interest/course work in political science/public policy, social studies, the arts or education and also have strong research, communications, and critical thinking skills. The internship is unpaid, but free parking is available. Weekly hours of the internship are negotiable. To apply or to suggest a candidate, **please email Mattie Robinson** for further information at robinson@eplc.org.
- COMING SOON. Early in 2014 EPLC will again conduct a series of **regional workshops on education issues for Legislative Candidates and other interested citizens**. Look for more information in future editions of the Notebook.

[DATEBOOK](#)

- The **House Education Committee** will meet **Tuesday, November 19** at 9:00 AM in Harrisburg to consider the following bills: [HB 803](#) (food allergy emergency epinephrine administration); [HB 1741](#) (notice prior to school board vote on collective bargaining); [SB 193](#) (school nurse CPR certification).
- The **Three Rivers Educational Technology Conference (TRETTC)** will be held **November 19 – 20** in Mars. TRETTC is the premier K-16 educational technology conference in Western PA. Learn more about the scheduled sessions, speakers, and how to register, [here](#).
- The **House Select Committee for School Safety** again postponed their meeting to vote on the report pursuant to [HR 53](#). The meeting is now scheduled for **Wednesday, November 20** at 9:00 AM in Harrisburg.
- The **National Association for the Education of Young Children’s Annual Conference and Expo** will be held **November 20 – 23** in Washington, DC. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.
- The **Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC)** will hold a public meeting on **Thursday, November 21** at 10:00 AM in Harrisburg to vote on State Board of Education regulation #6-326: Academic Standards and Assessment. [Click here](#) to view the agenda for the meeting.

- The **House Education Committee** rescheduled the hearing that was to be held November 14 to **Tuesday, December 3** at 10:00 AM in Harrisburg. The hearing will discuss [HB 1722](#) (teacher tenure and furlough); [HB 1735](#) (economic furlough); and [HB 779](#) (economic furlough).

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