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## **EPLC EDUCATION NOTEBOOK**

**Friday, August 2, 2013**

***Content in this edition:***

**Pennsylvania Policymakers**  
- The Governor's Office  
- House of Representatives  
- Special Education Funding Commission  
**Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
**EPLC News**  
**Datebook**

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** are in recess until **Monday, September 23** unless sooner recalled by the Speaker or the President Pro Tempore.

#### ***Governor William W. Scranton***

**Pennsylvanians are mourning the passing of former Pennsylvania Governor William W. Scranton**, who passed away on July 28 at the age of 96.

Scranton has been hailed by many as one of Pennsylvania's greatest governors. He was a progressive Republican who during his one term as Governor (1963-67) achieved the **creation of a community college system, the State Board of Education, and the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency**. He described himself as "a conservative on fiscal policy," and his foresight to invest in expanded educational opportunities for Pennsylvanians should be a lesson-learned for Pennsylvania leaders today.

Scranton leaves behind a long legacy of public service to the Commonwealth. During World War II he served in the U.S. Army Air Corps. Also prior to his governorship he served as special Assistant to the Secretary of State, and was elected to Congress in 1960. After serving as Governor, he later served on numerous commissions for President Nixon, and as an Ambassador to the United Nations under President Ford. In 2000, Scranton became the third recipient of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's Pennsylvania Founders Award, which honors a living person "who represents the ideals of

William Penn in individual rights, religious toleration, representative government, public support of education, and free enterprise.”

## [The Governor’s Office](#)

**Governor Corbett** on July 18 **signed into law** [Senate Bill 10](#) (Act No. 70 of 2013) (**Sen. Joseph Scarnati**, R-25), the **Safe Schools legislation** that will allow the **Office of Safe Schools** within the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to **make targeted grants to school entities and municipalities** to fund programs which **address school violence**. The grants shall be used to establish or enhance school security, and may include the costs associated with the training and compensation of **school resource officers** and **school police officers**. The applications for school entities that utilize **retired police officers** will be given priority.

To support the Safe School Targeted Grants, Senator Scarnati was successful in having \$8.522 million included in this year’s budget for funding of the School Safety Initiative line-item, which is an increase of \$6.5 million over last year’s appropriation.

Applications for Safe School Targeted Grants are submitted through the [PDE E-Grants Website](#).

## [House of Representatives](#)

- On July 15, the **House Select Committee on School Safety** conducted its **fourth and final hearing** pursuant to [House Resolution 53](#) (**Rep. Gary Day**, R-187).

The hearing began with **John “Ski” Sygielski**, President of the Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC), who shared HACC’s initiatives and strategies regarding emergency preparedness. Sygielski recommended **expanding the policing powers of campus police** to match those of other law enforcement personnel, which would be provided for in [House Bill 936](#) and [House Bill 937](#) (**Rep. Mike Carroll**, D-118), currently in the House Judiciary Committee.

Testifying along with Sygielski was **Ed Dominquez**, the director of HACC’s public safety department. Dominquez briefed the Committee on the active shooter training provided to current officers on all the HACC campuses. He added that the active shooter demonstrations last about 10 minutes, but proposed House Bills 936 and 937 would allow them to respond to a real situation more quickly and effectively. Sygielski outlined the steps faculty members are instructed to take upon identifying a student in need of counseling services. Sygielski noted that about one percent of a \$180 million budget is dedicated to campus safety.

**Michelle Twersky**, the Pennsylvania Associate Regional Political Director for the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, presented on behalf of the largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization in the country as well as the private school community under the Pennsylvania Affiliate of the Council on American Private Education. In her written testimony, Twersky said that until recently, non-public schools were not eligible for the Safe Schools targeted grants. Now they are, but another challenge still exists for all schools because no school is guaranteed consistent, if any, grant funding. Twersky urged the Committee to include in its recommendations “a statement that **schools require ongoing, consistent funding to support a safe and secure learning environment**” and that funding may be used for various needs including building security, planning, training or personnel. She reiterated the need to maintain flexibility for schools in their recommendations.

Also representing non-public schools was **David Hegedus**, Associate Director of the Association of Christian Schools International. Hegedus emphasized that there be no distinction between public and

non-public schools when it comes to the safety and security of students, as it is an important issue to both public and non-public schools. He made several recommendations, including:

- allocate **funding to support security equipment** and staff training;
- provide greater **access to state funded training programs**;
- **mandate local law enforcement engage each geographically represented non-public school**, to review the school's crisis plan, assist with on-site training, observe and review drills, and consult with the school; and
- develop a **school safety and security commission for non-public schools** "to provide a unified voice that speaks to the issues impacting the safety and security issues of these respective schools."

**Christopher Budano**, Assistant Director of Education Services with the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), highlighted ***Solutions That Work***, a framework for student safety released by PSEA two years ago. The strategies include greater access to mental health services for students; greater coordination between schools, law enforcement, and social service agencies; quality alternative placements for disruptive and potentially violent students; and bullying prevention. **Beth Zampogna**, PSEA Assistant Director of Government Relations, added that PSEA believes the programs are critical and should not have only a one-time commitment.

**Sallie Lynagh** testified on behalf of the Disability Rights Network (DRN) of Pennsylvania. Lynagh shared her experiences as DRN's Children's Team Leader and advocate for children with disabilities. She contended that placing police officers into a school changes the look and feel of the school, and this can affect children with disabilities adversely. She provided several case studies where a child's disability-related behavior was treated as a crime because of the blurred boundaries between school discipline procedures and law enforcement procedures, and the lack of officer training to work with children with disabilities.

Lynagh offered four recommendations to the Committee, which she described as evidence-based interventions and strategies that are more effective:

- expand the availability of **School Wide Positive Behavior Supports**;
- require **specialized training of school resource officers**;
- require the **Department of Education and the Department of Public Welfare** enter into a **Memorandum of Understanding** regarding school-based behavioral health services; and
- require the **Office of Safe Schools to analyze data on school referrals** sent to law enforcement regarding students with disabilities.

Lastly the Committee heard from **Auditor General Eugene DePasquale** regarding school accountability for establishing and updating emergency preparedness plans. Gen. DePasquale said that many schools have not updated their emergency plans, spoken with local law enforcement, or conducted emergency drills -- which were often incomplete, underdeveloped, and untested. In the initial safe school audit conducted by the Auditor General's office, he said the areas of concern were planning, training, and physical safety. He noted [Senate Bill 10, Act 70](#) will provide resources to schools to help them establish and update emergency preparedness plans.

The Committee is charged with developing and examining policies that enhance safety in Pennsylvania schools, and issuing a report of its findings and recommendations to the House of Representatives no later than September 30, 2013.

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

- [John "Ski" Sygielski](#), President, Harrisburg Area Community College
- [Michelle Twersky](#), Pennsylvania Associate Regional Director, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
- [David Hegedus](#), Associate Director, Association of Christian Schools International

- [Christopher Budano](#), Assistant Director of Education Services, Pennsylvania State Education Association
- [Sallie Lynagh](#), Children's Advocate, Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania
- [Eugene DePasquale](#), Auditor General
- [Pennsylvania Sheriffs' Association](#)

To view the new **website designated specifically for the activities of the Select Committee**, including the **press release and video recording of each hearing**, [click here](#).

- The **House Democratic Policy Committee** conducted two public hearings during the last week of July. On July 24 the Committee was in Wilkinsburg to discuss the topic of **education funding**. The testifiers included local school district administrators, borough council members, and residents of the community. To view the agenda and the written testimony, [click here](#). On July 30 the Committee was in Newtown to discuss **PlanCon and school construction projects**. The testifiers included the superintendents of two local school districts, and several individuals representing construction councils or contractor organizations. To view the agenda and the written testimony, [click here](#).

### **[Special Education Funding Commission](#)**

On July 25, in Bucks County, the **Special Education Funding Commission** conducted its **third public hearing**.

The Commission was formed by [Act 3 of 2013](#) with the purpose of developing a funding formula for the distribution of any future increase in special education funding. It must issue a report no later than November 30, 2013. Any formula recommendations would not go into effect until approved by the General Assembly.

Representing the **Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units** (PAIU) were the directors of the Chester, Delaware, Luzerne, and Bucks County Intermediate Units (IUs). They gave a presentation on how the IU system supports special education in districts, and factors that influence the costs of programs and costs of services. The panel answered questions from the Commission, sharing their views and data on topics such as protocols for exceptionalities, charter schools, and the contingency fund.

The business administrator from Central Bucks School District, **Dave Matyas**, and the district's director of student services, **Dale Scafuro** also testified before the Commission. Central Bucks is the third largest district in the Commonwealth. Matyas provided a broad financial overview of the district's special education program. Scafuro followed by providing a more detailed picture and addressing the factors that impact costs.

Find the **written testimony** and **video recording** of the July 25 hearing on Representative O'Neill's webpage dedicated to the work of the Funding Commission, [here](#).

The next Commission hearing is scheduled for August 7 in Pittsburgh.

### **[PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION](#)**

**Governor Corbett** announced August 1 that **\$84.5 million in Pre-K Count Grants** will be distributed to 159 program providers across Pennsylvania for the upcoming school year. The grants will provide services to nearly 12,000 children in 59 counties.

Funding for Pre-K Counts was increased in the 2013-14 state budget by five percent, or \$4.5 million, bringing the appropriation to \$87.284 million.

For the complete list of grantees, [click here](#).

## **EPLC NEWS**

For only a few more days, EPLC will continue to accept applications for the 2013-2014 Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP). The 10-month professional development program begins in September and continues until next June. To read about the Education Policy Fellowship Program, including the 2013-2014 schedule, [click here](#). If you would like to discuss any aspect of the Fellowship Program and its requirements, please contact Program coordinators Mattie Robinson at 717-260-9900 or [robinson@eplc.org](mailto:robinson@eplc.org), or Ron Cowell at 412-298-4796 or [cowell@eplc.org](mailto:cowell@eplc.org).

## **DATEBOOK**

- The **House Education Committee** will have an informational briefing in Harrisburg on **Monday, August 5** at 1:00 PM. The Committee will be briefed by the Department of Education and the State Board of Education on the revisions being made to the Common Core Academic Standards in the Chapter 4 regulations.
- The **Special Education Funding Commission** will conduct a public hearing on **Wednesday, August 7** at 9:30 AM in Pittsburgh.
- The **Pennsylvania State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)** will meet on **Thursday, August 8** from 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM at PaTTAN Harrisburg. PaTTAN offices in Pittsburgh and King of Prussia will be the only video conference sites. Please note the date was previously reported as August 9 but has been changed to August 8. For more information about SICC, [click here](#).
- The **National Conference of State Legislatures' Legislative Summit** will be held **August 12 – 15** in Atlanta, Georgia. For more information about the nation's largest gathering of state legislators and legislative staff, [click here](#).

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