



The Education Policy and Leadership Center
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EPLC EDUCATION NOTEBOOK

Friday, May 2, 2014

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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, May 5** at 1:00 PM.

State Budget Watch

Passing a 2014-2015 state budget for Pennsylvania became much more complicated this past week when it became clear that Governor Corbett's revenue forecast for next year was far too optimistic. Tax collections for the current year through April 30 are already close to \$600 million below estimates, and could get worse. This means there is a hole to be filled for the current year, and means dramatically lowered estimates for 2014-2015.

The Governor and legislative leaders now have serious negotiating to do. Here are just two of the big issues for state lawmakers to consider as they struggle to enact a balanced budget. 1) Will lawmakers finally agree to enact a tax on gas drilling to benefit the General Fund? 2) Will lawmakers protect the funding levels proposed by the Governor for the many education and education-related line items in the budget?

House of Representatives

- On April 29, the **House of Representatives** adopted [House Resolution 807](#), sponsored by **Rep. John Lawrence** (R-13), by a vote of [197-0](#). HR 807 declares the week of April 28 through May 2, 2014, as "**Pennsylvania Academic Competition Week**" in Pennsylvania. The resolution urges the

Department of Education, local school districts, and intermediate units to participate in the finals of the 23rd annual Statewide Pennsylvania Academic Competition to be held in the House of Representatives Chamber on May 2.

- On April 30, the **House of Representatives passed [House Bill 1801](#)**, sponsored by **Rep. Margo Davidson** (D-164), which would amend the Public School Code to require the **Office for Safe Schools** to develop **telephone hotlines and internet notification systems** ensuring anonymity to be used by students, parents, teachers, school employees, and members of the community to report potential or actual violence or possession of weapons on school property. The requirement to develop the hotlines and systems would be subject to funding appropriated by the General Assembly. HB 1801 passed by a vote of [197-0](#).

Prior to the passage in the House the bill was reported as committed from the House Appropriations Committee. [Click here](#) to read the **fiscal note**.

- On April 30, the **House Education Committee** met to consider the following bills:
 - [House Bill 1213](#), sponsored by **Rep. Marguerite Quinn** (R-143), which would provide for **student debt reduction**. HB 1213 was unanimously **reported as amended**. The **amendment**, offered by **Rep. Paul Clymer** (R-145) and unanimously adopted, changes the act from the Middle Income Student Debt Reduction Act to the **Ready to Succeed Scholarship Program**. The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA), in consultation with the Department of Education (PDE), shall administer and establish the guidelines for the program. The bill outlines minimum eligibility requirements. The bill, as amended, is intended to establish the parameters for Governor Corbett's proposed *Ready to Succeed* scholarship program which aims to make postsecondary educational opportunities more affordable to middle-income Pennsylvania families. The Governor has proposed in his FY 2014-15 budget \$25 million for this scholarship program within PHEAA.
 - [House Bill 2049](#), sponsored by **Rep. Justin Simmons** (R-131), amends the public school code to allow **school bus drivers to administer epinephrine auto-injectors** (epi-pens), so long as the school bus driver complies with the policies established by the school bus company or school district, and has successfully completed a training program to be developed and implemented by the Department of Health. The Department must develop the training program within 90 days from the effective date of this legislation. HB 2049 was unanimously **reported as committed**.
 - [House Bill 2124](#), sponsored by **Rep. Seth Grove** (R-196), which would amend the Public School Code to provide for changes in the Planning and Construction Workbook (**PlanCon**) **school construction reimbursement process**. The bill would require the Department of Education (PDE) to establish a public database for information on school construction projects; and establish a simplified process for school districts to apply for construction reimbursement, to be known as Accountability and Reducing Costs in Construction Process (ArcCon). HB 2124 was **reported as amended** by a party-line vote of [15-10](#) with Republicans in the affirmative and Democrats in the negative.

The **amendment**, sponsored by Rep. Grove, was adopted by a vote of [13-12](#) with Republican Representatives Mike Fleck and Mark Gillen joining the Democratic members in voting against the amendment. The amendment:

- Provides a **decrease in temporary reimbursable percent** in Step 3 of the ArcCon process from 20 percent to five percent;
- Provides for the addition of an **extraordinary and unanticipated increase in student enrollment under the list of emergencies** for which PDE can grant an exception to the 30-year rule;

- **Eliminates the interest on delayed reimbursement;**
 - Provides a **decrease in one of the factors** used to calculate the state reimbursement to school districts for project applications submitted to PDE after the moratorium on new applications was initiated;
 - Clarifies that the **elimination of the capital account reimbursement fraction as an alternative only applies** to project applications submitted to **PDE after the moratorium was initiated;**
 - Provides that **lump sum reimbursements may be made at any time** and shall be **no greater than 75 percent** of the total allowable construction reimbursement for which a school district is eligible, and clarifies that lump sum reimbursements shall be made available to school districts **in the order in which the initial applications were submitted;**
 - Provides that in FY 2014-15 and thereafter, when additional funding is appropriated for school construction reimbursements, **PDE shall first use the additional funding to offer lump sum reimbursement** to school districts;
 - **Eliminates a specific appropriation;** and
 - Provides the bill **take effect immediately.**
- [House Bill 2076](#), sponsored by **Rep. James Roebuck** (D-188), would amend the Public School Code to provide Advanced Placement (**AP**) **exam scores articulation for college credit**. HB 2076 was unanimously **reported as amended**. The amendment, offered by Rep. Roebuck and unanimously adopted:
 - **Expands the college credit articulation** to include Advanced Placement (AP) exams, International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (**IB**) **exams**, and College-Level Examination Program (**CLEP**) **exams;** and
 - Requires the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee to **develop and implement uniform standards** for awarding academic credit for prior learning; and
 - Require each public institution of higher education to **adopt and make public uniform standards no later than July 1, 2015**. The amendment also outlines reporting requirements from public institutions of higher education to the Department of Education and House and Senate Education Committees.

Senate

- On April 28, the **Senate Appropriations Committee** unanimously **reported as amended** [Senate Bill 1316](#), sponsored by **Sen. Pat Browne** (R-16), which would amend the Public School Code to provide for a **special education funding formula** based on the recommendations of the Special Education Funding Commission. The bill provides for the new formula, payments for services to charter schools, and changes to the administration of the Contingency Fund. The formula is for the distribution of any increase in special education funding over the 2010-2011 levels. [Click here](#) to read the Committee's **fiscal note**.

The **amendment**, sponsored by **Sen. Jake Corman** (R-34) and unanimously adopted, adds language ensuring the calculation of special education student costs is based on total expenditures, and that the cost category dollar ranges be **adjusted annually by the Consumer Price Index**. The amendment also **extends the phase-in of the new charter school funding formula from three years to six years**.

- On April 30, the **Senate passed** [Senate Bill 1194](#), sponsored by **Sen. Donald White** (R-41), which would amend the Public School Code to allow school entities to enter into **cooperative police service agreements** with local law enforcement outside the municipality wherein the school or school

district is located, if the school or district is located in a municipality without its own local law enforcement.

On April 28, the Senate Appropriations Committee adopted an **amendment** sponsored by **Sen. Joseph Scarnati** (R-25) that:

- Provides for **nonpublic schools**;
- Outlines the **notification process** to enter into an agreement;
- Requires the Office for Safe Schools to establish criteria for **certifying approved vendors** to provide school police officers to nonpublic schools for the purpose of awarding grants, and to publish on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's publicly accessible website a list of all approved vendors;
- Allows **nonpublic schools to apply to the Office of Safe Schools for grant funding** to be used for the cost associated with obtaining the services of a school police officer from a list of approved vendors certified by the Office;
- Authorizes the Office of Safe Schools to **make targeted grants to school entities, municipalities, local law enforcement agencies, and approved vendors**, and outlines the eligibility requirements and stipulations of the grant money; and
- Adds **language providing for grounds and buildings**, to add municipal authorities in the scope of administrative divisions to which a school district may convey unused and unnecessary lands and buildings.

[Click here](#) to read the Senate Appropriations' **fiscal note**. SB 1194 passed the Senate by a vote of **46-0**.

- On April 30, the **Senate Finance Committee** held a hearing on a comprehensive amendment to [Senate Bill 76](#), sponsored by **Sen. David Argall** (R-29), which would **eliminate school property taxes**. SB 76 would increase the state's Personal Income Tax from 3.07 to 4.34 percent, increase the state's Sales and Use Tax from 6 to 7 percent (seven to eight percent in Pittsburgh and eight to nine percent in Philadelphia), and expand the Sales and Use Tax to cover more goods and services.

The amendment discussed during the hearing clarifies all services subject to the expanded Sales and Use Tax, clarifies all business-to-business services exempted from the Sales and Use Tax, and deals with several technical issues.

[Click here](#) to watch the **video recording** of the hearing, and **view the testimony** provided by Senators David Argall and Mike Folmer, as well as specific revenue and tax data sought from the City of Philadelphia, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, and the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue.

[EPLC NEWS](#)

You can find on the EPLC website a list of remaining **2014 gubernatorial candidates**, and links to information about their **plans, if elected, for education and arts and culture** in Pennsylvania. The list continues to be updated as more information becomes available. [Click here](#) to visit the resource page. Gubernatorial candidates will be on the ballot for the May 20 Primary Election.

[DATEBOOK](#)

For more complete information on upcoming events, please visit www.eplc.org and click on "Events Calendar."

- **Jump Street's annual Derby Day** will be held on **Saturday, May 3** at the Mount Hill Tavern in Harrisburg. [Click here](#) to purchase tickets.
- The **Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling** is hosting its annual **College Access Forum and Walk the Hill** day on **Tuesday, May 6** in Harrisburg. Walk the Hill is from 8:30 AM -10:45 AM and the College Access Forum is from 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM. The events are free to attend. [Click here](#) for more information.
- The **House Education Committee** and **House Health Committee** will hold a joint public hearing on the school-based ACCESS Program on **Wednesday, May 7** at 9:00 AM in Harrisburg.
- The **National School Foundation Association's Annual Conference** will be held **May 7 – 9** in Philadelphia. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.
- The **PA STEM Vision Conference: From Classroom to Career** will take place on **Friday, May 9** from 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM in Pittsburgh. The conference will provide an opportunity for education, business, and policymaking leaders to collaborate and reflect on best practices for student achievement, bridging the skills gap, workforce development, and cross-sector partnerships. [Click here](#) to see the agenda and register for the event (free). Act 48 credit is available.
- The **State Board of Education** will meet **May 14 – 15** in Harrisburg.
- **Tuesday, May 20** is **Primary Election day** in Pennsylvania. Visit votespa.com for polling place information or other voting needs.

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