



**The Education Policy and Leadership Center**  
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## **EPLC EDUCATION NOTEBOOK**

**Friday, May 23, 2014**

***Content in this edition:***

**Pennsylvania Policymakers  
State Board of Education  
Reports  
Announcements  
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** will reconvene in voting session on **Monday, June 2** at 1:00 PM.

### **STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The 320<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **State Board of Education** (SBE) was held in Harrisburg May 14 – 15.

On May 14, SBE **Chairman Larry Wittig** welcomed in his opening comments a new member of the State Board. **Dr. Jay Badams**, superintendent of Erie Public Schools, was appointed by Governor Corbett to serve on the Council of Basic Education. The Senate recently confirmed his nomination. Badams fills the seat formerly held by Edward Sheehan. Wittig also announced two new student members who will begin their terms in July.

**Terry Barnaby**, director of the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality, provided to the **Council on Higher Education** the report of the Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education. Barnaby's report focused mainly on the expiring Praxis II certification assessments and how the Department of Education is working with the Educational Testing Service to replace or identify new tests and other competencies. Barnaby noted that teacher preparation programs with students affected by the changes are aware and that ETS has extended test availability for students who are mid-way through a program.

**Council Chairman James Grandon** announced that the College Textbook Policies Advisory Committee is a year out from issuing their report. They would like to include in the report case studies of innovative

ways schools are lowering textbook costs. Grandon asked that members share any examples with the SBE staff.

Grandon then spoke of the importance of community colleges. He announced that a questionnaire has been distributed and the information will be compiled in a “white paper.” The survey will focus on community college issues and ways community colleges are improving efficiency. **Keith Bailey**, director of research for the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges, spoke during public comment to express support for community colleges and the survey.

Also during the public comment period, the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators (**PACTE**) **President Jay Hertzog** addressed the Council of Higher Education to introduce PACTE President-elect Dr. Sally Winterton to the Council members. Winterton’s term as president will begin July 1, 2014.

State Board of Education **Executive Director Karen Molchanow** provided to the **Council of Basic Education** a brief report on behalf of the Committee on Chapter 16 (Gifted Education). The SBE is required per Chapter 16 regulations to conduct periodic reviews of the provisions. Molchanow explained that, at this time, the Board does not have a proposal for amendments, and neither does the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). The Committee on Chapter 16 has scheduled three roundtable discussions to receive public perspectives and ideas to determine if Chapter 16 needs opened for amendments. The first roundtable meeting was held on May 14 prior to the Board meeting. The next meeting was held May 22 in Pittsburgh. The final meeting will be held June 5 in Philadelphia. Public comment is being accepted in writing as well. [Click here](#) to download more information about the sites, dates, and registration deadlines if you would like to participate in the discussion.

**Rita Perez**, acting deputy secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, then provided a report. Perez updated the Council on the past months’ work of the Academic Recovery Liaisons (ARLs) who have been working with the priority schools to develop three year school improvement plans. She noted that aligning curriculum is a priority, and that the Department will soon be piloting a curriculum audit tool.

The May 15 meeting of the full Board began with a report from **Acting Secretary of Education Carolyn Dumaresq**. Dumaresq said that the Department leadership continues to work on the budget, and that the Governor indicated education remains a priority.

She announced that there have been over 300,000 visits to the School Performance Profile site. The largest number (33%) of visitors identify themselves as parents. Dumaresq then announced a new project underway in PDE to consolidate data collection. The project is based on feedback from school superintendents who are burdened by the repetition of data they are required to report. There is an internal group at PDE who is focused on streamlining the number of times and reducing the number of items collected through the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS). After PIMS, Dumaresq said that they will turn their attention to other data collection systems. They will no longer collect data that is “nice to have,” but only data that is mandated by regulation or statute.

Following the Secretary’s report, the Board received a presentation on the new rating tools for principals and non-teaching professionals from **David Volkman**, PDE executive deputy secretary, and **Angela Kirby-Wehr**, director at PaTTAN-Harrisburg. They are hoping to have the new rating tools published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin mid-June. Board members then discussed the intention of the new evaluation systems. Chairman Wittig emphasized and others echoed that the design is meant to recognize exemplar teachers and provide professional development supports. The design is not meant to be punitive. The SBE members acknowledged that there is a disconnection between the intentions and how they are being communicated to the field.

Before adjourning, the SBE approved [two resolutions](#) honoring their outgoing student members Emily Clark and Kevin Bates.

The next State Board of Education meeting will be held July 9 – 10 in Harrisburg.

## **REPORTS**

On May 12, **Auditor General Eugene DePasquale** issued a charter school report – [Pennsylvania Charter School Accountability and Transparency: Time for a Tune-Up](#) – that includes recommendations to improve accountability, effectiveness, and transparency of charter schools.

The recommendations stem from information learned through school audits and feedback gathered during a series of public meetings held earlier in the year. The report presents background information, then delves into what the law says, where we are, and what is needed for the areas of state oversight; authorizer powers and duties; charter school annual reports; special education funding; cyber school funding; and admissions, transparency, and management/operations.

Highlights of the report include recommendations to:

- Create a funded and staffed independent statewide charter school oversight board;
- Empower authorizers to intervene as problems develop and reward high performing charter schools;
- Require charter schools to present annual reports at public meetings;
- Allow the Department of Education's Special Education Division to serve as the intermediary between charter schools and school districts when a student classification is in dispute;
- Eliminate cyber school payments from school districts and replace funding with direct payment from the state; and
- Modify rules on admissions and enrollment, transparency, professional staff requirements, and management and operations.

In addition, the Auditor General recommends that the Commonwealth:

- Reinstitute the charter school tuition reimbursement from the state to offset charter school tuition paid by school districts;
- Impose the same limits on charter school fund balances as imposed on school districts, but provide for a waiver process for certain exemptions such as construction or renovation projects;
- Create a tiered funding mechanism for special education;
- Require charter schools to have the same teacher and principal performance evaluations as school districts and establish guidelines on how charters should calculate the 75 percent-of-teachers-certified requirement;
- Allow noncompliance with the Right-to-Know Law to be a factor in charter school renewal decisions;
- Create a website that would clearly identify expenditures for charter schools and traditional public schools that would include information on vendor contracts, superintendent buyouts, leases and transportation costs; and
- Require charter schools to request and receive a timely public hearing and school district vote on approval from the authorizing school district for any amendment or new contract for educational services.

[Click here](#) for links to the official press release and the many news articles written about the report's release.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **Applications are available now for the 2014-2015 Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP).** The Education Policy Fellowship Program is sponsored in Pennsylvania by The Education Policy and Leadership Center (EPLC).

With nearly 400 graduates in its first fifteen years, this Program is a premier professional development opportunity for educators, state and local policymakers, advocates, and community leaders.

State Board of Accountancy (SBA) credits are available to certified public accountants.

Past participants include state policymakers, district superintendents and principals, school business officers, school board members, education deans/chairs, statewide association leaders, parent leaders, education advocates, and other education and community leaders. Fellows are typically sponsored by their employer or another organization.

To read about the Education Policy Fellowship Program, [click here](#).

Since space is limited to approximately 30 positions, **it is advisable to submit an application as soon as possible**. The application may be copied from the EPLC website, but must be submitted by mail or scanned and e-mailed, with the necessary signatures of applicant and sponsor.

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).

- The **Arts Education Collaborative (AEC)** is now accepting applications for their **Community of Learners for Arts Education (CLAE) program**. The CLAE program is a professional learning opportunity **for school and district administrators**. During the course of the CLAE program, participants will explore three big ideas: 1. Quality arts education benefits students both in and out of school; 2. There are characteristics that all quality arts education programs share; and 3. Schools and districts have the ability to support quality arts education for all students. Participants will receive 35 Act 45/PIL hours upon successful completion of the program. The application deadline is September 5, 2014. [Click here](#) for more information about CLAE and how to apply.

## **EPLC NEWS**

The May episode of **Focus on Education** is now available to [watch online](#). The episode discussed **charter schools**, with guests **Nathan Mains**, executive director of the PA School Boards Association; **Larry Jones**, president of the PA Coalition of Public Charter Schools; **Dr. Maurice Flurie**, CEO of Commonwealth Connections Academy; and **State Representative James Roebuck**.

All past shows are archived and available "on demand" on the EPLC Focus on Education webpage, [here](#).

**The monthly show is an opportunity to get the name of your organization or cause in front of a statewide audience that has an interest in education issues.** Introductory rates are available now for a limited time. For more details, and to discuss your sponsorship for one or more monthly shows, please email Ron Cowell at [cowell@eplc.org](mailto:cowell@eplc.org).

## **DATEBOOK**

For more complete information on upcoming events, please visit [www.eplc.org](http://www.eplc.org) and click on "Events Calendar."

- Pennsylvania's major education leadership organizations representing school administrators (**PASA**), school boards (**PSBA**), school business officials (**PASBO**), and rural and small schools (**PARSS**) are hosting a live twitter chat on **Tuesday, May 27** at 8:00 PM. The May chat will focus on special education, charter schools and the need for a fair, predictable public school funding formula. Use hashtag **#PAEdFunding** to follow along. [Click here](#) for directions and a few tips for participating.
- The **House Subcommittee on Higher Education** will hold a public meeting hearing on **Wednesday, May 28** from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Nova Chemicals in Moon Township. The focus of the hearing will be higher education readiness for career success.
- The **Temple University Center on Regional Politics** will host **“How Public School Funding Works in Pennsylvania – Or Doesn’t: What You Need to Know”** on **Friday, May 30** from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM in Conshohocken, PA. [Click here](#) to register for this free symposium.
- On **Saturday, May 31** from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM at Cheyney University, Delaware County Campus, the **Media Area NAACP, PA State NAACP Education Committee**, and the **Keystone Honors Academy of Cheyney University** will host the **2014 Conference on the State of Education in Pennsylvania: 60 Years After Brown: How are the Children? What are the issues?** [Click here](#) to register online or by mail.
- The **State Interagency Coordinating Council for Early Intervention** will meet on **Thursday, June 5** from noon to 3:00 PM at PaTTAN Harrisburg. [Click here](#) for more information.
- The **Penn State College of Education** will host an interdisciplinary civil rights conference, **Education and Civil Rights: Historical Legacies, Contemporary Strategies, and Promise for the Future, June 6 – 7** in State College, PA. This conference is designed for academics in education, the social sciences, public policy and law; policymakers; practitioners (P–20); legal and policy advocates; civil rights groups; graduate students; journalists; political commentators; attorneys; community leaders; legislators; and judges. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.
- The **Pennsylvania Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance** will hold their **Keystone Health Promotion Conference** at Penn State Harrisburg **June 17 – 19**. Past attendees include representatives of school districts, hospitals, and other organizations/institutions who are interested in promoting healthy living for employees and/or students. Continuing education and graduate credits are available. [Click here](#) to register. Register before May 31 to receive the early registration discount.
- The **2014 Annual National PTA Convention and Exhibition** will be held **June 19 – 22** in Austin, Texas. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.
- **ASCD's Conference on Teaching Excellence** will be held **June 27 – 29** in Dallas, Texas. Choose from more than 150 sessions on assessment, college and career readiness, STEM, and instructional practices. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.

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