



The Education Policy and Leadership Center
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EPLC EDUCATION NOTEBOOK

Friday, July 11, 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 **House of Representatives** has been recalled by the Speaker to reconvene in session on **Monday, August 4** at 1:00 PM.

The **Senate** stands in recess until **Monday, September 15** at 1:00 PM, unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore.

State Budget Update

Governor Corbett announced during a press conference July 10 that he **signed the 2014-2015 [General Appropriations Budget and Fiscal Code](#)**, but exercised his ability to line-item veto. Of the \$29.1 billion spending plan the General Assembly sent to him on June 30, the **Governor vetoed a total of \$72 million dollars**, \$65 million of which was the General Assembly's operating budget, and \$7.2 million from various state departments for projects designated by the Legislature. [Click here](#) to read the Office of the Governor's Fact Sheet on the line-item veto/enacted budget. While addressing the media, Governor Corbett said that the Legislature left with unfinished business, and urged legislators to come back over the summer to work on pension reform. He did not yet force the General Assembly to return to Harrisburg by calling a special session, but said that the option remains on the table.

A bill that would address the **pension reform** the Governor demands was stalled by the House last week. On July 1, [House Bill 1353](#), sponsored by **Rep. Warren Kampf** (D-157) was sent to a Committee chaired by an acknowledged opponent of the proposal being considered. While the proposal was "rescued" the following night and returned to the full House from the Committee, it probably will not be considered again

by the House until the fall. Even then, chances are lawmakers will not vote on any controversial legislation prior to the November General Election.

The pension proposal supported by the Governor and others, but without enough votes in the House, is actually a proposed amendment to HB 1353. The amendment, sponsored by **Rep. Mike Tobash** (R-125), is a hybrid plan that would place new state and public school employees in the existing defined benefit plan for up to \$50,000 in salary before applying any additional salary to a new defined contribution plan.

Also subject to political ping pong has been a piece of budget-related legislation that would allow Philadelphia to raise additional revenue for schools. On June 30 the Senate approved an amendment sponsored by **Sen. Anthony Williams** (D-8) to [House Bill 1177](#), sponsored by **Rep. Gregory Lucas** (R-5), that would **authorize Philadelphia to levy a \$2-per-pack tax on cigarettes**. The anticipated revenue would be directed to the Philadelphia School District and is estimated to close the District's \$93 million budget deficit by nearly half in the first year.

The bill was sent back to the House for approval on Senate amendments. The House agreed to the cigarette tax provision, but also approved a new amendment sponsored by **Rep. Mike Turzai** (R-28) that would allow a **charter school applicant to appeal a decision made by the School Reform Commission**.

Because it was further amended by the House, the bill was then sent back to the Senate for concurrence. The Senate adopted an additional amendment sponsored by **Sen. Dominic Pileggi** (R-9) that would **"sunset" the cigarette tax increase after five years**.

The bill must now go back to the House. The House will not have an opportunity to consider the latest version of the legislation until the members return to Harrisburg on August 4. Philadelphia superintendent Dr. William Hite said that layoffs will be inevitable if the tax does not become law by August 15.

[Governor's Office](#)

In July, **Governor Corbett signed into law** the following bills:

- **Senate Bill 193** ([Act 107 of 2014](#)), sponsored by **Sen. Pat Vance** (R-31). Act 107 amends the Public School Code to require **school nurses** are **CPR-certified** by a Department of Health approved certifying agency. School nurses who are not CPR-certified by July 1, 2014 shall complete the training within one year. Nurses hired after July 1, 2014 must be CPR-certified or complete the training within one year of the hire date.
- **Senate Bill 874** ([Act 108 of 2014](#)), sponsored by **Sen. Pat Vance** (R-31). Act 108 amends the Public School Code to provide for **community college funding flexibility plans**. A local sponsoring school district of a community college that meets certain criteria may negotiate the amount the sponsor contributes on behalf of the community college's annual operating and capital expenses. The only community college this Act applies to currently is the Harrisburg Area Community College.
- **Senate Bill 1194** ([Act 122 of 2014](#)), sponsored by **Sen. Donald White** (R-41), amends the Public School Code to allow school entities to enter into **cooperative police 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. The **Office of Safe Schools** may make **targeted grants** to school entities, municipalities, local law enforcement agencies, and approved vendors. Nonpublic schools may apply to the Office for grant funding to be used for the cost associated with obtaining a school police officer from a list of approved

vendors. The Office of Safe Schools, in consultation with the Pennsylvania State Police, shall establish criteria for certifying approved vendors, and the list will be publicly accessible on the Pennsylvania Department of Education website.

House of Representatives

On June 29, the **House of Representatives passed [House Bill 1013](#)**, sponsored by **Rep. Mark Gillen** (R-128), by a vote of [133-65](#). HB 1013 would amend the Public School Code to make several changes regarding **home education programs**. The legislation would require a home school supervisor to **submit certification** to the superintendent of the school district of residence each year stating that education curriculum standards have been met. HB 1013 would provide for a process if the supervisor were to fail to send the certification, or if the superintendent has a reason to believe at any time that an appropriate education may not be occurring. The bill would also allow for the **supervisor to issue a diploma that would hold all rights and privileges of a high school diploma** awarded by the Commonwealth.

Prior to final passage, the bill was amended on the floor on June 27 and later reported as committed by the House Appropriations Committee with a fiscal note on June 29. The floor **amendment**, sponsored by **Rep. Will Tallman** (R-193) and **adopted** by a vote of [195-7](#), provides for diplomas to also be awarded by **approved diploma-granting organizations** in addition to home school supervisors. The Department of Education shall establish the eligibility criteria and an application process for approving diploma-granting organizations, and maintain a list of the approved organizations on the Department's website. [Click here](#) to read the Appropriations Committee's **fiscal note**.

Senate

➤ The **Senate Education Committee** met on June 27 to consider the following bills:

- [Senate Bill 1450](#), sponsored by **Sen. Mike Folmer** (R-48), would amend the Public School Code to allow a school entity to determine the **appropriate method of utilizing the Keystone Exam scores**. The legislation provides that beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, applications school entities may choose include, but are not limited to, end-of-course grades, indicators of need for remediation, and graduation requirements. SB 1450 was **reported as committed** by a vote of [8-2](#).
- [Senate Bill 1440](#), sponsored by **Sen. Robert Tomlinson** (R-6), would amend the State System of Higher Education Intellectual Property Act to provide for the **State-owned University Intellectual Property and Services Act**. It would allow an employee to retain a position as an officer or director of a company pursuant to an economic development agreement approved by the Council of Trustees. SB 1440 would also allow a State-owned university to contract with a company or organization that employs an employee of a State-owned university. The bill also amends reporting requirements, so that agreements shall be monitored and reported annually by each State-owned university, but no longer also by PASSHE. The Committee adopted a technical amendment and then SB 1440 was unanimously **reported as amended**.
- [House Bill 1718](#), sponsored by **Rep. Ryan Aument** (R-41), would amend the Public School Code to add an article titled the **Online Education Initiative**. Under the Online Education Initiative, the Department of Education (PDE) shall establish a central online clearinghouse that catalogs approved online courses for students enrolled in grades six through twelve. The clearinghouse would be accessible to school entities, nonpublic schools, home education programs, and the general public. PDE must develop the application and process by which providers may submit their online course offerings for inclusion in the clearinghouse. The initiative would not prevent a

school entity from establishing and offering its own online course or program, nor would it require a student to participate in an online program. HB 1718 was **reported as committed** by a vote of [7-3](#).

- The **Senate Education Committee** on June 29 **reported as amended** [House Bill 618](#), sponsored by **Rep. Joe Emrick** (R-137), by a vote of [10-1](#). HB 618 was originally the House version of charter school reform. The **amendment**, sponsored by **Sen. Mike Folmer** (R-48) and **adopted**, stripped all previous language in the bill and added a section that would provide for **reimbursements to school districts for charter school pension payments**. The bill states that the Department of Education shall allocate **up to \$30 million** to school districts through a block grant program to be created for FY 2014-15 which school districts may use for the purpose of offsetting cyber charter school expenses.
- On June 29, the **Senate adopted** [Senate Resolution 414](#), sponsored by **Sen. Lloyd Smucker** (R-13), which directs the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) to conduct a study of **alternative methods of authorizing charter schools** and regional charter schools. The LBFC must report its findings and recommendations to the Senate no later than **November 30, 2014**.
- During the week of June 30, the **Senate** acted on the following legislation:
 - [Senate Bill 922](#), sponsored by **Sen. Mike Brubaker** (R-36), would **revise pension provisions** for the Public School Employees' Retirement System and the State Employees' Retirement System. The Senate **passed** SB 922 on June 30 by a vote of [50-0](#).

Prior to its passage by the Senate, the bill was unanimously reported as amended from the Senate Appropriations Committee on June 29. The **amendment**, sponsored by **Sen. Joe Scarnati** (R-25) and unanimously **adopted, removed state and school employee pensions from the proposed plan**, so that the provisions of the bill only apply to elected officials. As amended, any **elected official**, upon being elected, reelected, or retained to a new term on or after November 30, 2014, shall be automatically **enrolled in a new defined contribution plan**. [Click here](#) to read the Committee's **fiscal note**.

This legislation is now stalled as part of the ongoing and unresolved pension reform debate.

- [Senate Bill 1085](#), sponsored by **Sen. Lloyd Smucker** (R-13), would amend the Public School Code to provide for **comprehensive charter school reform**. The bill would set forth fund balance limits; allow for charter school consolidation; allow for dual enrollment; and increase the initial term of a charter school to five years with the option of a ten year renewal. It would require the Department of Education to create a standard application for charter school applicants for charter renewals and create a school performance matrix to which charter entities would be held accountable. Charters would also be held accountable to state laws pertaining to open records and ethics and increased reporting requirements. SB 1085 **passed** on July 1 by a vote of [37-13](#).

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).

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 or get an application, [click here](#).

The 2014-15 cohort is already more than 50% full. 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, or Ron Cowell at 412-298-4796 or cowell@eplc.org.

Congratulations to the thirty-four members of the 2013-2014 Fellowship Program who were recognized at the Graduation/Recognition Luncheon in Harrisburg on June 26!

EPLC NEWS

- **Register Now!** EPLC will be hosting a nonpartisan, one-day **Education Issues Workshop for Legislative Candidates, Campaign Staff, and Interested Voters** on **Thursday, July 31** in Harrisburg. Space is limited. [Click here](#) to learn more about workshop and to register.
- Each month, EPLC publishes ***The Note: Arts and Education News from EPLC and the Pennsylvania Arts Education Network***. [Click here](#) to read the June edition of the newsletter. To receive all arts related news from EPLC and updates about Network activities, [join the Network](#).
- The July episode of ***Focus on Education*** will discuss **Teaching in Pennsylvania** and will air initially on the Pennsylvania Cable Network (PCN) on **Sunday, July 13 at 3:00 p.m.**

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

Be a sponsor! 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 for sponsors 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.

DATEBOOK

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

- The **2014 Summer Leadership Conference: Career and Technical Education: Leadership for Success**, sponsored by the **Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators** in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, will be held **July 30 – August 1** in State College. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.
- **Save the Date!** The **4th Annual Arts and Education Symposium**, sponsored by EPLC and the PA Arts Education Network, will be held in Harrisburg on **Thursday, October 2**. More details soon.

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