



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

## **Tuesday, August 12, 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** and **Senate** will reconvene in voting session on **Monday, September 15** at 1:00 PM.

After Republican House leaders cancelled plans to return to session in the middle of the Legislature's summer recess, Governor Corbett on August 6 called on lawmakers to return to Harrisburg early to pass legislation that would give the city of **Philadelphia the ability to authorize a \$2-a-pack cigarette tax** to help fund the Philadelphia School District. Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter said in July that the money garnered from such a tax would keep the schools' class sizes from rising to 41 and would prevent 1,300 teacher layoffs.

The House of Representatives had been scheduled to return on August 4, 5, and 6 to debate and approve this measure, but House Republican leaders cancelled the session dates, effectively **postponing the discussion until September**. The [bill](#) on the table does not contain the cigarette tax provision alone, but also includes hotel tax increases and City Revitalization and Improvement Zone expansion programs – two subjects on which Republican House leaders are still struggling to reconcile their opposing perspectives.

In the meantime, Governor Corbett agreed to have the state advance \$265 million to the Philadelphia school district. This does not represent an increase in money, but rather an early disbursement of money the schools would normally receive through the academic year. Superintendent William Hite said the district still has an \$81 million budget gap, and that up-front money without the ability to generate more money will not guarantee that school starts on time or that layoffs are avoided.

## **STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The 321<sup>st</sup> meeting of the **State Board of Education** (SBE) was held in Harrisburg July 9 – 10.

On July 9, SBE **Chairman Larry Wittig** announced in his opening comments that the Senate recently confirmed **Jim Barker** to continue serving on the Board through 2018. Wittig also introduced two new student representatives: **Teresa Lebo**, from Central Penn College, serving on the Council of Higher Education; and **Donald LeCompte**, East Stroudsburg North High School, serving on the Council of Basic Education.

During her report, **Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education Jill Hans** provided an update on the transition to the 2014 GED test. The GED is a high school equivalency assessment that allows for an alternative route to qualify for a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma. The GED Testing Service retired its 2002 test version at the end of 2013, with a policy that would not allow for grandfathering of scores into the 2014 version. At the request of the members of the General Assembly, the Office of Postsecondary implemented a process of grandfathering eligible scores to combine with passing scores of the new assessment. GED provided technical assistance in support of the process. Hans explained that scoring challenges of grandfathering and combining scores were due to two major differences between the test versions regarding number of subsections and different score requirements for passing them. She reported that as of July 2014, the Office received approximately 1,600 inquiries of grandfathering eligibility, and of those 1,600 inquiries, approximately 900 individuals were notified that they have eligible scores. Since January 1, approximately 10 individuals have been awarded a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma by utilizing the grandfathering process. Board member **Kirk Hallett** personally thanked Hans for “sticking her neck out” to make the grandfathering process possible.

The Board then discussed potential questions to be included in a Community College Survey designed to gather information, challenges, and measures taken by community colleges to operate more efficiently. The SBE will use the survey to release a whitepaper to highlight community college issues and share efficiency measures.

Board member **Wendy Beetlestone** provided to the **Council of Basic Education** a report from the Chapter 16 (Gifted Education) committee. During the summer, the Committee convened a series of public roundtables in Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia to gather stakeholder input on the current Chapter 16 regulations. Beetlestone reported the Committee heard a broad range of issues on topics such as qualifications of personnel, regulatory compliance, enforcement and monitoring, and cost of providing evaluation for potentially gifted students. The Committee does not recommend that Chapter 16 be opened for amendment, but they do suggest using the information gathered during the roundtables to make a series of recommendations to the Department of Education, and using their position on the SBE as a bully pulpit to highlight gifted education.

On July 10, **Acting Secretary of Education Carolyn Dumaresq** reported to the SBE the status of the budget and Fiscal Code legislation, which at that time had not been signed by Governor Corbett. She echoed the Governor’s sentiment that the pension problem needed fixed. Dumaresq noted several projects on which the Department of Education (PDE) is working: Chapter 16 (Approved Private Schools); Chapter 18 (Fiscal Recovery); and Chapter 11 (Compulsory Attendance). She also said that PDE will begin working on guidelines and training for Holocaust and Genocide education per [Act 70 of 2014](#). Dumaresq added that PDE just received from the U.S. Department of Education a notification that each State Education Agency must submit by April 2015 a new “State Educator Equity Plan” that would ensure minority students are not educated at higher percentages by poor performing teachers.

Action items approved on July 10 were the [2013 Annual Report](#) to the General Assembly, and the 2015 meeting schedule:

January 14-15

March 11-12  
May 13-14  
July 8-9  
September 16-17  
November 18-19

The meeting concluded with several announcements. Board member **Jonathan Peri** announced the upcoming review of the Board's model memorandum of understanding per Chapter 10 (Safe Schools). Larry Wittig said that Act 70 of 2014 requires the Board to conduct a study regarding the manner in which the Holocaust, genocide, and human rights violations education is offered by school entities, and that an ad hoc committee will be appointed shortly. He also notified board members that a technical amendment will be presented at September's meeting that will make consistent Chapter 11 (Compulsory Attendance) regulations with the School Code.

The next State Board of Education meeting will be held September 10-11 in Harrisburg.

## **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

On August 7, **Governor Corbett** announced that **nine public schools** will share **\$21 million in federal School Improvement Grant funding**. The grants were awarded through a competitive process. Of the 47 lowest-achieving schools eligible, only 20 submitted applications. Applicants were required to choose one of four reform models developed by the federal government: transformation; turnaround; restart; or school closure.

Below are the nine grantees, the reform model that will be implemented, and the award amount for the 2014-15 school year:

- **Academy Charter School**, Allegheny County  
*Transformation, \$571,597*
- **ASPIRA Bilingual Cyber Charter School**, Philadelphia County  
*Transformation, \$708,581*
- **Chester Upland School District**, Delaware County  
STEM High School, *Turnaround, \$1,938,959*
- **Duquesne City School District**, Allegheny County  
Duquesne City Elementary School, *Transformation, \$1,338,804*
- **Erie City School District**, Erie County  
Peiffer Burleigh Elementary School, *Transformation, \$3,660,349*
- **Mastery Charter School**, Gratz Campus, Philadelphia County  
*Transformation, \$4,776,839*
- **Memphis Street Academy Charter School**, Philadelphia County  
*Transformation, \$3,245,452*
- **Philadelphia School District**, Philadelphia County  
Roosevelt Middle School, *Transformation, \$2,135,097*
- **Universal Audenried Charter School**, Philadelphia County  
*Transformation, \$2,697,000*

[Click here](#) to read about the different reform models in the press release.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **Registration is now open** for the fourth annual **Arts and Education Symposium**, hosted by the Education Policy and Leadership Center and the Pennsylvania Arts Education Network. The

Symposium will be held on **Thursday, October 2** at the State Museum in Harrisburg. This year's keynote speaker will be Dennis Inhulsen, president of the National Art Education Association and principal of Patterson Elementary School in Michigan. Concurrent sessions will facilitate lively discussions about the latest news and ideas from the arts education, community arts, and arts advocacy fields. Act 48 professional development credit will be available. [Click here](#) for more information and to register. [Click here](#) to download and share the flyer about the 2014 Arts and Education Symposium.

- **Applications are still available for the 2014-2015 Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP), but only a few positions remain unfilled.** The Education Policy Fellowship Program is sponsored in Pennsylvania by 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 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).

## [EPLC NEWS](#)

- Each month, EPLC publishes ***The Note: Arts and Education News from EPLC and the Pennsylvania Arts Education Network***. [Click here](#) to read the July 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*** was broadcast on Pennsylvania Cable Network (PCN) on July 13 and is available to [watch online](#). The episode discussed **Teaching in Pennsylvania**, with guests **Dr. Theresa Barnaby**, director, Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality, PA Department of Education; **Ryan Devlin**, 2013 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year and Brockway Area High School English and technology teacher; **Dolores McCracken**, PSEA treasurer, Council Rock Education Foundation treasurer, and parent education advocate; and **Dr. Sally A. Winterton**, president, Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators.

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](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."

- The **Educational Collaborators**, in partnership with the Wilson School District, will host the **Pennsylvania Google Summit** featuring Google for Education **August 13 – 14** in Reading, PA. This is an open event primarily focused on Google Apps for Education, but will also cover Chromebooks, Google Earth, YouTube, and other technology integration methods that can be used in schools. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.
- The **Basic Education Funding Commission** will meet on **Wednesday, August 20** at 11:30 AM in Harrisburg.
- The **House Democratic Policy Committee** will hold a public hearing on **Monday, August 25** at 2:00 PM in Newtown, Bucks County, PA to discuss [HB 1959](#) (eating disorder parental education legislation).
- The **State Board of Education** will meet **September 10 – 11** in Harrisburg, PA.
- The **Arts Education Partnership's 2014 National Forum** will be held **September 11 – 12** in Pittsburgh, PA. Forum attendees include leaders from the education, arts, business, cultural, government, and philanthropic sectors. This year's theme is *Preparing Students for the Next America in and through the Arts*. [Click here](#) to see the agenda and to register.

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