



Center News

THE EDUCATION POLICY AND LEADERSHIP CENTER

EPLC Education Notebook

Monday, June 13, 2011

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The EPLC Education Notebook (current and past editions) also is available by visiting the EPLC website at www.eplc.org/publications_wpn.shtml.

2011-2012 PA BUDGET WATCH

Budget negotiations are continuing between legislative leaders and Governor Tom Corbett. According to published reports, **Senate Republican leaders** are asking for **approximately \$300 million more in budget restorations**. In particular, Senate leaders would like to see another **\$150 million more for pre-K-12** and another \$70 million added to higher education over what House Republicans proposed.

Using \$300-400 million from the state's \$540 million revenue surplus, Senate Republicans would add **\$50 million** to the **basic education funding formula** targeting poorer school districts and **at least \$100 million for Accountability Block Grants** (which represents a 70-80% restoration of the line item), much of which is used to support **full day kindergarten programs** in school districts. The Senate would keep the House's restoration of **Social Security payments** made by school districts. While these allocations represent a very important improvement over the major cuts proposed by Governor Corbett, school districts would still be faced with the loss of more than a half-billion dollars for the new school year.

Under the reported Senate Republican plan, an additional **\$67-70 million would be restored to Penn State, Pitt, Temple and Lincoln Universities**, giving those institutions the same 15 percent cut in state funding that is proposed in the House-approved budget for the **Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE)**.

PENNSYLVANIA POLICYMAKERS

Senate

On June 6, the **Senate Education Committee** unanimously reported as committed the following bills:

- o [Senate Bill 1086](#) (Sen. Jeffrey Piccola, R-15) which amends the **Library Code** to provide for a **formula for state funding for 2011-2012**.
- o [House Bill 1352](#) (Rep. Todd Stevens, R-151) which updates a reference to Section 3124.2 of the **Crimes Code**, relating to institutional sexual assault. The reference is part of a list of offenses in **Section 111 of the Public School Code**. A public or private school, intermediate unit or area vocational-technical school is prohibited from hiring a person within five years of conviction for any of these offenses. On June 6, the **Senate Education Committee** unanimously reported as committed the following bills:

On June 7, the Senate **unanimously approved [Senate Bill 389](#) (Sen. Mike Brubaker, R-36)** which would amend the Public School Code to expand and update the definition of "**vocational agricultural education**." SB 389 has been referred to the House Education Committee and is awaiting further action.

On June 8, the **Senate Education Committee** held a hearing on **teacher evaluation and effectiveness**. Senators heard from **Mike Wang, Vice President of Growth Strategy and Execution, of Teach for America -Greater Philadelphia (TFA)**; **Kathleen Delaski, Engagement Director of StudentsFirst**; and **Carolyn Dumaresq, Deputy Secretary, Elementary and Secondary Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education**. To read the full testimony presented at the Senate Education Committee, [click here](#).

Last week, the following bill were introduced in the **Senate**:

- o [Senate Bill 1087](#) (Sen. Jeffrey Piccola R-15) would amend the Public School Code by **amending section 1123 pertaining to the rating system of professional employees**. SB 1087 would add language that would **require the rating system to give consideration to student performance**. The bill further requires the Department of Education to revise and implement the use of rating cards relating to consideration of **student performance** by not later than January 1, 2012. SB 1087 would require the PDE to consult with classroom teachers, school administrators, parents of school-age children enrolled in a public school, school board members and representatives of institutions of higher education. Reports to the chairs and minority chairs of the Senate and House Education Committees describing the revision of the rating cards would be required. SB 1087 was referred to the **Senate Education Committee**.

House

On June 8, the **House Appropriations Committee** re-reported as committed [House Bill 139](#) (Rep. Robert Godshall, R-53) which would **allow school districts to receive reimbursement for approved building improvements**, including the cost of acquiring a suitable site for a school building, the cost of constructing a new school building or providing needed additions or alterations to existing buildings, **if a school district elects not to remove any modular classroom utilized after the completion of a building project**. Currently, school districts are not reimbursed for construction costs until the portable or modular classroom is removed from the premises. In addition, HB 139 would

terminate (with fiscal year 2010-2011) the requirement that any payments or taxes dedicated to the school district by the city or county of the first class be not less than the highest amount paid by the city or county to the school district or authorized by the city or county to be levied for the school district or dedicated to the school district during any of the three full fiscal years preceding the date of the declaration of distress.

Last week, the following bills were introduced in the **House**:

- [House Bill 1369](#) (Rep. Todd Rock, R-90) would amend the Public School Code by deleting and replacing provisions relating to collective bargaining between public school employees and their public employers; setting forth public policy; providing for assessments & duties and imposing penalties.
- [House Bill 704](#) (Rep. Bernie O'Neill R-29) would amend the Public School Code to further provide for definitions and require the General Assembly to annually appropriate money for the purpose of **special education funding increases**. HB 704 would establish a formula for the Department of Education to use in determining the appropriate state appropriation, increase in appropriation, and distribution of monies for special education for each school district. The bill would also establish a **Legislative Commission on Special Education** and task the commission with developing certain components of a funding formula. The department would also be required to develop a **competitive grant program** for school districts regarding special education funding. Under HB 704, PDE is given the responsibility of developing a plan for special education oversight including the submission of special education plans, amendments, and revisions.

[PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION](#)

On June 8, the **Pennsylvania Department of Education** (PDE) released information collected from 747 local education agencies indicating that **99.4 percent of all teachers** and **99.2 percent of all principals** evaluated during the 2009-2010 school year received **satisfactory performance ratings**. According to Secretary Ronald Tomalis, these results "raise serious concerns about the quality of the evaluation system and whether it has any relevance to what happens in the classroom." The PDE previously received an \$800,000 grant from the Bill and Melissa Gates Foundation to develop a new, comprehensive educator assessment system, and has described the new proposal to the Senate Education Committee. As proposed, the new teacher evaluation system would include student achievement. The new evaluation system would consist of four components: classroom observations, school performance on the PSSA exams, teacher performance and other criteria determined at the local level. The new system is expected to be implemented in the 2012-13 school year. To read PDE's press release, [click here](#).

[EPLC NEWS](#)

The second **EPLC Arts and Education Regional Community Forum**: "The Future of the Arts and Education in Pennsylvania" will take place in **Harrisburg on Tuesday, June 14**. The forum will be held at the Capital Area Intermediate Unit from 7-9 PM. For more information, visit EPLC website at www.eplc.org.

[EDUCATION POLICY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM](#)

Applications are available now for the **2011-2012 Pennsylvania Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP)** which is sponsored by The Education Policy and Leadership Center (EPLC).

With more than 300 graduates in its first eleven years, this Program is a premier professional development opportunity for educators, state and local policymakers, advocates, and community leaders. Act 48 credits are available to individuals holding Pennsylvania teaching or administrative certificates, and State Board of Accountancy (SBA) credits are available to certified public accountants.

The Fellowship Program begins with a two-day retreat on September 8-9, 2011 and continues through June 2012. **Applications are being accepted now**. For schedule and more information or to download an application, please click on http://www.eplc.org/leadership_fellowship_about.shtml.

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 Web Site, but must be submitted by mail 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 Ron Cowell at 717-260-9900 or cowell@eplc.org.

[ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)

On June 9, the **National Coalition for Core Arts Standards** (NCCAS) announced that it will lead the revision of the **1994 National Standards for Arts Education**. Membership of this newly formed partnership of organizations and a strategy framework were developed following a meeting in February 2011. The NCCAS committee has begun work on a report that will summarize the current status of arts education in America. The report will be made public in late summer or early fall. For more information, [click here](#).

Save the Date! The Arts and Education Initiative (AEI) of EPLC will hold its day-long Symposium on **October 13, 2011**.

[DATEBOOK](#)

- The **House** and **Senate** will reconvene on Monday, **June 13** at **1:00 PM**.
- The **House Education Committee** will hold a meeting on **Tuesday, June 14** at 9:30 AM to consider the following bills: [SB 612](#), [HB 1454](#) and [SB 858](#).
- The **Senate Education Committee** will meet on **Tuesday, June 14** at 11:45 AM. to consider the following nominees to the **State Charter School Appeals Board**: Kenneth Lawrence Jr., Angela Marks, Lee Ann Munger and Mitchell J. Yanyanin. In addition, the Committee will consider the following bills: [SB 172](#), [SB 391](#), [SB 1087](#), [SB 1127](#) and [SB 1129](#).
- The next meeting of the **Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education** (PASSHE) **Board of Governors** will be on June 29-30. For more information, [click here](#).
- **Americans for the Arts** hosts its Annual Convention in San Diego on **June 16-18**.
- The **International Society for Technology in Education** (ISTE) will hold its Annual Conference and Exposition in Philadelphia on **June 19-22**.

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

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The Education Policy and Leadership Center is an independent, non-partisan and not-for-profit organization. The Mission of EPLC is to encourage and support the enactment and implementation of effective state-level education policies in order to improve student learning in grades P-12, increase the effective operation of schools, and enhance educational opportunities for citizens of all ages.

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