



## **PAGE Legislative Updates October 2021**

**Note:** The content and links in this PAGE Legislative Update are for informational purposes only.

### **OSERS Return to School Roadmap – Final in a Series**

The IDEA Part C document links below complete OSERS Return to School Roadmap Q&A series. The documents demonstrate the Department's continued commitment to support States to ensure they have the information necessary to carry out these important requirements and to make good use of the additional American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to ensure the full implementation of IDEA requirements.

"Access to early intervention services is critical for the development and well-being of young children and their families. This guidance is designed to assist states to identify and serve all eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families so they can reach their full potential."

#### **Sources:**

- [Return to School Roadmap: Child Find, Referral, and Eligibility Under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#)
- [Return to School Roadmap: Provision of Early Intervention Services \(Oct. 29, 2021\) - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)

### **Update - PA Education Funding Lawsuit**

The PA Education Funding trial is slated to begin on November 12, 2021. For seven years, since the case was filed in 2014, clients--school districts and parents from under-funded communities across the state--have persisted to address the hundreds of thousands of students who have been continuously denied the resources they need for a quality education. Six school districts, including the William Penn School District in Delaware County, sued state lawmakers in 2014 for what they say is a severe underfunding of the public school system.

The [lawsuit](#) alleges the state has failed to ensure all students receive an adequate and equitable education, as guaranteed by the state constitution. It claims inadequate funding has placed an unfair burden on students from low-income districts and created a disparity in access to quality education.

The trial will be held in Courtroom 3002 of the Pennsylvania Judicial Center in Harrisburg and is expected to continue through December. A livestream will be available to the public--



The link to the livestream is forthcoming. [Sign up at Fund Our Schools PA for the latest updates.](#)

**Source:** [Pennsylvania's school funding could be revamped by civil trial that begins next week | PhillyVoice](#)

### **Update - Senate Bill 506**

Pointing to a rise in anxiety disorders and depression in school children, Pennsylvania lawmakers have proposed legislation that would allow K-12 students two mental health days per semester. The change is needed now more than ever, some officials argue, in the wake of the pandemic and all its attendant disruptions. State Senator Judith L. Schwank (D-Berks County) wrote in a co-sponsorship memorandum that, "This urgently requires further examination and immediate intervention." The bill is currently with the Education Committee, where it was referred to on April 9, 2021. No new movement documented to date.

**Source:** [Bill Information - Senate Bill 506; Regular Session 2021-2022 - PA General Assembly \(state.pa.us\)](#)

### **Update – PA Senate Bill 1**

In June 2021, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association announced that more than 400 school districts have passed a charter school reform resolution calling for changes to the 24-year-old charter school law.

More than 80% of Pennsylvania's 500 public school districts collectively called for change through the adoption of a formal resolution. Locally elected school leaders across Pennsylvania called upon the General Assembly to enact substantial charter school reform now. The bill was removed from the table on September 28, 2021.

**Source:** [Bill Information - Senate Bill 1; Regular Session 2021-2022 - PA General Assembly \(state.pa.us\)](#)

### **Update - PA House Bill 1642**

House lawmakers passed a measure October 5, 2021, that expands the size and scope of tuition vouchers for Pennsylvania's economically disadvantaged schools. Three Democrats joined all of the chamber's Republicans in approving House Bill 1642, which lowers the threshold for schools to qualify as economically disadvantaged under the law.

Currently, schools with 75% or more of students receiving tuition assistance through the Opportunity Tax Credit Scholarship (OSTC) program qualify for an additional \$1,000 credit. For additional information, refer to the link below. This bill was referred to the Education Committee



on October 18, 2021. It was subsequently reported as amended and for first consideration on November 8, 2021.

**Source:** [Bill Information \(History\) - House Bill 1642; Regular Session 2021-2022 - PA General Assembly \(state.pa.us\)](#)

### **Update - PA House Bill 1893**

A bill that would make more state reporting on COVID-19 and other diseases available to the public was passed by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in a party-line vote on October 4, 2021.

The [Republican-backed bill](#), sponsored by Bucks County's Rep. Craig Staats, would amend the 1950s-era Disease Prevention and Control Act to allow the public access to all state reports on diseases and any records of actions taken in response to those reports. This bill was referred to the House and Human Services Committee on October 25, 2021.

**Source:** [Bill Information - House Bill 1893; Regular Session 2021-2022 - PA General Assembly \(state.pa.us\)](#)

### **Update - PA House Bill 1332**

Parents of public-school students would be able to access the contents of a school curriculum, textbook titles, and lesson plans with a few clicks on a computer keyboard under legislation that is advancing in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

[The bill](#), sponsored by Rep. Andrew Lewis, R-Dauphin County, would make this standard practice. Some public schools already conduct this approach, but Lewis wants to make it more consistent across all school districts, charter schools, career and technology centers, and intermediate units. The bill was referred to the Education Committee on October 6, 2021. It was subsequently reported as amended and for first consideration on October 18, 2021.

**Source:** [Bill Information \(History\) - House Bill 1332; Regular Session 2021-2022 - PA General Assembly \(state.pa.us\)](#)

### **Additional Articles and Resources:**

**Article:** [Students With Depression, Anxiety May Qualify for Accommodations, Feds Tell Schools \(edweek.org\)](#)

**Resources:** [ocr-factsheet-students-self-harm-covid-19.pdf](#)

**Article:** [How Staff Shortages Are Crushing Schools \(edweek.org\)](#)

**Article:** [Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs \(PDF\)](#)

**Article:** [The State of Mental Health in America | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](#)



**Article:** <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/how-staff-shortages-are-crushing-schools/2021/10>

**Article:** [Why Schools Have a Stake in U.S. Supreme Court Case That May Expand Gun Rights \(edweek.org\)](#)

**Article:** [National Family Caregivers Month | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](#)

**Article:** [Gifted education's future requires more diversity, inclusion and access | K-12 Dive \(k12dive.com\)](#)

**Article:** [PA's Mental Health Consent Law is Being Misinterpreted \(paparentandfamilyalliance.org\)](#)

**Note:** The content and links in this PAGE Legislative Update are for informational purposes only.