

## April 25 – May 1, 2025

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### SESSION STATUS

At 12:46 p.m. on Thursday, April 24, 2025, the House stands adjourned until Friday, May 2, 2025, at 12:00 p.m., unless sooner recalled by the Speaker.

The House announced that it will reconvene on Friday, May 2, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. for non-voting session.

At 12:51 p.m. on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, the Senate recessed until Monday, May 5, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore.

### UPCOMING SESSION DAYS

#### House

May 2 (NV), 5-7, 12-14  
June 2-4, 9-11, 16-18, 23-27, 30  
Sept. 22-24 (NV), 29-30  
Oct. 1, 6-8, 27-29  
Nov. 17-19  
Dec. 8-10 (NV), 15-17

#### Senate

May 5-7, 12-13  
June 2-4, 9-11, 23-30

*The Education Recap is a comprehensive weekly report on legislative and executive actions on education-related legislation in Pennsylvania state government, as compiled and edited by PLS. Additional information, including video, transcript and testimony, is available to [PLSGovTrac](https://www.plsgovtrac.com) users. For more information, contact [sales@mypls.com](mailto:sales@mypls.com).*

## Press Conferences

*PLS coverage of Capitol events including press conferences, bill signings and media availabilities*

### REP. TOPPER PRESENTS HOUSE REPUBLICAN UPDATE ON VARIOUS ISSUES

By Julia Walters, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | April 30, 2025

House Republican Leader Jesse Topper (R-Bedford) provided updates on REAL ID, energy generation, Gov. Josh Shapiro's 2025-2026 budget proposal and other areas of interest today in Room 423 of the Main Capitol.

Rep. Topper began by touching on REAL ID requirements, which he stated the Department of Transportation (PennDOT) should "be a little more proactive" when it comes to addressing REAL ID processing and appointments. He noted that while the deadline for REAL ID has changed multiple times, Pennsylvania's current enforcement date is getting "very close." Rep. Topper considered ideas revolving around "extending hours [and] providing some more flexibility" for driver's license centers and other facilities that process REAL ID applications.

Rep. Topper then shifted focus to discuss the arson attack that occurred at the Governor's Mansion on April 22. Rep. Topper mentioned he is "certainly very happy and relieved" that Gov. Shapiro and his family were unharmed. He noted that "the number one question" he has been getting from his constituents regarding the situation is, "How did this happen?" Rep. Topper added he "fully understands" safety concerns regarding the release of the full report done by former State Police (PSP) commissioner Jeffrey Miller. "However, in terms of the accountability of what happened and how it happened, I think that is a question that needs to be answered," he said. "Those answers need to be provided to the people's representatives here in the House and the Senate." Rep. Topper noted that, potentially, the House Government Oversight Committee could be helpful in assessing the report in order to ensure "that it can never happen again."

Rep. Topper continued, moving toward issues concerning the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA). He mentioned his recent [co-sponsorship memo](#), "concerning the privatization of some elements of SEPTA." Rep. Topper emphasized that SEPTA needs "long-term, sustainable solutions" and added that their proposed "\$165 million this year, [and] potentially more in a couple years" in the governor's budget is "not realistic." He acknowledged the "critical nature" of mass transit but criticized that the solutions do not match "the reality of... our fiscal situation." Rep. Topper stressed the importance of grasping reality, equating SEPTA funding to pizza nutrition. "I have to live in a world where pizza is not a health food, as bad as I want it to be," he said. "And we have to live in a world that, over the next few years, the economic situation... could be such that we cannot continue to support SEPTA in this way." Rep. Topper stated that while there will "always be public support" for SEPTA, other solutions should be considered to supplement funding.

Rep. Topper also discussed energy generation and initiatives, mentioning its significance not only for Pennsylvania but for the entire energy grid. He added that increased energy initiatives need to get started now, as there are no "overnight fixes." Rep. Topper also said the legislature needs to stay away from "anything that looks or smells like [the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative] RGGI." He emphasized generating more economic growth to support the amount of energy generation needed, including creating "the tax base to support the programs that we feel are vital here in Pennsylvania."

Rep. Topper opened the press conference to questions from the media.

**Have House Republicans and Democrats been working together for alternative solutions for SEPTA?**

Rep. Topper said no specific solution has been seen yet, though conversations are occurring. He added that “there are certain systematic changes that have to take place,” and mentioned Democrats and Republicans must come together to find solutions. He praised SEPTA for “recognizing” that fare increases could be necessary. Rep. Topper emphasized that Pennsylvania is in a “fiscal crisis” and all major cities need “sustainable” mass transit.

**What are your thoughts on spurring energy generation?**

Rep. Topper replied, “The number one thing to bring stability to the market is to get out of RGGI.” He added that RGGI should not be replaced with other greenhouse gas initiatives. Rep. Topper also mentioned that government should “step back” and let the market exist without the carbon tax RGGI imposes, as well as eliminate certain permitting regulations. He stated that other neighboring states, such as Ohio and West Virginia, have been able to “spur ahead” by eliminating various regulations. “We need generation, and we need the ability to transport the product. Pipeline development is essential,” he continued.

**What are your thoughts on permitting restrictions that have already been lifted to speed up the process?**

Rep. Topper expressed his belief that if there are certain situations where restrictions have been lifted, that can also occur “across the board.” He stated Pennsylvania needs to eliminate more “red tape” regulations, “as opposed to allowing the administration to just speed up or slow up when they wish.”

**Have you heard about any power plants that are being brought back?**

Rep. Topper responded, “When you’re talking about the data centers that want to come here, as you can see with Three Mile Island, they’re looking for any option to do it themselves.” He noted they are “limited” on what can be done, but that they should be “part of the discussion.” Rep. Topper added that since the infrastructure already exists, it would “certainly be better to bring some of them back online.”

**Why do you believe that it would be better to bring some of them back online?**

Rep. Topper explained, “They’re pulling coal [out] of the ground in Germany. It’s not exactly like anybody else isn’t seeing what needs to be done.”

**Regarding the attack on the Governor’s Mansion, why is the impending Miller report so important?**

Rep. Topper stated he believes the “specifics and the transparency around what happened is what we need to see.” He mentioned keeping that information “close to the vest” is significant but reiterated that new protections should be in place as a result of the attack. Rep. Topper mentioned the report’s importance in reflecting “the failures of the system.”

**How important is communication between local law enforcement, emergency services and PSP?**

Rep. Topper replied, “Communication among our emergency services and law enforcement community, whether it’s at the national level, whether it’s at the local level, certainly if it’s at the state level, should be one of our priorities.” He again mentioned the Miller report and its assistance in identifying communication issues to ensure they don’t occur again.

**Are you concerned about PSP hiring their former commissioner to conduct an independent report?**

Rep. Topper responded that Miller’s experience as the former PSP commissioner “can help and hurt.” He stated his desire to see the report and determine its contents while relying on Miller “to view it as an expert.” Rep. Topper also added that “nothing official” has been given to the legislature as of yet.

**How will you balance what should be kept private and what can be public regarding the Miller report?**

Rep. Topper stated that there can be “legislative action” if necessary to ensure private information stays classified. He also stated his belief that “the accountability of what took place and how it happened... is something that the public should be aware of.”

**What is your prediction on the timeline for budget finalization?**

Rep. Topper said, “I’m out of that prediction business.” He described his many years of budget discussions, some finishing earlier or later than predicted. He noted that “conversations are always flying around in this building,” regarding budget discussions and timelines. Rep. Topper added, “These next two months will tell the tale, as they always do.”

**What are your thoughts on the legalization of marijuana as outlined in the budget proposal?**

Rep. Topper said it has “a long way to go” before it can be completed.

**How do you feel about extending the time frame to allow for more budget discussions?**

Rep. Topper mentioned that “conversations are taking place... whether it’s via phone, in the building.” He stated he is “not concerned” about “building time” but more about creating a successful product.

**What are your thoughts on data centers using large amounts of energy and water?**

Rep. Topper responded, “If we do not do something to increase our generating capacity in Pennsylvania with the data centers, in a few years, we will be experiencing brownouts [and] blackouts.” He emphasized that data centers are “a huge part of the new economy” and Pennsylvania should be attempting to attract some of them within the commonwealth.

**What is happening regarding private companies potentially helping to support SEPTA?**

Rep. Topper said those conversations “are just getting started.” He explained, “It would be different in every way, depending on what private company would want to come in and help with that.” Rep. Topper refrained from discussing specifics as the concept isn’t fully developed but reiterated the need for stability and options for mass transit when the General Assembly is unable to provide adequate funding. “However we can do that, I’m open to suggestions,” Rep. Topper said.

**What are your thoughts on raising taxes to help fund SEPTA?**

Rep. Topper responded, “I’m not a big fan of creating new revenue specifically to designate to one problem.”

**Is your upcoming legislation to privatize SEPTA an alternative solution for funding as a whole or a supplemental plan?**

Rep. Topper explained, “It’s a mix.” He continued that “there will be state dollars that will flow to mass transit,” and mentioned that his ideas could be part of the solution. “Keep in mind, we’re talking about one aspect of our transportation system that needs investing,” he said. Rep. Topper called attention to bridges and roads in his district that couldn’t be repaired due to Gov. Shapiro’s “flexing” of federal dollars away from infrastructure issues toward SEPTA. “I don’t think we want to damage the overall transportation model or infrastructure model in Pennsylvania specifically to try and fix one problem,” he stated.

**What are your thoughts on President Donald Trump’s first 100 days in office?**

Rep. Topper said, “At the end of the day, the issues that we’re finding in Pennsylvania are the ones that we would have found regardless of who the president is.” He added he is “hopeful” that President Trump’s policies will benefit Pennsylvania, highlighting his support for the Trump administration’s energy policies.

**What is your opinion on President Trump’s tariffs?**

Rep. Topper explained, “I think what people want to see from all of the conversation about tariffs is making more products in America.” He emphasized the importance of spurring American manufacturing, adding that it will create more jobs for Pennsylvania.



## Committee News

*Comprehensive coverage of the House & Senate public hearings and voting meetings*

**House Education Committee**

*04/25/25, 10:00 a.m., Lancaster Middle School, 1001 Lehigh Avenue, Lancaster  
Pennsylvania Legislative Services*

The committee held an informational meeting to discuss cyber charter school outcomes.

Chairman Peter Schweyer (D-Lehigh) opened the meeting by emphasizing the importance of summarizing testimonies for an efficient Q&A session. He reminded everyone that the meeting was being live-streamed and asked for electronics to be silenced. He acknowledged the School District of Lancaster (SDOL) for hosting the meeting and his colleagues from Lancaster County.

Minority Chairman Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster) highlighted the importance of the changes made last session regarding oversight, transparency and ethical standards. He mentioned the impact of [Act 55](#), which shifted approximately \$180 to \$190 million in costs, and expressed a desire to delve into the specifics of these changes. Chairman Cutler stressed understanding the real impact of policies and the importance of family involvement in educational outcomes.

Dr. Sherri Smith, executive director, Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA), focused on student outcomes in cyber charter schools, highlighting concerns about academic performance, participation rates, attendance and graduation rates. Smith emphasized residency verification as a large issue for cyber charters. “It costs our districts a whole lot of money, and our taxpayers in that area a whole lot of money to send those students to our cyber charter programs,” she said. “I think they do have an accountability or taxpayers to make sure they're in residency.” Smith also provided data on proficiency levels in language arts and mathematics and suggested policy improvements for better tracking and accountability in cyber charter schools.

Susan Spicka, executive director, Education Voters of Pennsylvania, specified inaccuracies in a report published by her organization, emphasizing that minor errors were corrected and the report's findings on cyber charter schools' spending remained unchanged. Spicka criticized cyber charter schools for their “very long and very well-documented history of low performance for students.” She recalled a 2023-2024 study that showed although cyber charter schools enrolled 5% of students in grades seven through 12, they accounted for 20% of the high school dropout rate for Pennsylvania. She opined that the cyber charter industry prioritizes enrollment and revenue over student success, saying there is a “mismatch between what money is being spent on and what the goals of a school should be.” Spicka advocated for tuition adjustments and a refocus on educational priorities. “There is a real urgency for something to happen this year because every year that students are not being served by cyber charter schools and taxpayer dollars are being wasted is a year that is really harming kids,” Spicka stated.

Rep. Barbara Gleim (R-Cumberland) shared her experiences from serving on a school board, highlighting success stories of students who benefited from cyber education. She questioned the current disputes over funding between cyber and brick-and-mortar schools, criticized the existing education funding formula and called for a revised formula that considers the needs of all types of schools. Rep. Gleim also pointed out that public schools, like cyber schools, can misappropriate funds and emphasized the need for a balanced discussion on funding that includes all stakeholders.

Rep. Ismail Smith Wade-EI (D-Lancaster) asked for specifics on other expenditures by cyber charter schools. Spicka detailed significant expenditures on non-educational activities and venues, highlighting over \$400,000 spent on entertainment, and criticized the lack of scrutiny and transparency in cyber charter school spending.

Rep. John Schlegel (R-Lebanon) questioned the effectiveness of the current state testing system and mentioned Gov. Josh Shapiro's proposal of \$52 million towards state testing. He asked for thoughts on an appropriate funding amount for cyber charter schools, referencing [House Bill 1422](#). Smith discussed the need for new metrics to measure school success and mentioned that professional organizations recommended tuition reform for cyber charter schools, suggesting a figure up to \$10,000. Spicka emphasized the importance of teaching students the value of regular engagement and the development of soft skills, noting that challenges in school attendance and engagement are widespread.

Chairman Schweyer announced an extension of the panel discussion by 10 minutes to accommodate more questions.

Rep. Mary Isaacson (D-Philadelphia) highlighted the challenges faced by Philadelphia's school districts and questioned the applicability of cyber programs to other public schools. She also raised concerns about student performance, acknowledging a specific example from Smith's testimony about a student with a low GPA and class rank, and asked how to ensure students do not fall behind academically. Smith stated that different students require different solutions. “Sometimes it's personal discipline of a child to do well in education, and sometimes it's [that] they just need more in-person support,” she reiterated.

Rep. Marc Anderson (R-York) emphasized the importance of focusing on student benefits in the debate between cyber charter schools and traditional public schools, criticizing the use of biased statistics. He proposed direct dialogue between representatives of both types of schools to objectively compare outcomes and asked if there had been efforts to facilitate such discussions. Smith, aligning with Rep. Anderson's student-focused approach, pointed out the main barrier to collaboration as the fight over funding. She suggested that addressing the funding model could lead to better cooperation between cyber charters and districts. Spicka highlighted the need for updates to the charter school law and mentioned a report comparing outcomes of cyber charter schools to the largest school districts in Pennsylvania, offering to share it for closer comparison. Rep. Anderson expressed interest in Spicka's report and disagreed that financial concerns should prevent discussions between educational stakeholders. He offered to facilitate a meeting to discuss the issues.

Chairman Cutler asked Smith about the inclusion of intermediate unit (IU) schools or public schools with their own cyber programs in her data and inquired about a discrepancy in savings mentioned in the testimony. He noted the difference between \$278 million and \$378 million as indicated by the governor. Spicka specified her use of data from the Department of Education (PDE) and her calculation that resulted in a savings figure of \$378 million, accounting for the removal of a \$100 million cyber transition line item. Chairman Cutler discussed the financial challenges faced by school boards, particularly with pension payments, and called for a discussion on pension reform. He advocated for standards and accountability to be applied equally across different types of educational programs and shared a personal anecdote about his son's success in an online learning environment.

Chairman Schweyer inquired about the proficiency rates for students by 2024 and emphasized that a specific math proficiency percentage for certain third graders was as low as 5.2%. He asked Smith what corrective actions she would take if a school had a third-grade math proficiency rate of 5.2%, including whether she would consider firing the principal. Smith emphasized she would do a “deep dive” into why the numbers are so low, calling it “inexcusable.” She mentioned utilizing a corrective action plan to facilitate the investigation. Chairman Schweyer asked if the practices she described would be recommended for the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), particularly in relation to schools. Smith emphasized the importance of aligning curriculum, instruction and assessment, especially for third-grade performance, and the need for cyber charters to develop corrective action plans for underperforming students. Chairman Schweyer then asked if these action plans should be public and discussed at board meetings. Smith shared her experience as a superintendent for Lower Dauphin School District (LDSD), where a collaborative effort improved special education students' performance. She noted the challenge, but also the possibility of similar improvements in virtual programs.

Chairman Cutler asked whether evaluating a student's deficiencies could lead to an additional individualized education program (IEP) for students needing extra support. Smith specified that standardized test performance alone does not typically trigger special needs identification, with various interventions tried before considering an IEP.

Chairman Schweyer inquired about PDE's response to a district with a 5.3 math proficiency rate, questioning if it would lead to receivership or corrective action. Smith explained that receivership is for financial issues, not academic performance, and under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), schools with low scores receive additional support from Pennsylvania every three years. Chairman Schweyer discussed PSSA participation rates, noting significant drops across districts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and asked if similar declines were observed statewide. Smith confirmed a significant drop in participation during the 2023-2024 period due to the pandemic and parental pushback, emphasizing the federal requirement for these tests and the challenges cyber charter schools face in finding physical locations for testing.

Chairman Schweyer then introduced the second panel.

Melanie Upton, administrator, Non-Traditional Learning and Career Readiness, Conestoga Valley School District (CVSD), responded to concerns about student safety and support in cyber education by detailing the measures her program takes, such as orientations, weekly checks and home visits. She also discussed how her program integrates hands-on learning opportunities and collaborates with other districts to ensure students have access to both virtual and physical learning experiences.

Rep. Danielle Friel-Otten (D-Chester) shared her concerns about the safety of students in cyber education programs and the challenges of supporting students with learning disabilities in virtual learning environments. She asked how cyber programs are addressing these issues, particularly for students who need hands-on support. Upton emphasized weekly check-ins to make sure students are up-to-date on their schoolwork. She noted that if students fall behind, they implement home visits and family appointments to investigate potential issues. Upton also stated her office is “very connected” with their school counselors to identify other problems if they come up.

Rep. Anderson praised the CVSD program but expressed concerns about the adequacy of educational options for students in districts without access to high-quality in-house programs. He questioned what options exist for students in districts that might be considered failing. Upton emphasized the importance of local support systems for education and described her role in non-traditional learning and career readiness at CVSD. She advocated for the sharing of best practices among districts and stressed the role of IUs in facilitating educational improvements and support.

Rep. Smith Wade-El asked whether students moving from in-person instruction to the Conestoga Valley Virtual Academy (CVVA) would still have access to in-person school counselors or psychologists if needed. Upton confirmed that virtual students at CVVA have access to the same interventions as in-person students, including psychologists and counselors, and detailed how coordinators facilitate access to these services. Rep. Smith Wade-El inquired about the development of the curriculum for CVVA, asking whether it is largely developed in-house or differently. Upton explained that their virtual academy uses platforms that allow for the integration of the district's curriculum standards and performance assessments, emphasizing the adaptability of these platforms and the effort to align virtual content with district standards.

Rep. Schlegel asked about the role of IUs in supporting cyber school initiatives and whether there is guidance for students and parents on choosing cyber education. Upton confirmed that discussions with families about virtual education do occur, emphasizing a solutions-oriented approach and the importance of trial periods, blended learning and the role of parents as learning coaches. Rep. Schlegel then inquired if the concept of a learning coach is universally applied within the IU and the consortium offering cyber education. Upton responded that most schools refer to the at-home caregiver as a “learning coach,” though the level of support varies.

Rep. Gleim noted her district pays approximately \$1.27 million for cyber education for about 70 to 75 students fully enrolled in cyber programs outside the district. Rep. Gleim also described her district's hybrid charter model that combines cyber education with traditional amenities and inquired if CVVA trademarks or sells its curriculum. Upton mentioned using eDynamic as their "baseline."

Chairman Cutler commended the hybrid model of education, highlighting its effectiveness in his home district and the support provided by the Lancaster-Lebanon IU-13.

Chairman Schweyer thanked the speakers and mentioned he would follow up with an email regarding best practices and collaboration among public school district cyber programs.

Reese Flurie, CEO, Flurie Solutions Group, and volunteer chair for the Coalition of Public Cyber Charter Schools (PCPCS), discussed his 40-year career in public education and the evolution of the PSSAs from curriculum guides to accountability measures under No Child Left Behind. He called for an independent analysis of the PSSA's validity and reliability, modernization of the assessment process and educational reform that addresses systemic issues without immediate financial considerations, noting the impact of pension costs on school budgets.

Rep. Friel-Otten raised concerns about the targeted marketing of cyber charter schools towards certain districts and the disparity in tuition fees for students with similar educational needs from different townships. She questioned the justification for these differences and their impact on school districts and property taxes. Flurie responded that marketing for cyber charter schools is generally broad-based, targeting specific communities only in cases of upheaval. He criticized the special education funding formula and mentioned the complexity of funding public education, the impact of the cyber charter law on funding disparities and inaccuracies in financial reporting that could lead to either underpayment or overpayment to cyber charter schools. Rep. Friel-Otten asked about the allocation of an extra \$30,000 in taxpayer dollars for a student from Coatesville Area School District (CASA), implying skepticism about the funds' use. Flurie explained that funds received by a cyber charter school are used to deliver the program without segregating funds for special education or regular education students, emphasizing that spending should be based on the services required by each child.

Rep. Friel-Otten questioned the fairness of a funding formula that burdens taxpayers in economically disadvantaged school districts like CASA to subsidize cyber charter education statewide, highlighting disparities between funding formulas for students from wealthier districts versus less affluent areas. Flurie cautioned against comparing school districts without considering the individual costs of services provided to students, explaining that expenses for student services can vary significantly. Rep. Friel-Otten highlighted the disparity in tuition costs for cyber charter schools, noting a significant difference in tuition for the same student with the same IEP living within 15 minutes of each other, suggesting that this disparity places a primary burden on taxpayers who subsidize these costs. She stressed the importance of making precise comparisons in discussions, cautioning against comparing dissimilar entities. Flurie explained that the services provided by a cyber charter school to a student with an IEP are determined by the IEP student's needs, not by the funding that follows the student.

Rep. Gleim commented on how the fair funding formula creates an adequacy gap that affects funding in areas with a lower average daily membership (ADM) compared to big cities and highlighted this issue as relevant to the entire basic education funding formula.

Chairman Schweyer sought specifications on whether Flurie was representing PCPCS or a private corporation, emphasizing the need for fairness in the discussion. Flurie specified that he does not speak for Commonwealth Charter Academy (CCA) but is comfortable representing his views as a private consultant and for the coalition. Chairman Schweyer discussed the importance of evaluating the outcomes of education funding and pointed out that cyber charter schools are classified as public schools but do not follow the same rules as traditional public schools. Flurie explained the regulatory environment in which cyber charter schools operate, being a mix of public schools and 501(c)(3) organizations, and highlighted the distinct requirements they must fulfill. Chairman Schweyer raised concerns about the differing regulations between cyber charter schools and traditional public schools, specifically the certification of teachers. Flurie acknowledged that not all cyber charter school teachers have to be certified, and while he mentioned that the CEOs of five cyber charter schools reported their teachers were fully certified, he couldn't speak for all 14 cyber charter schools.

Chairman Schweyer discussed the allowance of up to 25% of cyber school teachers in Pennsylvania not being certified and questioned if there are other instances where regulations might be more flexible or standards lower. Flurie expressed a wish for public schools to have more flexibility in areas such as allowing a local Doctor of Medicine (MD) to teach a biology class. Chairman Schweyer alleged, "The cyber outcomes are clearly worse than the average of our public schools." Flurie expressed uncertainty, stating, "I don't know if you can say that." Flurie then shared his concern about performance numbers from his time as a school leader, noting no significant difference in assessment scores between students in his school and those from their original districts. Flurie also mentioned he is unsure if the practice of comparing assessment scores is still ongoing and stated he would be willing to inquire about the availability of certain data.

Chairman Schweyer expressed a desire for cyber charter schools to attend public hearings, noting his lack of subpoena power but willingness to use it. Flurie mentioned he has communicated with cyber leaders about attending in-person meetings to address questions. Chairman Schweyer questioned the claim that it has become significantly harder for students in cyber charter schools to take assessments, comparing the situation to 2018 and noting no substantial change in difficulty. Chairman Schweyer also pointed out a significant outlier in participation rates among schools, asking if this issue was addressed in the “nonprofit board meetings” Flurie volunteers at. Flurie described the drop in participation rates as a “one-year anomaly” and suggested it might continue due to a growing movement of parents wanting more control over their child’s education. Chairman Schweyer compared assessments to necessary processes like a driver’s test, questioning why cyber charter schools’ graduation rates receive unnecessary attention. Flurie suggested that the metrics used to evaluate cyber charter schools might be skewed, noting that 30% of students were already behind due to COVID-19 impacts.

Chairman Schweyer mentioned that students who are off-cohort from a K-12 school are the same individuals who have poor test scores, whether in a traditional school district or a cyber school. Flurie mentioned that outside of Philadelphia, it’s unlikely many public schools in the commonwealth experience a significant influx of students who are substantially behind academically. Chairman Schweyer challenged the argument that cyber charter schools should not be scrutinized for their graduation rates, emphasizing the importance of assessments and arguing that if assessments are applied equally across traditional and cyber schools, the argument that assessments are only flawed for cyber schools is invalid. He argued that cyber schools should not be exempt from the expectation to graduate more than 70% of their students on time.

Chairman Schweyer then focused the discussion on the PSSAs. Flurie discussed concerns about the PSSAs, questioning their normalization and validity, and highlighting the stress and disruption to families. Chairman Schweyer acknowledged the discomfort tests cause for children, especially those with special needs or severe anxiety and depression, and the challenges faced by school districts with a high volume of English language learners. Flurie highlighted the similarity in the numbers of students taking assessments in different districts but noted that the performance and characteristics of students in separate charter schools do not match those in the highest performing districts. Chairman Schweyer criticized the assessment participation rates of the largest cyber school in Pennsylvania, mentioning its failure to meet federal requirements and its recent expenditure of over \$200 million on new academic buildings and fleets of vehicles. Flurie disagreed with the previous assessment, stating that if the assessments were online and proctored, there should be a 95% participation rate. Chairman Schweyer mentioned the transition to online assessments next year and discussed the intersection of financial investments and educational outcomes, highlighting last year’s \$500 million allocation for adequacy in school districts and a \$100 million investment in cyber education. Flurie mentioned he couldn’t answer Chairman Schweyer’s question about the legislation because he hadn’t reviewed it.

Chairman Schweyer discussed the lack of specific spending rules for cyber schools, contrasting it with the criteria set for traditional public schools. Flurie agreed that there were no specific rules on how the \$100 million for cyber education could be spent but noted that the delivery of educational services by cyber schools is inherently different. Flurie also disagreed with the idea of imposing specific rules on cyber schools regarding spending, emphasizing the significant costs associated with technology and curriculum distribution. Chairman Schweyer asked about the justification for using public funds for educational purposes, specifically questioning the educational benefit of spending on neon signs for buildings. “What’s the educational benefit of putting neon signs on buildings?” he asked. “Should taxpayers be paying for neon?” Flurie mentioned that many schools have neon scoreboards, which help in identifying the location of the facility. Chairman Schweyer questioned the justification for public spending on aesthetic enhancements like neon signs on school buildings. Flurie explained that schools use various methods, such as wrapping vans for athletic teams and placing signs in gymnasiums, as a form of promoting the school.

Chairman Cutler addressed the issue of local decision-making in special education funding and the broader problem of schools failing to meet educational standards. He highlighted a case where a student was inadequately supported, emphasizing the need for better investment in education and increased stakeholder involvement in discussions about education. He questioned whether reducing or adjusting funding would lead to improved outcomes. Flurie disagreed with the notion that cutting or leveling funding rates would lead to better educational outcomes. Chairman Cutler then questioned the standard for evaluating schools that miss educational targets, asking for a discussion on the criteria applied to all schools failing to meet expectations. Flurie recounted his experience on a committee with the Pennsylvania School Boards Association PSBA, representing cyber charter schools in discussions about their costs and what they should be within school districts. He emphasized the complexity of accounting for all relevant expenses beyond simple estimates. Chairman Cutler mentioned that there had been discussions about what sunk costs are not considered when evaluating the expenses of cyber charter schools. He expressed his hope that they would obtain the necessary information to understand these costs better. Flurie mentioned that eight to nine years ago, a discussion on the cost of programs for school districts concluded with an estimated cost of \$13 to \$15,000, but did not extend to determining the cost for a cyber charter program.

Chairman Cutler discussed the importance of obtaining additional background information from school districts to better understand costs, particularly unexpected ones like those associated with hybrid counseling. He emphasized the need for students to receive the best education possible across all educational delivery systems and highlighted the importance of parental involvement in

educational choices. Chairman Cutler called for continued robust discussions and participation in future hearings to ensure parity in education.

Chairman Schweyer announced the next hearing on cyber education scheduled for May 2 at 10 a.m. in Johnstown, emphasizing the committee's commitment to the entire commonwealth. He also mentioned a forthcoming notice about a voting meeting when back in session, before closing the hearing.



### **House Democratic Policy Committee**

*04/28/2025, York County School of Technology, 2179 South Queen Street, York  
Pennsylvania Legislative Services*

The committee held a public hearing on community-based workforce centers.

Rep. Carol Hill-Evans (D-York) opened a meeting to discuss the role of organizations in workforce development, community growth and local economy in York County, emphasizing the importance of partnerships between community workforce centers and career and technical education (CTE) programs.

Dr. Scott Rogers, administrative director, York County School of Technology (YCST), discussed the role of YCST in workforce development, highlighting its comprehensive curriculum, high graduation rate and the demand for skilled trades. He requested increased funding for CTE, an updated funding formula and higher reimbursement rates for adult education.

Jacqueline Martino-Miller, charter school CEO, Crispus Attucks York (CAY), discussed CAY Charter School's role in re-engaging disconnected youth through education, job training and leadership development, sharing the success story of a graduate who secured employment through the school's support.

Rep. Regina Young (D-Philadelphia) asked about the nature of the diplomas that students receive and the selection process for new students. Martino-Miller explained that the school offers a regular high school diploma and detailed the admission process. Rep. Young also inquired about the total number of students and the context in which 20 students were described as scholars. Martino-Miller explained that these students are part of a new manufacturing program supported by a grant and that the school currently has 80 students enrolled.

Rep. Napoleon Nelson (D-Montgomery) asked about the reading and math proficiency levels of students at CAY, inquiring how the programs address deficiencies across the K-12 spectrum. Martino-Miller responded that her students, often being dropouts, have lower English and math scores, but the goal is to improve their skills for success in the world. Rogers discussed the success of transitioning students from eighth to ninth grade using an academic and technical model, noting significant academic growth over four years due to the synergy between academic and technical education. Rep. Nelson then asked if the incoming freshman class at the technical school had similar PSSA scores to the average of the 14-member school districts. Rogers mentioned that 25% of incoming students have special needs with individualized education plans (IEPs) and some have 504 plans, and described support systems in place, such as the algebra program and an A-B day schedule to accommodate certain students' learning needs.

Rep. Hill-Evans asked about the operation of the current Co-Op Program. Rogers explained the benefits of the eight A-B day program, allowing students to alternate between academic learning and cooperative work experience. Rep. Hill-Evans mentioned that the co-op work hours are included in the total hours required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Rogers confirmed that in a Career and Technical Education Center, cooperative education hours are counted as technical hours. Rep. Hill-Evans asked Martino-Miller if the same conditions apply to her. Martino-Miller acknowledged the requirement of completing 180 days. Rep. Hill-Evans asked Rogers to confirm a statement regarding a reimbursement of \$6.88 an hour for instructors. Rogers explained the historical background regarding state investment in adult and continuing education, suggesting that increasing the subsidy would help maintain low tuition costs for programs. Rep. Hill-Evans shared her personal experience with the Youth Build Program and referenced legislation she introduced, [HB 455](#), aimed at providing grant programs to support organizations like Youth Build, encouraging her colleagues to support the bill to ensure the sustainability of such programs.

Melissa Longenberger, executive director, Workforce Now Foundation, York Building Association (YBA), discussed challenges addressing the labor industry and explained what her foundation does to assist with the skilled labor shortages. She provided a brief overview of her organization's activities, including career days and fairs, as well as a pre-apprenticeship program.

AliceAnn Frost, executive director, Tec Centro York, discussed the mission and impact of Tech Centro York, highlighting its role in addressing workforce needs through training programs and partnerships. She detailed the center's services, including career training and adult basic education, and emphasized the importance of training for in-demand jobs like health care. Frost mentioned that since its opening in January 2025, the center has served over 150 people with a waitlist of over 525. She also discussed the significance of public-private partnerships and requested continued legislative support for workforce development.

Rep. Young raised concerns about the impact of robots and AI on the workforce and asked for perspectives on maintaining a viable workforce in the technological context. Longenberger discussed the impact of technology on the building and construction industry, stating that it enhances opportunities and changes career pathways without eliminating jobs. She shared an example of technology aiding workers to become more efficient. Frost emphasized the importance of adapting to labor market changes due to technological advancements and advocated for partnerships to navigate these changes. She stressed the need for community-focused efforts and preparing the next generation for future challenges. Rep. Young discussed the need for training in new skills like programming robots in her district, emphasizing collaboration between stakeholders and legislators to address technological changes and ensure efficient production.

Rep. Darisha Parker (D-Philadelphia) shared observations from a tour in Lancaster, highlighting new trends in social media employment and questioning the relevance of traditional workforce development in this context. She noted the challenge of retaining workers in traditional industries due to emerging industries on social media platforms. Longenberger described a high school-level pre-apprenticeship program that connects students with industry professionals, emphasizing the importance of teaching basic entry-level skills and providing ongoing training to showcase real career opportunities. Forst said she appreciated Rep. Parker's question and regarded the question as "forward-thinking and realistic." She emphasized that the students "advertise" the program, and said their programs are within "walking distance" from some of their homes.

Rep. Nelson asked about the capacity of workforce training programs and the importance of local resources in expanding that capacity, questioning whether increased state funding, business model adjustments or local support enhancements could be the solution. He sought to understand the effectiveness of local partnerships in expanding program capacities. Longenberger discussed the capacity challenges and growth of their pre-apprenticeship program, which began in the 2022-2023 period. She mentioned the program's success and desire to expand, including adding a second year, but noted space constraints as a limitation. Longenberger also highlighted partnerships with the York County Alliance for Learning. Rep. Nelson asked whether partnering organizations are providing financial resources or offering larger spaces. Longenberger explained that Junior Achievement is contributing a module to their science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) program and mentioned partnering with the New York Builders Association for sponsorship and support. She is exploring local grant opportunities and noted that the development of the facility is being led by the New York Builders Association and its board of directors. Frost discussed the challenges of expanding capacity due to space constraints and limitations with partner organizations, specifically with Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) for allied health courses. She mentioned the difficulty in running more Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) classes due to having only one instructor and emphasized efforts to overcome these constraints by building partnerships and searching for a second location in York County.

Sully Pinos, executive director, BLOOM Business Empowerment Center, York County Economic Alliance, detailed the center's role in community development and economic empowerment. She highlighted the center's achievements, including deploying nearly \$2 million in small business loans, providing entrepreneurial classes in multiple languages and issuing \$700,000 in small business grants. Pinos also mentioned the center's involvement in workforce development initiatives and a shipbuilding initiative.

Rep. Parker discussed the challenges faced by new daycare providers, particularly in relation to funding and regulatory compliance. She inquired about the measures being taken to prepare these providers for industry challenges and emphasized the importance of distinguishing between a business and a hobby. Rep. Parker mentioned considering town halls with Rep. Hill-Evans and others to address these concerns. Pinos discussed initiatives her organization is taking to address concerns surrounding daycare, including early learning resource centers and teacher aid training programs.

Rep. Young discussed the importance of integrating various elements to support education and workforce development, emphasizing the need for practical steps to create a seamless transition from classroom to career. She expressed interest in collaborating to expand these efforts across all counties, acknowledging the historical underfunding of the educational system and the current workforce deficit. Rep. Young highlighted the necessity of engaging stakeholders and county leadership to strengthen both education and workforce simultaneously and expressed a desire to continue the conversation and work together in the future. Pinos emphasized the importance of addressing educational and workforce challenges across the commonwealth. Pinos also highlighted the value of adopting an entrepreneurial mindset and design thinking, emphasizing empathy in engaging with individuals

and fostering thoughtful discussions. Rep. Young expressed her interest in scheduling a future meeting to continue the discussion.

Chairman Ryan Bizzarro (D-Erie) humorously asked for the speaker's opinion on their boss, who was watching the event live. Pinos mentioned that the individual in question is not leaving, referring to a statement that might be on page five of their prepared remarks.

Rep. Hill-Evans thanked all the testifiers for speaking and noted she had participated in events the testifiers spoke about during the hearing. She said she is "always happy to share with my colleagues things that we're doing here in York County." She thanked the committee and Chairman Bizzarro for joining her in York.

Chairman Bizzarro thanked Rep. Hill-Evans for hosting the policy committee in her county and directed those interested in the House Democratic Policy Committee's activities to visit their website.



## **Bullet.in.Points**

No Bullet.in.Points this week.

## **Cosponsor Memos**

### **HCO1745 - Abrogation of Chapter 49 Regulations Related to Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Education ("CR-SE").**

#### **Sponsor**

Rep. Stephenie Scialabba (R)

#### **Summary**

Considers abrogating the Chapter 49 regulations insofar as they relate to culturally relevant and sustaining education (CR-SE).

#### **Intro Date**

03/04/2025

#### **Last Action**

04/28/2025 H - Introduced HB1351

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### **HCO2100 - Updating the Civics Education Graduation Requirement**

#### **Sponsor**

Rep. Lou C. Schmitt (R)

#### **Summary**

Updates the assessment of civic knowledge in schools required by law.

#### **Intro Date**

04/22/2025

**Last Action**

05/01/2025 H - Introduced HB1373

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**HCO2139 - Protecting College Student-Athletes' NIL and Agency Rights****Sponsor**

Rep. Aerion Abney (D)

**Summary**

Strengthens name, image, and likeness (NIL) protections and ensures student-athletes can exercise their rights without undue restriction.

**Intro Date**

04/29/2025

**Last Action**

04/29/2025 H - Cosponsor memo filed

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**SCO958 - Education Support Professional Living Wage****Sponsor**

Sen. Lindsey Marie Williams (D)

**Summary**

Aims to help recruit and retain education support professionals (ESPs) in Pennsylvania's public schools by requiring public schools to pay a living wage of at least \$20/hour.

**Intro Date**

04/09/2025

**Last Action**

04/28/2025 S - Introduced SB679

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**SCO967 - Promoting Hearing Health Education in Pennsylvania's Schools****Sponsor**

Sen. Katie J. Muth (D)

**Summary**

Requires the Pennsylvania Department of Education to develop a model curriculum focused on hearing health education for students across the state

**Intro Date**

04/10/2025

**Last Action**

04/28/2025 S - Introduced SB663

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**SCO969 - Pennsylvania Award for Student Success Scholarship Program****Sponsor**

Sen. Judy Ward (R)

**Summary**

Creates a scholarship program for students in our lowest performing schools.

**Intro Date**

04/10/2025

**Last Action**

04/28/2025 S - Introduced SB10

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**SCO1044 - Ensuring Safe Transportation for All Public-School Students****Sponsor**

Sen. Greg Rothman (R)

**Summary**

Requires school districts to provide the same mode of transportation to public charter students as they provide to their school district-going peers.

**Intro Date**

04/30/2025

**Last Action**

04/30/2025 S - Cosponsor memo filed

## Basic Ed Bill Actions

**HB17 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in terms and courses of study, further providing for subjects of instruction and flag code.**

### Sponsor

Rep. Dane Watro (R)

### Summary

(PN 2) Amends the Public School Code, in terms and courses of study, further providing for subjects of instruction and flag code. Provides for every elementary public and private school to teach writing in print, joined italics and cursive handwriting. Allows the secretary of education to provide the teaching of subjects in a language other than English. Effective in 60 days.

### Intro Date

01/08/2025

### Actions

01/08/2025 H - Introduced

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01/08/2025 H - Referred to - House Education

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04/30/2025 H - Meeting Scheduled - 05/07/2025, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room 205, Ryan Office Building

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**HB41 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in interscholastic athletics accountability, providing for playoffs and championships.**

### Sponsor

Rep. Scott Conklin (D)

### Summary

(PN 20) Amends the Public School Code, in interscholastic athletics accountability, providing for playoffs and championships. Adds section 1606-A for playoffs and championships. Permits the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletics Association (PIAA) to establish separate playoffs and championships for athletics for boundary schools and nonboundary schools. Requires at least one joint meeting in each PIAA district and provides meeting requirements including for meetings to be made public, sworn testimony and what the meetings will discuss. Establishes the procedures for the board when deliberating and deciding any changes to playoffs and championships. Defines "board," "boundary school," "nonboundary school" and "oversight committee." Effective in 30 days.

### Intro Date

01/08/2025

### Actions

01/08/2025 H - Introduced

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01/10/2025 H - Referred to - House Intergovernmental Affairs and Operations

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05/01/2025 H - Meeting Scheduled - 05/12/2025, 9:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Intergovernmental Affairs and Operations), Room 205, Ryan Office Building

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**HB191 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in certification of teachers, repealing provisions relating to CPR instruction; and, in school health services, repealing provisions relating to automatic external defibrillators and providing for AED and CPR instruction and procedure, for Automated External Defibrillator Program and for availability and specifications of automated external defibrillators.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Tim Brennan (D)

**Summary**

(PN 138) Amends the Public School Code, in certification of teachers, repealing provisions relating to cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instructions; and, in school health services, repealing provisions relating to automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) and adding sections to provide for AED and CPR instruction and procedure, for Automated External Defibrillator Program and for availability and specifications of automated external defibrillators. Provides that a school entity shall provide certified instruction for CPR and AEDs to employees and volunteers at least once every two years and requires at least one adult certified in CPR and AED usage to be present in a school building at all times. Requires each school nurse or designee, coach of an athletic activity, marching band director, physical education teacher, athletic trainer and athletic training student aide within each school entity must participate in the instruction of and maintain certification in the use of an AED and CPR. Provides that each school entity must develop or amend existing cardiac emergency response plans to meet criteria outlined in section 1423.1(3)(e). Requires the Department of Education (PDE) to establish the Automatic External Defibrillator Program to ensure the presence of AEDs in eligible school entities under the program by issuing an invitation to bid for the cost of AEDs and other necessary equipment on a biennial basis. Provides that PDE, in consultation with the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA), shall develop guidelines for the availability of AEDs at athletic activities. Provides several definitions. Effective immediately.

**Intro Date**

01/15/2025

**Actions**

01/15/2025 H - Introduced

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01/16/2025 H - Referred to - House Education

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04/30/2025 H - Meeting Scheduled - 05/07/2025, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room 205, Ryan Office Building

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**HB455 - An Act providing for grants to organizations that host or offer education, workforce training or skills development to young adults; establishing the Building a Better Future Grant Program; imposing duties on the Department of Labor and Industry; and making an appropriation.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Carol Hill-Evans (D)

**Summary**

(PN 437) The Building a Better Future Grant Program Act provides for grants to organizations that host or offer education, workforce training or skills development to young adults; establishes the Building a Better Future Grant Program within the Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) to provide grants to eligible organizations offering skill developments, educational services and any other relevant labor market opportunities to individuals aged 16 to 24 who have been disconnected from educational opportunities; imposes duties on L&I; and makes an appropriation of \$5 million from the General Fund to provide grants for this program as well as allowing L&I to appropriate any reserved moneys from the department as necessary. Provides definitions. Requires eligible organizations to enroll individuals aged 16 to 24 who can attest they come from low-income households and attest two additional specified disadvantages. Directs L&I to provide guidelines for the grants specifying requirements as well as supply program and fiscal reports to L&I. Asserts L&I may not award more than \$1 million to any single organization receiving the grant and that up to 5% of the money available for grants may be given to a statewide non-profit that supervises multiple eligible organizations. Effective immediately.

**Intro Date**

02/03/2025

**Actions**

02/03/2025 H - Introduced

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02/03/2025 H - Referred to - House Labor and Industry

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04/28/2025 H - Discussed during public hearing - House Democratic Policy

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**HB681 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in school health services, further providing for health services, for reports and for interagency coordinating council for child health, nutrition and physical education.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Danielle Friel Otten (D)

**Summary**

(PN 695) Amends the Public School Code, in school health services, further providing for health services, for reports and for interagency coordinating council for child health, nutrition and physical education. Provides for student confidentiality. Exempts a student from height and weight measurement if the student's parent or guardian requests an exemption in writing. Does not permit height and weight measurements to be calculated and reported as body mass index (BMI) and asserts that they may only be reported as aggregate information from a scientifically drawn sample of students in a manner that protects student confidentiality. Includes the Department of Human Services (DHS) secretary as a member of the interagency Coordinating Council for Child Health, Nutrition and Physical Education. Requires council to include recommendations from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) education program. Mandates the final report to be available on the websites of DHS, Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (PDE) and Department of Agriculture (PDA). Effective immediately.

**Intro Date**

02/19/2025

**Actions**

02/19/2025 H - Introduced

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02/20/2025 H - Referred to - House Health

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05/01/2025 H - Meeting Scheduled - 05/07/2025, 9:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Health), Room G-50, Irvis Office Building

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**HB684 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in evidence-based reading instruction, further providing for definitions, providing for school entity duties related to evidence-based reading instruction, for school entity duties related to reading screening, for reading deficiency identification and parental notification, for reading intervention plans, for grant program, for funding, for reporting, for accountability and for construction.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Jason Ortity (R)

**Summary**

(PN 1557) Amends the Public School Code, in evidence-based reading instruction, further providing for definitions, providing for school entity duties related to evidence-based reading instruction, for school entity duties related to reading screening, for reading deficiency identification and parental notification, for reading intervention plans, for grant program, for funding, for reporting, for accountability and for construction. Adds a definition for "parent." Outlines the duties of a school entity related to evidence-based reading instruction, including adopting an evidence-based reading instruction curriculum, approving a professional development training program, identifying an educator responsible for assisting each school and demonstrating that each educator responsible is in the process of completing approved professional development beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. Outlines the duties of a school entity related to reading screenings, including screening each student enrolled in kindergarten through grade three times a school year and providing educators time during the contractual school day to complete data entry and compilation associated with the screener, to communicate with families and carry out all other responsibilities. Provides for exceptions for students with limited English proficiency, disabilities and gifted students. Requires parental notification if a student is identified as having a reading deficiency and a defined reading deficiency or as a student who is identified by an approved universal reading screener as at risk for reading failure. Outlines the reading deficiency procedures until which the student is considered reading deficient. Requires school entities to establish reading intervention plans and provides content requirements. Requires the department to establish a grant program to aid school entities with costs associated with training and other resources necessary and outlines the application process. Provides for funding, including from appropriations to the department for the purposes of the article, for general government operations and from money made available to the department from other public or private sources, including the federal government. Establishes reporting requirements. Adds that nothing in the article shall be construed to supersede or preempt rights, remedies and procedures afforded to school employees or labor organizations. Effective immediately.

**Intro Date**

04/30/2025

**Actions**

04/30/2025 H - Introduced

05/01/2025 H - Referred to - House Education

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**HB1042 - An Act amending Titles 61 (Prisons and Parole) and 63 (Professions and Occupations (State Licensed)) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in general administration, providing for earned vocational training and education credit; in Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole, further providing for parole power and for short sentence parole; and, in powers and duties, further providing for consideration of criminal convictions.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Napoleon J. Nelson (D)

**Summary**

(PN 1131) Amends Titles 61 (Prisons and Parole) and 63 (Professions and Occupations (State Licensed)), in general administration, adding Subchapter E to provide for earned vocational training and education credit; in Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole, further providing for parole power and for short sentence parole; and, in powers and duties, further providing for consideration of criminal convictions. Provides scope and purpose of subchapter. Allows an inmate sentenced on or after the effective date and incarcerated under the supervision of the department shall earn vocational training and education credit toward sentence reduction.

Provides schedule. Establishes limitations. Provides exclusions. Permits parole board to exercise its power to parole an inmate at the expiration of the minimum term of imprisonment fixed by the court sentence less any earned vocational training and education credits as provided under this subchapter. Stipulates eligibility for earned vocational training and education credits shall be considered an element of the disposition and sentence for the purposes of notice requirements under section 213(f) of the act of the Crime Victims Act. Establishes rules and regulations. Revises parole power to include inmate earned credit. Effective in one year.

**Intro Date**

03/25/2025

**Actions**

03/25/2025 H - Introduced

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03/25/2025 H - Referred to - House Judiciary

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04/25/2025 H - Meeting Scheduled - 05/05/2025, 11:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Judiciary), Room 140, Main Capitol

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**HB1295 - An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in other required equipment, further providing for general requirements for school buses; and, in size, weight and load, further providing for width of vehicles.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Marla Brown (R)

**Summary**

(PN 1491) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in other required equipment, further providing for general requirements for school buses; and, in size, weight and load, further providing for width of vehicles. Permits school buses to be equipped with up to two extensions to a side stop signal arm that partially obstructs the roadway. Provides specifications for extensions to a side stop signal arm. Directs the Department of Transportation to promulgate regulations. Permits extended stop signal arms to extend beyond width limitations when displaying red visual signals. Effective in 60 days.

**Intro Date**

04/23/2025

**Actions**

04/23/2025 H - Introduced

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04/28/2025 H - Referred to - House Transportation

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**HB1326 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in pupils and attendance, further providing for when transportation provided and for computation of distances; and, in reimbursements by Commonwealth and between school districts, providing for pupil transportation data.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Paul Friel (D)

**Summary**

(PN 1518) Amends the Public School Code, in pupils and attendance, further providing for when transportation provided and for computation of distances; and, in reimbursements by commonwealth and between school districts, providing for pupil transportation data. Allows the board of school directors in any school district to provide for the free transportation of pupils as long as the school is either located within district boundaries or located within the commonwealth but outside the district boundaries, not exceeding 10 miles by the nearest public highway. Asserts that these distances will be calculated using technology capable of accurate measurements of distances. Prohibits the Department of Education (PDE) from requiring the manual recording of distances. Requires school entities who are entitled to reimbursement for pupil transportation to provide specified data to PDE beginning with information from the 2025-2026 school year and annually thereafter. Requires school entities who are entitled to reimbursement for pupil transportation to provide a detailed breakdown of pupil transportation expenditures to PDE, beginning with information from the 2025-2026 school year and annually thereafter. Requires PDE to post data collected under this section on their public website. Requires PDE to notify the chairmen and minority chairmen of both the Senate and House Appropriations Committees and the Senate and House Education Committees when the information is posted under subsection (c). Effective July 1, 2025, or immediately, whichever is later.

**Intro Date**

04/24/2025

**Actions**

04/24/2025 H - Introduced

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04/28/2025 H - Referred to - House Education

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04/30/2025 H - Meeting Scheduled - 05/07/2025, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room 205, Ryan Office Building

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**HB1351 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in terms and courses of study, prohibiting the integration of culturally relevant and sustaining education into education preparation, induction and continuing professional development programs; and abrogating regulations.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Stephenie Scialabba (R)

**Summary**

(PN 1539) Amends the Public School Code, in terms and courses of study, prohibiting the integration of culturally relevant and sustaining education into education preparation, induction and continuing professional development programs; and abrogating regulations. Stipulates that the regulations at 22 Pa. Code §§ 49.1 (relating to definitions), 49.13 (relating to policies), 49.14 (relating to approval of institutions and alternative program providers), 49.16 (relating to approval of induction plans) and 49.17 (relating to continuing professional education) are abrogated insofar as they relate to culturally relevant and sustaining education. Effective immediately.

**Intro Date**

04/28/2025

**Actions**

04/28/2025 H - Introduced

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04/30/2025 H - Referred to - House Education

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**HB1354 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in duties and powers of boards of school directors, further providing for school athletics, publications, and organizations.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Scott Barger (R)

**Summary**

(PN 1542) Amends the Public School Code, in duties and powers of boards of school directors, further providing for school athletics, publications, and organizations. Stipulates that a school district in which a private school student is a resident shall permit the student to participate in any extracurricular activity that the school district offers if the student is able to fulfill all of the requirements of participation associated with the extracurricular activity and the private school that the student attends does not offer the same extracurricular activity. Effective in 60 days.

**Intro Date**

04/28/2025

**Actions**

04/28/2025 H - Introduced

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04/30/2025 H - Referred to - House Education

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**HB1372 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in preliminary provisions, further providing for advertising and sponsorships; and, in charter schools, further providing for definitions, for charter school requirements, for powers of board of trustees, for facilities, for enrollment, for funding for charter schools, for funding for cyber charter schools, for powers and duties of department, for assessment and evaluation and for cyber charter school requirements and prohibitions, providing for fund balance limits and for educational management service providers, further providing for school district and intermediate unit responsibilities and for establishment of cyber charter school, providing for renewal of charters, for charter amendments and for causes for nonrenewal, revocation or termination and further providing for State Charter School Appeal Board review, for cyber charter school application, for enrollment and notification and for applicability of other provisions of this act and of other acts and regulations.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Joe Ciresi (D)

**Summary**

No summary available yet.

**Intro Date**

05/01/2025

## Actions

05/01/2025 H - Introduced

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**HB1373 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in high schools, further providing for assessment of civic knowledge.**

## Sponsor

Rep. Lou C. Schmitt (R)

## Summary

No summary available yet.

## Intro Date

05/01/2025

## Actions

05/01/2025 H - Introduced

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**SB10 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, establishing the Pennsylvania Award for Student Success Scholarship Program and the Pennsylvania Award for Student Success Scholarship Fund.**

## Sponsor

Sen. Judy Ward (R)

## Summary

(PN 692) Amends the Public School Code, adding Article XVII-E to establish the Pennsylvania Award for Student Success (PASS) Scholarship Program as a program in the State Treasury to provide scholarships to help eligible students pay tuition, school-related fees and special education services fees for attendance at a participating nonpublic school and the Pennsylvania Award for Student Success Scholarship Fund in the State Treasury. Provides several definitions. Provides the purpose of the program. Requires notification to parents and lists required contents. Requires a notice to the State Treasury. Mandates the State Treasury to develop an application form. Provides the application and approval process. Stipulates that for the 2026-2027 school year, scholarships shall be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis considering money available in the fund, and for the 2027-2028 school year and each school year thereafter, priority for scholarships shall be given to prior year scholarship recipients. Asserts that new applicants shall be awarded a scholarship on a first-come, first-served basis, considering the money available in the fund. Provides for entering into agreements, the terms of the agreement and the termination of agreements. Allows agreement renewal. Permits multiple agreements. Requires a written explanation to parents. Asserts that the PASS scholarship account is administered by the State Treasurer. Provides money deposit into the account and lists deposit amounts. Permits payments to participating nonpublic schools. Establishes a general rule for qualified education expenses, listing the expenses. Asserts that a participating nonpublic school that receives a payment for qualified education expenses authorized under subsection (a) may not refund, rebate or otherwise directly share any portion of the payment with the parent who made the payment. Declares the money in a PASS scholarship account as not taxable income to the parent or scholarship recipient under state law. Explains that an award made to, or payment from, a PASS scholarship account may not be construed to be an appropriation or financial assistance to a participating nonpublic school. Specifies the purpose of the PASS fund. Explains that the funding of the fund consists of money appropriated, given, granted or donated by the commonwealth or any other government or private agency or person for the purpose established under this article, and the money is appropriated on a continuing basis. Establishes duties of the State Treasury. Permits contracting with a third-party administration to administer the program. Provides temporary regulations that are deemed necessary. Establishes duties of the Auditor General and of participating nonpublic schools. Provides prohibitions and reporting requirements. Permits the barring of certain participating nonpublic schools and requires the posting of a notification on the State Treasury website. Permits a nonpublic

school to appeal the decision. Provides for the duties of resident school districts. Requires reporting and outlines the required contents. Effective immediately.

**Intro Date**

04/28/2025

**Actions**

04/28/2025 S - Introduced

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04/28/2025 S - Referred to - Senate Education

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**SB663 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in terms and courses of study, providing for deaf and hard of hearing education.**

**Sponsor**

Sen. Katie J. Muth (D)

**Summary**

(PN 687) Amends the Public School Code, in terms and courses of study, providing for deaf and hard of hearing education. Provides specifications for a model curriculum and guidelines for the deaf and hard of hearing public school students. Provides that a school entity offering instruction in deaf or hard of hearing education must create a curriculum in accordance with academic standards and guidelines or use appropriate publicly or privately available materials in developing and implementing the instruction. Provides that a teacher, instructor or community volunteer can facilitate or oversee instruction with the participation of a professional educator with a Pennsylvania certification, including in physical education or health education or a school nurse. Provides that a cyber charter school can provide instruction through the Internet or other electronic means and is exempt from academic standards regarding in-person instructional requirements. Defines "department" and "school entity." Effective in 60 days.

**Intro Date**

04/28/2025

**Actions**

04/28/2025 S - Introduced

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04/28/2025 S - Referred to - Senate Education

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**SB679 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in preliminary provisions, providing for minimum hourly wage or living wage for education support professionals; in duties and powers of boards of school directors, further providing for majority vote required and recording; and imposing duties on the Department of Labor and Industry.**

**Sponsor**

Sen. Lindsey Marie Williams (D)

**Summary**

(PN 678) Amends the Public School Code, in preliminary provisions, providing for minimum hourly wage or living wage for education support professionals; in duties and powers of boards of school directors, further providing for majority vote required and recording; and imposing duties on the Department of Labor and Industry (L&I). Establishes the minimum hourly wage for an educational support professional at no less than \$20 beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. Provides for overtime pay and for salaried workers.

Provides for supplementary wage payments for education support professionals who are entitled to a wage that is lower than the minimum hourly wage or living wage required under subsection (a). Outlines the eligibility requirements for public school entities entitled to receive payments, requires L&I to determine the living wage applicable to each public school entity and post the living wage on a publicly accessible website within 30 days of the effective date, and after one year, adjust the living wage upward if there has been a positive change in the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers and post the adjusted wage on their website. Outlines the supplemental reimbursements and special payments regarding wage increase requirements and procedures. Adds definitions. Adds that a board of school directors may not enter into a contract for services to be provided by an education support professional that provides for payment of a wage less than required and outlines contract requirements. Makes editorial adjustments. Effective immediately.

**Intro Date**

04/28/2025

**Actions**

04/28/2025 S - Introduced

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04/28/2025 S - Referred to - Senate Education

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**SB696 - An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in rules of the road in general, further providing for special speed limitations.**

**Sponsor**

Sen. Kristin Phillips-Hill (R)

**Summary**

(PN 723) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in rules of the road in general, further providing for special speed limitations. Adds under school zones that a speed limitation in a school zone during regular school hours may be established and enforced regardless of whether students are permitted to walk to and from a school that is within the school zone. Effective in 60 days.

**Intro Date**

04/30/2025

**Actions**

04/30/2025 S - Introduced

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04/30/2025 S - Referred to - Senate Transportation

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**SB698 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in grounds and buildings, further providing for acquisition of buildings, sites for school buildings and playgrounds, and disposing thereof.**

**Sponsor**

Sen. Jarrett Coleman (R)

**Summary**

(PN 709) Amends the Public School Code, in grounds and buildings, further providing for acquisition of buildings, sites for school buildings and playgrounds, and disposing thereof. Allows the board of school directors of each district to acquire real property by purchase for not more than the fair market value. Adds that the fair market value of real property for a purchase valued in excess of

\$10,000 shall be determined by the school directors in consultation with two of the following professions: a county assessor, a licensed real estate broker or a licensed real estate appraiser. Provides that the documents related to the determination of the fair market value are subject to and accessible under the Right-To-Know Law and must be made public. Effective in 60 days.

**Intro Date**

04/30/2025

**Actions**

04/30/2025 S - Introduced

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04/30/2025 S - Referred to - Senate Education

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**SB700 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in evidence-based reading instruction, further providing for definitions and for evidence-based reading instruction curriculum and providing for reading screening, for reading deficiency and identification, for school entity duties and reading intervention plan, for parent notification, for grants to school entities, for funding and for reporting; and establishing the Evidence-based Reading Instruction Restricted Account.**

**Sponsor**

Sen. Devlin J. Robinson (R)

**Summary**

(PN 714) Amends the Public School Code, in evidence-based reading instruction, further providing for definitions and for evidence-based reading instruction curriculum and providing for reading screening, for reading deficiency and identification, for school entity duties and reading intervention plan, for parent notification, for grants to school entities, for funding and for reporting; and establishing the Evidence-based Reading Instruction Restricted Account. Adds definitions for “core curriculum” and “parent.” Requires the department to collect and post on their website a disaggregated list of school entities that have adopted an evidence-based reading instruction curriculum, are using reading screeners or are undergoing or have completed a structured literacy professional development training. Increases the expiration date to 10 years for the reporting requirement subsection. Replaces subsection (b) regarding the list of screeners, to outline the duties of the school entity, including approving, beginning with the 2016-2027 school year, a professional development training program, ensuring students in kindergarten through grade three who are identified for reading deficiencies are provided intervention plans and, no later than the 2030-2031 school year adopting an evidence-based reading instruction curriculum and identifying an education responsible for assisting with the implementation. Provides for reading screenings, requiring school entities to screen each student from kindergarten through grade three for reading competency three times each school year. Requires school entities to provide educators time during the contractual school day to complete data entry and compilation associated with the screenings. Provides for exceptions and outlines the list of screeners. Outlines the reading deficiency and identification processes. Provides for the school entity duties and reading intervention plan, outlining content requirements. Requires parent notification for each student who exhibits a deficiency in reading in the third screening at the end of the school year. Establishes grants to school entities, requiring the department to establish a program to aid school entities with initial costs associated with training and other resources necessary to implement the article. Outlines the application and eligibility requirements. Establishes the Evidence-based Reading Instruction Restricted Account within the General fund, outlines the uses and funding origins, including appropriations from the General Assembly, funds from the federal government and funding from other public and private sources. Establishes reporting requirements. Effective in 90 days.

**Intro Date**

04/30/2025

**Actions**

04/30/2025 S - Introduced

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04/30/2025 S - Referred to - Senate Education

## Higher Ed Bill Actions

No Bill Actions this Week.

## Upcoming Events

### **TUESDAY – 05/06/2025**

#### **1:00 PM, PASA and PASBO on Cyber-Charter Reform**

*Press Conference, Main Capitol Steps*

The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA) and the Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials (PASBO) will hold a press conference to call for urgent legislative action on cyber charter funding reform. Education leaders from across the Commonwealth will gather on the front steps of the Capitol to highlight the financial impact on public schools and outline specific, actionable reforms to improve fairness, accountability, and transparency in cyber charter operations.

### **WEDNESDAY – 05/07/2025**

#### **10:00 AM, [House Children & Youth](#)**

*Public Hearing, Room 60, East Wing*

Public hearing on [HB 928](#)

#### **10:00 AM, [House Education](#)**

*Voting Meeting, Room 205, Ryan Office Building*

To consider: [HB 17](#), [HB 191](#) and [HB 1326](#)

### **THURSDAY – 05/08/2025**

#### **10:00 AM, [Senate Communications & Technology](#)**

*Public Hearing, Ben Franklin Technology, Partners of NE PA, 116 Research Dr, Bethlehem*

Public hearing on powering artificial intelligence's future in Pennsylvania's economy.

### **THURSDAY – 05/15/2025**

#### **10:00 AM, [Independent Regulatory Review Commission \(IRRC\)](#)**

*Commission Meeting, 14th Fl., Conference Rm., 333 Market St., Harrisburg*

Public hearing on No. 3390 State Board of Medicine #16A-4955: Physician Assistants; No. 3394 State Board of Physical Therapy #16A-6522: Early Exam and CE for Clinical Instruction; No. 3396 State Board of Pharmacy #16A-5433: Pharmacy Technician Registration; No. 3406 State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers #16A-7029: Distance Education and PAREA; No. 3431 Department of Labor and Industry #12-121: Uniform Construction Code Supersedes Prior L&I Code Provisions; No. 3355 Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission #57-334: Use of Fully Projected Future Test Year; 52 Pa. Code Chapter 53.51-53.56a (Previously Tolerated) – [Agenda](#)

## In the News

[04/29/2025 - White, Policy Committee to Hold Hearing on Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in Philadelphia Public Schools](#)

[05/01/2025 - Langerholc, Armanini, Burns, Kephart and Rigby Announce Increased Funding for Career and Technical Education](#)

Education Recap is a comprehensive weekly report on legislative and executive actions on education related legislation in the Pennsylvania Capitol and is compiled and edited by PLS.

For subscription information, questions or more information contact PLS at [mypls@mypls.com](mailto:mypls@mypls.com) or 717-236-6984. Thank you, Deborah, Cheryl, Derek, Hattie, Sam, Grace, Aaron, Christian, Katie, Zoe, Daniel, Kyle, Nicholas, Dominic, Julia and Noah.

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