

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

State Update



Due to the weather, the House canceled its session days for Monday, January 26, and Tuesday, January 27, and will return on Wednesday, January 28. The Senate is also scheduled to reconvene at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, January 28. Next week, Governor Shapiro will deliver his annual budget address to both chambers on Tuesday, February 3.

What principals and educational leaders need to know about Act 47

In a recent video Q&A hosted by the Pennsylvania Principals Association, **Amy Lena, Deputy Secretary for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education**, breaks down the most important provisions of **Act 47 of 2025**—covering immediate requirements, staffing flexibility through expanded certification grade spans, safety and cyber charter changes and curriculum requirements on the horizon.

Principals and school leaders are strongly encouraged to watch this timely Q&A video to better understand what's coming and how to prepare their schools for successful implementation.

[Click here](#) to view the Q&A video.

[Click here](#) for the transcript.

It's elementary: Restrict use of mobile devices at school

Pennsylvania's educators have long known that easy student access to smartphones, watches, and tablets is a problem in our public schools.

[Click here](#) for the full article.

Source: CITY & STATE PENNSYLVANIA, January 26, 2026.

Secretary of Education Visits Red Lion Area School District, Highlights 50 Percent Increase in CTE and STEM Funding During the Shapiro Administration

Governor Josh Shapiro's Administration has increased funding for public education by nearly \$3 billion.

Since taking office, Governor Shapiro has worked to increase funding for career and technical education (CTE) and apprenticeships – and today, the Commonwealth spends 50 percent more on workforce development than the day the Governor took office.

[Click here](#) for the full article.

Source: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Education Newsroom, Press Release, January 23, 2026.

Schools required to notify parents through PA Act 44: What is it?

PA Act 44 of 2025 is a bill that requires the notification of weapon incidents on school property during events held on school grounds, signed into law by Governor Josh Shapiro in November. The law had 60 days to take effect before schools had to follow it.

[Click here](#) for the full article.

Source: WTAJ, January 22, 2026.

Pennsylvania lawmakers propose lowering voting age for certain elections

Pennsylvania lawmakers are proposing legislation to lower the voting age for school board elections in the state.

Democrat State Representatives Chris Pielli (D-156) and John Inglis III (D-38) are introducing legislation that would lower the voting age for school board elections to 16 years old.

[Click here](#) for the full article.

Source: ABC27, WHTM, January 22, 2026.

BASIC BILL ACTIONS

- **HB 1331:** 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, providing for prohibited substances in competitive foods.
 - **Sponsor:** Rep. Natalie Mihalek (R)
 - **Action Taken:** 01/21/2026 - Press Conference Held - Secretary Kennedy Kicks Off "Eat Read Food Tour" Rally
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- **HB2148:** - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, requiring certain school entities to adopt policies and procedures relating to access to school property by individuals or certain enforcement officials; and providing for training, reporting to governing bodies of school entities and for department guidelines.
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Joseph C. Hohenstein (D)
- **Action Taken:** 01/20/2026 - Referred to House Education

- **HB2149:** - An Act establishing the Executive Functioning and Study Skills Grant Program for public school entities and the Executive Functioning and Study Skills Fund.
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Jennifer O'Mara (D)
- **Action Taken:** 01/20/2026 - Referred to House Education

- **HB2152:** - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in school safety and security, further providing for School Safety and Security Grant Program; and, in terms and courses of study, providing for delaying secondary school start times.
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Jill N. Cooper (R)
- **Action Taken:** 01/21/2026 H - Referred to House Education

Click on the link below for the full Education Recap.

EDUCATION RECAP

Click here for more.

(A weekly report on legislative and executive actions on education-related legislation in Pennsylvania state government.)

Federal Update FY26 K-12 Education Funding Update

Submitted by Melanie Rosenberger, Federal Relations Coordinator

The House-Senate agreement for FY26 federal education funding has been announced. It is very good news for K-12 education!



The agreement includes \$20 million increases each for Title I and IDEA--nominal but symbolically important increases for the twin pillars of federal aid to K-12 schools and students.

Funding for the other main K-12 formula grant programs are maintained at current levels:

- Title I-A local grants: \$18.4 billion (+\$20 million)
- IDEA state grants: \$14.23 billion (+\$20 million)
- Title II Professional development state grants: \$2.2 billion
- Title III English language acquisition grants: \$890 million
- Title IV-A Student support and academic enrichment state grants: \$1.4 billion
- Title IV-B Afterschool activities state grants: \$1.3 billion

Head Start will also get the same as it did last year: \$12.3 billion

Obviously this is a great outcome considering the House Appropriations Committee-approved bill cut Title I by \$4.7 billion (25%) and eliminated both the Title II and Title III programs while the Trump administration sought to also

eliminate Title IV-A and Title IV-B and consolidate three dozen other federal education programs.

The bill includes language to prevent the Department from withholding formula grant funding like they did last July which caused havoc with local budgets and planning. There is also language about the pending move of K-12 programs out of the Department of Education to the Department of Labor. While not an outright ban that congressional Democrats had sought, the bill includes language requiring congressional approval before funds can be transferred to another cabinet agency. The bill also requires regular, ongoing updates from the Department to congressional leaders about actions to move programs out of the Department. The bill's committee report also notes that no authority exists that would allow the Department of Education to shift its fundamental activities to another agency.

Both the House and Senate each have to pass the bill. Temporary government funding expires on January 30 so the bill would need to be signed into law by President Trump by then.

Education Department halts effort to implement controversial anti-DEI letter

The agency dropped its appeal of a court ruling against guidance aimed at ending race-based programs in schools.

[Click here](#) for full article.

Source: *K-12 DIVE*, January 22, 2026.

4 education legal and policy trends to watch in 2026

After a tumultuous 2025, education policy and legal experts expect no let-up in 2026. The second Trump administration and its Education Department are continuing to reshape the direction of federal support for K-12, and courts are routinely hearing cases of great consequence for school district policies.

[Click here](#) for full article.

Source: *K-12 DIVE*, January 21, 2026.

Bipartisan K-12 budget proposal would stall gutting of Education Department

A bipartisan and bicameral proposed agreement released [Monday] to fund the U.S. Department of Education at \$79 billion for fiscal year 2026 — or at \$217 million above FY 2025 levels — dealt a major blow to the Trump administration's efforts to downsize and eventually eliminate the agency.

[Click here](#) for full article.

Source: *K-12 DIVE*, January 20, 2026.

Pennsylvania Principals Association

Position Statement on State and Federal Education Issues

The **Pennsylvania Principals Association (PA Principals Association)** stands in solidarity with national organizations such as the **National Association of Secondary**

School Principals (NASSP) and the **National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)** in advocating for equitable, well-funded and inclusive education policies at both state and federal levels. In light of ongoing challenges and critiques directed at the education sector, we reaffirm our commitment to the following principles:

[CLICK HERE FOR POSITION STATEMENT.](#)

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