

Jan. 30 – Feb. 5, 2026

Contents

Press Conferences.....	1
Committee News	9
Bullet.in.Points.....	28
Cosponsor Memos	29
Basic Ed Bill Actions	32
Higher Ed Bill Actions.....	46
Upcoming Events	51
In the News	52

SESSION STATUS

At 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, the House stands adjourned until Monday, March 23, 2026, at 12:00 p.m., unless sooner recalled by the Speaker.

At 1:59 p.m. on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, the Senate recessed until Monday, March 16, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore.

UPCOMING SESSION DAYS

House

March 23-25
April 13-15, 27-29
May 4-6
June 1-3, 8-10, 15-17, 22-30
Sept. 28-30
Oct. 5-7, 19-21
Nov. 9, 10

Senate

March 16-18, 23-25
April 20-22
May 4-6
June 1-3, 8-10, 22-26, 29-30

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.

Press Conferences

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

GOV. SHAPIRO PRESENTS HIS 2026-2027 BUDGET PROPOSAL

By Zoe Buchmann, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | February 3, 2026

Gov. Josh Shapiro held his fourth annual budget address today on the House Floor.

Gov. Shapiro thanked Lt. Gov. Austin Davis, legislative leaders and members of the General Assembly for the opportunity to speak. He recognized his cabinet, senior staff and family members in attendance. He expressed gratitude for the chance to address another joint session and highlighted his administration's leadership team, including newly appointed Budget Secretary Zachary Reber. He welcomed attendees and thanked legislators and Pennsylvanians for their service and trust in government. He emphasized that he remains motivated to continue advancing progress across the state and reflected on the historical significance of the legislative chamber. He referenced Pennsylvania's founding legacy and civic responsibility, quoting a biblical passage displayed in the chamber. He described Pennsylvania's historical leaders as figures whose example should "guide and inspire us," noting that earlier generations helped establish a system of governance that continues to influence policymaking and public service.

Gov. Shapiro highlighted that his policy priorities are shaped not only by history but also by the experiences of Pennsylvanians. He described these stories as reinforcing his belief that "government can be a productive force for good in people's lives." He pointed to progress achieved during his administration, stating that "over the past three years, our kids are getting a better quality education, our workers have more opportunity to chart their own course, our economy is growing and our communities are safer." He credited bipartisan cooperation and inclusive policymaking for these outcomes. He outlined education and workforce development initiatives, noting that his administration has increased education funding by nearly 30% and expanded vocational-technical education, career and technical education (CTE) and apprenticeship programs to create new workforce pathways. He reported that school attendance and graduation rates have increased, more students are pursuing skilled trades and Pennsylvania's unemployment rate has remained below the national average for 31 consecutive months. He highlighted that the state has secured "the largest private sector investment in the history" of the state and has "won the biggest life science deal in Pennsylvania history and the largest economic development deal ever in the Lehigh Valley." He cited Moody's Analytics' findings that Pennsylvania is the only growing state economy in the Northeast and noted increased state revenue collections and improved bond ratings that produced taxpayer savings. He added that Forbes rated Pennsylvania "one of the best states in the country to start a business." He stressed that the investments made have worked, with \$417 million more collected in revenues than estimated in the first seven months of this fiscal year. He continued that the bond rating has gone up twice, saving taxpayers more than \$200 million. "What we are doing, together, is working," he said. "Pennsylvania is on the rise."

Gov. Shapiro outlined public safety investments, asserting that the state has funded nearly 2,000 additional law enforcement officers over the last three years and expanded violence prevention and afterschool initiatives. He reported that violent crime has declined by 12% and fatal gun violence has decreased by 42%, noting reduced homicide rates in major cities, with Philadelphia and Pittsburgh having the fewest homicides in decades. He proposed continued funding for the

Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), funding another four classes of troopers, training, violence prevention programs and grants to support fire and emergency services infrastructure. He underscored Lt. Gov. Davis's lead in the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), driving out \$97 million to violence prevention organizations. He emphasized, "It is working." He announced that this year's budget will build on that progress, further increasing funding and expanding afterschool programs through Lt. Gov. Davis's Building Opportunity through Out-of-School Time (BOOST) initiative. He noted that they have invested in both violence prevention and PSP training "because we know our two-pronged approach is the smart way to ensure public safety."

Gov. Shapiro criticized federal funding reductions affecting public safety and social programs, stating that Pennsylvania residents contribute substantial federal tax revenue and should receive equitable funding in return. He highlighted litigation efforts against the federal government, noting that his administration has "taken them to court 19 times and won each time." He pointed out that the federal government has not only tried "to unlawfully withhold funding for public safety," but has also attempted to withhold funds for plugging abandoned wells, providing health care for rural communities, improving school infrastructure and food benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In response, he proposed creating a \$100 million Federal Response Fund to offset potential future federal funding shortfalls. He highlighted that 40% of the budget comes from the federal government and that they "need to prepare should [the federal government] continue to walk away from those commitments." He explained that he was appointed by President Donald Trump to sit on the Board of Governors, where conversations with the federal government have made clear that it wants to "shift the cost burden for emergency preparedness and response to the states." He alluded to the Allentown Firehouse to underscore the importance of infrastructure repair funding, announcing \$30 million in competitive grants to give firehouses the opportunity to upgrade their facilities. "Public safety is at the heart of our work as elected leaders," he stated. "I hope you will join me in standing with our first responders to make these investments."

Gov. Shapiro emphasized economic development strategies focused on job creation, infrastructure investment and business incentives. He spoke of over 21,500 newly created jobs and \$39 billion in private sector investment in the last three years. He listed several new projects across the state to highlight the impact of his economic strategy. He cited investments in transportation, announcing that his proposal includes sustainable mass transit funding beginning in 2027. "Mass transit helps us drive our economy – this is an issue of economic competitiveness," he added. He celebrated the success of the Agriculture Innovation Fund, crediting Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding with implementing the funds to fund 88 new projects in 45 counties. He proposed expanding this initiative, creating a new "Innovate In PA 2.0" program to support startups, clinical research and workforce development. He noted that the General Assembly launched the innovation fund in 2013, seeded with \$100 million in tax credits, calling on them to invest in it again. "Pennsylvanians are innovators," he said. "We have got to believe in that potential and invest in it."

Gov. Shapiro highlighted Pennsylvania's competitiveness in artificial intelligence (AI) and data center development, referencing major corporate investments and the state's research institutions and energy production capacity. He argued that Pennsylvania, as the second-largest energy producer, is poised to lead in AI innovation. Yet, he acknowledged citizen concerns regarding data center projects and the impact they have on communities, utility bills and the environment. In response, he announced the Governor's Responsible Infrastructure Development (GRID) standards, which would require data center developers to fund their own energy infrastructure, comply with strict transparency requirements, hire and train local workers and commit to the highest environmental standards, especially water conservation. He argued that if companies adhere to these principles, they will "unlock benefits from the commonwealth, including speed and certainty in permitting and available tax credits." He added that when used right, these technologies can support businesses and hospitals but stressed that the state must ensure that it protects children and that those tools are safe. He pointed to safety concerns, particularly regarding AI chatbots, stating that these tools pose risks to children and vulnerable populations. He cited an example where an AI Chatbot said it was licensed to practice medicine in Pennsylvania, something he argued was "dangerous" and "illegal." He stated that he has directed the Department of State (DOS), the Department of Health (DOH), PSP and the Office of General Counsel to explore all legal options to hold developers of apps accountable. He called for bipartisan legislation requiring age verification, parental consent and safety protocols to prevent harmful content or misinformation, including detecting when a child mentions self-harm or violence against others, periodic reminders that the AI is not human and prohibitions against producing sexually explicit or violent content featuring children. He warned, "This space is evolving rapidly. We need to act quickly to protect our kids."

Gov. Shapiro emphasized education investments, citing more than 224 million free breakfasts served, 3,000 more students enrolled in CTE courses, increasing teacher certifications and increasing regular attendance and graduation rates. He stated that his proposal builds on that progress, announcing increased funding for special education and \$564 million to schools that need it most through the state adequacy formula. He proposed additional cyber charter reforms projected to generate \$250 million in public school savings. He highlighted expanded school mental health funding to support hiring substance use disorder counselors. He called on the legislators to put a bill on his desk to ban cell phone use during school hours. He said, "I know there are bills in both chambers on this — come together and send a bill to my desk." He argued for expanding student recess opportunities, indicating that he has directed the State Board of Education to develop recommendations for schools to guarantee recess for students. He thanked Tre Hadrick and Kathy Christiano, the two parent representatives on the board, for their work and efforts. Gov. Shapiro discussed higher education and workforce development, noting the creation of a State Board of Higher Education and the Performance-based Funding Council for major universities. He emphasized multiple career pathways, including military service, trade apprenticeships,

and adult education programs. He proposed increasing funding by another \$18 million for CTE and expanding General Educational Development (GED) and adult education access by investing \$2.5 million. He highlighted workforce inclusion initiatives supporting individuals with disabilities, noting their recent win to use federal Medicaid dollars for an initiative to ensure that basic needs are met. He added, "For less than \$3 million, we will be able to access more than double that in federal funding and potentially save millions of dollars and expand our workforce." He pointed to targeted investments in child care recruitment, adding \$10 million in this year's budget. He proposed increasing teacher training stipends.

Gov. Shapiro called for increasing Pennsylvania's minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour, arguing that raising wages would reduce reliance on public assistance programs, like Medicaid, and strengthen workforce participation. "If you are not going to do this because it is the right thing to do," he said. "Then do this because it is going to save us \$300 million and shrink our entitlement budget by growing our workforce and putting more money back in our workers' pockets." He outlined efforts to reduce licensing and regulatory barriers, citing reduced processing times for professional licenses and proposals to align Pennsylvania licensing standards with neighboring states. He proposed reforms allowing social work graduates to obtain licensure more quickly. He noted that Commonwealth Secretary Al Schmidt is working in partnership with social work schools and the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers to support changes to the laws that will ensure final exams cover all licensing requirements. He emphasized the need for expanded funding for crisis response services, including the 988 mental health hotline. "This work is bipartisan," he remarked. "Let us keep going."

Gov. Shapiro outlined child welfare reform priorities, including increased ChildLine funding, updates to the Child Protective Services Act and additional support for families facing economic hardship. He highlighted his work as Attorney General in holding child abusers accountable, noting that he has called on the legislature repeatedly to open a civil window to give "survivors a chance at real accountability." He pointed out that the House has passed a bill six times over the past three years, but "that Senate Republicans have refused to act." He called on them to "stop cowering to the special interests, like insurance companies and lobbyists for the Catholic Church." He continued, "Stop tying justice for abused kids to your pet political projects and start listening to victims." He urged lawmakers to approve statute-of-limitations reforms for survivors of childhood sexual abuse, arguing that such reforms would allow victims to seek accountability. "It is shameful that this has not gotten done here in Pennsylvania when almost 30 other states have followed our grand jury report and passed it," he added. He proposed strengthening elder abuse protections by updating the Older Adults Protective Services Act to include financial exploitation as a prosecutable offense. He announced that his budget proposal includes funds for public safety initiatives to address and investigate when an older adult is the victim of fraud or abuse. He pointed to an example where criminals stole more than \$850,000 in life savings from an older adult couple. He noted that even though the transfers were sudden, none of them was flagged. He called on the legislature to update the laws to include financial exploitation as a crime and empower district attorneys and the attorney general to prosecute those crimes.

Gov. Shapiro highlighted anti-fraud initiatives, noting efforts to recover Medicaid funds and proposing the adoption of a state False Claims Act to improve fraud enforcement. He emphasized cost-of-living concerns, citing rising health insurance premiums and household expenses, and highlighted tax reductions enacted during his administration, including the Working Pennsylvanians Tax Credit, which he stated will return \$193 million to residents. He stated that his budget proposal would not increase broad-based taxes but would include proposals to regulate skill games and legalize and implement comprehensive cannabis reform. "We are putting our communities at risk and losing out on billions of dollars in revenue by doing nothing to both," he argued, urging action.

Gov. Shapiro addressed energy affordability and policy reforms, describing legal actions against the regional grid operator PJM that he stated have saved consumers over \$18 billion so far and will save 67 million Americans an additional \$27 billion. He acknowledged that another issue is the rising cost of utility bills for Pennsylvania households, especially the increases in costs for consumers with "too little public accountability or transparency." He explained that he has called the four largest electric utility companies in Pennsylvania to push them to help control rising costs in the state, noting potential enforcement by the Public Utility Commission (PUC) should they not act. He announced that PECO, Duquesne Light, First Energy and PPL have agreed to improve price transparency, enact reforms to ban deceptive contracts, eliminate junk fees and strengthen and expand consumer protections. He proposed additional oversight of utility rate structures, calling on PUC to scrutinize utility spending, and new legal tools to limit excessive profits, highlighting that he has created a Special Counsel for Energy Affordability within his administration, tasked with closely examining utility rate requests and taking legal actions to stop utility companies from increasing rates. He called on the legislature to create benchmarks for PUC to prevent excessive utility profits and determine how much utilities can make. He argued, "We grant these utilities a monopoly, and in exchange, they have a legal responsibility to keep their costs just and reasonable." He promoted his "Lightning Plan," which would expand energy production, diversify energy sources and streamline permitting to reduce consumer costs and create energy-sector jobs. He acknowledged that past discussions have not moved forward, which is why they removed the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) from the discussion "to remove your excuse for not moving forward." He cited an estimated \$664 million in consumer savings and 15,000 energy-sector jobs as a result of his proposed Lightning Plan, noting that it is supported by labor leaders, environmentalists, consumer advocates and energy producers. He addressed lawmakers, saying, "If you do not like [my plan], stop making excuses, put your proposal on the table and let us get to work."

Gov. Shapiro outlined housing affordability proposals, citing rising housing costs and projected shortages of 185,000 homes by 2035. He proposed zoning reforms, which would include a catalog of the different zoning requirements across counties, increased affordable housing investment and the creation of a \$1 billion Critical Infrastructure Fund supported by bonds to finance housing and infrastructure projects. He noted that thanks to the improved bond ratings, the state will save \$25 million compared to what it would have cost two years ago. He called for statewide caps on rental application fees and legislation limiting rent increases in manufactured home communities to protect residents from financial exploitation. He pointed out that there have been bipartisan bills in the Senate and that a bipartisan group of House members yesterday stood together to advance this issue. He urged, "Let us pass those together."

Gov. Shapiro emphasized the importance of bipartisan cooperation, stating, "When we all sit together, majority and minority, we make progress." He stated that he has invited leaders of all four caucuses to his office tomorrow to begin the process in earnest, noting that they have all accepted his invitation. He acknowledged past budget negotiation challenges while encouraging earlier and more collaborative legislative engagement. He argued that Pennsylvania can serve as an "example to the nations" by prioritizing economic growth, public safety, education and affordability while maintaining inclusive governance. He highlighted, "At a time of dysfunction and chaos reigns elsewhere, Pennsylvania is showing that we can be a model for steady progress when we come together, treat others with respect and find ways to extend a helping hand to our neighbors." He addressed the importance of free elections, free expression and "the freedom to worship as you wish," highlighting these as enduring tenants of William Penn. He urged lawmakers to continue working together to "make smart investments in schools, safety and economic development," cut costs and taxes and maintain Pennsylvania's economic and social progress.



HOUSE, SENATE DEMOCRATS RESPOND TO GOV. SHAPIRO'S BUDGET ADDRESS

By Dominic Kenny, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | Feb. 3, 2026

House and Senate Democrats gathered to discuss Gov. Josh Shapiro's 2026-2027 Budget Address during a joint press conference in the House Majority Caucus Room today.

House Speaker Joanna McClinton (D-Philadelphia) discussed budget achievements accomplished by the legislature since the Democrats claimed a majority in the House following the 2022 election. She mentioned expanding the income eligibility of property tax and rent rebates and tripling the dependent childcare tax credit for those caring for senior parents or children as notable budget victories under the current administration. She discussed the establishment of the Working Pennsylvanians Tax Credit in the 2025-2026 budget, which grants tax relief to low-to-moderate income individuals and families. She said the Democrats are focused on raising the minimum wage and funding public transportation. She criticized the Trump administration and the Republican-controlled United States General Assembly for raising the cost of living and violating the rights of citizens. "We here in Harrisburg are doing our jobs each and every day," she said.

Senate Minority Leader Jay Costa (D-Allegheny) applauded Gov. Shapiro's "comprehensive" approach to governing, acknowledging the governor's willingness to engage in a bipartisan effort. He said public transit is still a "major issue" in Allegheny County. He expressed his excitement over the governor's proposed \$1 billion Critical Infrastructure Fund, which would invest in housing and energy infrastructure, along with assisting local county and municipal projects such as school buildings. He discussed the governor's call to invest in the Agriculture Innovation fund, which he claimed could generate millions of dollars in revenue for the commonwealth. He stressed the importance of negotiating with Republicans in both chambers, recognizing the challenges of divided government.

Rep. Jordan Harris (D-Philadelphia), majority chair, House Appropriations Committee, said that it is "too expensive to live in Pennsylvania. He said Gov. Shapiro's budget address reflects the interactions he's had with everyday Pennsylvanians. He decried the high costs of mortgages, rents and childcare in all areas of the commonwealth. "What this budget does is it builds on the work that we've collectively done to make Pennsylvania more affordable for everyday, working people," he said. He stressed the need for housing infrastructure, arguing that an increase in Pennsylvania's housing stock would decrease housing prices. He discussed the 2023 Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court ruling, which declared Pennsylvania's school funding system unconstitutional, mentioning that the upcoming budget will feature the commonwealth's "third significant investment in righting that ship." He said he has seen firsthand the results of education funding increases in the William Penn School District. "This budget does what the federal government should be doing," he said. "This budget isn't about the partisan back and forth, [it's] about governing." He said struggling Pennsylvanians are no longer worried about party alignment, instead focusing on kitchen table issues such as the cost of groceries

and utilities. He responded to Republicans who claim that the budget proposal features high spending, demanding they publicly announce what initiatives they would cut.

Sen. Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia), minority chair, Senate Appropriations Committee, stressed that Gov. Shapiro's budget proposal featured no tax increases. He criticized Republican concern over the structural deficit, noting that Republicans have controlled the Senate for 46 of the last 50 years. He suggested that the structural deficit was not actually important to Republicans, serving only as a means of opposition to Democratic proposals. He referred to the state budget as a "moral document," criticizing Republicans' willingness to cut education funding despite the commonwealth court ruling. He referred to the proposed Critical Infrastructure Fund as a potential "gamechanger" for communities across the commonwealth. He noted that budget negotiations begin tomorrow, Feb. 4, 2026. He said the June 30 budget deadline is a realistic completion date. He called for raising the minimum wage and praised Gov. Shapiro for "putting the people first."

Some of the governor's proposals require withdrawing from the commonwealth's surplus. Are you okay with that?

House Majority Leader Matthew Bradford (D-Montgomery) said that every budget is built on the budget before. He stressed the importance of returning surpluses to the people of the commonwealth.

Can Pennsylvania afford this budget if proposals such as skill games and recreational marijuana are not passed?

Leader Bradford said House Democrats have "shown a path" on legalized marijuana and "stand ready" for the skill games bill promised by the Senate three years ago. "At some point, somebody needs to start asking the Senate real questions about what they can pass," he said. He noted that the governor's proposal features additional cuts to the corporate net income tax (CNIT), sending a message that Pennsylvania is "open for business." He referenced Senate Majority Leader Joe Pittman's (R-Indiana) claim that skill games were a public safety issue, urging him to bring a proposal to the table.

Can you further discuss the Critical Infrastructure Fund? How comfortable is the commonwealth with taking on additional debt in the form of bonds?

Leader Bradford said the fund will grow the economy, noting that similar investments in infrastructure made in recent years are already "bearing fruit." He stressed the importance of addressing Pennsylvania's "demographics problem" by making investments that attract young people and entice them to stay in the commonwealth.

What has changed from last year's budget impasse?

Leader Bradford noted Gov. Shapiro's popularity in the commonwealth, arguing that it was "politically imperative" for Republicans to work with the governor in the face of upcoming elections in November.

Can you discuss mass transit?

Leader Bradford said the governor "bailed out" the legislature on the issue of transit last year. "[He] got us a two-year bridge which will have us dealing with this issue immediately after the next election," he said. He criticized Leader Pittman for "inextricably" linking the issues of mass transit and skill games during the previous budget negotiations. "You can't be pro-business, you can't be pro-worker, you can't be pro-economic growth... if you're not going to support mass transit," he said. He suggested that Republicans in the areas that rely on mass transit may have a difficult time explaining their lack of support to their constituents.

Can you discuss data centers?

Leader Bradford stressed the importance of incentivizing the "right kind of data center growth." He discussed the inevitability of data centers and the need to explain to constituents how important they are to Pennsylvania's economy. He said data centers must be environmentally responsible without raising the electric bills of Pennsylvanians.

Is there anything you wanted to see in the governor's budget address that was not there?

"Not a thing," Leader Bradford said. "This governor speaks for House Democrats and Senate Democrats every day."



SENATE, HOUSE GOP RESPOND TO GOV. SHAPIRO'S PROPOSED 2026-2027 BUDGET

By Kyle Purchase, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | February 3, 2026

Members of the Senate and House Republican caucuses met in the Capitol Media Center today to respond to Gov. Josh Shapiro's proposed budget for 2026-2027.

President Pro Tempore Kim Ward (R-Westmoreland) said, "I'm just going to kick off this press conference by making sure we all understand that what we care about most are the Pennsylvanians." She said workers cannot be burdened and wait for overtime. She criticized Gov. Shapiro for spending "too much" and said her caucus plans to be "fiscally responsible." She further criticized Gov. Shapiro's proposal for housing policies, which she says would "still be here in 2028, when he's gone." She said she believes a burden would be left "on all of us, putting all of that money into a bond, and we again will be left holding the bag."

Senate Majority Leader Joe Pittman (R-Indiana) echoed Sen. Ward's sentiments regarding the spending amount. "Much of what I heard in his remarks today reminded me of two things: imitation is the best form of flattery and success has 1,000 fathers," he said. Leader Pittman asserted that the themes Gov. Shapiro discussed, such as cutting taxes, energy, public safety, reducing crime, cutting bureaucratic red tape and permitting reform, are similar to what House and Senate Republicans have proposed in previous years. "Let's be very clear — much of the successes that he touted today would not have been possible without our initiative," Sen. Pittman said. "Speeches are great, applause lines are wonderful, but at the end of the day, speeches and applause lines cannot become law." He mentioned the upcoming meeting with the governor tomorrow morning and said he appreciated the governor taking his suggestion. He emphasized the focus on long-term sustainability of the commonwealth after Gov. Shapiro leaves office.

Sen. Scott Martin (R-Lancaster), majority chair, Senate Appropriations Committee, said he didn't want to sound "like a broken record," and reiterated concerns about the commonwealth's structural deficit. Discussing the upcoming budget hearings, Sen. Martin said, "They underestimate what their spending is going to be, deliberately, and they overestimate what their revenues are going to be." He criticized Gov. Shapiro for "twisting and turning" when he was discussing pathways to jobs and didn't mention the Grow PA program. He further criticized the lack of spending related to tax credits for the "Lighting Plan" and the bond upgrades. Sen. Martin warned that a potential bond downgrade is "the moment we start draining that fund completely." He urged a "fiscally responsible" budget and regarded the proposal as a "rinse and repeat."

House Minority Leader Jesse Topper (R-Bedford) agreed with the notion of a growing economy, noting Pennsylvania leaving the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), but said it "still doesn't match the spending." He acknowledged the divided legislature and summarized it as the "fundamental disagreement over the role of government." He argued for the private sector to contribute to economic growth, given that RGGI is "out of the way."

Senate Majority Whip Wayne Langerholc (R-Cambria) praised his colleagues for being "fiscally responsible" and asked, "Where would we be if we did not advance those policies?" He criticized Gov. Shapiro's comments about the state of Ohio's energy during his address and pointed out the operating power plants in Ohio and the potential for Pennsylvania to have them to support economic development. "I want to personally ask those that are watching this now, the taxpayer in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the energy bill that you got your electricity bill this month, the month before or the prior month, did this governor save you money? I would beg to differ," he said. Sen. Langerholc concluded by urging "fiscal common sense."

Why should people trust Republican leadership to address the deficit?

Sen. Pittman said one would need to look at previous spending proposals and criticized House Democrats for their proposals that would spend too much. Sen. Pittman assured his caucus would reduce the "couch cushions of bureaucracy" and make them "flat as a pancake."

Is tapping into the Rainy Day Fund a red line item for Senate Republicans?

Sen. Pittman admitted it would be difficult to have no conversation of the Rainy Day Fund and said there is "a long way to go" as far as revenue and projections are concerned. He criticized the corrections line item as "wholly ridiculous" and pointed out the closing of two prisons.

What is your response to "there will be a billion dollars five years from now in the Rainy Day Fund," and are there other areas of interest?

Rep. Topper replied, "They better hope that Republicans are still in control of the legislature, because that's the only way that will happen." He echoed Sen. Martin's concerns about the budget numbers and the aging population of the commonwealth.

Can you comment on Gov. Josh Shapiro calling Senate Republicans out regarding the statute of limitations?

Sen. Ward pointed out the Senate had passed a constitutional amendment addressing the statute of limitations "four times" and mentioned the commonwealth has a remedies clause in its' constitution, whereas other states do not. "If he is sincere about victims,

not only in the past, but more present, he should return the \$1.1 million he got from Reid Hoffman, who is on the Epstein list,” she said. Sen. Ward mentioned the Williamsport High School baseball team sexual assault case, which occurred during Gov. Shapiro’s tenure as Attorney General. “We have a case number if you’d like to see it,” she remarked.

Is there an increased motivation to begin the budget process sooner?

Sen. Pittman assured his team has been “quite motivated delivering a budget on time,” but said “delivering a budget on time and delivering the right product have to go hand in hand.” He said he and his caucus are committed to getting a budget in time.

How do you respond to calls for raising the minimum wage?

Sen. Pittman replied, “That’s why we have continually been focused on pro-growth economic policies that bring all wages up to maximum wages.” He said his caucus is willing to have a conversation about it and come to a compromise. “I think he’s more interested in the political talking point than actually getting something done on the issue,” Sen. Pittman said.

The talking point, if it were just raised, wouldn’t that affect the items you just discussed?

Rep. Topper said there would “always be a talking point” and also emphasized the market’s role in determining wages. He reiterated that the budget now is a proposal, and negotiation would begin.

Can you comment on education, where the governor wants another half-billion dollars?

Rep. Topper replied, “It’s not just money that makes schools effective — we believe that parental choice in a student’s education is what makes education effective.”

Is there an update on skill games and cannabis?

Sen. Pittman described it as a “five-party conversation” and reaffirmed the belief that “something needs to occur on gaming reform.” He hoped the Supreme Court would address gaming “sooner rather than later,” and criticized the previous House plan on marijuana that would have been implemented by the state stores as “crazy.” He continued, “We heard nothing from the governor on whether or not he’d even signed the bill.” Sen. Pittman criticized Gov. Shapiro for talking but not providing a legislative proposal.

What is your response to the data center standards that were mentioned in the budget address?

Sen. Pittman emphasized the connection between affordability and availability. He criticized the time spent on RGGI as “wasteful” and said conversations would be held about data centers.

Can the administration require those standards under the law?

Sen. Pittman replied, “I don’t think they can, otherwise he wouldn’t be asking us for it.”



LAWMAKERS, ADVOCATES CELEBRATE SENATE APPROVAL OF THE CELL PHONE BAN BILL

By Zoe Buchmann, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | February 4, 2026

Sen. Devlin Robinson (R-Allegheny) was joined by Sens. Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia) and Steven Santarsiero (D-Bucks) and advocates at a press conference today to highlight the passage of [SB 1014](#) in the Senate.

Sen. Robinson, the prime sponsor of SB 1014, highlighted his legislation aimed at banning student cell phone use during the school day in Pennsylvania. He emphasized that phones capture and monetize students’ attention, distracting them from learning and social interactions. He argued that with Pennsylvania investing nearly \$12 billion annually in K-12 education, schools must recapture students’ attention to ensure this investment is effective. He cited studies showing teens spend an average of eight hours per day on phones, including 1.5 hours during school, and noted that nearly 20 states have already successfully banned phones in schools. He explained that the bill is designed to improve academic performance, mental health and social development. He thanked stakeholders, educators, parents, students and legislative colleagues for their bipartisan partnership and called on the House to take up the bill.

Sen. Hughes thanked colleagues for their bipartisan work, staff and advocacy groups for their work on the cell phone legislation. He emphasized that Pennsylvania is investing “unprecedented funds” to constitutionally and equitably fund schools, but student distractions from smartphones undermine this investment. He cited that 72% of high school teachers identify cell phone distraction as a major problem. He connected smartphone use to rising rates of adolescent depression, anxiety, suicide and cyberbullying,

noting research showing children who get smartphones before age 13 face higher risks of mental health issues later. He highlighted strong public support, including from Gov. Josh Shapiro, and stressed the need to maximize classroom learning, support teachers and protect students' development. He urged lawmakers to pass the legislation quickly and effectively.

Sen. Santarsiero thanked colleagues, advocacy groups and staff for working on the student cell phone legislation. He framed smartphones as handheld computers with unintended consequences, particularly when combined with addictive apps and social media, which can disrupt learning, social development and personal relationships for children. He emphasized, as a former teacher and parent, that restricting phone use from bell to bell in schools allows students to focus on academics and develop real-world social skills, while giving teachers the environment to effectively teach. He noted that in schools that have implemented similar policies, students reported feeling relieved and more present, while teachers saw positive changes in classroom dynamics. He argued that this is a reasonable policy intervention, similar to other state educational mandates and does not remove family responsibility for teaching technology use. He urged Pennsylvania to follow other states, pass the bill through the House and get it to Gov. Shapiro's desk, encouraging public support and outreach to representatives and school boards.

Jeff Ney, vice president, Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), thanked Sens. Robinson, Hughes and Santarsiero for SB 1014 and for bipartisan support. He explained that the bill establishes a statewide expectation that schools restrict student use of mobile devices during the school day, while allowing individual schools to determine implementation. He highlighted that smartphones and tablets disrupt lessons, distract students and facilitate cyberbullying and that restricting them will help students focus on learning, develop interpersonal skills and improve social interaction. He noted that 28 states have similar laws, with positive outcomes such as more engagement and fewer classroom disruptions. He urged the House to pass the bill so it can reach Gov. Shapiro's desk, emphasizing that while implementation will be an adjustment, it is the right thing to do for students' well-being and academic success.

Kelly Marsh, co-leader, PA Unplugged, emphasized the need for bell-to-bell phone-free schools and thanked senators for their bipartisan leadership. She highlighted that students spend over an hour on phones during school, effectively losing almost a full school day each week. She explained that phones are designed to capture attention, and parents alone cannot manage their use. She stressed that restricting phones throughout the day restores students' focus, creativity and opportunities for human connection and that legislation is a necessary first step for cultural change, requiring collaboration between families, schools and government.

Sen. Rosemary Brown (R-Lackawanna), co-chair of the Mental Health Caucus, framed the legislation in the context of her previous work on hands-free cell phone laws for drivers, highlighting it as a common-sense approach. She noted that teachers and schools are seeking guidance and state support to manage phone use, protect learning and reinforce social and soft skills. She highlighted that technology use directly impacts mental health and the bill gives schools the flexibility to implement policies while providing statewide consistency and support.

Sen. Robinson thanked attendees and colleagues for their work. He opened the floor to questions from the media.

Where are the cell phones going to go, and how much control do teachers have over them?

Sen. Robinson answered that the bill is written in a way to let school boards decide what to do. He emphasized that they wanted to ensure local control and have the communities weigh in to implement the policy.

Gov. Shapiro has publicly supported this recently, so there is some urgency to get this law passed. Do you have a sense of how quickly the House is going to move forward with this? Have you heard from your colleagues in the House?

Sen. Robinson noted he has not heard from the House but added that the bill just passed the Senate yesterday.

Sen. Santarsiero emphasized respecting the legislative process in the House, adding that the bill must first pass through committee before reaching the floor. He highlighted his commitment to working with House members, answering questions and advocating effectively while allowing colleagues to complete the process. He stated that he hopes to get the bill to Gov. Shapiro's desk this year but stressed the importance of ensuring lawmakers fully understand and support the policy when it comes up for a vote.

Can you talk a little bit more about the exceptions and what you considered in what should be included and what should not be? Was there anything that you were on the fence about, including when it came to exceptions?

Sen. Robinson responded that some teachers may use phones for instructional purposes as exceptions to the law. He explained that in such cases, teachers would need approval from the principal and school board, ensuring that exceptions are carefully managed while maintaining the overall goal of a focused, distraction-free learning environment.

What about students in Individualized Education Programs (IEP) or other exceptions?

Sen. Robinson reiterated that those decisions will be made with input from teachers and school board supervisors.

What are your comments concerning the safety concerns brought up in committee hearings?

Sen. Santarsiero shared a personal experience as a high school teacher during a lockdown 17 years ago, before smartphones existed. He explained that students' flip phones spread misinformation, creating unnecessary panic that made it harder for the teacher and first responders to manage the situation. He emphasized that phones in emergencies can be more harmful than helpful, interfering with safety protocols and causing confusion. He noted that parents can still be informed through traditional school communication, reinforcing that restricting student phone use in schools is not a safety concern but actually supports safety and order.

Sen. Robinson added that in cases of emergencies, students are better served by listening to their teachers to get them out of harm's way, instead of focusing on their phones.

Have you heard from Gov. Shapiro's Office as to whether this is the product he was envisioning when he said he supports a bell-to-bell phone ban?

Sen. Hughes noted that legislative staff are monitoring discussions and providing guidance throughout the process. He stated that the House will need to follow its normal procedures, including committee hearings and possible recesses, but emphasized the urgency of the bill for real people. He suggested that action could realistically occur when the House reconvenes, possibly in March, though no firm prediction was made.



Committee News

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

House Education Committee

02/02/2026, 9:30 a.m., Room 140, Main Capitol

By Zoe Buchmann, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee held an informational meeting on the Future Ready PA Index and student outcomes.

Amy Lena, deputy secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Department of Education (PDE), explained that the Future Ready PA Index is designed to show the full picture of how schools serve students rather than reducing performance to a single score or label. She stated that while standardized tests offer useful information, they capture only a snapshot and miss important factors such as attendance, graduation, English language progress and career readiness. She highlighted that Pennsylvania intentionally adopted a public dashboard approach that displays multiple indicators side by side, allowing families, educators and policymakers to make informed decisions and focus on improvement rather than punishment. She added that the index uses color coding and trend arrows to show both performance and progress over time, helping identify strengths and areas needing support. She emphasized positive outcomes, including increased attendance, graduation rates surpassing pre-pandemic levels and Pennsylvania's national leadership in career readiness, and underscored that the index supports transparency, accountability and continuous improvement.

Rep. Jim Prokopiak (D-Bucks) inquired about the greatest strengths and weaknesses in the last year between what has been done and what is going on. Lena answered that the strongest areas of performance were attendance, career readiness benchmarks and graduation rates, noting that math scores also increased, marking another success. She explained that English language arts (ELA) remains an area for improvement but emphasized that schools using the free Classroom Diagnostic Tools and the Firefly benchmark tool saw an average increase of 5%. She noted that while ELA continues to require focused attention, the data suggest these tools are having a positive impact. She added that the department is now working with schools to determine whether lower ELA performance reflects issues with the test itself or a misalignment between instruction and assessment.

Rep. Prokopiak asked what potential reasons are for those results. Brian Campbell, director, Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction, OESE, PDE, explained that declines in ELA scores were concentrated primarily in grades three through eight, while some secondary-level scores improved. He noted several concerning trends, including a roughly 4% increase in skipped test items, an 8% increase in non-scorable responses in which students wrote answers that were off task and did not address the question, and an average of about 15 fewer minutes spent per student on the ELA Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) compared to the previous year. He emphasized that these patterns do not necessarily indicate an inability to write but may instead reflect misalignment between classroom instruction and the test format. He stated that Gov. Josh Shapiro is currently in discussions

with the State Board of Education to review the standards and consider whether the test design, particularly its emphasis on long-form reading and written responses, is still an appropriate way to assess how students engage with texts in today's classrooms. Rep. Prokopiak asked when the last time was that the test was changed. Campbell replied that the last significant changes to the test were adopted in 2012.

Rep. John Schlegel (R-Lebanon) stated that he looked at the school district indexes and requested the panel to explain what "state target goal" and "interim target" meant. Lena explained that the long-term performance goals set in the Future Ready PA Index are targets that all local education agencies and individual schools are expected to meet by 2033. She stated that these long-term goals are broken into annual benchmarks to help schools track progress over time, which are represented by the green indicators on the dashboard. She noted that meeting these yearly benchmarks signals that a school is on track to reach the 2033 goal, acknowledging that progress timelines were briefly disrupted by the pandemic. She emphasized that the benchmark system provides schools with clear, incremental expectations so that steady progress each year leads to achieving the overall long-term goal. Rep. Schlegel confirmed that the state target goal is a long-term objective set for 2033, while the interim goals provide schools with ongoing feedback on their progress toward reaching that target. He affirmed that the interim benchmarks are designed to show whether schools are on track over time, thanking Lena for the explanation.

Rep. Paul Takac (D-Centre) asked what the differences are between demographic slices, particularly rural schools versus urban or suburban schools. Campbell explained that the Future Ready PA Index allows users to break down data across multiple student subgroups, including the seven federally required racial and ethnic groups, students in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), students of low socioeconomic status (SES) and non-native English speakers. She noted that many observed trends align with expectations, such as the impact of higher concentrations of English learners or low-income students on performance, though Pennsylvania has seen improvement among non-native English speakers over the past two years for the first time since the data has been measured this way. She stated that racial and ethnic subgroup variation is present but less pronounced than often assumed, while socioeconomic status and disability status tend to have a greater impact. She emphasized that interpreting results for students with disabilities requires caution, as only about 1-2% of students qualify to take an adapted assessment under federal law, while roughly 17% of students have IEPs, meaning most take the standard version of the test. She noted that this gap creates understandable performance friction within that subgroup and must be considered carefully when analyzing the data. Rep. Takac asked specifically how they can separate out the rural data, given that 48 counties are considered rural. Campbell answered that it is not fair to assume that every rural district struggles but that there is a combination of rural and low SES that tend to highlight problem areas. Lena added that there is a location option on the website to track districts within specific location markers.

Rep. Roman Kozak (R-Beaver) thanked the witnesses for their testimony and service and shared concerns based on personal experience as a teacher about the tendency of accountability systems to categorize schools and students in a one-size-fits-all way. He noted that while state-level measurement is necessary, test-driven accountability often leads to teaching to the test, marginalization of non-tested subjects such as social studies and the public perception of schools as simply "good" or "bad," sometimes amplified by media and political debates over school funding. He expressed concern that pressure to continuously improve scores can incentivize schools to manipulate outcomes, such as pushing students to graduate to boost metrics without ensuring meaningful accountability or genuine progress.

Rep. Kozak asked what safeguards exist to prevent schools from narrowing their focus solely to index requirements and whether the Future Ready PA Index truly supports a well-rounded education, particularly in light of economic changes that are leading fewer students to attend college and more to enter the workforce earlier. Lena expressed appreciation for the questions and open dialogue, emphasizing the importance of discussing both the positive and challenging aspects of education in a public forum. She explained that teaching to the standards is essential to ensure all students meet a baseline, sharing her own experience teaching multiple subjects, including both tested and non-tested areas, and acknowledging the pressure of accountability. She noted that the previous single-score system allowed schools to focus on bragging rights rather than identifying areas of struggle, and that the pandemic created further challenges with missing data. She emphasized that the Future Ready PA Index aims to provide a more complete picture of student learning, prevent schools from pushing students to graduate prematurely, and ensure that students meet standards to earn their diplomas. Campbell acknowledged the concerns raised about the previous School Performance Profile (SPP), noting that it was often misinterpreted as a percentage or letter grade despite not being on a 0-100 scale, and emphasized the importance of educating the public on how to interpret school performance data. He highlighted that while the six federal indicators remain central for federal school improvement designations, Pennsylvania has voluntarily added seven additional indicators to the Future Ready PA Index. He explained that these include measures of career and postsecondary success, such as CTE program completion, industry certifications, college enrollment, military enlistment, employment and standardized assessments like the SAT. He emphasized that these voluntary indicators provide a broader view of student success beyond state tests and reinforced that teaching to standards, rather than simply teaching to the test, is central to ensuring students achieve meaningful outcomes without being pushed through prematurely. Rep. Kozak thanked them for their answers, noting that he hopes there will be a future measurement on history because he believes students need to understand "our history to be good citizens."

Rep. Napoleon Nelson (D-Montgomery) asked for clarification about grade-level proficiency, noting that PSSA and Keystone scores are published, but some aspects of proficiency appear unclear or skewed. He observed what seems to be an artificial shift in scoring, where performance moves from below basic to basic, and sought further explanation on how these proficiency levels are determined and reported. Campbell explained that the apparent skew in proficiency scores, particularly in fifth- and sixth-grade ELA and seventh-grade math, often occurs during transitions between school levels, such as moving from elementary to middle school. He noted that these transitions involve increases in content rigor, changes in classroom structure and new responsibilities for students, all of which can temporarily affect performance. He added that such issues are common across multiple indicators and that supports like school counseling, teacher preparation and targeted certification requirements are intended to help students navigate these transitions. He observed that the below-basic ELA numbers at these grades may appear artificially low, with many students shifting from below basic to basic, while proficiency and higher-level scores remain more stable.

Rep. Nelson asked how the state ensures consistency in what is being tested so that results can be meaningfully compared year over year. He focused particularly on the “below basic” category, noting that it is not clear how students are classified there. He explained that while he understands it involves some deviation from proficiency, he finds it difficult to interpret what it means in practice, especially when 30% of students fall into the below-basic category. Campbell explained that the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS) measures something different from proficiency. He confirmed that PVAAS calculations are based on standard deviations from proficiency, projecting the growth a student would need in a single year to reach proficiency, with larger gaps requiring exponentially more growth. He specified that proficiency itself is calculated differently, as it is a weighted score based on test questions, where items like essays carry more weight than multiple-choice questions, and the total points earned are compared against set ranges to determine performance levels. He emphasized that proficiency reflects a single-day measure of achievement, while PVAAS provides a growth projection. Campbell noted that if 30% of students are below basic and 35% are at the basic level, these are significant percentages, particularly in math, and such results may indicate areas needing attention, such as targeted support for students and addressing achievement gaps to ensure readiness for future goals. Lena noted that math scores have increased compared to last year but emphasized the importance of looking at multiple indicators to identify where students are struggling and which specific concepts may need attention. She explained that this is part of the rationale for Gov. Shapiro’s initiative to review and potentially update the standards, ensuring they remain relevant for current students. She highlighted the significance of including a growth indicator for schools, which reflects an average of student progress over three years, providing a more comprehensive view of performance beyond a single-year snapshot.

Rep. Nelson emphasized that 57% of African American students are performing below basic in math and expressed concern about how to interpret such data within the Future Ready PA Index. He highlighted the need to acknowledge that certain portions of the student population are not yet being adequately prepared to be “future ready.” He stressed that this reality underscores the importance of increased funding and urgency in addressing these gaps and urged the panel to explicitly recognize and communicate that these outcomes are unacceptable and require targeted attention. Lena agreed that the data clearly shows the need for improvement and emphasized that the Future Ready PA Index helps identify where supports should be targeted. She highlighted that one critical area of focus is ensuring that funding is effective, noting recent efforts to provide stipends for student teachers and to place highly qualified teachers in every classroom. She expressed appreciation for these efforts, emphasizing that they are essential steps toward making a meaningful difference in students’ lives.

Rep. Tarah Probst (D-Monroe) asked why the ELA baseline has remained largely unchanged since 2012-2013. She noted that students’ literacy practices have shifted dramatically since that time, citing changes such as less emphasis on cursive, book reports and traditional research methods and the pervasive use of technology and artificial intelligence (AI). She suggested that these cultural and technological shifts likely contribute to lower ELA scores. She asked whether future baseline updates would take these factors into account, noting that incorporating modern tools and practices could potentially produce more accurate or improved results. Campbell agreed, adding that they are looking forward to opening and changing the standards. Rep. Probst asked whether the data included only public schools and whether there was a distinction between cyber schools and traditional brick-and-mortar schools. She expressed concern about the validity of online school results, noting that in some cases, parents may complete work for students, which could affect performance measures. She asked if the data had been separated by school type or if it was reported collectively, highlighting the importance of understanding how the school setting might influence outcomes. Lena confirmed that the data includes all types of schools and that the analysis is broken down by school setting. She explained that traditional brick-and-mortar public schools generally perform above the state average in all areas, brick-and-mortar charter schools perform slightly lower and cyber schools are struggling the most. She noted that Pennsylvania identifies schools needing additional support through school improvement designations, such as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) or Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI), and provides targeted assistance to help ensure students in these schools have access to quality instruction and resources. She emphasized that there are clear performance differences by school type.

Rep. Barbara Gleim (R-Cumberland) inquired about the state target goals in the Future Ready PA Index, noting that many of the 2033 targets appear to be in the 70th percentile. She asked whether that is considered an “average” goal, and whether the intent is primarily to bring students currently below that level up to 70%, effectively aiming for all students to reach an average level of performance by 2033. She requested further explanation of how these targets should be interpreted. Campbell explained that the

2033 goals were set during the transition from No Child Left Behind to the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA) using a federal formula. He noted that if the statewide ELA proficiency in 2016 was 60%, the remaining gap to 100% would be 40 points. He continued that under ESSA, the federal formula required closing half of that gap over ten years, which in this example would be 20 points, resulting in a target of 80%. He emphasized that this formula comes from the federal government and limits the extent to which state goals can be independently set, providing a structured, incremental approach to closing proficiency gaps over time.

Rep. Gleim asked whether additional state or federal funding is being used strategically to target students and schools with lower performance, particularly the roughly 30% who are below proficiency, or whether resources are being applied broadly across all students to raise overall averages. She inquired how the department prioritizes support to ensure that the students most in need receive focused attention rather than a uniform approach for all. Lena explained that funding and support are indeed targeted toward schools and students with the greatest need. She stated that federal school improvement funds are directed to schools in the lowest 5%, which always exists relative to state performance, and these schools receive the most assistance, including a designated school improvement facilitator and additional resources. She continued that schools identified for ATSI also receive a school improvement facilitator to provide focused guidance. She added that all of this support is coordinated through the state's network of intermediate units to ensure that the lowest-performing students and schools get targeted interventions.

Dr. Sherri Smith, executive director, Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA), explained that Pennsylvania has recently transitioned to online testing for students, noting that such shifts can affect results as reading and writing on a computer differ from paper-and-pencil assessments. She emphasized that these transitional impacts may have contributed to changes in ELA proficiency this past year. She addressed the impact of state adequacy funding, which was first implemented last year, noting that meaningful effects on student performance typically take two to three years to appear. Analyzing districts that received at least \$100,000 in adequacy funding in 2024-2025, she reported that 79 districts improved in math, nine in ELA, 82 improved in at least one subject and six showed gains in both performance and growth. She highlighted ongoing factors influencing assessment outcomes, including truancy and absenteeism, early learning needs, shortages of certified teachers, student motivation and parent/guardian opt-outs. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that state assessments measure the right skills, particularly given Pennsylvania's focus on creativity, innovation, career readiness and workforce preparation. She suggested that assessments should align with classroom instruction to accurately reflect student learning and preparation for life after high school.

Rep. Kozak asked whether the two- to three-year timeline for seeing meaningful effects from new programs should also guide the legislature in making funding and policy decisions related to the Future Ready PA Index. He suggested that annual changes may not allow enough time to evaluate effectiveness. Smith agreed, affirming that policymakers should adopt a similar approach and avoid making frequent, dramatic changes to funding or accountability measures. She used structured literacy as an example to explain why changes in curriculum or instructional techniques take time to show results. She noted that districts must first develop and align curriculum, acquire materials and provide professional development for teachers. She added that when a new approach is implemented, such as structured literacy in third grade, there is often an "implementation dip" in student performance during the first year or two as both teachers and students adjust. She emphasized that legislators should be aware that new requirements take time to translate into measurable outcomes.

Rep. Prokopiak requested that Smith share what she would prioritize or do if she were part of the legislature. Smith reflected on the challenge of measuring school success and accountability, noting that while the Future Ready PA Index was a significant improvement, there are still questions about whether current metrics accurately reflect student learning. She emphasized that state assessments, like PSSAs and Keystones, may no longer align with how students read, process information or learn in classrooms today, given changes such as shorter reading segments and technology use. She noted that academic standards are too broad, which forces teachers to fragment instruction rather than focus intensively on key skills, raising concerns about whether students are truly being prepared for life after high school. She argued for a reset to evaluate both the standards and the assessments to ensure they accurately measure meaningful student success.

Rep. Marc Anderson (R-York) noted that meaningful changes in student outcomes typically take two to three years to appear and asked whether the modest improvements seen over just six months can be directly attributed to the additional funding. He expressed skepticism that such a short timeframe could produce measurable results, seeking clarification on the relationship between funding and observed changes. Smith explained that many factors influence student performance on state assessments, making it impossible to establish a direct one-to-one correlation. She specified that while six months of adequacy funding may coincide with some improvements, it cannot be conclusively linked to those test results, emphasizing that meaningful impacts typically take longer to measure.

Rep. Takac acknowledged the value of local control across Pennsylvania's 500 school boards, noting the challenges posed by polarization and competing interests in education policy. He asked, from the perspective of a school administrator, what the legislature can do to build bridges between these groups and foster collaboration, rather than exacerbate divisions, emphasizing that everyone ultimately shares the same goal of educating students and preparing them for the future. Smith emphasized that, despite polarization in many school districts, all stakeholders share a common goal that is caring for students. She stressed the

importance of involving communities and parents in decision-making, highlighting that schools cannot meet student needs in isolation. Smith noted that Pennsylvania's districts are diverse, so state accountability measures should allow for local context and reflect what each community values. She described efforts with other associations to identify the metrics that communities consider meaningful indicators of student success. She stated that while statewide assessments are important, they should be complemented by locally relevant measures to fully capture how schools are performing. Rep. Takac agreed with Smith that it is easier to make progress if you are starting from common ground rather than from disagreement.

Rep. Jill Cooper (R-Westmoreland) asked whether Pennsylvania is exploring federal waivers that allow states to bypass certain federal regulations and direct federal funds more flexibly. She requested insight on whether PDE is considering such waivers and what the first steps or priorities would be if they pursued that approach. Smith responded that pursuing a federal waiver would require leadership from PDE, including potentially reopening the state's ESSA plan. She noted the key question is how receptive the U.S. Department of Education (ED) would be to such a request. She added that many states are likely to explore this option, given that current state assessments sometimes no longer align with classroom practices or evolving educational needs.

Rep. Gleim asked Smith if the results from the survey on accountability measures could be made available for review, seeking access to the collected information. Smith agreed to share the information, noting that she will compile a full report.

Chair Peter Schweyer (D-Lehigh) asked Smith whether, from her perspective representing all superintendents in Pennsylvania, the adequacy funds distributed to roughly 380 school districts are being used appropriately, specifically for investments in teachers, curriculum, facilities and technology and whether she has seen any questionable or improper uses of those funds. Smith explained that the adequacy funds have been used appropriately by districts, primarily to reduce class sizes, hire additional reading specialists and support curriculum improvements. She emphasized that districts are held accountable through the Ready to Learn grant reporting process, which requires them to document how funds are spent. She noted that in her experience, she has not encountered any questionable use of these dollars and that districts greatly appreciate the funding to address key needs in student learning.

Chair Schweyer explained that meaningful educational improvements take time, typically two to three years or more, as programs must be implemented by teachers and absorbed by students before results are visible. He stressed that the decade-long underinvestment in many districts means it will take time to reach adequate levels. He highlighted the importance of looking at long-term trend lines and expressed confidence that districts are using adequacy funds appropriately while building toward sustained improvements.

Dan Urevick-Ackelsberg, senior attorney, Public Interest Law Center, explained that the school funding lawsuit found Pennsylvania was underfunding low-wealth districts, resulting in unconstitutional outcomes due to insufficient resources for staff, facilities, technology and curricula. He emphasized that money matters, noting the legislature responded with [SB 700 in 2024](#) to establish an adequacy formula, which has begun closing the \$4.8 billion funding gap. He highlighted how districts like Shenandoah Valley, Wilkes-Barre and Panther Valley are using adequacy funds to hire teachers, support early literacy, provide academic interventions and expand STEM and arts education. He stressed that while progress has been made, students in underfunded districts still face significant unmet needs, including mental health supports, experienced staff and equitable educational opportunities.

Dr. Brooks Bowden, director, Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education, and associate professor in education policy, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education (Penn GSE), explained that her research examines the efficiency and economic impact of educational investments, focusing on the 2024 report on Pennsylvania's adequacy funding. She emphasized that increasing high school graduation and postsecondary attainment generates substantial societal returns, about \$500,000 per additional graduate through higher earnings, tax contributions, reduced reliance on social services, lower crime and better health. She noted that increased school funding improves staffing, student achievement and long-term economic outcomes. Bowden highlighted two key findings: one that states achieve the greatest gains when adequacy funding is fully phased in and sustained, and two that student benefits accumulate over time, with the largest effects seen in cohorts educated entirely under fully funded systems. She said she found that full implementation of adequacy funding would meaningfully improve school quality, staffing parity and student outcomes, especially for ninth graders and incoming kindergarteners. She stated that the investment is economically sound, with returns exceeding costs, and that continued investment in human capital through school funding is crucial for maximizing educational and economic benefits.

Aaron Riggleman, manager of government affairs, PA Chamber of Business and Industry (PA Chamber), explained that the PA Chamber represents 12,000 employers across the state and emphasized the business community's interest in education because employers fund schools through taxes and rely on students as the future workforce. He noted that while Pennsylvania has made historic investments in public education, student outcomes have seen only marginal improvement, showing that funding alone is insufficient. He highlighted the importance of accountability and transparency through tools like standardized assessments and the Future Ready PA Index, which help identify best practices and struggling schools. He stressed that strong academic proficiency is necessary but not sufficient, and employers increasingly need graduates with problem-solving, communication and adaptability skills, especially for advanced manufacturing and AI-driven industries. He advocated for embedding employability skills into

instruction and expanding real-world learning opportunities, such as internships, apprenticeships and youth employment programs, to ensure Pennsylvania's education system supports long-term economic growth and workforce readiness.

Rep. Anderson stated that while funding is essential, student success is influenced by many factors beyond money, so increases in funding alone do not automatically guarantee better outcomes. He noted that Pennsylvania just passed a budget that increases the structural deficit by \$5 billion, with PreK-12 education accounting for 36% of the total budget. He acknowledged that while ideally every district could be funded at the level of the state's highest-spending districts, there is no "money tree." He referenced the court-ordered estimate that the state is underfunding its public schools by at least \$4.8 billion, which represents the minimum needed to provide equitable educational opportunities, and asked if the panel could provide a number that would be adequate for funding schools. Urevick-Ackelsberg explained that Pennsylvania spends a large portion of its budget on education, similar to other states, because staffing and operating public schools inherently require significant resources. He specified that the \$4.8 billion adequacy figure comes from the state's own data and is meant to provide each school district with equivalent opportunity, not to match the highest-spending districts. He added that the methodology intentionally excluded high-spending districts like Lower Merion or Fox Chapel, while including low-spending districts, making the estimate conservative. He continued that adequate funding ensures that schools can meet students' needs, but Pennsylvania remains far from fully funding its schools.

Rep. Anderson acknowledged that while district spending is monitored through audits and reporting, there is no comprehensive statewide research specifically identifying "unwise" spending. He noted that increases in administrative costs, such as the 40% rise in central office staff, are a concern, and while districts are held accountable for expenditures through processes like Ready to Learn grants, additional analysis comparing administrative spending to direct student impact could help ensure funds are maximized for classroom outcomes. Urevick-Ackelsberg explained that while accountability for educational spending is important, adequacy funds are generally spent according to the practices established by the General Assembly, including administrative costs. He noted that low-wealth districts often have some of the lowest administrative costs and that sufficient central office staff can be necessary to implement effective instruction. He emphasized that, based on trial evidence, administrative spending in these districts was not excessive and that funds were generally directed to support students.

Rep. Mary Louise Isaacson (D-Philadelphia) noted that the PA Chamber supports investments in public education because a strong school system makes the state more attractive for businesses and their employees. She emphasized that these investments help retain a skilled workforce, prevent brain drain and create a competitive environment for businesses to locate, expand, and invest in Pennsylvania. She asked if the PA Chamber is supportive of those increases. Riggleman explained that while the business community recognizes the importance of education for workforce development, the correlation between increased funding and student achievement is not always direct, noting that historic investments have led to only marginal gains in test scores. He emphasized that businesses remain committed to supporting education through both taxes and workforce development programs. He encouraged policymakers to consider the broader picture of how funding translates into meaningful student outcomes. Rep. Isaacson argued that the adequacy funding investments go beyond test scores, emphasizing that improving school facilities and overall learning environments also makes Pennsylvania a more attractive place for businesses to invest and locate. Bowden specified that while historical research on school funding was largely correlational, recent developments in data analysis allow for causal estimates, showing that increased funding does have measurable effects on student outcomes. She emphasized that the field has largely moved past debates over whether funding matters, and evidence, including testimony from the Pennsylvania court case, supports the conclusion that school funding directly impacts student success. Riggleman replied that he does not dispute the importance of school funding but emphasized the discussion around the potential for diminishing returns, where additional funding may show less clear impact on outcomes, likening it to a scatter plot. He stressed that this nuance should not be lost in broader conversations about school funding. Bowden explained that while older studies on school funding were largely correlational, recent research using state-level data allows for causal estimates, showing that increasing funding does have measurable effects on student outcomes. She emphasized that the field has reached a consensus that funding matters, reinforcing evidence presented during the school funding court case. Bowden noted that adequacy investments, such as the \$4.8-\$5.1 billion proposals, are expected to yield positive returns for students over time, particularly for cohorts entering kindergarten and ninth grade.

Rep. Cooper asked Bowden whether her research on adequacy funding accounted for Pennsylvania's declining population and the outflow of students, and if so, what assumptions or numbers were used in the analysis. Bowden stated that her research did account for Pennsylvania's declining population and student outmigration, but she did not provide specific numbers during the hearing. She noted that detailed figures are included in an appendix and offered to follow up with Rep. Cooper afterward for more information.

Rep. Takac asked Riggleman and other panelists about the role of local businesses in supporting school districts. He emphasized that businesses rely on a skilled workforce and understand the importance of investing for a return on investment. He asked for examples of how chambers of commerce are partnering with schools to address both urgent needs and long-term educational outcomes, and how the legislature can help facilitate these partnerships. Riggleman said that local businesses can support schools by exposing students early to career opportunities and integrating real-world experiences into the curriculum. He highlighted initiatives such as site visits, job shadowing, and innovative uses of AI and virtual reality to give students exposure without disrupting class time. He noted that employers and educators often communicate in different "languages," and local and state chambers can

help bridge that gap to create more effective partnerships between schools and the business community. Rep. Takac emphasized the importance of continuing dialogue between the education and business communities, noting that the relationship should be collaborative rather than adversarial. He stressed the shared goal of supporting students and building a strong workforce, encouraging efforts to “build bridges, not walls.”

Rep. Gleim inquired about more information on adequacy funding, noting that Pennsylvania increased education funding by \$3 billion since 2023. She asked whether an additional \$3.8 billion is still needed to fully close the adequacy gap and inquired where in the state budget that funding could come from. Urevick-Ackelsberg explained that the adequacy formula passed in July 2024 calculated the funding gap at \$4.8 billion. He noted that inflation alone increases basic education funding needs by roughly \$300 million per year, quickly consuming any increases. He emphasized that determining budget sources is the responsibility of the General Assembly, not school districts or their attorneys. He stressed that under the Pennsylvania Constitution, providing adequate education is a priority over nearly all other budgetary considerations. Rep. Gleim cautioned that there is a point of diminishing returns when it comes to taxation and funding, noting that 50-51% of taxes come from local taxpayers. She emphasized that while Pennsylvania ranks seventh nationally in per-student spending, taxpayers need a clear plan for adequacy investments, including goals, amounts and a sustainable timeline, rather than repeated requests for more funding without a defined path forward. Urevick-Ackelsberg pointed out that the General Assembly already enacted a law two years ago establishing a precise adequacy funding number of \$4.8 billion. He acknowledged that while the implied timeline to fully fund that gap may extend several years, he argued that this pace is too slow and the amount is likely too low, but emphasized that at a minimum, the state has a responsibility to implement the plan and should do so on an accelerated timeline.

Chair Schweyer asked Bowden to elaborate on her research regarding teacher ratios and salaries, noting that supporting teachers is not just for their sake but is assumed to be directly linked to specific educational outcomes, and asked her to expound on that connection. Bowden explained that key factors in student outcomes include teacher pay, student-to-teacher ratios and the number of counselors and other essential staff. She noted that adequacy funding helps address disparities across districts, improving parity in teacher salaries and staffing levels, though it does not fully solve all inequities. She emphasized the importance of the teacher pipeline, ensuring there are enough well-trained, qualified teachers entering the system to sustain improvements. Chair Schweyer inquired if Bowden had reviewed the regulations for the Ready to Learn block grant, noting that this is where adequacy funding is allocated. He expressed interest in understanding whether the current allowable uses for these funds are effectively promoting strategies and district policies that improve student outcomes. He requested that she take a look at the regulations and provide feedback on how the funds are being used and where improvements could be made. Bowden responded that she appreciates the question and is interested in reviewing the regulations for the Ready to Learn block grant. She noted that while she has seen some data on how the funding has been allocated so far, it is difficult to interpret that information without also reviewing the underlying regulations and allowable uses for the funds.

Chair Schweyer noted that over the past three years, graduation rates, attendance, math scores and career readiness indicators have all improved, though ELA scores have dipped. He emphasized that the legislature is not just increasing funding but also implementing policy changes, such as adjustments to teacher certification and expanded literacy programs in response to data. He highlighted the ongoing need for additional data collection on facilities and transportation and expressed openness to continued dialogue and policy improvements. He thanked the testifiers, staff and committee members, reminding them of an upcoming voting meeting on Feb. 4, at 10 a.m.



Senate Rules and Executive Nominations Committee
02/02/2026, 3:00 p.m., Rules Committee Conference Room
By Kyle Purchase, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider two bills and certain [executive nominations](#).

[SB 327](#) - (PN 1360) Amends the Public School Code, in the state system of higher education, further providing for definitions and for powers and duties of councils of trustees. Amends Title 53 (Municipalities Generally), in employees, further providing for automatic certification. Defines “campus police.” Makes a repeal under powers and duties. Adds that an installation police officer at Fort Indiantown Gap is eligible to maintain certification if they satisfactorily completed the basic educational and training requirements, satisfactorily completed the minimum number of in-service training hours established by the commission and required to maintain certification and either has an active certification on or after the effective date or was previously certified as a police officer by the commission, which certification lapsed within the last two years, and has been employed, with no lapse in service, as an installation police officer at Fort Indiantown Gap. Asserts that a resolution adopted by a council of trustees of an institution within the state system of higher education under section 2009-A(A)(13) of the Public School Code that authorizes campus police to carry firearms shall be void and of no effect as of the effective date of this section. Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 297). The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[SB 467](#) - (PN 1181) An Act authorizing the release of Project 70 restrictions on certain lands owned by the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, formerly owned by the Borough of West Mifflin, Allegheny County, in exchange for the imposition of Project 70 restrictions on other land owned by the Borough of West Mifflin. Provides conditions on the conveyances, including being subject to all lawful and enforceable easements, servitudes and rights of others. Repeals the section on conveyance in Rush Township, Schuylkill County. Effective immediately. (Prior PN: 1057, 420). The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

Sen. Camera Bartolotta (R-Washington) provided the list of certain [executive nominations](#) to be reported to the appropriate standing committee for the purpose of a public hearing.

Certain [executive nominations](#) were unanimously **reported to the appropriate standing committee** for the purpose of a public hearing.



House Health Committee
02/03/2026, 8:30 a.m., Room 60, East Wing
By Daniel Sachetta, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider one bill and four resolutions.

[HB 2042](#) – (PN 2614) Amends the Safety in Youth Sports Act, further providing for definitions and for the prevention of concussions and traumatic brain injuries. Adds organized leagues and any recreational team activity with pre-adult participants under the definition for “athletic activity” and adds definitions for “pre-adult participant” and “return-to-learn.” Replaces “student” with “pre-adult participant” throughout the language of the legislation. Outlines the information distribution requirements by sponsoring organizations. Provides for training course requirements approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Federation of State High School Associations or other provider approved by the Department of Health. Effective in 60 days. The bill was **reported as amended**, on a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

[A02388](#) by Frankel, further defines “official recreational athletic event,” and specifies that an event covered by the legislation is sponsored, organized and competitive, and does not occur spontaneously. The amendment was **adopted**, on a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

Minority Chair Kathy Rapp (R-Warren) expressed her opposition to both the amendment and the bill, referencing the re-referral of [SB 9](#) out of this committee. “While I feel it’s very important to protect our young people in sports — especially when it involves concussions — at the same time, we are overlooking and overlooking, deliberately, the injuries of female athletes by transgender males,” she stated. Chair Rapp recounted instances of athletes being injured and said, “I cannot, in good conscience, vote in favor

of this bill when it does not mention anything about protecting women in sports against our transgender male athletes.” She asked the members to vote no on both the amendment and the bill.

On the bill as amended, Rep. Tim Briggs (D-Montgomery), the bill’s prime sponsor, spoke about passing this act in a bipartisan manner back in 2011 when he worked on the issue. He highlighted the need to expand the definitions of the Safety and Youth Sports Act to cover all youth sports and address “return to learn” policies. He opined that “politics was getting in the way” of support for the bill. He detailed that SB 9 was currently in the House Judiciary Committee, so he will see what can be done about bringing that bill for a vote. He encouraged members to vote in the affirmative to advance a bill to protect children in sports.

Chair Rapp acknowledged Rep. Briggs’ comments about politics invading all issues but noted that as a legislator, “most bills are politically driven.”

Rep. Charity Grimm Krupa (R-Fayette) highlighted the importance of concussion injuries in sports. She spoke on Rep. Briggs’ point about the involvement of politics, criticizing the bill for not addressing “sending young girls and our athletes out to go to athletic war with biological men.” She expressed her opposition to the bill as “taking a stand for those female athletes.”

Rep. Brad Roae (R-Crawford) stated that “this is appalling,” criticizing the bill for addressing concussions after they occur. He highlighted SB 9 as his preferred solution to “keep that situation from happening to begin with.” He said, “Now, there’s always going to be concussions in sports; you’re never going to get rid of all of them, but we can prevent concussions that happen when boys that are much larger, stronger hurt girls.” He added that girls playing on girls’ sports teams and boys playing on boys’ sports teams is “not political,” but rather “just absolute common sense.” He stated he would be voting no on the bill. He proposed a motion to table HB 2042 until SB 9 is passed by the House Judiciary Committee.

Rep. Roae urged members to vote yes on tabling a bill related to concussions to potentially encourage the Judiciary Committee to pass SB 9.

The motion to table HB 2042 **failed**, along a party-line vote, with Democrats voting in the negative.

Chair Rapp criticized the majority party for not supporting SB 9, which she believes would protect women’s sports. She detailed that she believed young athletes should be protected against concussion injuries but urged a vote against the bill “on principle” to protect women in sports.

Chair Dan Frankel (D-Allegheny) thanked Rep. Briggs for his work on legislation to enhance safety precautions for student athletes, particularly regarding concussions. He stated that issues are being brought up that do not concern the contents of the bill as motivations to vote in the negative. He emphasized the importance of “voting on what is in front of the committee.” He urged members to vote affirmatively on the legislation.

[HR 203](#) – (PN 1458) Resolution directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study of medication errors and issue a report to provide recommendations on reduction of errors and improved patient safety. The resolution was **reported as amended**, with Rep. Timothy Bonner (R-Mercer), Rep. Krupa, Rep. Roae, Rep. Leslie Rossi (R-Westmoreland), Rep. Tim Twardzik (R-Schuylkill) and Rep. David Zimmerman (R-Lancaster) voting in the negative.

[A02337](#), by Frankel, expands the study beyond medication errors, including them as one component of medical errors; asks the commission to make suggestions and provide policy options; and expands the advisory committee to include a patient safety officer from a medical facility and a representative from the Patient Safety Authority. The amendment was **adopted**, with Rep. Bonner, Rep. Krupa, Rep. Roae, Rep. Twardzik and Rep. Zimmerman voting in the negative.

[A02373](#), by Rossi, adds the Pennsylvania Ambulatory Surgery Association to the commission for the study. The amendment was **adopted**, with Rep. Bonner and Rep. Twardzik voting in the negative.

Rep. Arvind Venkat (D-Allegheny) expressed cautious support for the amendment, highlighting concerns about the methodology of studies on medical errors. He noted concerns about the Joint State Government Commission’s (JSGC) structure to perform this study and the Patient Safety Authority working in hospitals. He stated the resolution will require more work before a floor vote.

Rep. Bonner discussed the expansion of HR 203 to include all medical errors and questioned why the legislature has not consulted the Patient Safety Authority about its capability to oversee hospital errors. He expressed concern with JSGC’s ability to conduct this investigation due to being overwhelmed with other studies. He noted issues with spending taxpayer dollars to create another bureaucracy through an advisory committee. He asked members to allow the system to work as it has been and make an inquiry to the Patient Safety Authority. Chair Frankel stated that [Glenn Pasewicz, executive director, JSGC](#), was present to answer questions from the committee. Pasewicz assured the committee that JSGC could handle additional work despite being busy.

Chair Rapp asked whether the commission's work would require additional funding from the state budget. Pasewicz explained that the commission's current appropriation covers its projects but would always appreciate more funding.

Rep. Roae inquired about the number of studies the commission is currently working on. Pasewicz stated they have about nine projects ongoing, but typically the range is from 15 to 17 projects. Rep. Roae asked about the average number of projects completed annually. Pasewicz explained that the commission releases between nine and 14 reports per year.

Rep. Krupa inquired about the staff's expertise and educational capabilities in providing opinions on specific medical issues. She noted the importance of needing medical experts with a strong educational background to complete this study. Pasewicz explained that the commission relies on an advisory committee for specialized and technical issues.

Rep. Bonner asked why Pasewicz attended the committee meeting today. Pasewicz stated he attended because HR 203 was being discussed. Rep. Bonner inquired about any concerns regarding conducting the study and whether there were medical personnel within the commission. Pasewicz explained he had no concerns and noted there were no employees with a specific medical background. Rep. Bonner further asked if Pasewicz had expressed concerns about the workload given by the legislature. Pasewicz specified he personally had not expressed any such sentiments. Rep. Bonner asked if the commission had ever conducted a study of hospital services. Pasewicz detailed that the commission completed a report on medical malpractice but has not done anything on patient safety or medical errors.

Rep. Twardzik shared his experience on a hospital board and argued against the need for a new study on hospital services, citing the thorough review practices already in place. He noted that this would be a duplicate study, which another program already takes care of.

Chair Frankel specified that the resolution aims to examine the medical error reporting system, not to duplicate existing processes. He discussed efforts to ensure the study's feasibility and the inclusion of regulated facilities in the advisory committee.

Rep. Rossi asked for an affirmative vote on her amendment.

Chair Rapp expressed her support for the amendments and the resolution, highlighting the importance of the study and the fact that it requires no additional funding.

Chair Frankel emphasized the need to improve the medical error reporting system to enhance patient safety without increasing litigation risk for facilities, referencing a federal report on unreported patient harm events.

[HR 392](#)– (PN 2781) Resolution recognizing the week of March 8 through 14, 2026, as “Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week” in Pennsylvania. The resolution was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[HR 399](#) – (PN 2796) Resolution designating February 19, 2026, as “Wear Purple Day” in Pennsylvania. The resolution was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[HR 411](#) – (PN 2825) Resolution recognizing the month of February 2026 as “Blood Cancer Awareness Month” in Pennsylvania. The resolution was unanimously **reported as committed**.

Chair Frankel introduced the package of “non-controversial resolutions,” stating they would be voted on as a package without individual comments, and opposition should be indicated by a hand raise. Seeing no hands raised, he stated there was no further business and adjourned the meeting.



House State Government Committee

02/03/2026, 1:40 p.m., Room 515, Irvis Office Building
By Derek Danneker, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider several bills.

[HB 1139](#) - (PN 1259) Amends the Administrative Code, in powers and duties of the Department of General Services and its departmental administrative and advisory boards and commissions, providing for water bottle filling stations. Provides intentions for water bottle filling stations. Asserts that standards relating to water bottle filling stations shall comply with the Pennsylvania Construction Code Act as well as other applicable standards. Outlines requirements for water bottle filling station installation. Directs the Department of General Services (DGS) to promulgate rules as necessary to implement this section. Provides definitions. Effective in 60 days. The bill was **reported as amended**, on a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

A00699, by Hill-Evans, provides that the definition of "water bottle filling station" incorporates a third-party, certified water filter, certified for NSF and C53 standards for lead reduction. The amendment was unanimously **adopted**.

Chair Brad Roae (R-Crawford) asserted that although the bill is well-intended, it is unnecessary. He stated that on a tour of the new state archives building or any newly remodeled state building, all the water fountains were able to fill water bottles.

[HB 1278](#) - (PN 1433) Amends the Pennsylvania Election Code, in dates of elections and primaries and special elections, further providing for affidavits of candidates; in nomination of candidates, further providing for affidavits of candidates, for statement of candidates for delegates to national conventions, for Secretary of the Commonwealth to furnish county boards with list of candidates and candidates to be notified, for nominations by political bodies, for examination of nomination petitions, certificates and papers and return of rejected nomination petitions, certificates and papers and for affidavits of candidates; and, in penalties, further providing for false affidavits of candidates and for false signatures and statements in nomination petitions and papers. Replaces "affidavit" with "statement," "statement, subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities)" and "statement required under section 910" throughout the language of the bill. Effective in 60 days. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

Rep. Nathan Davidson (D-Dauphin), prime sponsor of the bill, said his legislation would reduce barriers to accessing the ballot box.

[HB 1375](#) - (PN 1571) Amends Titles 24 (Education) and 71 (State Government), in administration and miscellaneous provisions, further providing for administrative duties of the Public School Employees' Retirement Board; and, in administration, funds, accounts and general provisions, further providing for administrative duties of the State Employees' Retirement Board. Directs the board to livestream all public meetings and post an unedited video and written record of all public proceedings on its website. Mandates that videos and records remain online for a period of at least three years and be maintained for a period of at least seven years. Directs the Office of Administration to promptly revise its management directives relating to record management policies to conform to requirements. Provides for information to be submitted to the General Assembly by the board. Provides definitions for "carried interest" and "Institutional Limited Partners Association Fee Transparency Initiative." Provides for information regarding an alternative investment vehicle to be subject to public access under the Right-to-Know Law. Effective in 60 days. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

Rep. Brett Miller (R-Lancaster), prime sponsor of the bill, said his legislation would provide transparency for the fees that are paid into the fund. He noted he has introduced the bill five times. "This bill would require various elements, as outlined in the bill, to make sure that those fees are known, so that we're not paying more to money managers, but that the fees are going into the fund," he said.

[HB 1806](#) - (PN 2220) Amends Title 38 (Holidays and Observances), in veteran recognition, providing for 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day. Provides legislative findings. Designates March 9 of each year as "6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day" in the commonwealth. Directs the governor to issue a proclamation encouraging resident to observe the holiday and write and mail letters to family, friends, military personnel and veterans to recognize postal employees. Effective immediately. The bill was **reported as committed**, with Reps. Wendy Fink (R-York) and Scott Barger (R-Blair) voting in the negative.

Rep. Napoleon Nelson (D-Montgomery), prime sponsor of the bill, emphasized that his legislation is needed because the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion was not recognized when they were abroad or at home. He detailed his experience meeting individuals who served in the battalion. He noted that resolutions have been passed in several other states to recognize their sacrifices.

Chair Carol Hill-Evans (D-York) said she was honored to have met individuals who served in the battalion.

Rep. Melissa Shusterman (D-Chester) emphasized the need to thank those who have helped the United States.

Rep. Tarah Probst (D-Monroe) highlighted the value of a historical education. She noted she is part of her local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and has learned much over the past decade.

[HR 56](#) - (PN 501) Resolution directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study on the current utilization of poll workers, polling places, voting compartments and voting machines to determine the best course of action in order to minimize the time investment required to vote and ensure that the average time required to vote does not promote inequities based on geography, economic status, race, gender or other relevant factors. The resolution was **reported as committed**, on a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

Rep. Joseph Webster (D-Montgomery), prime sponsor of the bill, pointed out that counties do not have enough poll workers. He said the study would provide recommendations to promote volunteerism.

Chair Roae said the study is unneeded and a five-minute conversation with a county election director could determine what is needed to increase the number of poll workers.

Rep. Russ Diamond (R-Lebanon) said the study would be better placed with the Election Law Advisory Board. He noted Gov. Josh Shapiro has failed to fill seven appointments on the board for three years, which makes it difficult for the board to proceed. He said he would file an amendment to move the study to the board. Rep. Webster said he would be interested in further conversations on the topic.

[HR 384](#) - (PN 2742) Resolution directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study regarding the feasibility of implementing both a statewide ballot rotation system and a precinct ballot rotation system for the order of listing candidates on ballots in primary and general elections and for each type of office and to issue a report. The resolution was **reported as committed**, on a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

Rep. Jared Solomon (D-Philadelphia), prime sponsor of the bill, said his legislation would direct a study that would provide recommendations on how to randomize how candidates appear on ballots to promote fairness. He reported that elections in Texas show a 10% difference depending on where a candidate's name appears. "I'm just saying, let's take a look at it, and if we can find a better way forward that will decrease the advantage that number one ballot position has in our commonwealth," he said.

Chair Roae stated that counties facilitate four elections each year, counting mail-in elections. He said there are still many other questions regarding ballot curing, and the bill would cause additional difficulties.

Rep. Diamond stated that the Election Law Advisory Board would be best positioned to address the issue. He detailed that changing the order of candidates on ballots would require election directors to provide many different versions of ballots. He said he would consider voting for the bill if the study were directed to the board.

Rep. Solomon noted that the bill directs a study and does not create any additional mandate. He said Pennsylvania could emulate processes in Florida, Texas and West Virginia that institute candidate randomization.

Rep. Ben Waxman (D-Philadelphia) emphasized how ballot randomization is pivotal to providing fair elections. He said the study is a "great first step."

[HR 390](#) - (PN 2771) Resolution recognizing the month of March 2026 as "Women's History Month" in Pennsylvania. The resolution was **reported as committed**, with Reps. Fink and Barger voting in the negative.

[HR 391](#) - (PN 2776) Resolution recognizing January 27, 2026, as "International Holocaust Remembrance Day" in Pennsylvania. The resolution was **reported as committed**, with Reps. Fink and Barger voting in the negative.

Chair Hill-Evans asked members to submit resolutions that designate a holiday or remembrance before the date has occurred. She noted that the inclement weather delayed consideration of the resolution.

[HR 394](#) - (PN 2783) Resolution designating March 17, 2026, as "Bayard Rustin Day" in Pennsylvania. The resolution was **reported as committed**, with Reps. Fink, Barger, Jamie Walsh (R-Luzerne) and Jacob Banta (R-Erie) voting in the negative.

[HR 406](#) - (PN 2815) Resolution recognizing the month of March 2026 as "National Social Work Month" in Pennsylvania. The resolution was **reported as committed**, with Reps. Fink, Barger and Walsh voting in the negative.

Chair Hill-Evans, prime sponsor of the resolution, noted that her sister worked as a social worker out of a desire to help others.

[HR 409](#) - (PN 2818) Resolution designating March 8, 2026, as “Charter Day” and Pennsylvania’s 345th birthday in Pennsylvania. The resolution was **reported as committed** with Reps. Fink, Barger and Walsh voting in the negative.

Rep. La’Tasha Mayes (D-Allegheny) detailed the history of how Freedom House Emergency Service was founded in Pittsburgh’s Hill District in 1967. She stated that prior to the service, police were used to transport individuals to the hospital, however African Americans were often sidelined. She detailed that the Freedom House model became the foundation of modern paramedic systems across the country.

[HR 413](#) - (PN 2844) Resolution recognizing “Black History Month” in Pennsylvania by commemorating the recently passed 50th anniversary of the closure of Freedom House Ambulance Service. The resolution was **reported as committed** with Reps. Fink, Barger, Walsh and Banta voting in the negative.

[SB 829](#) - (PN 906) An Act designating the *Hynerpeton bassetti*, a stem tetrapod, as the official state fossil of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and repealing the act of December 5, 1988. Effective immediately. The bill was **re-referred** to the House Commerce Committee, on a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

Chair Roae noted that several of Sen. Cris Dush’s (R-Franklin) bills have been referred to the House Commerce Committee. “I don’t think we should be sending bills to a committee graveyard,” he said.

Rep. Tim Bonner (R-Mercer) questioned why the bill is being re-referred. Chair Hill-Evans said Rep. Conklin requested the referral.



Senate Appropriations Committee

02/03/2026, 4:35 p.m., Rules Committee Conference Room

By Julia Walters, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider legislation.

[SB 116](#) – (PN 1420) Amends the Public School Code, in terms and courses of study, providing for credit for employment at congregate care facility. Permits a student who is in grade 11 or 12 at a school entity or nonpublic school, at least 16 years of age and who is employed, either on a paid or voluntary basis, at a congregate care facility to earn one elective credit toward graduation for every 250 hours worked at the congregate care facility, for a maximum of two elective credits toward graduation and the school entity or nonpublic school shall develop or modify an existing application process and form should the student elective credit under this section with the appropriate criteria and requirements with deadlines of application submissions. Adds that the school entity or nonpublic school may not award the elective credit to the student unless the school entity or nonpublic school has approved the student’s application and the student has satisfied all the requirements under this section. Directs school entities and nonpublic schools to ensure that the students’ employment at the congregate care facility satisfies the requirements of 22 Pa. Code 339.29. Specifies definitions. Adds descriptors to the definition of “congregate care facility.” Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 1351, 67). The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[SB 256](#) – (PN 210) The Carbon Monoxide Alarm Standards in Child Care Facilities Act provides for standards for carbon monoxide alarms in child care facilities; and imposes penalties. Provides several definitions. Explains nothing in this act is intended to modify the authority and responsibilities of the Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) under the Pennsylvania Construction Code Act. Establishes carbon monoxide alarm requirements in child care facilities. Provides for licensure. Effective in 90 days. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[SB 704](#) – (PN 725) The Grid Stabilization and Security Act provides for stabilization and security of Pennsylvania’s electricity supply and for identifying and designating sites suitable for natural gas electric generation projects. Defines “department” and “natural gas.” Directs the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to identify economically viable sites for natural gas electric generation projects that are near producing natural gas wells or pipelines, near existing electric transmission infrastructure and likely to create economically viable natural gas electric generation projects that provide economic benefits. Requires DCED to prepare a list of the sites, submit the list to the Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Bureau of Air Quality and publish

the list on DCED's website following identification of economically viable sites for natural gas electric generation projects. Mandates DCED to work in conjunction with DEP's Bureau of Air Quality to identify the air quality permits or approvals that may be required for each site on the list, outlining what shall be considered when identifying a required air quality permit or approval. Effective in 60 days. The bill was **reported as committed**, on a party-line vote, with Democrats voting in the negative.

[SB 712](#) – (PN 726) Amends Title 58 (Oil and Gas), in development, further providing for definitions and for plugging requirements. Defines “attainable bottom,” “reasonable efforts” and “total depth.” Stipulates that the department shall require, at a minimum, that a cement plug of at least 50 feet be set at the attainable bottom of the well bore, the depth and efficacy of the plug be confirmed and the remaining well bore be plugged to the surface with a solid column of cement. Effective in 60 days. The bill was **reported as committed**, on a party-line vote, with Democrats voting in the negative.

[SB 782](#) – (PN 844) Amends Titles 24 (Education) and 71 (State Government), in membership, contributions and benefits, further providing for termination of annuities; in membership, credited service, classes of service, and eligibility for benefits relating to retirement for State employees and officers, further providing for mandatory and optional membership in the system and participation in the plan; and, in benefits, further providing for termination of annuities. Strikes language related to emergency or in an extracurricular position under Section 8346 for the termination of annuities. Outlines the procedures for returning to school services as a police instructor or emergency medical services instructor. Adds an annuitant who is a part-time fire instructor at the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy, the Department of Education, a state-owned educational institution, a community college or the Pennsylvania State University who has received certification as a firefighter training instructor from the Pennsylvania Academy to the list of whom the general rule for termination of annuities does not apply. Includes an annuitant who is a part-time instructor teaching a basic police training course or an in-service police training course and an annuitant who is a part-time emergency medical services instructor at any State Employees' Retirement System employer to the list as well. Adds that the services of an annuitant shall not be subject to school employee member contributions to the Public School Employees' Retirement System or eligible for qualification as creditable school service in the Public School Employees' Retirement System and shall not be eligible for participation as a school employee in the School Employees' Defined Contribution Plan or any type of contributions to the contribution plan. Effective immediately. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[SB 974](#) – (PN 1115) Amends the Public School Code, in miscellaneous provisions relating to institutions of higher education, further providing for Dual Credit Innovation Grant Program. Extends the program to community education councils in collaboration with one or more higher education institutions to offer dual credit opportunities to high school students enrolled in a school entity. Adds community education councils to the list of priorities and additional priority in program grant funding. Provides for data collection on the number of college credits earned by students enrolled in dual credit courses offered by a collaboration between a community education council and an institution of higher education, the number of students enrolled in the courses that were offered in this collaboration and the percentage of dual credit students who earned college credits through this collaboration at an institution of higher education following high school graduation. Defines “community education council.” Effective in 60 days. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[SB 1014](#) – (PN 1421) Amends the Public School Code, in student supports, providing for bell-to-bell phone-free policy. Requires, no later than the start of the 2027-2028 school year, the governing body of each school entity to adopt a policy related to student possession and use of mobile devices during the school day while on school property. Outlines the content requirements of the policy. Adds that section 1314-A should not be construed to require a school entity to take possession of a student's mobile device. Asserts that a school entity will not be held liable for damages if the school entity's governing body adopts a policy permitting an employee to take possession of a student's mobile device if the employee acted in good faith in accordance with the school entity's policy. Provides for exceptions. Permits a school entity's policy to allow a chief school administrator or designee to approve an exception not previously mentioned with the required exception details. Requires a public comment period before adoption of the policy, the amending of an existing policy and the posting of the policy on the school entity's public website no later than five business days after adoption. Establishes reporting requirements. Provides definitions and adds the definitions of “chief school administrator” and “principal.” Removes the definition of “school property.” Effective immediately. (Prior PN: 1352, 1227). The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[HB 538](#) – (PN 2147) Amends the Public School Code, in sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking education, prevention and response at institutions of higher education and private licensed schools, further providing for scope of article, for definitions, for education program and for follow-up; and making an editorial change. Includes provisions relating to human trafficking. Defines “human trafficking,” “human trafficking prevention organization,” and “involuntary servitude.” Adds that institutions of higher education and private licensed schools may consult with a human trafficking prevention organization to develop and implement an education program. Provides that the department shall consult the Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect when creating a model education program or other resources to help schools fulfill this requirement. Adds that the department may consult with a human trafficking prevention organization to develop the online clearinghouse of model education programs and other resources. Outlines the instruction that the human trafficking prevention component of an education program shall provide students

with at a minimum, beginning with the 2027-2028 school year. Adds the phrase “human trafficking” throughout the act. Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 1946, 531). The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[HB 710](#) – (PN 2597) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in financial responsibility, further providing for required financial responsibility and providing for online verification of financial responsibility. Requires the Department of Transportation to verify financial responsibility information self-certified by a motor vehicle registrant through the verification system established under section 1786.1 (relating to online verification of financial responsibility). Stipulates that if the verification system provides no evidence of financial responsibility, the department shall send the owner or registrant a notice providing the owner or registrant the opportunity to provide proof of financial responsibility to the department. Permits proof of financial responsibility to be satisfied through the online verification system established under section 1786.1. Does not require a motor vehicle owner or registrant to provide a financial responsibility identification card if coverage is confirmed through the online verification system. Adds that any insurer who has issued a contract of motor vehicle liability insurance or any approved self-insurance entity must notify the department in an appropriate and timely manner and asserts this does not apply to an insurer that participated in the verification system established under section 1786.1. Requires an insurer to provide a copy of the cancellation notice of insurer’s filing procedures with proof that the notice was written in the normal course of business and mailing upon request of an owner or registrant in an appeal case. Asserts that the department is not required to produce a copy or other proof that a notice of termination, lapse or cancellation was provided to the owner or registrant in order to satisfy the burden of proof in a proceeding under section 1786 (e). Provides online verification and the duty to establish an online verification system. Establishes system and participation requirements. Adds system requirements must be consistent with specifications and standards supported and used by motor vehicle administrators in other jurisdictions of the United States. Requires insurers with over 1,000 contracts of motor vehicle liability insurance to have the ability to respond to and confirm a request for verification of financial responsibility for at least 24 months prior to the date of the request for verification of financial responsibility. Asserts that an insurer is not required to respond to and confirm a request for verification of financial responsibility made more than six months prior to the effective date of section 1786.1(c)(3). Provides liability. Requires reporting. Provides for temporary regulations. Defines “department.” The addition of 75 Pa.C.S. § 1786.1(a), (b)(7) and (i) is effective immediately. Section 3 is effective immediately. The remainder of this act is effective in 18 months. (Prior PN: 729). The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.



House Education Committee

02/04/2026, 10:00 a.m., Room B-31, Main Capitol

By Kyle Purchase, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider several bills.

[HB 2084](#) – (PN 2680) Amends the Public School Code, providing for Pennsylvania Promise Program; and establishing the Pennsylvania Promise Program Fund. Adds definitions. Directs the agency to administer the program and allows the agency to promulgate regulations as necessary. Establishes the Pennsylvania Promise Program Fund in the State Treasury, outlines the administration, contributions and investment and purpose of the plan. Provides for nonlapsing and the reallocation of funds. Provides for an application process for scholarships for tuition and fees, outlining eligibility and requirements. Outlines the review and approval process and the distribution requirements. Provides for limitations and renewals. Provides for scholarships for room and board, outlining application, eligibility distribution and limitation requirements. Provides for aid for adult reeducation, outlining eligibility and application requirements. Increases the household income limits by a percentage equal to the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index and provides for the coordination of the programs. Establishes annual reporting requirements. Effective immediately. The bill was **reported as amended**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

[A02411](#), by Schweyer, adds the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP) schools to the bill. The amendment was **adopted**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

Minority Chair Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster) expressed concerns about the costs of the bill and indicated he would vote against both the amendment and the bill.

Chair Peter Schweyer (D-Lehigh) advocated for the amendment, emphasizing its goal to preserve higher education choices and its importance for African American and Latino students pursuing education careers.

Rep. Jordan Harris (D-Philadelphia), the bill's prime sponsor, discussed the PA Promise program, highlighting its aim to increase college affordability and access, its last-dollar scholarship nature with an income cap of \$250,000, and its coverage of room and board for families earning less than \$60,000. He emphasized the program's extension to independent institutions and its role in retooling adults for the evolving economy, urging support for the legislation.

Rep. Tarah Probst (D-Monroe) discussed the significant increase in college costs and the importance of the PA Promise bill in providing educational opportunities for all, regardless of financial background.

Rep. Barbara Gleim (R-Cumberland) expressed difficulty in supporting the bill without a specified dollar amount, emphasizing the need for a cost estimate to make an informed decision. "I just want to also point out that the dollars are taxpayer dollars, so the working-class skilled laborers are the ones whose taxes would be paying for this as well," she said. Rep. Harris replied to Rep. Gleim and agreed that working-class skilled labor would help to pay for the program. "I also want to point out that this is for them too," he added.

Chair Cutler said Rep. Harris's "heart is in the right place." Chair Cutler reiterated his concerns about the bill and about the rising costs of college tuition and attributed it to the availability of government funds. He shared his personal experience with high loan interest rates and his son's future medical school expenses, concluding that the proposed costs of the education funding program were too high.

Chair Schweyer highlighted the importance of public investment in education, sharing his personal experiences of attending Penn State through Pell grants and Stafford loans. He discussed the struggle of saving for his daughters' education and argued that the proposed measure to lower educational costs would support higher education accessibility. Chair Schweyer urged a yes vote on the amendment to help lower costs for students.

[HR 396](#) - (PN 2785) Resolution designating the month of January 2026 as "School Director Recognition Month" in Pennsylvania. The resolution was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[SB 375](#) - (PN 934) Amends the Public School Code, in certification of teachers, repealing provisions relating to CPR instruction; in school safety and security, further providing for School Safety and Security Grant Program; and, in school health services, further providing for definitions, repealing provisions relating to automatic external defibrillators, providing for AED and CPR instruction and procedure, establishing the Automated External Defibrillator Program and providing for availability and specifications of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Asserts the School Safety and Security Fund may use grants to provide AEDs and training. Provides additional details regarding the percentage of money appropriated to the fund in that fiscal year that must go toward AEDs and training. Requires any uncommitted moneys to be returned to the fund by September 30 of each succeeding fiscal year. Defines "automated external defibrillator." Requires each school entity and nonpublic school to make available instructions on cardiopulmonary resuscitation and AED usage to its employees and volunteers on school property at least once every two years, with additional details. Outlines requirements for AED locations and training. Provides continuing education requirements. Requires completion of training under this section to be recorded with specified details. Requires the Department of Education (PDE), in consultation with the Department of Health (DOH), to develop guidelines and materials to assist school entities and nonpublic schools in developing a cardiac emergency response plan with additional information. Provides additional definitions. Provides a procedure for a biennial bid for the cost of AEDs and other equipment and necessary supplies. Provides requirements of eligibility to obtain, purchase or loan AEDs under the program. Asserts that the provisions of 42 Pa.C.S. § 8331.2 apply to school entities and nonpublic school employees who render care with an AED. Allows PDE to offer discounts or loans for AEDs as necessary. Asserts that AED purchases are considered an allowable use of Pennsylvania Accountability Grants under section 2599.2(b), as well as an innovative educational program under Article XX-B and an eligible school safety and security expense in section 1306-B(j). Allows PDE to accept donations under this section with specified requirements. Outlines content requirements for reports under this section. Allows PDE to adopt other guidelines as necessary to implement this section. Requires school entities and nonpublic schools that participate in interscholastic athletics to have an AED readily accessible. Prohibits this section from being construed as establishing any liability against a school entity or nonpublic school or its officers or employees. Requires school entities and nonpublic schools to ensure each AED is properly tested and maintained. Effective immediately. (Prior PN: 912). The bill was **reported as amended**, with Reps. Gleim, Marc Anderson (R-York) and Joe D'Orsie (R-York) voting in the negative.

[A02437](#), by Schweyer, directs funds to nonpublic schools for AED training. The amendment was unanimously **adopted**.

Chair Schweyer provided an overview of his amendment and said it was based on work from numerous past sessions. He dismissed the bill as an "unfunded mandate," and said, "This is an instance where we were able to find an existing pot of money that should be helpful to this."

Rep. Anderson expressed concerns about the increasing demands on teachers for additional training, specifically for AED training. He argued that mandating more training for school staff is burdensome and stated he would vote against the bill due to the added pressure it places on educators.

[HB 1648](#) – (PN 2002) Amends the Public School Code, in pupils and attendance, further providing for definitions and providing for mental health days. Provides for policy adoption to provide an excused absence from compulsory school attendance designated as a mental health day when a student's well-being is at risk due to mental or physical fatigue, regardless of whether an underlying mental health-related condition triggering the fatigue is certified or uncertified. Requires the policy to be in place no later than the 2026-2027 school year by the board of directors or a governing body or a public, nonpublic or private school. Establishes that the policy adopted in this subsection is based on the model policy developed by the department under subsection (d). Provides that a student can use up to two consecutive days for a mental health day but shall not use three or more mental health days in a week or in two or more consecutive weeks. Provides for additional days needed for mental or physical fatigue should be permitted under policies and procedures adopted by the school under section 1329. Requires the department to develop and publish guidelines for schools to implement mental health days and a model policy to meet the requirements for adoption under subsection (a). Outlines the guidelines, including evidence-based guidance to integrate the student-excused absences for a mental health day into the school's support systems for student well-being. Provides for evidence-based practices for school employees to contact a student who uses two or more mental health days and connect them to mental health support. Requires the department to consult with a student advisory group and school administrators whose members are directly impacted by student absence rules and policies and those representing the diversity of the public school population including gender identity, family income, race and ethnicity, geography and any other factors deemed relevant by the department when developing the guidelines. Defines "certified mental health-related condition," "extended family," "fatigue," "immediate family," "mental health day," "school" and "uncertified mental health-related condition." Outlines qualifications for certified and uncertified mental health-related conditions. Effective in 60 days. The bill was **reported as amended**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

[A02390](#), by Schweyer, changes the timetable for PDE to develop and publish the model policy and guidelines from 90 days to 180 days of the effective date of the section and requires PDE to hold at least three meetings with the workgroup, with the first meeting within 30 days. The amendment was **adopted**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

Chair Schweyer asked for an affirmative vote on the amendment, emphasizing its importance in improving the bill.

Chair Cutler expressed his opposition to the amendment and the bill, questioning the necessity of a work group study.

Rep. Anderson criticized the bill for removing challenges instead of teaching students to overcome them and for the lack of a clear definition of mental health.

Rep. Danielle Friel-Otten (D-Chester) expressed strong support for the bill, emphasizing the importance of mental health alongside physical health.

Chair Cutler reiterated his belief that existing law already addresses the proposal and emphasized the importance of local control over educational policies.

Chair Schweyer shared his personal experience with therapy and urged a yes vote on the bill, emphasizing the need for honest conversations about mental health. Chair Schweyer also expressed his appreciation to Chair Cutler and his staff. "So, to be clear, we all recognize that everybody on this committee is equally concerned for our kids," he said. "We're just going about trying to address it in different ways."

[HB 1706](#) - (PN 2091) Amends the Public School Code, in school health services, providing for student mental health awareness. Directs the State Board of Education (SBE) to review existing state standards for health, safety and physical education and revise them as necessary to address student mental health awareness. Requires the Department of Health and the Department of Education to develop and post guidelines and other relevant materials to inform and educate students in athletic activities, their parents or guardians and coaches about the nature and warning signs of mental health distress, illness and related issues. Establishes notification requirements. Requires that no later than 90 days after the effective date, the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association review existing coaching education requirements for coaches engaged at a member school. Outlines training requirements. Adds definitions. Effective in 60 days. The bill was **reported as amended**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

[A02396](#), by Schweyer, removes the SBE requirement to update health, safety and physical education standards and elaborates on the SAP process, asserting it is triggered only when a student stops attending school-sponsored activities without explanation. The amendment was **adopted**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

Chair Schweyer explained that the amendment was worked on by multiple stakeholders and the bill's prime sponsor.

Chair Cutler thanked Chair Schweyer for his words but expressed concerns about the bill and its amendment, suggesting waiting for the SBE's review of new standards before adding more requirements.

Rep. Mary Jo Daley (D-Montgomery), the bill's prime sponsor, emphasized the bill's aim to provide information on mental health issues among student athletes, citing a study showing a lack of confidence among youth coaches in connecting athletes with mental health resources.

Rep. Anderson highlighted the extensive responsibilities already placed on teachers and coaches, expressing concern over the additional burden of addressing mental health issues.

Rep. Friel-Otten supported the proposal, sharing her personal experience as a coach and the challenges of dealing with children's mental health, appreciating the opportunity for more training and guidance.

[HB 2167](#) - (PN 2809) Amends the Public School Code, making editorial changes to delete references to "approved private school" for the purpose of adding references to "approved special education school." Effective immediately. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[HB 2168](#) - (PN 2810) Amends the Early Intervention Services System Act, in statewide system for provision of early intervention services, further providing for administration by Department of Education. Makes changes from "approved private schools" to "approved special education schools." Effective in 60 days. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[HB 2169](#) - (PN 2811) Amends the Fiscal Code, making editorial changes to delete references to "approved private school" for the purpose of adding references to "approved special education school." Effective immediately. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

Rep. Anderson spoke in favor of HB 2167, HB 2168 and HB 2169, citing their simplicity, necessity and the bipartisan support for related initiatives.

[HB 2152](#) - (PN 2779) Amends the Public School Code, 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. Includes costs associated with the planning, implementation or operation of a later school start time for which the committee shall provide grants to school entities. Permits the governing body of a school entity to adopt a policy to implement an instructional day start time at the secondary school level to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m., imposing duties on the governing body prior to adopting the new start time. Requires the Department of Education to provide guidance and support for school entities. Allows school entities that adopt a policy to use funding to alleviate costs associated with planning, implementation or operation of a later school start time. Defines "department," "school entity" and "secondary school." Effective in 60 days. The bill was unanimously **reported as amended**.

[A02376](#), by Cooper, removes duties of the department and allows start times to be at least 15 minutes later than the current start time. The amendment was unanimously **adopted**.

Rep. Jill Cooper (R-Westmoreland), the bill's prime sponsor, highlighted its bipartisan nature and the benefits of later school start times for adolescent health, academic performance and safety.

Rep. Paul Friel (D-Chester) expressed his support for the bill, acknowledging the scientific evidence supporting later start times.

[HB 2176](#) - (PN 2826) Amends the Public School Code, in terms and courses of study, adding a section to provide for social media literacy education. Details what the standards adopted by the State Board of Education in accordance with 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4 (relating to academic standards and assessment) shall include. Permits the State Board of Education to review the existing state standards for health, safety and physical education, as specified in 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4, to revise the standards as necessary to implement the provisions of the section. Imposes duties on the Department of Education. Asserts that nothing in this section shall supersede or preempt any provision of a collective bargaining agreement between a school entity and an employee organization. Defines "department," "nonpublic school" and "school entity." Effective in 60 days. The bill was **reported as committed**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

Rep. Jim Prokopiak (D-Bucks), the bill's prime sponsor, emphasized the significant impact of social media on individuals and expressed his motivation to address these issues through legislation that provides resources for social media education without imposing new classroom mandates.

Rep. Gleim asked whether the social media literacy programming would be implemented during the school day. Rep. Prokopiak confirmed it would. Rep. Gleim then expressed concerns about the compatibility of this programming with a potential complete ban on cell phones in schools, citing her own bill, [HB 1238](#), that limits cell phone use but allows for exceptions.

Chair Cutler expressed reservations about the bill, believing discussions on online behavior are best managed by parents and at the local level.

Rep. Friel-Otten shared her support for literacy training in schools, citing the benefits observed in her children's understanding of online content.

Chair Schweyer asked for an affirmative vote, highlighting the importance of educating students about the dangers of social media.

Chair Schweyer thanked the staff for their work.



House Appropriations Committee

02/04/2026, 12:30 p.m., Room 140, Main Capitol

By Dominic Kenny, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider several bills.

[HB 144](#) – (PN 2858) Amends Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure), in juvenile matters, further providing for informal adjustment; and making an editorial change. Updates the reference to section 6323 (relating to informal adjustment and diversion). Adds local government agencies and other diversion programs to the list of recipients to whom the agency may return the referral. Provides that social agencies and the probation officer or other officer in the court shall offer the child an opportunity to complete an informal adjustment or other diversion program. Outlines the qualifications. Adds that no detention, authorized or admission of guilt, requires an admission of guilt as a prerequisite to any informal adjustment or diversion program. Adds that no monetary obligations other than restitution are authorized. Removes fees and costs from the terms and conditions. Requires notification to the victim stating the alleged offense, eligibility criteria for diversion, conditions or program proposed and the victim's opportunity to provide a statement within 30 days of notification. Requires the court to schedule a review hearing if the juvenile's victim opposes entry into the diversion program. Changes language throughout section 6323 (h) from "complaining witness" or "witness" to "victim." Adds a definition for "diversion program." Makes editorial and technical changes. Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 2445, 2617). The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[HB 469](#) – (PN 452) Amends the act entitled "An act providing for the acceptance by the governor of jurisdiction relinquished by the United States to the commonwealth over lands within the commonwealth's boundaries," further providing for general provisions and for procedure relating to concurrent jurisdiction over military installations. Establishes notice requirements and procedure applicability. Effective immediately. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[HB 2017](#) – (PN 2556) Amends the Radiation Protection Act, in general provisions, further providing for definitions; and, in fees, further providing for nuclear facility and transport fees. Defines "microreactor" and "small modular reactor." Permits the Department of Environmental Protection to lower the fee amounts for small modular reactor and microreactor sites in the commonwealth. Stipulates that payments will be deposited into the Radiation Protection Fund. Permits the department to exempt small modular reactor or microreactor sites from any fee that is not applicable to the site's activities. Stipulates that any person who holds a license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will be subject to regulations and orders under the act. Effective in 60 days. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[HB 490](#) – (PN 479) Amends Titles 2 (Administrative Law and Procedure) and 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure), in depositions and witnesses, further providing for confidential communications to news reporters; and making editorial changes. Permits reporters to have a qualified privilege to refuse to disclose nonconfidential sources and materials. Provides the privilege may only be overcome by court order. Provides limitations. Effective in 60 days. The bill was **reported as committed**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

[HB 1936](#) – (PN 2861) Amends Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure), in juvenile matters, further providing for release or holding of hearing, for disposition of delinquent child and for limitation on and change in place of commitment and disposition review hearing. Provides a procedure for scheduling a hearing. Asserts that a child can spend additional time in shelter care after the period specified in subsection (a) if the court finds the child has no reasonable assurance of public safety in their release conditions or community-based alternatives, or if the harm to the child by cumulative secure detention, shelter care or taking them out of their home, school and community substantially outweighs the harm of keeping them in secure detention. Outlines summons information. Requires the court to consider the child’s cumulative time spent in secure detention when determining the duration of detention and the best interests of the child if the child has been committed for a period of 18 months or more. Stipulates that a child committed to an institution or other facility will transition to the institution or facility no more than 20 business days after the court’s order unless individualized circumstances necessitate a delay in placement. Provides details on the release pending transfer. Outlines court considerations for a disposition review hearing. Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 2435). The bill was **reported as committed**, along a party-line vote, with Republicans voting in the negative.

[HB 460](#) – (PN 2860) Amends the Public School Code, in certification of teachers, further providing for child abuse recognition and reporting training; and, in terms and courses of study, providing for child abuse awareness and prevention. Directs school entities and independent contractors of school entities to provide employees who have direct contact with children with mandatory training on child abuse recognition and reporting. Asserts that employees required to undergo continuing professional education will receive credit toward their requirements if the training program has been approved by the Department of Education (PDE) in consultation with the Department of Human Services (DHS). Requires school entities to offer an age-appropriate, evidence-based child abuse awareness and prevention education program. Directs PDE to post relevant educational materials on its publicly accessible website regarding child abuse recognition and prevention. Provides definitions. Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 444). The bill was **reported as committed**, with Republicans voting in the negative except Rep. Kristin Marcell (R-Bucks).

[HB 1923](#) – (PN 2819) The Meat Packing and Food Processing Protection Act provides for regulation of the meat packing and food processing industry by creating facility health and safety committees in the workplace; establishes the industry workers’ rights coordinator within the Department of Labor and Industry (L&I); and imposes penalties. Provides and removes definitions. Removes language related to unpaid sick leave, public health emergencies and civil actions. Mandates the employer to provide information on health and safety and worker safety training to employees. Renames section 4 as “emergency medical transportation benefits” and requires an employer to pay for out-of-pocket expenses not covered by an insurance plan associated with the emergency medical transportation, under certain circumstances. Requires the employer to pay for medical transportation to the employee if an employee is injured or ill at a facility as a result of duties associated with employment. Establishes the facility health and safety committee. Outlines committee members. Provides for committee formation. Highlights committee responsibilities and meetings. Elaborates on committee member training and training records. Prohibits interference. Requires the employer to permit committee members to attend a training without loss of pay. Provides for the appointment of an industry workers’ rights coordinator. Stipulates that an employer may not penalize, discriminate against, dismiss or discharge an employee for exercising any of the employee’s rights under this act. Establishes enforcement and penalties. Permits the department to promulgate regulations as necessary. Provides for collective bargaining agreements. Abrogates any and all regulations to the extent of any inconsistency with this act. Effective in 90 days. (Prior PN: 2402). The bill was **reported as committed**, with Republicans voting in the negative except Reps. Marcell, Eric Davanzo (R-Westmoreland), Eric Nelson (R-Westmoreland) and Jeff Olsommer (R-Wayne).



Bullet.in.Points

GOVERNOR’S OFFICE: PROCLAMATION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY

The Governor’s Office published the Proclamation of Disaster Emergency from Jan. 23, 2026. Additional information is available on the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

Cosponsor Memos

HCO3071 - Change “Approved Private Schools” to “Approved Special Education Schools”

Sponsor

Rep. Marc S. Anderson (R)

Summary

Aims to rename an “approved private school” for special education as an “approved special education school” in the Public School Code and other regulations.

Intro Date

01/30/2026

Last Action

01/30/2026 H - Cosponsor memo filed

HCO3073 - Remove Charter School Enrollment Caps

Sponsor

Rep. Marc S. Anderson (R)

Summary

Aims to prohibit caps or other limitations on enrollment for charter schools and cyber charter schools.

Intro Date

01/30/2026

Last Action

01/30/2026 H - Cosponsor memo filed

HCO3074 - Allow Charter Schools More Than One Address

Sponsor

Rep. Marc S. Anderson (R)

Summary

Aims to allow brick-and-mortar charter schools to have more than one facility within the boundaries of a single school district.

Intro Date

01/30/2026

Last Action

01/30/2026 H - Cosponsor memo filed

HCO3075 - Incentivizing Joint Schools

Sponsor

Rep. Jim Prokopiak (D)

Summary

Aims to require grants under PDE's Administrative, Instructional Programming Partnership and Feasibility Studies Grant Program could also be utilized by school districts to explore the feasibility of forming joint schools.

Intro Date

01/30/2026

Last Action

01/30/2026 H - Cosponsor memo filed

HCO3082 - AI WEAPONS DETECTION IN SCHOOLS

Sponsor

Rep. Joe Hogan (R)

Summary

Aims to authorize public and nonpublic schools to connect this technology to existing security cameras or other monitoring systems on school buildings, school grounds, and school buses.

Intro Date

01/30/2026

Last Action

01/30/2026 H - Cosponsor memo filed

HCO3094 - School Mapping Standards

Sponsor

Rep. Ben V. Sanchez (D)

Summary

Establishes uniform standards for school mapping technology across the commonwealth.

Intro Date

02/03/2026

Last Action

02/03/2026 H - Cosponsor memo filed

HCO3095 - PA WORKS Program

Sponsor

Rep. Bryan Cutler (R)

Summary

Establishes a new scholarship program designed to strengthen Pennsylvania's skilled trades workforce while expanding post-secondary opportunities for students.

Intro Date

02/03/2026

Last Action

02/03/2026 H - Cosponsor memo filed

HCO3097 - School Free-Play Recess and Lunch Periods

Sponsor

Rep. Danielle Friel Otten (D)

Summary

Requires schools in Pennsylvania to provide 30 minutes of recess and 30 minutes of lunch for all students in grades K-12.

Intro Date

02/03/2026

Last Action

02/03/2026 H - 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

02/03/2026 S - Laid out for discussion

02/03/2026 S - Third consideration and final passage

02/04/2026 H - Signed in House

02/04/2026 S - Signed in Senate

02/04/2026 G - Presented to the Governor

HB460 - 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, further providing for child abuse recognition and reporting training; and, in terms and courses of study, providing for child abuse awareness and prevention.

Sponsor

Rep. Mary Jo Daley (D)

Summary

(PN 2860) Amends the Public School Code, in certification of teachers, further providing for child abuse recognition and reporting training; and, in terms and courses of study, providing for child abuse awareness and prevention. Directs school entities and independent contractors of school entities to provide employees who have direct contact with children with mandatory training on child abuse recognition and reporting. Asserts that employees required to undergo continuing professional education will receive credit toward their requirements if the training program has been approved by the Department of Education (PDE) in consultation with the Department of Human Services (DHS). Requires school entities to offer an age-appropriate, evidence-based child abuse awareness and prevention education program. Directs PDE to post relevant educational materials on its publicly accessible website regarding child abuse recognition and prevention. Provides definitions. Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 444)

Intro Date

02/04/2025

Actions

02/03/2026 H - Re-committed to House Appropriations

02/04/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee House Appropriations

02/04/2026 H - Re-reported as committed House Appropriations

02/04/2026 H - Laid out for discussion

02/04/2026 H - Third consideration and final passage

HB538 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking education, prevention and response at institutions of higher education and private licensed schools, further providing for scope of article, for definitions, for education program and for follow-up; and making an editorial change.

Sponsor

Rep. Robert Leadbeter (R)

Summary

(PN 2147) Amends the Public School Code, in sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking education, prevention and response at institutions of higher education and private licensed schools, further providing for scope of article, for definitions, for education program and for follow-up; and making an editorial change. Includes provisions relating to human trafficking. Defines “human trafficking,” “human trafficking prevention organization,” and “involuntary servitude.” Adds that institutions of higher education and private licensed schools may consult with a human trafficking prevention organization to develop and implement an education program. Provides that the department shall consult the Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect when creating a model education program or other resources to help schools fulfill this requirement. Adds that the department may consult with a human trafficking prevention organization to develop the online clearinghouse of model education programs and other resources. Outlines the instruction that the human trafficking prevention component of an education program shall provide students with at a minimum, beginning with the 2027-2028 school year. Adds the phrase “human trafficking” throughout the act. Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 1946, 531)

Intro Date

02/10/2025

Actions

07/17/2025 S - Second consideration

07/17/2025 S - Re-referred to Senate Appropriations

02/02/2026 S - Meeting Scheduled - 02/03/2026, 4:35 PM - Voting Meeting (Senate Appropriations), Rules Committee Conference Room

02/03/2026 S - Voted Favorably From Committee Senate Appropriations

02/03/2026 S - Re-reported as committed Senate Appropriations

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

02/03/2026 H - Removed from table

02/04/2026 H - Placed on HVS

02/04/2026 H - Laid out for discussion

02/04/2026 H - Second consideration, with amendments

02/04/2026 H - Re-committed to House Appropriations

HB1238 - 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, providing for restricting possession and use by students of mobile devices.

Sponsor

Rep. Barbara Gleim (R)

Summary

(PN 1389) Amends the Public School Code, in pupils and attendance, providing for restricting possession and use by students of mobile devices. Prohibits students from using mobile devices during instructional time. Directs governing bodies of school entities to adopt a policy that restricts students from possessing or using mobile devices during instructional time. Provides exceptions. Directs school entities to inform parents of the policy. Provides definitions. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

04/17/2025

Actions

04/15/2025 H - Introduced

04/17/2025 H - Referred to House Education

11/17/2025 H - Discussed during informational meeting House Health

11/17/2025 H - Discussed during informational meeting House Education

02/04/2026 H - Discussed during voting meeting House Education

HB1375 - An Act amending Titles 24 (Education) and 71 (State Government) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in administration and miscellaneous provisions, further providing for administrative duties of the Public School Employees' Retirement Board; and, in administration, funds, accounts and general provisions, further providing for administrative duties of the State Employees' Retirement Board.

Sponsor

Rep. Brett R. Miller (R)

Summary

(PN 1571) Amends Titles 24 (Education) and 71 (State Government), in administration and miscellaneous provisions, further providing for administrative duties of the Public School Employees' Retirement Board; and, in administration, funds, accounts and general provisions, further providing for administrative duties of the State Employees' Retirement Board. Directs the board to livestream all public meetings and post an unedited video and written record of all public proceedings on its website. Mandates that videos and records remain online for a period of at least three years and be maintained for a period of at least seven years. Directs the Office of Administration to promptly revise its management directives relating to record management policies to conform to requirements. Provides for information to be submitted to the General Assembly by the board. Provides definitions for "carried interest" and "Institutional Limited Partners Association Fee Transparency Initiative." Provides for information regarding an alternative investment vehicle to be subject to public access under the Right-to-Know Law. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

05/02/2025

Actions

01/28/2026 H - Meeting Scheduled - 02/03/2026 - Voting Meeting (House State Government), Room 515, Irvis Office Building

02/03/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee House State Government

02/03/2026 H - Reported as committed House State Government

02/03/2026 H - First consideration

02/03/2026 H - Laid on the table

HB1648 - 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 definitions and providing for mental health days.

Sponsor

Rep. Napoleon J. Nelson (D)

Summary

(PN 2002) Amends the Public School Code, in pupils and attendance, further providing for definitions and providing for mental health days. Provides for policy adoption to provide an excused absence from compulsory school attendance designated as a mental health day when a student's well-being is at risk due to mental or physical fatigue, regardless of whether an underlying mental health-related condition triggering the fatigue is certified or uncertified. Requires the policy to be in place no later than the 2026-2027 school year by the board of directors or a governing body or a public, nonpublic or private school. Establishes that the policy adopted in this subsection is based on the model policy developed by the department under subsection (d). Provides that a student can use up to two consecutive days for a mental health day but shall not use three or more mental health days in a week or in two or more consecutive weeks. Provides for additional days needed for mental or physical fatigue should be permitted under policies and procedures adopted by the school under section 1329. Requires the department to develop and publish guidelines for schools to implement mental health days and a model policy to meet the requirements for adoption under subsection (a). Outlines the guidelines, including evidence-based guidance to integrate the student-excused absences for a mental health day into the school's support systems for student well-being. Provides for evidence-based practices for school employees to contact a student who uses two or more mental health days and connect them to mental health support. Requires the department to consult with a student advisory group and school administrators whose members are directly impacted by student absence rules and policies and those representing the diversity of the public school population including gender identity, family income, race and ethnicity, geography and any other factors deemed relevant by the department when developing the guidelines. Defines "certified mental health-related condition," "extended family," "fatigue," "immediate family," "mental health day," "school" and "uncertified mental health-related condition." Outlines qualifications for certified and uncertified mental health-related conditions. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

06/24/2025

Actions

01/29/2026 H - Meeting Scheduled - 02/04/2026, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room B31, Main Capitol

02/04/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee as Amended House Education

02/04/2026 H - Re-reported as amended House Education

02/04/2026 H - First consideration

02/04/2026 H - Laid on the table

HB1706 - 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 student mental health awareness.

Sponsor

Rep. Mary Jo Daley (D)

Summary

(PN 2091) Amends the Public School Code, in school health services, providing for student mental health awareness. Directs the State Board of Education to review existing state standards for health, safety and physical education and revise them as necessary to address student mental health awareness. Requires the Department of Health and the Department of Education to develop and post guidelines and other relevant materials to inform and educate students in athletic activities, their parents or guardians and coaches about the nature and warning signs of mental health distress, illness and related issues. Establishes notification requirements. Requires that no later than 90 days after the effective date, the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association review existing coaching education requirements for coaches engaged at a member school. Outlines training requirements. Adds definitions. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

07/07/2025

Actions

01/29/2026 H - Meeting Scheduled - 02/04/2026, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room B31, Main Capitol

02/04/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee as Amended House Education

02/04/2026 H - Re-reported as amended House Education

02/04/2026 H - First consideration

02/04/2026 H - Laid on the table

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)

Summary

(PN 2779) Amends the Public School Code, 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. Includes costs associated with the planning, implementation or operation of a later school start time for which the committee shall provide grants to school entities. Permits the governing body of a school entity to adopt a policy to implement an instructional day start time at the secondary school level to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m., imposing duties on the governing body prior to adopting the new start time. Requires the Department of Education to provide guidance and support for school entities. Allows school entities that adopt a policy to use funding to alleviate costs associated with planning, implementation or operation of a later school start time. Defines "department," "school entity" and "secondary school." Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

01/21/2026

Actions

01/29/2026 H - Meeting Scheduled - 02/04/2026, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room B31, Main Capitol

02/04/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee as Amended House Education

02/04/2026 H - Reported as amended House Education

02/04/2026 H - First consideration

02/04/2026 H - Laid on the table

HB2167 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, making editorial changes to delete references to "approved private school" for the purpose of adding references to "approved special education school."

Sponsor

Rep. Napoleon J. Nelson (D)

Summary

(PN 2809) Amends the Public School Code, making editorial changes to delete references to "approved private school" for the purpose of adding references to "approved special education school." Effective immediately.

Intro Date

01/28/2026

Actions

01/29/2026 H - Meeting Scheduled - 02/04/2026, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room B31, Main Capitol

02/04/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee House Education

02/04/2026 H - Reported as committed House Education

02/04/2026 H - First consideration

02/04/2026 H - Laid on the table

HB2168 - An Act amending the act of December 19, 1990 (P.L.1372, No.212), known as the Early Intervention Services System Act, in Statewide system for provision of early intervention services, further providing for administration by Department of Education.

Sponsor

Rep. Napoleon J. Nelson (D)

Summary

(PN 2810) Amends the Early Intervention Services System Act, in statewide system for provision of early intervention services, further providing for administration by Department of Education. Makes changes from "approved private schools" to "approved special education schools." Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

01/28/2026

Actions

01/29/2026 H - Meeting Scheduled - 02/04/2026, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room B31, Main Capitol

02/04/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee House Education

02/04/2026 H - Reported as committed House Education

02/04/2026 H - First consideration

02/04/2026 H - Laid on the table

HB2169 - An Act amending the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.343, No.176), known as The Fiscal Code, making editorial changes to delete references to "approved private school" for the purpose of adding references to "approved special education school."

Sponsor

Rep. Napoleon J. Nelson (D)

Summary

(PN 2811) Amends the Fiscal Code, making editorial changes to delete references to "approved private school" for the purpose of adding references to "approved special education school." Effective immediately.

Intro Date

01/28/2026

Actions

01/29/2026 H - Meeting Scheduled - 02/04/2026, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room B31, Main Capitol

02/04/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee House Education

02/04/2026 H - Reported as committed House Education

02/04/2026 H - First consideration

02/04/2026 H - Laid on the table

HB2176 - 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 social media literacy education.

Sponsor

Rep. Jim Prokopiak (D)

Summary

(PN 2826) Amends the Public School Code, in terms and courses of study, adding a section to provide for social media literacy education. Details what the standards adopted by the State Board of Education in accordance with 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4 (relating to academic standards and assessment) shall include. Permits the State Board of Education to review the existing state standards for health, safety and physical education, as specified in 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4, to revise the standards as necessary to implement the provisions of the section. Imposes duties on the Department of Education. Asserts that nothing in this section shall supersede or preempt any provision of a collective bargaining agreement between a school entity and an employee organization. Defines "department," "nonpublic school" and "school entity." Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

01/30/2026

Actions

01/30/2026 H - Referred to House Education

02/04/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee House Education

02/04/2026 H - Reported as committed House Education

02/04/2026 H - First consideration

02/04/2026 H - Laid on the table

HB2197 - 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 attendance policy at charter, regional charter and cyber charter schools.

Sponsor

Rep. Carol Kazeem (D)

Summary

(PN 2888) Amends the Public School Code, in pupils and attendance, further providing for attendance policy at charter, regional charter and cyber charter schools. Adds that a board of trustees of a charter, regional charter or cyber charter school shall report to the department for each fiscal year the number of students who returned to the school district of residence or were otherwise removed from the school. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

02/04/2026

Actions

02/04/2026 H - Introduced

02/05/2026 H - Referred to House Education

HB2199 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in student supports, providing for policy against gender-based bullying.

Sponsor

Rep. Paul Takac (D)

Summary

(PN 2890) Amends the Public School Code, in student supports, providing for policy against gender-based bullying. Requires school entities, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, to adopt a policy or amend an existing policy related to bullying and incorporate it into the school entity's code of student conduct. Adds that the policy shall delineate disciplinary consequences for bullying against a student based on their actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression and shall provide for prevention, intervention and education programs. Provides that for a nonbinary or transgender student transitioning, the policy shall establish best practices and guidelines for student and family support during the transition period, respect the student's privacy from other students, school faculty and parents and include the student's stated gender identity and pronouns when the student is being addressed. Adds that a school entity shall include the policy in the student handbook and make it available on its publicly accessible website and in every classroom. Requires review of the policy every three years and requires it to be provided to the Department of Education annually. Prohibits any other definition of "bullying," except as outlined in the chapter. Adds further definitions. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

02/04/2026

Actions

02/04/2026 H - Introduced

02/05/2026 H - Referred to House Education

HR409 - A Resolution designating March 8, 2026, as "Charter Day" and Pennsylvania's 345th birthday in Pennsylvania.

Sponsor

Rep. Robert F. Matzie (D)

Summary

(PN 2818) Resolution designating March 8, 2026, as "Charter Day" and Pennsylvania's 345th birthday in Pennsylvania.

Intro Date

01/28/2026

Actions

02/03/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee House State Government

02/03/2026 H - Reported as committed House State Government

02/04/2026 H - Placed on HVS

02/04/2026 H - Laid out for discussion

02/04/2026 H - Adopted

SB9 - An Act providing for sport activities in public institutions of higher education and public school entities to be expressly designated male, female or coed; and creating causes of action for harm suffered by designation.

Sponsor

Sen. Judy Ward (R)

Summary

(PN 177) The Fairness in Women's Sports Act provides for sport activities in public institutions of higher education and public school entities to be expressly designated male, female or coed; and creates causes of action for harm suffered by designation. Provides definitions. Prohibits athletic teams or sports designated for females, women or girls from being open to students of the male sex. Allows students to participate in an interscholastic, intercollegiate, intramural or club athletic team or sport designed for the student's sex or designated coed or mixed. Prohibits a government entity, licensing or accrediting organization or an athletic association or organization from entertaining a complaint, opening an investigation or taking any other adverse action against a school or institution of higher education for maintaining separate interscholastic, intercollegiate, intramural or club athletic teams or sports for students of the female sex. Permits a student who is deprived of an athletic opportunity or suffers direct or indirect harm as a result of a known violation to bring a cause of action for injunctive relief, damages, psychological, emotional and physical harm suffered, attorney fees and costs and any other relief available under law against the school or institution of higher education. Allows a student who is subject to retaliation or other adverse action by a school, institution of higher education or athletic association or organization as a result of reporting a violation to an employee or representative of the school, institution or athletic association or organization or to any federal or state agency with oversight of schools or institutions of higher education in Pennsylvania to bring a cause of action. Permits a school or institution of higher education that suffers direct or indirect harm as a result of a violation to bring cause of action. Prohibits a person from bringing a civil action later than two years after the day on which the harm underlying the cause of action occurs. Provides that if a part of this act is found invalid, all valid parts that are severable from the invalid part shall remain in effect. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

02/03/2025

Actions

10/29/2025 H - Voted favorably from committee with request to re-refer to House Judiciary Committee House Health

10/29/2025 S - Press Conference Held - Dad Legislators Call for Action to Defend Daughters in Sports

10/29/2025 H - Reported with request to re-refer to House Judiciary Committee House Health

10/29/2025 H - Re-referred to House Judiciary

02/03/2026 H - Discussed during voting meeting House Health

SB116 - 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 credit for employment at congregate care facility.

Sponsor

Sen. David G. Argall (R)

Summary

(PN 1420) Amends the Public School Code, in terms and courses of study, providing for credit for employment at congregate care facility. Permits a student who is in grade 11 or 12 at a school entity or nonpublic school, at least 16 years of age and who is employed, either on a paid or voluntary basis, at a congregate care facility to earn one elective credit toward graduation for every 250 hours worked at the congregate care facility, for a maximum of two elective credits toward graduation and the school entity or nonpublic school shall develop or modify an existing application process and form should the student elective credit under this section with the appropriate criteria and requirements with deadlines of application submissions. Adds that the school entity or nonpublic school may not award the elective credit to the student unless the school entity or nonpublic school has approved the student's application and the student has satisfied all the requirements under this section. Directs school entities and nonpublic schools to ensure that the students' employment at the congregate care facility satisfies the requirements of 22 Pa. Code 339.29. Specifies definitions. Adds descriptors to the definition of "congregate care facility." Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 1351, 67)

Intro Date

01/22/2025

Actions

02/03/2026 S - Voted Favorably From Committee Senate Appropriations

02/03/2026 S - Re-reported as committed Senate Appropriations

02/03/2026 S - Laid out for discussion

02/03/2026 S - Third consideration and final passage

02/04/2026 H - Referred to House Education

SB375 - 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; in school safety and security, further providing for School Safety and Security Grant Program; and, in school health services, further providing for definitions, repealing provisions relating to automatic external defibrillators, providing for AED and CPR instruction and procedure, establishing the Automated External Defibrillator Program and providing for availability and specifications of automated external defibrillators.

Sponsor

Sen. Rosemary M. Brown (R)

Summary

(PN 934) Amends the Public School Code, in certification of teachers, repealing provisions relating to CPR instruction; in school safety and security, further providing for School Safety and Security Grant Program; and, in school health services, further providing for definitions, repealing provisions relating to automatic external defibrillators, providing for AED and CPR instruction and procedure, establishing the Automated External Defibrillator Program and providing for availability and specifications of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Asserts the School Safety and Security Fund may use grants to provide AEDs and training. Provides additional details regarding the percentage of money appropriated to the fund in that fiscal year that must go toward AEDs and training. Requires any uncommitted moneys to be returned to the fund by September 30 of each succeeding fiscal year. Defines "automated external defibrillator." Requires each school entity and nonpublic school to make available instructions on cardiopulmonary resuscitation and AED usage to its employees and volunteers on school property at least once every two years, with additional details. Outlines requirements for AED locations and training. Provides continuing education requirements. Requires completion of training under this section to be recorded with specified details. Requires the Department of Education (PDE), in consultation with the Department of Health (DOH), to develop guidelines and materials to assist school entities and nonpublic schools in developing a cardiac emergency response plan with additional information. Provides additional definitions. Provides a procedure for a biennial bid for the cost of AEDs and other equipment and necessary supplies. Provides requirements of eligibility to obtain, purchase or loan AEDs under the program. Asserts that the provisions of 42 Pa.C.S. § 8331.2 apply to school entities and nonpublic school employees who render care with an AED. Allows PDE to offer discounts or loans for AEDs as necessary. Asserts that AED purchases are considered an allowable use of Pennsylvania Accountability Grants under section 2599.2(b), as well as an innovative educational program under Article XX-B and an eligible school safety and security expense in section 1306-B(j). Allows PDE to accept donations under this section with specified requirements. Outlines content requirements for reports under this section. Allows PDE to adopt other guidelines as necessary to implement this section. Requires school entities and nonpublic schools that participate in interscholastic athletics to have an AED readily accessible. Prohibits this section from being construed as establishing any liability against a school entity or nonpublic school or its officers or employees. Requires school entities and nonpublic schools to ensure each AED is properly tested and maintained. Effective immediately. (Prior PN: 912)

Intro Date

06/06/2025

Actions

01/29/2026 H - Meeting Scheduled - 02/04/2026, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room B31, Main Capitol

02/04/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee as Amended House Education

02/04/2026 H - Re-reported as amended House Education

02/04/2026 H - First consideration

02/04/2026 H - Laid on the table

SB1014 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in student supports, providing for bell-to-bell phone-free policy.

Sponsor

Sen. Devlin J. Robinson (R)

Summary

(PN 1421) Amends the Public School Code, in student supports, providing for bell-to-bell phone-free policy. Requires, no later than the start of the 2027-2028 school year, the governing body of each school entity to adopt a policy related to student possession and use of mobile devices during the school day while on school property. Outlines the content requirements of the policy. Adds that section 1314-A should not be construed to require a school entity to take possession of a student's mobile device. Asserts that a school entity will not be held liable for damages if the school entity's governing body adopts a policy permitting an employee to take possession of a student's mobile device if the employee acted in good faith in accordance with the school entity's policy. Provides for exceptions. Permits a school entity's policy to allow a chief school administrator or designee to approve an exception not previously mentioned with the required exception details. Requires a public comment period before adoption of the policy, the amending of an existing policy and the posting of the policy on the school entity's public website no later than five business days after adoption. Establishes reporting requirements. Provides definitions and adds the definitions of "chief school administrator" and "principal." Removes the definition of "school property." Effective immediately. (Prior PN: 1352, 1227)

Intro Date

10/10/2025

Actions

02/03/2026 S - Voted Favorably From Committee Senate Appropriations

02/03/2026 S - Re-reported as committed Senate Appropriations

02/03/2026 S - Laid out for discussion

02/03/2026 S - Third consideration and final passage

02/04/2026 H - Referred to House Education

SB1090 - An Act providing for disclosures and safeguards relating to the use of artificial intelligence; and imposing duties on the Attorney General.

Sponsor

Sen. Tracy Pennycuick (R)

Summary

(PN 1423) The Safeguarding Adolescents from Exploitative Chatbots and Harmful AI Technology Act provides for disclosures and safeguards relating to the use of artificial intelligence (AI); and imposes duties on the Attorney General. Provides definitions. Requires an operator to issue a clear and conspicuous notification indicating that the AI companion is artificially generated and not human if a reasonable person interacting with an AI companion would be misled to believe the person is interacting with a human. Outlines suicide and self-harm safeguards, as well as safeguards for minors for a user that the operator knows or should have known. Mandates general disclosure if a service is offered to users that an operator knows are minors. Specifies that this act shall not apply to the underlying AI model unless the model is directly offered, configured or deployed as an AI companion. Directs the Attorney General to enforce this act. Provides for a civil penalty in addition to any other remedy provided by law. Effective in 120 days. (Prior PN: 1311)

Intro Date

11/14/2025

Actions

11/18/2025 S - First consideration

02/03/2026 S - Laid out for discussion

02/03/2026 S - Amended on second consideration

02/04/2026 S - Second consideration

02/04/2026 S - Re-referred to Senate Appropriations

Higher Ed Bill Actions

HB538 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking education, prevention and response at institutions of higher education and private licensed schools, further providing for scope of article, for definitions, for education program and for follow-up; and making an editorial change.

Sponsor

Rep. Robert Leadbeter (R)

Summary

(PN 2147) Amends the Public School Code, in sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking education, prevention and response at institutions of higher education and private licensed schools, further providing for scope of article, for definitions, for education program and for follow-up; and making an editorial change. Includes provisions relating to human trafficking. Defines "human trafficking," "human trafficking prevention organization," and "involuntary servitude." Adds that institutions of higher education and private licensed schools may consult with a human trafficking prevention organization to develop and implement an education program. Provides that the department shall consult the Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect when creating a model education program or other resources to help schools fulfill this requirement. Adds that the department may consult with a human trafficking prevention organization to develop the online clearinghouse of model education programs and other resources. Outlines the instruction that the human trafficking prevention component of an education program shall provide students with at a minimum, beginning with the 2027-2028 school year. Adds the phrase "human trafficking" throughout the act. Effective in 60 days. (Prior PN: 1946, 531)

Intro Date

02/10/2025

Actions

07/17/2025 S - Second consideration

07/17/2025 S - Re-referred to Senate Appropriations

02/02/2026 S - Meeting Scheduled - 02/03/2026, 4:35 PM - Voting Meeting (Senate Appropriations), Rules Committee Conference Room

02/03/2026 S - Voted Favorably From Committee Senate Appropriations

02/03/2026 S - Re-reported as committed Senate Appropriations

HB1935 - An Act amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in assault, further providing for the offense of terroristic threats.

Sponsor

Rep. Tim Briggs (D)

Summary

(PN 2434) Amends Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses), in assault, further providing for the offense of terroristic threats. Allows the court to order restitution in the amount equal to the cost of supplies, equipment and materials, including the salary, overtime pay or other wages of affected employees and first responders. Requires the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing to provide a sentencing enhancement for courts to consider in cases of terroristic threats against a school entity or an institute of higher education. Provides definitions. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

10/08/2025

Actions

02/02/2026 H - Re-committed to House Appropriations

02/03/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee House Appropriations

02/03/2026 H - Re-reported as committed House Appropriations

02/03/2026 H - Laid out for discussion

02/03/2026 H - Third consideration and final passage

HB2084 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, providing for Pennsylvania Promise Program; and establishing the Pennsylvania Promise Program Fund.

Sponsor

Rep. Jordan A. Harris (D)

Summary

(PN 2680) Amends the Public School Code, providing for Pennsylvania Promise Program; and establishing the Pennsylvania Promise Program Fund. Adds definitions. Directs the agency to administer the program and allows the agency to promulgate regulations as necessary. Establishes the Pennsylvania Promise Program Fund in the State Treasury, outlines the administration, contributions and investment and purpose of the plan. Provides for nonlapsing and the reallocation of funds. Provides for an application process for scholarships for tuition and fees, outlining eligibility and requirements. Outlines the review and approval process and the distribution requirements. Provides for limitations and renewals. Provides for scholarships for room and board, outlining application, eligibility distribution and limitation requirements. Provides for aid for adult reeducation, outlining eligibility and application requirements. Increases the household income limits by a percentage equal to the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index and provides for the coordination of the programs. Establishes annual reporting requirements. Effective immediately.

Intro Date

12/05/2025

Actions

01/29/2026 H - Meeting Scheduled - 02/04/2026, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room B31, Main Capitol

02/04/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee as Amended House Education

02/04/2026 H - Re-reported as amended House Education

02/04/2026 H - First consideration

02/04/2026 H - Laid on the table

HB2163 - An Act amending the act of May 1, 1933 (P.L.216, No.76), known as The Dental Law, further providing for definitions, for general powers of the State Board of Dentistry, for penalties and for restricted faculty license.

Sponsor

Rep. Maureen E. Madden (D)

Summary

(PN 2800) Amends the Dental Law, further providing for definitions, for general powers of the State Board of Dentistry, for penalties and for restricted faculty license. Revises definitions. Stipulates that in assessing the moral character of an individual with a criminal conviction, the board shall conduct an individualized assessment in accordance with 63 Pa.C.S. § 3113 (relating to consideration of criminal convictions) for certifications in dentistry, dental hygienists and dental assistants. Changes language in the provision for penalties to assert that it is unlawful for any restricted faculty licensee to practice dentistry outside the facilities owned or operated by a dental school, an affiliated academic health care center or a dental school-owned faculty practice in this commonwealth at which the individual is licensed to teach. Stipulates that in assessing the moral character of an individual with a criminal conviction, the board shall conduct an individualized assessment in accordance with 63 Pa.C.S. § 3113 (relating to consideration of criminal convictions) for a certification for a restricted faculty license. Revises training requirements. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

01/28/2026

Actions

02/04/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee House Professional Licensure

02/04/2026 H - Reported as committed House Professional Licensure

02/04/2026 H - First consideration

02/04/2026 H - Laid on the table

03/24/2026 H - Placed on HVS

SB9 - An Act providing for sport activities in public institutions of higher education and public school entities to be expressly designated male, female or coed; and creating causes of action for harm suffered by designation.

Sponsor

Sen. Judy Ward (R)

Summary

(PN 177) The Fairness in Women's Sports Act provides for sport activities in public institutions of higher education and public school entities to be expressly designated male, female or coed; and creates causes of action for harm suffered by designation. Provides definitions. Prohibits athletic teams or sports designated for females, women or girls from being open to students of the male sex. Allows students to participate in an interscholastic, intercollegiate, intramural or club athletic team or sport designed for the student's sex or designated coed or mixed. Prohibits a government entity, licensing or accrediting organization or an athletic association or organization from entertaining a complaint, opening an investigation or taking any other adverse action against a school or institution of higher education for maintaining separate interscholastic, intercollegiate, intramural or club athletic teams or sports for students of the female sex. Permits a student who is deprived of an athletic opportunity or suffers direct or indirect harm as a result of a known violation to bring a cause of action for injunctive relief, damages, psychological, emotional and physical harm suffered, attorney fees and costs and any other relief available under law against the school or institution of higher education. Allows a student who is subject to retaliation or other adverse action by a school, institution of higher education or athletic association or organization as a result of reporting a violation to an employee or representative of the school, institution or athletic association or organization or to any federal or state agency with oversight of schools or institutions of higher education in Pennsylvania to bring a cause of action. Permits a school or institution of higher education that suffers direct or indirect harm as a result of a violation to bring cause of action. Prohibits a person from bringing a civil action later than two years after the day on which the harm underlying the cause of action occurs. Provides that if a part of this act is found invalid, all valid parts that are severable from the invalid part shall remain in effect. Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

02/03/2025

Actions

10/29/2025 H - Voted favorably from committee with request to re-refer to House Judiciary Committee House Health

10/29/2025 S - Press Conference Held - Dad Legislators Call for Action to Defend Daughters in Sports

10/29/2025 H - Reported with request to re-refer to House Judiciary Committee House Health

10/29/2025 H - Re-referred to House Judiciary

02/03/2026 H - Discussed during voting meeting House Health

SB375 - 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; in school safety and security, further providing for School Safety and Security Grant Program; and, in school health services, further providing for definitions, repealing provisions relating to automatic external defibrillators, providing for AED and CPR instruction and procedure, establishing the Automated External Defibrillator Program and providing for availability and specifications of automated external defibrillators.

Sponsor

Sen. Rosemary M. Brown (R)

Summary

(PN 934) Amends the Public School Code, in certification of teachers, repealing provisions relating to CPR instruction; in school safety and security, further providing for School Safety and Security Grant Program; and, in school health services, further providing for definitions, repealing provisions relating to automatic external defibrillators, providing for AED and CPR instruction and procedure, establishing the Automated External Defibrillator Program and providing for availability and specifications of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Asserts the School Safety and Security Fund may use grants to provide AEDs and training. Provides additional details regarding the percentage of money appropriated to the fund in that fiscal year that must go toward AEDs and training. Requires any uncommitted moneys to be returned to the fund by September 30 of each succeeding fiscal year. Defines "automated external defibrillator." Requires each school entity and nonpublic school to make available instructions on cardiopulmonary resuscitation and AED usage to its employees and volunteers on school property at least once every two years, with additional details. Outlines requirements for AED locations and training. Provides continuing education requirements. Requires completion of training under this section to be recorded with specified details. Requires the Department of Education (PDE), in consultation with the Department of Health (DOH), to develop guidelines and materials to assist school entities and nonpublic schools in developing a cardiac emergency response plan with additional information. Provides additional definitions. Provides a procedure for a biennial bid for the cost of AEDs and other equipment and necessary supplies. Provides requirements of eligibility to obtain, purchase or loan AEDs under the program. Asserts that the provisions of 42 Pa.C.S. § 8331.2 apply to school entities and nonpublic school employees who render care with an AED. Allows PDE to offer discounts or loans for AEDs as necessary. Asserts that AED purchases are considered an allowable use of Pennsylvania Accountability Grants under section 2599.2(b), as well as an innovative educational program under Article XX-B and an eligible school safety and security expense in section 1306-B(j). Allows PDE to accept donations under this section with specified requirements. Outlines content requirements for reports under this section. Allows PDE to adopt other guidelines as necessary to implement this section. Requires school entities and nonpublic schools that participate in interscholastic athletics to have an AED readily accessible. Prohibits this section from being construed as establishing any liability against a school entity or nonpublic school or its officers or employees. Requires school entities and nonpublic schools to ensure each AED is properly tested and maintained. Effective immediately. (Prior PN: 912)

Intro Date

06/06/2025

Actions

01/29/2026 H - Meeting Scheduled - 02/04/2026, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room B31, Main Capitol

02/04/2026 H - Voted Favorably From Committee as Amended House Education

02/04/2026 H - Re-reported as amended House Education

02/04/2026 H - First consideration

02/04/2026 H - Laid on the table

SB974 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in miscellaneous provisions relating to institutions of higher education, further providing for Dual Credit Innovation Grant Program.

Sponsor

Sen. Scott Hutchinson (R)

Summary

(PN 1115) Amends the Public School Code, in miscellaneous provisions relating to institutions of higher education, further providing for Dual Credit Innovation Grant Program. Extends the program to community education councils in collaboration with one or more higher education institutions to offer dual credit opportunities to high school students enrolled in a school entity. Adds community education councils to the list of priorities and additional priority in program grant funding. Provides for data collection on the number of college credits earned by students enrolled in dual credit courses offered by a collaboration between a community education council and an institution of higher education, the number of students enrolled in the courses that were offered in this collaboration and the percentage of dual credit students who earned college credits through this collaboration at an institution of higher education following high school graduation. Defines "community education council." Effective in 60 days.

Intro Date

08/25/2025

Actions

02/03/2026 S - Voted Favorably From Committee Senate Appropriations

02/03/2026 S - Re-reported as committed Senate Appropriations

02/03/2026 S - Laid out for discussion

02/03/2026 S - Third consideration and final passage

02/04/2026 H - Referred to House Education

Upcoming Events

MONDAY – 02/09/2026

1:00 PM, [House Democratic Policy](#)

Public Hearing, Abington Heights Middle School, 1555 Newton Ransom Blvd., Clarks Summit
Public hearing on cyber charter schools.

THURSDAY – 02/12/2026

10:00 AM, [House Republican Policy](#)

Public Hearing, Crayola, 1100 Church Lane, Easton
Public hearing on making back-to-school affordable.

MONDAY – 02/23/2026

9:30 AM, [Senate Appropriations](#)

Budget Hearing, Hearing Room 1, North Office Building
Budget Hearing with the Department of Education (PDE).

1:00 PM, [Senate Appropriations](#)

Budget Hearing, Hearing Room 1, North Office Building
Budget hearing with the Department of Education (PDE).

TUESDAY – 03/03/2026

9:30 AM, [Senate Appropriations](#)

Budget Hearing, Hearing Room 1, North Office Building

Budget hearing with state universities in Millersville, East Stroudsburg, West Chester and Indiana.

1:00 PM, [House Appropriations](#)

Budget Hearing, House Chamber

Budget hearing with the Department of Education (PDE).

WEDNESDAY – 03/11/2026

10:00 AM, [House Appropriations](#)

Budget Hearing, House Chamber

Budget hearing with the state-related universities.

1:00 PM, [House Appropriations](#)

Budget Hearing, House Chamber

Budget hearing with the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) and community colleges.

In the News

[02/02/2026 - Auditor General DeFoor Celebrates Winner of Student Art Contest at Wilkes-Barre Area High School](#)

[02/03/2026 - Governor Shapiro's 2026-27 Budget Address as Prepared for Delivery](#)

[02/03/2026 - 2026-27 Governor's Executive Budget - Press Briefing Slides](#)

[02/03/2026 - 2026-2027 Budget Fact Sheet - Press Briefing](#)

[02/03/2026 - Budget-in-Brief 2026-2027](#)

[02/03/2026 - Senator Pisciotto Issues Statement Following Governor Shapiro's Budget Address](#)

[02/03/2026 - Senator Lindsey M. Williams Applauds Governor Shapiro's Budget Proposal that Protects Taxpayer Dollars and Invests in Working Families](#)

[02/03/2026 - Senator Malone's Statement on Governor Shapiro's 2026-27 Proposed Budget Address](#)

[02/03/2026 - House Republican Leaders Respond to Shapiro Budget Proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - Sen. Fontana Statement on Proposed Budget](#)

[02/03/2026 - Phillips-Hill: Pennsylvania Cannot Afford a \\$6 Billion Spending Gap](#)

[02/03/2026 - HAP Statement on Governor's 2026–2027 Budget Proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - Senator Patty Kim's Statement on Governor Shapiro's 2026-27 Proposed Budget Address](#)

[02/03/2026 - Commonwealth Foundation: Governor Shapiro Presents Unaffordable State Budget](#)

[02/03/2026 - SEPTA's Statement on Governor Shapiro's Funding Proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - PSEA president issues statement on governor's FY 2026-27 state budget proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - PennFuture Reacts to Governor Shapiro's 2026 Budget Address](#)

[02/03/2026 - HACD: 2026/27 Executive Budget Briefing](#)

[02/03/2026 - HACD: 2026/27 Executive Budget At-A-Glance](#)

[02/03/2026 - HACD: 2026/27 Executive Budget: General Fund Tracking Spreadsheet](#)

[02/03/2026 - HACD: 2026/27 Executive Budget Proposal: Education Funding](#)

[02/03/2026 - HACD: 2026/27 Executive Budget: General Fund Tracking Spreadsheet - State Only](#)

[02/03/2026 - Schlossberg applauds governor's proposed investments in schools, job creation, mental health care](#)

[02/03/2026 - Matzie: governor's proposed budget would deliver dollars where they're needed](#)

[02/03/2026 - Kutz: Fiscal Responsibility Must be at Forefront as Budget Talks Begin](#)

[02/03/2026 - State Budget Spends Too Much, Future Tax Increase Incoming, Roae Says](#)

[02/03/2026 - An Ortitay Note: Pennsylvanians Deserve to Hear About this Budget Proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - Cutler Responds to Proposed Budget](#)

[02/03/2026 - Cook: Shapiro Is at It Again, Overspending and Ignoring Fiscal Responsibility](#)

[02/03/2026 - Shaffer Urges On-Time Budget and Government Reform in Response to Governor's Plan](#)

[02/03/2026 - Governor Demonstrates Delusion Related to State Spending, Barger Says](#)

[02/03/2026 - York County House Republicans: Shapiro's Budget Proposal is Unrealistic, Fiscally Foolish](#)

[02/03/2026 - Stender Says Governor's Budget is Only Balanced by Raiding Rainy Day Fund](#)

[02/03/2026 - Kozak: Governor's Budget Plan Proves He's Out of Touch](#)

[02/03/2026 - Causer Responds to Governor's Budget Proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - Owlett, Pickett Comment on Governor's Budget Address](#)

[02/03/2026 - Governor's Budget Proposal Foolhardy in Spending, Diamond Says](#)

[02/03/2026 - Grimm Krupa: Shapiro's Budget Betrays the Keystone Promise](#)

[02/03/2026 - Marcell Statement on Governor's 2026–27 Budget Proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - Mako Reacts to Governor's Budget Proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - Reichard: Gov.'s Spending Plan Too High for Residents to Afford](#)

[02/03/2026 - Pugh Reacts to Shapiro's Proposed 2026-27 Budget](#)

[02/03/2026 - T. Jones: Governor Proposes Yet Another Big Spend Budget](#)

[02/03/2026 - Delozier Ready to Work Toward Compromise on State Budget](#)

[02/03/2026 - Flick Reminds Pennsylvanians Governor's Budget Proposal is Just the First Step in the Process](#)

[02/03/2026 - Staats Raises Concerns about Governor's Budget Proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - B. Miller Responds to Governor's Budget Proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - Affordability Must Be Center of 2026-27 State Budget, Says Kerwin](#)

[02/03/2026 - Shapiro Budget Proposal Unsustainable, Rader Says](#)

[02/03/2026 - Smith: Latest Budget Plan Feels Like Groundhog Day](#)

[02/03/2026 - PA Families Left Behind in Shapiro's Budget Proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - Stefano Pushes Back on Spending Levels in Shapiro's Budget](#)

[02/03/2026 - Baker Responds to Shapiro's Inflated Budget Proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - Hunger-Free PA: Budget Maintains Funding for Key Anti-Hunger Programs](#)

[02/03/2026 - What Pennsylvanians Are Saying About Governor Shapiro's 2026-27 Proposed Budget to Cut Costs, Create Opportunity, Strengthen Public Safety, Fund Education, and Get Stuff Done](#)

[02/03/2026 - AARP Endorses Key Investments for Older Pennsylvanians in 2026/2027 Budget Proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - Steele welcomes governor's support for restricting cell phones in schools](#)

[02/03/2026 - Conklin: Proposed budget spends responsibly to help students and working families](#)

[02/03/2026 - Philadelphia House Delegation supports Shapiro budget proposal](#)

[02/03/2026 - Senate Republican Leaders Voice Concern About Spending Levels in Shapiro's Budget](#)

[02/03/2026 - Robinson, Hughes, Santarsiero Bill to Implement a Bell-to-Bell Ban on Student Cellphone Use During School Day Passes Senate](#)

[02/03/2026 - Sen. Nick Miller Responds to Gov. Shapiro's 2026-27 Budget Address](#)

[02/03/2026 - Culver Voices Concern About Spending Levels in the Governor's Budget Proposal](#)

[02/04/2026 - 2/3 Governor's Budget Address - Rapid Response Roundtable](#)

[02/04/2026 - PA Policy Center 2026-27 Governor's Budget Address Statement](#)

[02/04/2026 - Senator Collett Reacts to Governor Shapiro's 2026-27 Budget Address](#)

[02/04/2026 - Senators Haywood: Gov. Shapiro's Budget Proposal Protects the Dignity for Workers, Families, and Communities.](#)

[02/04/2026 - Bartolotta Raises Concerns Over Repeated Themes in Governor's Budget](#)

[02/04/2026 - Gaydos Opposes Shapiro's Overspending, Praises Cell Phone Ban, Making Data Centers Accountable for their Own Energy Use](#)

[02/04/2026 - Rowe: Shapiro's Budget Proposal is Not Affordable for Pennsylvania](#)

[02/04/2026 - Governor's Budget Proposal Fails to Address Pennsylvanians' Needs, White Says](#)

[02/04/2026 - M. Brown Raises Concerns About Governor's Budget Proposal, Long-Term Tax Risks](#)[02/04/2026 - Warner Responds to Governor's Budget Proposal](#)

[02/04/2026 - E. Nelson: Shapiro's Budget is More of the Same](#)

[02/04/2026 - Watro's Cursive Bill Heads to Governor](#)

[02/04/2026 - James Urges Fiscal Discipline, Targeted Investments for 2026-27 Fiscal Year Budget](#)

[02/04/2026 - Olsommer: Shapiro's Spending is Not Sustainable](#)

[02/04/2026 - Senator Boscola Highlights Jobs, Workforce, and Consumer Protections After Shapiro Budget Address](#)

[02/04/2026 - Susquehanna Valley Center for Public Policy: Fiscal Reality MIA in Governor Shapiro's Budget Address](#)

[02/04/2026 - What Pennsylvania Leaders Are Saying About Governor Shapiro's 2026-27 Proposed Budget that Builds on Three Years of Progress, Cuts Costs, Creates Opportunity, Strengthens Public Safety, and Funds Education](#)

[02/04/2026 - PAYBAC: Ten New Legislators Back \\$7B "Tax Billionaires, Fund PA" Revenue Plan Following Shapiro Budget Address](#)

[02/04/2026 - In Franklin County, Lt. Gov. Austin Davis Highlights New Budget Proposal's Investments to Make Pennsylvania Communities and Schools Safer](#)

[02/04/2026 - Press Conference Follow-Up: Senate Approval of School Cellphone Ban](#)

[02/04/2026 - PA Dems: Stacy Garrity Opposes Funding Pennsylvania Law Enforcement, Schools, and Economic Opportunity](#)

[02/04/2026 - Commonwealth Foundation Releases Analysis on Governor Shapiro's 2026 Budget Plan](#)

[02/04/2026 - Allegheny Conference on Community Development Statement on the Governor's 2026-27 Budget Address](#)

[02/04/2026 - PSEA praises Pa. Senate on vote to restrict student use of personal mobile devices in public schools](#)

[02/04/2026 - Walsh Reacts to Governor's Proposed State Budget](#)

[02/04/2026 - Rapp: Long Way to Go Before Final Budget Bill](#)

[02/04/2026 - Heffley: Governor's Spending Plan Threatens Fiscal Stability and Taxpayer Protection](#)

[02/04/2026 - Budget Proposal Rightly Focuses on Energy Production, Mehaffie Says](#)

[02/04/2026 - Rep. Hamm: Governor Shapiro Should Put Pennsylvanians First, Not Harrisburg](#)

[02/04/2026 - Culver: Senate Passes SB 1014 Cell Phone Policy for Schools](#)

[02/04/2026 - PA GOP: Shapiro's Budget: More Spending, More Empty Promises, More Pain for Taxpayers](#)

[02/05/2026 - Senate Approves Bill to Ban Student Cellphones During School Day](#)

[02/05/2026 - PDE: Shapiro Administration Invests More Than \\$56 Million Across 13 Community Colleges for Capital Projects and Renovations](#)

[02/05/2026 - Senator Martin Announces Grow PA Scholarship Grant Program Now Accepting Applications](#)

[02/05/2026 - Pugh Legislation Addresses Time Parameters for Passing State Budget](#)

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 or 717-236-6984. Thank you, Deborah, Cheryl, Derek, Hattie, Sam, Grace, Aaron, Christian, Katie, Zoe, Daniel, Kyle, Nicholas, Dominic, Julia and Noah.

Copyright © 2026. All materials contained in the Education Recap are protected by US copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, published, broadcast, modified, electronically forwarded or copied, in whole or in part, without prior written permission from Pennsylvania Legislative Services to purchase the rights to make or forward additional copies.

Provided by Pennsylvania Legislative Services
409 N. 2nd Street, Suite 212
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Phone: 717.236.6984
www.mypls.com