

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## State Update

*Both chambers of the Pennsylvania General Assembly are currently in recess. The Senate is scheduled to return on Monday, March 16, 2026, and the House will reconvene on Monday, March 23, 2026.*



## *Important PDE Updates*

Below are several updates from the PA Department of Education (PDE) about new provisions related to cursive handwriting and cyber charter student residency verification requirements.

### **Cursive Writing Instruction**

**Section 1511 of the Public School Code**, as amended by Act 2 of 2026, established new subjects of required instruction, including print, joined italics, and cursive handwriting.

The new provisions require elementary public schools, Licensed Private Academic Schools, and accredited, nonreligious schools to incorporate handwriting instruction no later than the 2026-2027 school year.

### **Residency Verification Requirement for Cyber Charter Students**

We appreciate your patience as the Department works through implementation of the new cyber charter school student residency verification process that took effect in the middle of the school year.

The law requires the same form to be used for both initial enrollment and residency verification. The law also requires that parents and guardians of the cyber charter school students complete the enrollment form and submit it to both the school district of residence and the cyber charter school for residency verification.

Last month, the Department released a form that we thought met both requirements. However, it was brought to our attention that parts of the form inadvertently caused confusion about which school was responsible for verifying submission and for that we apologize.

Subsequently, we revised and reposted the [Cyber Charter School Enrollment and Residency Verification Form](#) to indicate that a school official at either entity receiving the form may sign it.

We recognize many of you are in the process of collecting these forms and the process has presented some challenges. We appreciate your continued efforts and encourage you to continue educating parents and guardians about the statutory requirement. Families are not as familiar with School Code requirements as educators are, and multiple outreach attempts may be necessary as we work through this late rollout of the new requirements.

**Source:** *Amy Lena, Deputy Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, PDE.*

---

## **Report: PA school districts facing budget, mental health and special education challenges**

Budget pressures – especially from rising healthcare and special education costs – remain a top concern for the state’s public schools, along with sagging math scores and growing needs around student mental health.

That’s according to the [10th annual State of Education report](#) from the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, which represents the vast majority of the leadership for the state’s 500 public-school districts. The 2026 report, released on [Monday], includes data from 230, or 46%, of those districts, highlighting schools’ most pressing challenges and overall trends.

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

**Source:** *CITY & STATE PENNSYLVANIA, March 9, 2026.*

---

## **Gov. Shapiro proposes \$5M boost as Pa. student teacher stipend demand outpaces funding**

The demand for student teacher stipends in Pennsylvania is outgrowing the available funds.

The PA Student Teacher Support Program was designed to help combat teacher shortages across the Commonwealth by providing a solution to the financial strain caused by unpaid student teaching requirements.

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

**Source:** *WJAC 6, March 9, 2026.*

---

## **Pennsylvania schools will be required to teach cursive again starting in April**

Starting next month, all public and private schools in Pennsylvania [will be required](#) to reintroduce cursive handwriting into their curriculum.

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

**Source:** *FOX 29 Philadelphia, March 9, 2026.*

---

## **PA State Budget Hearing Updates:**

- *Lawmakers discuss school cellphone ban, literacy scores, repairing buildings at Pa. budget hearing*

- Education spending is often among the most heated debates in the state Capitol as lawmakers negotiate Pennsylvania's state budget. But conversations were civil on Thursday when Education Secretary Carrie Rowe appeared before a panel of Senators to take questions about Gov. Josh Shapiro's proposed spending plan for the 2026-27 fiscal year.
- [Click here](#) for the full article.
- **Source:** 90.5 WESA, March 6, 2026.

- 
- ***Key Points from Senate Budget Hearing with Department of Education***
  - Senate Appropriations Committee members highlighted concerns about potential cuts to cyber charter schools, unfilled seats for pre-K programs, and ways to boost student achievement statewide during a budget hearing with the Department of Education [today].
  - [Click here](#) for the full article.
  - **Source:** PA Senate Republicans, March 5, 2026.

---

## ***Senate education leader calls for focus on boosting early literacy in PA***

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is accepting nominations for the federal Recognizing Inspiring School Employees Award, a national honor recognizing non-teaching school staff who provide exemplary service to students from pre-kindergarten through high school.

[Click here](#) for the full article.  
**Source:** *The Daily Item/CNHI News*, March 5, 2026.

---

## ***PA seeks nominations for federal school employee honor***

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is accepting nominations for the federal Recognizing Inspiring School Employees Award, a national honor recognizing non-teaching school staff who provide exemplary service to students from pre-kindergarten through high school.

[Click here](#) for the full article.  
**Source:** *MyChesCo.*, March 3, 2026.

---

## **BASIC BILL ACTIONS**

- **HB 46:** - *An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in duties and powers of boards of school directors, further providing for kindergartens and providing for pre-kindergarten programs; and, in pupils and attendance, further providing for age limits and temporary residence and for definitions.*
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Tarik Khan (D)
- **Action Taken:** 03/03/2026 - Discussed during budget hearing with the Department of Education House Appropriations

- 
- **HB 564:** - *An Act amending Title 35 (Health and Safety) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, providing for mental health crisis response; and imposing duties on the Department of Human Services.*
  - **Sponsor:** Rep. Tarah Probst (D)

- **Action Taken:** 03/04/2026 - Discussed during budget hearing with the Department of Human Services House Appropriations

- **HB 2267:** - 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 possession and use of prescribed pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy.
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Tarik Khan (D)
- **Action Taken:** 03/05/2026 - Introduced

- **SB 1192:** - An Act amending the act of June 27, 2006 (1st Sp.Sess., P.L.1873, No.1), known as the Taxpayer Relief Act, in taxation by school districts, further providing for public referendum requirements for increasing certain taxes.
- **Sponsor:** Sen. Jarrett Coleman (R)
- **Action Taken:** 02/27/2026 - Referred to Senate Finance

**Click on the link below for the full Education Recap.**

## EDUCATION RECAP

**Click here** for more.

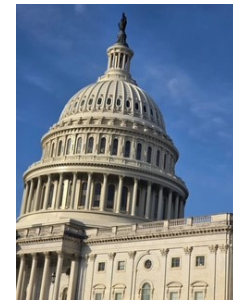
(A weekly report on legislative and executive actions on education-related legislation in Pennsylvania state government.)

## Federal Update

### **Education Department urged to broaden 'professional' student definition**

With Republicans' massive spending and tax bill, known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, set to take effect this summer, the U.S. Department of Education is tasked with crafting regulations that will fill in some of the details of the law's enforcement.

**Click here** for full article.  
**Source:** *K-12 DIVE*, March 6, 2026.



### **K-12 education grant funding guide for 2026**

Federal dollars account for between 8% and 13% of school budgets, with the majority flowing through state and local channels. That may not seem like much, but in practice it can mean the difference between being able to execute certain initiatives and not.

**Click here** for full article.  
**Source:** *EdTech Magazine*, March 4, 2026.

## ***Position Statement on State and Federal Education Issues***

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

**[CLICK HERE FOR POSITION STATEMENT.](#)**

**[FIND YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS](#)**

**[FIND YOUR FEDERAL LEGISLATORS](#)**



**The Pennsylvania Principals Association - 122 Valley Road - Enola, PA 17025  
717-732-4999 - [www.papincipals.org](http://www.papincipals.org)**

PA Principals Association | 122 Valley Road | Enola, PA 17025 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!