

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

State Update

Both chambers of the Pennsylvania General Assembly reconvened on Monday, March 23 for a dual session week, when legislative activity is expected to pick up.



Education advocates, lawmakers rally for literacy at Pa. State Capitol

Educators, lawmakers and other advocates gathered in Harrisburg to call for additional funding for evidence-based literacy instruction in Pennsylvania schools.

[Click here](#) to view the news story.
Source: *Fox43*, March 23, 2026.

Phillips-Hill Measure Aimed at Curbing Student Data Risks Amid Rise in School Cyberattacks Clears Committee

As cyberattacks targeting schools **continue to rise nationwide**, the Senate Education Committee advanced legislation authored by **Sen. Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-York)** to strengthen protections for student data and digital privacy.

Senate Bill 378 would establish clear rules for how student data is collected, stored and shared, while increasing transparency for parents and accountability for schools and third-party vendors.

[Click here](#) for the full press release.
Source: *PA Senate Republicans News, Press Release*, March 23, 2026.

Senate Education Committee Approves Pennycuick Measure to Require Public Schools

to Display the POW/MIA Flag

The Senate Education Committee [today] approved legislation ([Senate Bill 835](#)) sponsored by Sen. [Tracy Pennycuick](#) (R-24) to require the POW/MIA flag be displayed at any public school in the Commonwealth that already displays the American flag, provided the school can reasonably accommodate it. ... The bill now goes to the full Senate for consideration.

[Click here](#) for the full press release.

Source: *PA Senate Republicans News, Press Release, March 23, 2026.*

Governor Shapiro Holds Roundtable Discussion with Attorney General Sunday on Protecting Pennsylvanians Who Use AI and Holding Bad Actors Accountable

Governor Josh Shapiro and **Attorney General Dave Sunday** held a roundtable discussion with legislators, educators, experts, students, and parents to share recent steps the Commonwealth has taken to protect Pennsylvanians from predatory artificial intelligence (AI) practices while ensuring they have the tools needed to safely and responsibly use the latest technology.

[Click here](#) for the full press release.

Source: *Commonwealth of PA, Office of the Governor, Newsroom, Press Release, March 19, 2026.*

Shapiro Administration Puts More Special Education Teachers in Pennsylvania Classrooms

This week, **Secretary of Education Dr. Carrie Rowe** announced nearly \$1 million in grants to 11 institutions of higher education to provide an accelerated pathway to certification for Special Education teachers in training, delivering on [Governor Josh Shapiro's pledge to stabilize the Commonwealth's pipeline of highly qualified teachers](#) and ensure that all Pennsylvania students – including students with disabilities -- have the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed.

[Click here](#) for the full press release.

Source: *Pennsylvania Department of Education Newsroom, Press Release, March 17, 2026.*

BASIC BILL ACTIONS

- **HB 289:** - *An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in grounds and buildings, providing for radon testing.*
 - **Sponsor:** Rep. Tim Briggs (D)
 - **Action Taken:** 03/16/2026 - Meeting Scheduled - 03/23/2026, 10:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Environmental and Natural Resource Protection), Room 515, Irvis Office Building
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- **HB 830:** - *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, further providing for policy relating to bullying.*

- **Sponsor:** Rep. Jennifer O'Mara (D)
- **Action Taken:** 03/16/2026 - Meeting Scheduled - 03/24/2026, 9:30 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room 140, Main Capitol

- **HB 1045** - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in school health services, further providing for seizure recognition and related first aid training.
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Carol Kazeem (D)
- **Action Taken:** 03/16/2026 - Meeting Scheduled - 03/24/2026, 9:30 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room 140, Main Capitol

- **HB 1077** - 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, establishing the Commission on Children's Vision and providing for duties of Commission on Children's Vision.
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Johann Cepeda-Freytiz (D)
- **Action Taken:** 03/17/2026 - Meeting Scheduled - 03/25/2026, 9:00 AM - Voting Meeting (House Health), Room B31, Main Capitol

- **HB 1752** - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in preliminary provisions, providing for Keystone Exam alternative feasibility study.
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Gina H. Curry (D)
- **Action Taken:** 03/16/2026 - Meeting Scheduled - 03/24/2026, 9:30 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room 140, Main Capitol

- **HB 2218** - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, providing for comprehensive school counseling services.
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Mandy Steele (D)
- **Action Taken:** 03/16/2026 - Meeting Scheduled - 03/24/2026, 9:30 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room 140, Main Capitol

- **HB 2269** - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, repealing provisions relating to medical education loan assistance.
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Jennifer O'Mara (D)
- **Action Taken:** 03/16/2026 - Meeting Scheduled - 03/24/2026, 9:30 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room 140, Main Capitol

- **HB 2285** - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in school health services, further providing for health services; and, in reimbursements by Commonwealth and between school districts, further providing for State reimbursement for health services.
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Lisa A. Borowski (D)
- **Action Taken:** 03/16/2026 - Meeting Scheduled - 03/24/2026, 9:30 AM - Voting Meeting (House Education), Room 140, Main Capitol

- **HB 2291** - An Act amending the act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as the Tax Reform Code of 1971, in tobacco products tax, further providing for licensing of retailers.
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Chris Pielli (D)

- **Action Taken:** 03/16/2026 - Referred to House Finance

- **HB 2293** - *An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in charter schools, further providing for enrollment.*
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Marc S. Anderson (R)
- **Action Taken:** 03/18/2026 - Referred to House Education

- **HB 2295** - *An Act amending the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.343, No.176), known as The Fiscal Code, in cigarette sales and licensing, further providing for definitions, for licensing of retailers and for transfer of licenses.*
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Ben Waxman (D)
- **Action Taken:** 03/18/2026 - Referred to House Finance

- **HB 2307** - *An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in reimbursements by Commonwealth and between school districts, further providing for extraordinary special education program expenses.*
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Emily Kinhead (D)
- **Action Taken:** 03/19/2026 - Introduced

- **HR 407** - *A Resolution recognizing the week of April 11 through 17, 2026, as "Week of the Young Child" in Pennsylvania.*
- **Sponsor:** Rep. Carol Hill-Evans (D)
- **Action Taken:** 03/18/2026 - Meeting Scheduled - 03/25/2026, 10:30 AM - Voting Meeting (House Children and Youth), Room 515, Irvis Office Building

- **SB 9** - *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)
- **Action Taken:** 03/19/2026 - Re-referred to House Children and Youth

- **SB 1090** - *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)
- **Action Taken:** 03/17/2026 - Third consideration and final passage

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

Cardona speaks out on Ed Dept. breakup, ESL and more

Cardona: Damage Done to the Education Dept.'s Mission Will Take Decades to Fix

Miguel Cardona, who served as the secretary of education under the Biden administration, entered school as a Spanish speaker and has long called multilingualism a “superpower.”



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

Source: *The 74*, March 23, 2026 (*The 74 Interview*, March 20, 2026).

States say Education Department not following mental health grant orders

Despite a court order requiring the U.S. Department of Education to completely reinstate its previously canceled mental health grants, the agency only awarded recipients six months worth of funding rather than for a full year, according to states affected last year by the department’s grant cancellations.

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

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

Bipartisan Science of Reading Bill Passes House Committee

States receiving federal literacy grants would have to follow the science of reading, under [a bill](#) the House education committee passed [last Tuesday].

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

Source: *The 74*, March 17, 2026.

Federal court blocks RFK Jr.’s moves to upend US vaccine policy

A federal judge on temporarily blocked several major moves Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has made to upend vaccine policy in the U.S., arguing the changes he and his agency directed likely violated federal law.

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

Source: *K-12 DIVE*, March 17, 2026.

Pennsylvania Principals Association

Position Statement on State and Federal Education Issues

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

[CLICK HERE FOR POSITION STATEMENT.](#)

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[FIND YOUR FEDERAL LEGISLATORS](#)



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