



January 7, 2016

*With a partial 2015-16 state budget now enacted, work remains to complete a spending plan and accompanying legislation that could include pension and tax reform measures. The House of Representatives will reconvene on Monday, Jan. 11, and the Senate will return to Harrisburg on Tuesday, Jan. 19. Meanwhile, Gov. Wolf is scheduled to deliver his 2016-17 state budget address on Tuesday, Feb. 9.*

#### **State releases funding to school districts**



This week the state Treasury began sending school districts the emergency funding contained in the partial 2015-16 state budget approved last week under [House Bill 1460](#), now **Act 10A of 2015**. As passed by the General Assembly, the bill contained a \$30.3 billion 2015-16 state budget that was presented to Gov. Tom Wolf on Dec. 24, 2015. The governor signed the bill on Dec. 29 after using a line-item veto on numerous appropriations. The final enacted bill released \$23.4 billion. The basic subsidy funding amount is based on six months of the amount appropriated for 2014-15, or just over \$2.5 billion to fund schools immediately for the first half of the fiscal year. Special education received \$1.076 billion. Funding for the Ready to Learn Block Grant program was set at \$250 million and restores reimbursement to school districts for charter school expenses.

PSBA is encouraged that a portion of the state funds has been released to school districts and believes it is important for the General Assembly and Gov. Wolf to work toward a full education budget agreement.

[Click here to see the 2015-16 enacted summary of state education appropriations.](#)

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#### **District Allocations: Basic Subsidy & Ready to Learn Block Grant**

The General Assembly did not send the governor a bill amending the School Code that would provide for the distribution of funding under the new budget to schools. The Wolf Administration distributed funding using "components consistent with the proposed formula in the 2015-16 Executive Budget, and are part of the agreed-to hybrid funding formula that would have been fully enacted as part of the bipartisan framework budget agreement."

*Basic Education Funding:* While Gov. Wolf only accepted the first six months of the appropriation, the distribution assumes a restoration of the vetoed amount for a total appropriation of \$5.6 billion. School districts are to receive an amount equal to their 2014-15 basic subsidy funding. The \$100 million increase is distributed as follows: nearly \$50 million was distributed to restore Education Assistance Program

funding; \$12 million was directed to the Chester-Upland School District to comply with the Financial Recovery Plan and settlement agreement as approved by the Delaware County Court of Common Pleas; \$3 million was directed to Wilkinsburg Borough School District as required for their transition of high school students to Pittsburgh School District; and the balance was distributed as a pro-rata restoration of the Basic Education Funding cuts under the previous administration. Each school district has received 45% of its net allocation, which is the amount due for August, October and December.

*Ready to Learn Block Grant:* The enacted budget includes \$250 million for the 2015-16 Ready to Learn Block Grant. Of that amount, approximately \$192 million was distributed to school districts in the same amount they received in 2014-15. The remaining \$58 million was used to restore the charter school reimbursement program. Each district has received 100% of its allocation.

[Click here to see the 2015-16 estimated Basic Subsidy and Ready to Learn Block Grant funding for each district.](#)

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#### **District Allocations: Special Education**

The 2015-16 budget contains \$1.076 billion for special education, which is a \$300 million, or 2.87%, increase over the enacted appropriation for 2014-15. School districts will receive an amount equal to their 2013-14 special education funding (approximately \$947.5 million). Increases in the amount will be distributed based on three categories of support for students with disabilities (approximately \$46.7 million). The increases are a pro rata share based on the district's adjusted weighted special education student count multiplied by its market value/personal income aid ratio and equalized mills multiplier.

The 2015-16 Special Education appropriation also includes funding totaling approximately \$82.5 million for the following components: Special Education Contingency Fund, Core Services funding to intermediate units, Institutionalized Children's Program funding, special education for wards of state students, and special education for students placed out of state.

[Click here to see the 2015-16 estimated special education funding for each district.](#)

## Latest News

### PSBA News

- [Special Report: Education Laws Passed in 2015](#)

### PSBA News

#### **Special Report: Education Laws Passed in 2015**

*Following is a summary of the education-related laws that were enacted this year and reported by PSBA:*

**Act 15: Amendments to the Child Protective Services Law - [House Bill 1276](#),** now Act 15 of 2015, makes clarifying changes to the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) as amended last year. The bill clarifies existing statute with respect to individuals required to obtain background checks, how the law applies to volunteers, definitions, including "independent contractor," "person responsible for

a child's welfare," and "school employee," and adds a definition for "routine interaction." [Click here for PSBA's more extensive summary of Act 15.](#)

**Act 44: Youth Sports Officials** - [House Bill 315](#), now Act 44 of 2015, amends the Child Labor Act to allow youth as young as 12 to be employed as a "youth sports official" without a work permit. A youth sports official is defined as a minor who enforces the rules and supervises participants in a youth sporting event, including acting as an umpire or referee. The same time and rest restrictions and requirements that currently apply to 14 and 15 year-old employees under the law will also apply to youth sports officials.

**Act 48: Training for Tax Collectors** - [House Bill 823](#), now Act 48 of 2015, makes clarifications and revisions to [Act 164 of 2014](#), providing for basic and continuing education requirements for tax collectors, mandatory background checks for tax collector candidates and the appointment of a deputy tax collector. The municipality for which the tax collector was elected must sign off on the deputy, along with the tax collectors bond company, before an appointment is made.

**Act 49: School Bus Driver Qualifications/Other CDL Changes** - [Senate Bill 925](#), now Act 49 of 2015, amends the Vehicle Code to make numerous changes to the law regarding commercial drivers licenses (CDL). Regarding school bus drivers, the bill extends the time period in which a school bus driver must have his or her required physical examination, including an eye exam, from 12 months to 13 months. Act 49 updates the CDL testing standards and adjusts a variety of license classifications, endorsements and restrictions. These changes will put Pennsylvania in compliance with new guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

**Act 93: PSERS/SERS Compliance** -- [House Bill 1332](#), now Act 93 of 2015, amends the Public School Employees' Retirement Code and the State Employees' Retirement Code to make updates and technical changes to maintain compliance with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules in order to maintain tax deferred status for current school district and state employee retirement benefits.

**Act 10A: Partial State Budget** - [House Bill 1460](#), now Act 10A of 2015, is a \$30.3 billion 2015-16 state budget passed by the General Assembly and presented to Gov. Tom Wolf on Dec. 24, 2015. The governor signed the bill on Dec. 29 after using a line-item veto on numerous appropriations. The final enacted bill released \$23.4 billion in state funding. The basic subsidy funding amount is based on six months of the amount appropriated for 2014-15, or just over \$2.5 billion to fund schools immediately for the first half of the fiscal year. Special education received \$1.076 billion. Funding for the Ready to Learn Block Grant program was set at \$250 million and restores reimbursement to school districts for charter school expenses. [Click here for details of the line item veto and 2015-16 enacted budget.](#)

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