



Pennsylvania School Boards Association

# legislative report

May 12, 2016



## **PSBA urges Gov. Wolf not to veto economic furlough bill**

This week the Senate voted to revert to a prior version of [House Bill 805](#) (Rep. Bloom, R- Cumberland) legislation already passed by the House of Representatives which allows school districts to furlough professional employees for economic reasons, and to use performance evaluations to determine the order that employees are furloughed. This action allows the bill to be sent to Gov. Wolf, who has already indicated his intention to veto the bill.

**PSBA, along with the bill's sponsors, Rep. Stephen Bloom (R-Cumberland) and Sen. Ryan Aument (R-Lancaster) held a news conference this week to urge the governor to reconsider his decision. The PA Association of School Administrators (PASA) and the PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO) also participated in the event.**

"Pennsylvania's children deserve a high quality education. The passage of House Bill 805 will assure that the best educators in the Commonwealth are kept in our classrooms," said PSBA President Kathy Swope.

"Having the best, most effective educators teaching our children gives Pennsylvania the greatest opportunity for individual student success and maximizes the substantial public investments we are making in schools," said Rep. Bloom.

"The most influential factor in a school child's education is the quality of the teacher in his or her classroom," said Rep. Aument. "As leaders, we cannot, and should not endorse a system that perpetuates the status quo and promotes 'failing' teachers over 'distinguished' educators."

[Click here to read PSBA's letter of support to Gov. Wolf regarding House Bill 805.](#)

[Click here to read the release issued at the news conference.](#)

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### **Senate passes truancy bill**

This week the Senate passed legislation recommended by PSBA that provides significant reforms to the truancy system in Pennsylvania. [Senate Bill 359](#) (Sen. Greenleaf, R -Montgomery) establishes various reforms that reflect the recommendations of the Truancy Advisory Committee of the Joint State Government Commission and the Educational Success and Truancy Prevention Workgroup. The group consists of PSBA, judges, magisterial district justices, probation officers, and children and youth services professionals.

Among its provisions, the bill clarifies and updates various definitions, and changes the penalties for truancy. It also removes school districts from the responsibility of having to enforce compulsory attendance laws with regards to charter school students and gives it to the charter schools. Charter and cyber charter schools must establish an attendance policy that addresses unexcused absences and must report unexcused absences directly to the PA Department of Education annually.

The House recently passed similar legislation under [House Bill 1907](#) (Rep. Benninghoff, R-Centre).

[Click here to read PSBA's letter of support for Senate Bill 359 that includes a detailed description of the legislation.](#)

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### **PSBA supports immunization changes with modifications**

This week PSBA sent a letter of general support with request for some modifications to proposed changes to the state regulations regarding student immunization and school attendance that are being jointly proposed by the Department of Health and the State Board of Education.

One of the most substantive changes would replace the current provisional waiver of eight months for school children to be fully immunized with a provisional period of five school days to obtain the next or final dose before being excluded from school. A student may attend school provisionally beyond the five days upon the submission of a medical certificate from the child's health care provider outlining the dates for additional vaccination. The proposal changes the time for the school administrator or designee to review the medical certificate and the child's compliance from every 60 days to every 30 days. The proposal also extends the deadline for schools to report immunization data to the Department of Health from Oct. 15 to Dec. 31.

PSBA recommends a provisional period of 15 school days rather than five to allow for a more reasonable timeframe for notification and compliance. The association supports a shortened timeframe for school review of student compliance but suggests an alternate timeframe longer than the proposed 30 days, such as 45 days. PSBA also raised various logistical concerns if the changes become effective for the upcoming 2016-17 school year. Finally, the association supports the extension of the deadline for schools to report immunization data.

[Click here to read PSBA's letter regarding the proposed changes to the regulations.](#) [Click here to see IRRC's pages for \[Chapter 23\]\(#\) and \[Chapter 11\]\(#\) proposals.](#)

On a related note, the Joint State Government Commission has released a study that concludes that "vaccination rates in Pennsylvania are below target vaccination rates, and therefore pose serious health risks to residents of the Commonwealth." The report includes 12 recommendations; among them:

- Efforts should be made to ensure school medical staff have access to the Pennsylvania Statewide Immunization Information System (PA-SIIS).
- The Department of Health and the Department of Education consider implementing a system for

making school district vaccination rates easily accessible to the public.

- Enforcement procedures for vaccination compliance should be defined by regulations developed in collaboration by the Department of Health and the Department of Education.
- There should be a much shorter provisional admission period, which should expire prior to federal reporting deadlines, for children who do not meet the vaccination requirements at the beginning of the school year.

[Click here to read the Joint State Government Commission's report on youth vaccinations.](#)

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## Latest News

### Passed by the Senate

- [Anti-hazing](#)
- [Notification of Audio on School Buses](#)

### Approved by the Senate Finance Committee

- [Transfer of Duties from PERC](#)

### Approved by the Senate Local Government Committee

- [Contracts for Services](#)

### PSBA News

- [June 30 Deadline: School boards invited to submit proposals for PSBA's 2017 Legislative Platform](#)

### Passed by the Senate

#### Anti-hazing

[House Bill 1574](#) (Rep. Marsico, R-Dauphin) expands Pennsylvania's anti-hazing law to apply to public and private secondary schools, as well as to organizations not affiliated with schools in which students still participate, such as private athletic leagues. The bill requires that each secondary school have a written anti-hazing policy. The bill will now return to the House for concurrence.

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#### Notification of Audio on School Buses

[Senate Bill 1077](#) (Sen. Vogel, R-Beaver) removes the requirement of physical

mailings for school districts regarding the use of audio on school buses. Instead, districts must include the policy in a student handbook and other publications that set forth rules and procedures of conduct. The bill was amended on the Senate floor to require the district to also post a notice of the policy on their website.

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## **Approved by the Senate Finance Committee**

### **Transfer of Duties from PERC**

[Senate Bill 1227](#) (Sen. Blake, D-Lackawanna) amends the Administrative Code to transfer certain powers and duties relating to public pension system analysis and legislation from the Public Employee Retirement Commission (PERC) to the Independent Fiscal Office (IFO). The bill also transfers certain powers and duties relating to municipal pension reporting and analysis from PERC to the Department of the Auditor General.

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## **Approved by the Senate Local Government Committee**

### **Contracts for Services**

[House Bill 902](#) (Rep. Ross, R-Chester) permits political subdivisions and authorities to enter into contracts for services when two consecutive advertisements fail to induce bids. If no bids are received within 15 days of the second advertisement, the political subdivision or authority may initiate negotiations for a contract for services with any provider not otherwise disqualified by law or the policy of the governing body. Prior to the execution of the contract, the political subdivision or authority must publicly announce at a regular or special public meeting the identity of the parties, the proposed contract price and a summary of the other terms and conditions relating to the proposed contract in order to demonstrate that the services sought are consistent with those previously advertised.

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## **PSBA News**

### **June 30 Deadline: School boards invited to submit proposals for PSBA's 2017 Legislative Platform**

PSBA is now inviting your school board to submit proposals to be considered for the association's 2017 Legislative Platform. The platform is PSBA's official record of positions on legislative issues and is the guide for the association's advocacy efforts. It is reviewed and adopted annually by school directors.

**The deadline for school boards to submit items for consideration is Thursday, June 30.** It is not too early to bring this issue up for discussion at your next board meeting so that your items can be drafted, approved and submitted to PSBA by the deadline. School boards should focus on the section of the PSBA Platform containing the Core Legislative Principles and Supporting Concepts. **In addition, this year school directors will be invited to participate in a**

**separate process to select PSBA's Legislative Priorities for the upcoming 2017-18 session of the General Assembly.** More information on that process, which occurs every two years to coincide with the legislative session, will be available soon.

[Click here for details and submission forms.](#)

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### **Pennsylvania School Boards Association**

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