



Pennsylvania School Boards Association

# legislative report

May 26, 2016

*The House of Representatives was in session this week. Both the House and the Senate will reconvene on Monday, June 6.*

## Funding Reform

### **PSBA Priority Issue: New school funding formula heads to the governor**

Legislation that would make the bi-partisan Basic Education Funding Commission's subsidy funding formula permanent is now headed to Gov. Wolf's desk after the House of Representatives concurred with Senate amendments to [House Bill 1552](#).

The need for the state to provide adequate, equitable and fair funding is one of PSBA's top legislative priority issues. The association applauds the work the BEF Commission completed nearly a year ago and is pleased that the proposed formula has moved to the governor's desk for final approval. The formula removes politics from state school funding decisions, directing money to school districts based on objective factors, such as student enrollment, the needs of the student population, and school district wealth and capacity to raise local revenues.

PSBA worked hard to get this language into the Fiscal Code bill under Act 25 of 2016 that applied the formula to the distribution of 2015-16 funds. Those efforts were heightened when last week the Senate inserted language in House Bill 1552 to establish the formula into the Public School Code and make it permanently applicable for the payment of basic subsidy funds. The bill was overwhelmingly passed by the Senate and sent to the House for concurrence. PSBA and local public school officials quickly mobilized to urge House members to quickly agree to the bill and send it to the governor.

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### **PSBA opposes alternate school funding proposal**

This week PSBA presented testimony to the House Education Committee in opposition to a proposal to be introduced by Rep. David Parker (R-Monroe) that would provide an alternative approach for school district funding different from the new funding formula recommended by the bi-partisan Basic Education Funding Commission.

Representing PSBA was Assistant Executive Director John Callahan, who raised numerous concerns with the plan to change the distribution of state funds under the subsidy formula that was just approved by the General Assembly under House Bill 1552 and now headed to Gov. Wolf's desk.



Callahan said that House Bill 1552 reflects the formula recommended by the bi-partisan Basic Education Funding Commission (BEFC), and that there has been no broad consensus with

the General Assembly for the need to consider another formula.

The alternate proposal would redistribute BEF funding so that only one-quarter (25%) of any increase in the basic subsidy appropriation would be allocated to all districts and 75% of the increase would be given to a group of districts identified by the group as underfunded. Callahan said that, essentially, it would bring the funding debate back to square one and pit school districts against one another and unfairly penalize them at the expense of politics. He emphasized that from a statewide perspective, it makes little sense to exacerbate the inequities that occurred under previous funding systems of cherry-picking a selected minority of school districts for supplements.

This alternate plan ignores the hard work done by the BEFC and by the legislators who voted to support the formula contained in House Bill 1552. This formula drives out new BEF dollars to all school districts annually and is fair to all districts across the commonwealth. Over time, this formula will remedy the inequity that currently exists across districts and will direct resources to those districts that need them the most.

[Click here to read PSBA's testimony.](#)

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#### **Anti-hazing bill signed by the governor**

Legislation sought by PSBA to protect students from harmful hazing rituals was signed by the governor this week. [House Bill 1574](#) (Rep. Marsico, R-Dauphin), now **Act 31 of 2016**, expands Pennsylvania's anti-hazing law applicable to institutions of higher education to also apply to public and private secondary schools (grades 7-12). PSBA worked extensively with Rep. Marsico to secure passage of the bill as it moved through the House and Senate, and thanks him for his efforts.

The school board must adopt a written anti-hazing policy and provide a copy of the policy, rules, penalties and program of enforcement to all athletic coaches involved in organizations within the secondary school. The policy must also be posted on the district's website. Penalties may include fines, withholding of fines, or imposition of probation, suspension, dismissal or expulsion. Penalties may also include rescission of permission of an organization to operate on school property or under the sanction of the school.

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### **Latest News**

#### **Approved by the House Education Committee**

- [Expedited teacher certification](#)
- [Continuing professional education](#)

#### **PDE News**

- [PDE provides update on the evaluation of Project Based Assessments](#)

#### **PSBA News**

- [June 30 deadline approaching for school boards to submit proposals for PSBA's 2017 Legislative Platform](#)

## **Approved by the House Education Committee**

### **Expedited teacher certification**

[House Bill 2078](#) (Rep. Hill, R-York) amends the School Code to require the PA Department of Education (PDE) to process completed applications for permanent certification within 14 days for active military personnel, veterans and their spouses. The bill also allows educators with inactive Pennsylvania certification who have maintained "active" certification on other states to return to Pennsylvania and have their certification be returned to active status. This legislation would codify a new policy implemented by PDE this month.

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### **Continuing professional education**

[House Bill 2082](#) (Rep. Milne, R - Chester) amends the School Code to allow a professional educator to carry over continuing professional education credits or hours into the next five-year continuing compliance period. The educator may carry up to 50 excess hours that were earned during the final two years of her or his compliance period.

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## **PDE News**

### **PDE provides update on the evaluation of Project Based Assessments**

The PA Department of Education (PDE) has provided schools with information regarding the evaluation of Project Based Assessments (PBA) with regards to provisions under Act 1 of 2016. The law delays the use of the Keystone Exam as a graduation requirement or as a benchmark for the need for participation in a project based assessment until the 2018-19 school year.

However, PDE will evaluate PBAs per the following:

- For students whose anticipated graduation date is pre-2019, PBAs currently in the queue will be evaluated by one external evaluator. Schools will be notified of the disposition of each project. If unsatisfactory, the project will be returned to the school and the student may work with the tutor to resubmit in order to earn a satisfactory mark.

- For students whose anticipated graduation date is pre-2019, projects submitted after April 29, 2016, will be deemed satisfactory upon submission of the tutor's evaluation verifying satisfactory performance.

The goal is to have all projects for pre-2019 graduates evaluated no later than June 30, 2016.

For students whose anticipated graduation date is 2019 or later, the projects will be evaluated by two external evaluators. Timeline for turnaround will be communicated at a later date.

Questions may be directed to [jinskip@pa.gov](mailto:jinskip@pa.gov).

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## PSBA News

### **June 30 deadline approaching for school boards to submit proposals for PSBA's 2017 Legislative Platform**

School boards have about one month remaining 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.

**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.

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

**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. Early next month all school directors will receive a survey and information on that process.**

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### **Pennsylvania School Boards Association**

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