



Pennsylvania School Boards Association

# legislative report

September 16, 2016



## **New public awareness campaign launches for public education**

This week a new public awareness campaign for public education was jointly launched by PSBA, PA Association of Intermediate Units, PA Association of School Administrators, PA Principals Association, PA School Boards Association, PA School Public Relations Association, and PA State Education Association.

The Success Starts Here campaign is a multi-year statewide effort to share the positive news about public education through advertising, web, social media, traditional media and word-of-mouth with the goal of raising understanding of the value of public education in Pennsylvania. It is not an advocacy campaign.

For more information about Success Starts Here, visit [www.SuccessStartsHere.org](http://www.SuccessStartsHere.org). The website contains success stories submitted by school districts, a "find my school" directory listed by county, and a "show support" tab includes a tool kit that provides schools with everything they need to get involved in the campaign, a form for districts to submit their stories, and an order form to receive a supply of window clings for school building entrances.



## **PSBA testifies on testing and graduation issues**

This week PSBA presented testimony to the House Democratic Policy Committee on the issues of state-mandated exams, including Keystone Exams as graduation requirements. Representing the association was PSBA Assistant Executive Director **John Callahan**, who said there is no evidence that high-stake tests accomplish the majority of the policy goals they were developed to support.

Callahan noted that the development and implementation of the three Keystone Exams now being used has cost taxpayers approximately \$70 million over a six-year period with many more millions spent by the state to develop, distribute, collect, analyze and report results of Keystone Exams, the Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA), Classroom Diagnostic Tools and other assessments.

An additional cost to districts is the extensive recordkeeping systems to match students with the Keystone Exams that have been successfully completed and those for which remediation will be necessary. The costs to school districts for implement the required Project Based Assessment (PBA) for those not passing the Keystone is conservatively estimated to be over \$300 million. This means between the state and school districts, Pennsylvania's testing programs since 2008 have cost the taxpayers almost \$1.1 billion.

Callahan emphasized that with the passage of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) there should

be greater flexibility regarding assessment in a manner that is not punitive, with multiple measures that can be used to provide targeted instruction and help each child grow academically.

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

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**TESTIMONY**

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### **PSBA raises concerns with expansion of workplace mandates**

This week PSBA told the House Labor and Industry Committee that the provisions under [House Bill 1082](#) regarding workplace safety would add a layer of unnecessary and expensive mandates for school districts. During a public hearing to discuss the bill, PSBA Senior Director of Legal Services **Stuart Knade** questioned the need for the proposal, which would extend the provisions of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA) now geared to private sector and federal employees, to Pennsylvania public employees. He told the committee that Pennsylvania already has numerous workplace safety laws and regulations in place, as well as requirements attached to state workers compensation laws and regulations.

"So far as PSBA is aware, the need for this kind of legislation has not been sufficiently demonstrated by data showing that a genuine workplace safety or health problem exists in the public sector, or that the track record of workplace health and safety in the public sector is any worse than what exists for comparable private sector activities covered by the federal OSHA. There will be a significant cost for implementing this sea change in public sector administration, not only for local public sector employers, but also for the Commonwealth as it assembles a new and expensive bureaucracy and regulatory regime. The significant cost to the Commonwealth and political subdivisions of implementing what House Bill 1082 proposes will not likely be limited to the short term, and should be carefully calculated over the next several decades. That cost does not appear to be justified at this time," Knade said.

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

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## Latest News

### **PA State Board of Education**

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- [State Board ad hoc committee meets to discuss reduction of data collection](#)

### **PSBA News**

- [PSBA participates in ACCESS advisory workgroup to discuss changes, trainings](#)

### **PA State Board of Education**

#### **State Board of Education discusses school instruction on Holocaust, human rights**

This week the State Board of Education began work on its requirement under [Act](#)

[70 of 2014](#) to examine whether schools are providing human rights education. Act 70 encourages, but does not require, school entities to offer instruction on the Holocaust, genocide and human rights violations to students in any grade. The Department of Education (PDE) must distribute guidelines on appropriate curriculum and materials, and must make in-service training programs available to schools.

The State Board is required to conduct a study regarding whether schools are providing the instruction and how they are implementing it. If the study shows that less than 90% of schools are providing the instruction, the State Board must adopt a regulation requiring schools to offer such education.

The newly-formed committee began its initial work with a presentation from PDE on its guidelines and training programs that already have been developed and implemented. The board, in conjunction with PDE, will be conducting a survey of all school districts, charter schools, intermediate units and area vocational technical schools to gather information on training, courses and programs provided regarding human rights education. The board's final report is due next year, with a deadline of Nov. 30, 2017.

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### **State Board ad hoc committee meets to discuss reduction of data collection**

The State Board of Education's ad hoc advisory committee on data collection reduction met this week to continue its work required by [Act 86 of 2016](#) to conduct a review of data collection requirements imposed on public school entities in the areas of finance, human resources, food services, transportation, child accounting, athletics, health and special education. The ad hoc committee includes representatives of the General Assembly; Secretary of Education; school district, charter school and area vocational-technical school business managers; school district, charter school and area vocational-technical school governing board members; and educators. PSBA President-Elect **Mark B. Miller** serves on the panel.

The advisory committee will consider whether the data collected has a valuable purpose and identify those data collection requirements that are redundant, overly burdensome or no longer necessary and issue a report of its findings and recommendations on the data identified as such. Act 86 directs the Department of Education to terminate the collection of data identified as redundant, overly burdensome or no longer necessary in the Board's report if the data is not required by statute or regulation. The report is due by the end of 2016.

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## **PSBA News**

### **PSBA participates in ACCESS advisory workgroup to discuss changes, trainings**

This week PSBA participated in the School Based ACCESS Program Advisory Workgroup that met to discuss changes to the program reporting schedule and

upcoming trainings for school personnel.

The dates for the training sessions are listed below, with all sessions to be held 9:00am - 3:00pm. Participation is strongly encouraged to ensure your LEA has the latest information.

- Oct. 11: PaTTAN-Harrisburg, 6340 Flank Drive, Harrisburg
- Oct. 17: Ramada/Mountain View Country Club, 100 Elks Club Road, Boalsburg
- Oct. 18: Northeastern Educational IU 19, 1200 Line Street, Archbald
- Oct. 19: PaTTAN-East, 333 Technology Drive, Malvern
- Oct. 24: Tri-County IU 5, 252 Waterford Street, Edinboro
- Oct. 25: PaTTAN-Pittsburgh, 3190 William Pitt Way, Pittsburgh

Registration for the trainings is available online via the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) at <http://www.pattan.net>.

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### **Pennsylvania School Boards Association**

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