



**April 30, 2015**

PSBA Legislative Report

[More Info](#)

*The General Assembly was not in session this week and will return to Harrisburg on Monday, May 4, 2015.*

### **Top Stories**

- \* **PSBA testifies in support of state re-investment of career and technical education**
- \* **U.S. Education Department sets new rules for local school district spending on special education**

### **Latest News**

- \* **Rep. Grell resigns from House of Representatives**
- \* **New IFO report finds state revenues above estimates**
- \* **School boards invited to submit proposals for the 2016 Legislative Platform**
- \* **On the Hill: Upcoming meetings**

---

### **Top Stories**

#### **PSBA testifies in support of state re-investment of career and technical education**

This week PSBA presented [testimony](#) to the House Education Select Subcommittee on Technical Education and Career Readiness in support of career training programs. Representing PSBA was Vicki Smith, board president of the Homer-Center School District in Indiana County and chairperson of the Joint Operating Committee of the Indiana County Technology Center (ICTC). Also presenting was Eric Wolfgang, board president of the Central York School District and a former JOC member at the York County School of Technology (YCST).

Both Smith and Wolfgang emphasized the continual need to sustain high-quality occupational programs that students need to meet the changing demands of the workforce, and the importance of career and technical education centers in providing specialized opportunities for students to earn their high school diploma, additional industry certifications, and for some, college credit.

Smith described opportunities for students to excel in their career fields, such as SKILLS USA competitions, special projects and work in the community. She also described several successful efforts of ICTC and the sending school districts in working with industry partners to provide new opportunities for students,

particularly in areas of math and science education. One example is the partnership between the ICTC and the NASA affiliated Challenger Center for Space Science Education to bring a Challenger Learning Center to their campus.

Wolfgang discussed the successes of YCST as a comprehensive technical school and the desire to increase programming and student population at the school, but explained the increasing budgetary challenges that exist under the current system of state funding. Looking the issue from a statewide perspective, he said that approximately 5% of a technical school's budget comes from federal Perkins funding, 10% or less comes from the state Career and Technical Education Subsidy, and about 85% comes from member school districts that pay tuition for their students who enroll in the CTC. He urged legislators to increase the amount of per-pupil state basic subsidy so that school districts do not have to bear the majority of the costs.

The bipartisan subcommittee was created in March pursuant to [House Resolution 102](#) and is chaired by Rep. Seth Grove (R-York) and Rep. Patrick Harkins (D-Erie). The panel's report is due to the House by Nov. 30, 2016.

### **U.S. Education Department sets new rules for school district spending on special education**

This week the U.S. Department of Education published its [final rule](#) about maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements for local education agencies (LEAs), effective July 1, 2015. In general, the rule states that school districts must be consistent each school year regarding the amount of expenditures (fiscal effort) for special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The rule also notes exceptions.

Education Week also published a [short summary](#) that cites one of the charts from the Department's rule to illustrate that "school districts generally can only maintain or increase their spending on special education, not cut it." Questions regarding the new rule should be directed to Mary Louise Dirrigl, U.S. Department of Education, 550 12th Street SW., Potomac Center Plaza, Room 5156, Washington, DC 20202-2641. Telephone: (202) 245-7324.

---

## **Latest News**

### **Rep. Grell resigns from House of Representatives**

This week Rep. Glen Grell (R-Cumberland) submitted his letter of resignation to the House of Representatives, effective April 30, 2015. Grell will be the new executive director of the Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS), effective May 1, 2015. He replaces Jeff Clay, who retired from the position earlier in April. A special election will be held to fill Grell's seat in the House.

### **New IFO report finds state revenues above estimates**

This week the Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) has released a new edition of the [Quarterly Revenue Review](#). This report compares the IFO's revenue estimates to actual collections for the first quarter of calendar 2015 (January to March) and the fiscal year-to-date. The report encompasses the General Fund, Motor License Fund and the Lottery Fund. For the first nine months of the fiscal year:

- \* General Fund revenue collections were \$470 million above the IFO estimate.
- \* Motor License Fund revenue collections were \$82 million above the IFO estimate.
- \* Lottery Fund ticket sales and miscellaneous revenues were \$44 million below the IFO estimate.

### **School boards invited to submit proposals for the 2016 Legislative Platform**

PSBA is now inviting your school board to submit proposals to be considered for the association's 2016 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 **Tuesday, 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. All proposals will be reviewed by the PSBA Platform Committee on **Saturday, Aug. 8** and receive final consideration by the PSBA Delegate Assembly on **Tuesday, Oct. 13** in conjunction with the School Leadership Conference in Hershey. [Click here for guidelines on how to submit a platform item.](#) [Click here to read PSBA's 2015 Legislative Platform.](#)

### **On the Hill: Upcoming Meetings**

*Upcoming events currently scheduled include:*

#### **Monday, May 4**

The **House Education Committee** will consider the following bills:

- \* [House Bill 805](#) (Rep. Bloom, R- Cumberland), which would end the practice of "last in, first out" regarding furloughs, and instead allow districts to use performance evaluations to determine the order that employees are furloughed in times of economic need. *PSBA supports House Bill 805.*
- \* [House Bill 752](#) (Rep. Christiana, R- Beaver) which would increase the amount of available tax credits for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program from \$100 million to \$170 million, and the amount of available tax credits for the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) program from \$50 million to \$80 million. *PSBA opposes House Bill 752.*
- \* [House Bill 1039](#) (Rep. O'Neill, R-Bucks), which would allow school districts, area vocational-technical schools, and intermediate units to employ uncertified individuals as substitute teachers in the event certified substitute teachers are unavailable. *PSBA supports House Bill 1039.*
- \* [House Bill 499](#) (Rep. Emrick, R -Northampton), which would prohibit teacher preparation programs approved by the PA Department of Education from requiring students to obtain a passing score on a Praxis exam in order to graduate and from including a student's score on the Praxis exam as a component of a student's grade.

#### **Tuesday, May 5**

- \* The **Joint Legislative Budget and Finance Committee** will meet to discuss awarding a contract for [Senate Resolution 250 of 2013](#) regarding a study on the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of merging public school district health care plans.