



March 26, 2015

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PSBA Legislative Report

The General Assembly was not in session this week as the Senate and House Appropriations Committees continue budget hearings. The House will return to Harrisburg next week. The Senate will return on Monday, April 13.

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Top Stories

PSBA to support prevailing wage reform at news conference next week

Next Wednesday, April 1, PSBA will be speaking at a news conference in support of [House Bill 707](#) (Rep. Topper, R-Bedford), which would exempt school districts from the costly burden of paying prevailing wage rates for construction projects.

The Prevailing Wage Act imposes one of the most costly mandates on our school districts. The law requires school districts to pay prevailing wage rates on the vast majority of construction and renovation projects. These prevailing wage rates, which are not reflective of the actual wage rates in the local community, inflate the cost of construction projects, siphoning millions of taxpayer dollars from the classroom each year.

Dollars spent on costly mandates, such as prevailing wage, are dollars that cannot be spent in the classroom. Compliance with this mandate forces school districts to spend precious taxpayer dollars on items that have little or no impact on the quality of education.

House Bill 707 was introduced earlier this month and is currently in the House Education Committee for

consideration.

House and Senate Appropriations Committees meet with PSERS

This week the Senate and House Appropriations Committees conducted separate hearings with representatives from the Public School Employees Retirement System. Discussion at both meetings centered on the unfunded liability of the system, whether current provisions under Act 120 of 2010 are sufficiently addressing the problem, and if other changes to the benefit structures should be considered.

The governor is not suggesting major changes to the current defined benefit plan, but is proposing financial reforms that include: improvement of the PSERS management board; refinancing a portion of the current unfunded liability through a pension obligation bond; and the use of new revenues that would be generated in 2017-18 from a modernization of the state liquor sales system.

During the rounds of questioning, legislators of both parties focused on the debt problem and asked various questions regarding investment management structures and fees, investment income and long-term considerations. PSERS representatives suggested that reforms under Act 120 are well underway but acknowledged that difficult budget issues remain for the state and school districts.

White wins special state House election

Republican Martina White defeated Democrat Sarah Del Ricci in a special election held this week to fill a vacancy in the 170th House District in Northeast Philadelphia. The vacancy was created when Rep. Brendan Boyle was elected to the U.S. Congress in the 13th District.

Latest News

PSBA Sample Resolutions: Basic Education Funding, Pension Reform, Cyber Charter Funding

PSBA has drafted sample resolutions on some key issues of importance to school officials. Please take action at your next board meeting to adopt these resolutions. Some resolutions include areas for you to add data related to your district's expenditures related to the issue.

Once your board has appropriately modified and adopted a resolution, we ask that you send a copy of the resolution to your House and Senate members and the Governor's Office. Click the links to find the addresses for your [House](#) and [Senate](#) members. Just click on your legislator's name to find the address. You may send your resolution to either their Harrisburg or district office. Here is the address for the Governor's Office: The Honorable Tom Wolf, Governor of Pennsylvania, 225 Main Capitol Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120 or email at governor@pa.gov. We also ask that you send a copy of the resolution you have adopted to PSBA. You may mail to: PSBA Office of Government Affairs, 400 Bent Creek Blvd, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050.

Sample Resolutions:

[Resolution on New Basic Education Funding Formula](#)

[Resolution on Pension Reform](#)

[Resolution on Reform of Cyber Charter Funding](#)

Join next Twitter chat on PA education

The next monthly Twitter chat with Pennsylvania's major education leadership organizations is set for

Tuesday, March 31 at 8 p.m. Use hashtag #FairFundingPA to participate and follow the conversation. **John Hanger, Gov. Wolf's secretary of Policy and Planning, will be joining the conversation.**

On the Hill: Upcoming Meetings

Upcoming events currently scheduled include:

Monday, March 30

* The **Senate Appropriations Committee** will meet with the Department of Education to discuss the governor's proposed budget.

Tuesday, March 31

* The **House State Government Committee** will consider [House Bill 342](#) (Rep. Gabler, R-Clearfield), which corrects an inconsistency in the Election Code relating to nominating petitions by clarifying that all candidates for the office of school director will be required to submit 25 signatures.

* The **House Urban Affairs Committee** will meet to consider [House Bill 11](#) (Rep. Grove, R-York), which establishes the Lean Management Practices Program that would provide training to the administrators of financially struggling municipalities and school districts in financial recovery status.

Wednesday, April 1

* The **House Education Committee** will consider [House Bill 423](#) (Rep. Simmons, R-Lehigh), which applies good Samaritan civil immunity to school bus drivers who administer epinephrine auto-injectors (epi-pens) to students, provided that the school bus driver complies with employer and school district policy and completes necessary training.

Wednesday, April 15

* The **Joint Legislative Budget and Finance Committee** will release a report on the feasibility of alternative methods of authorizing charter schools.