



Pennsylvania School Boards Association

legislative report

February 8, 2019

The Senate and House of Representatives were in session this week. The House is scheduled to reconvene on Tuesday, Feb. 19, and the Senate is in recess until Monday, March 18.

STATE BUDGET

Gov. Wolf presents 2019-20 state budget proposal

This week Gov. Tom Wolf delivered his state budget address to the General Assembly. The \$34.15 billion proposal is an increase of \$927.3 million, or 2.8% over the current year. Education generally fares well under the proposed budget, with increases in the basic subsidy and special education

line items.

The budget plan includes:

- A \$200 million increase to the basic education subsidy, which after adjustments brings about \$166 million in new money that would be run through the funding formula.
- Roughly \$14 million of the new basic subsidy dollars would be used to increase the minimum teacher salary to \$45,000. These funds would not be run through the formula;
- \$50 million more for special education;
- \$45 million for the School Safety and Security Fund, a decrease from the \$60 million allocated in the 2018-19 budget; and
- A \$10 million boost for career and technical education focusing the dollars on workforce development, with \$4 million to be used to increase the Manufacturing to Career Training Grant, and \$6 million to develop and expand adult career and technical education training programs.

The governor is also calling for the state's compulsory age of attendance to be lowered from the current requirement of 8 years to 6 years, and to study the impact of lowering the age to 5 and creating universal access to free, full-day kindergarten for all children. In addition, the budget plan proposes to raise the minimum dropout age from 17 years old to 18 years old.

PSBA is disappointed that the governor's budget did not include funding for school building projects or address the need to reform the state's reimbursement program for construction and renovation projects (Plancon).

Additionally, PSBA notes that total proposed increases must be viewed with the fact that public schools continue to face huge increases in mandated costs outside of their control, including expenditures for pensions and charter school tuition. While mandatory pensions and many other expenses continue to soar, school districts are forced to make difficult choices.

[Click here for PSBA's report on the budget proposal and subsidy charts.](#)

Also this week, PSBA presented a **Budget Briefing** webinar featuring state Budget Secretary Jen Swails. In case you missed it, the webinar was recorded and will soon be available on [myPSBA](#).

Latest News

State budget news

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State budget news

House and Senate to conduct budget hearings

Following this week's budget address, the Senate and House Appropriations Committees will be conducting hearings in February and early March on specific components of the proposal. Hearings of special interest to school officials scheduled to date include:

House Appropriations Committee budget hearings:

- Feb. 11 (Independent Fiscal Office, Department of Revenue)
- Feb. 12 (PSERS/SERS, State System of Higher Education)
- Feb. 13 (Treasury Department, Auditor General, Attorney General)
- Feb. 14 (Department of Labor & Industry)
- Feb. 27 (Department of Community & Economic Development)
- Feb. 28 ((Department of Human Services)
- March 4 (Department of Education),
- March 6 (Governor's Budget Secretary)

Senate Appropriations Committee budget hearings:

- Feb. 19 (Independent Fiscal Office, Department of Revenue)
- Feb. 20 (Department of State)
- Feb. 21 (State System of Higher Education)
- Feb. 25 (Department of Labor & Industry)
- Feb. 27 (Department of Health, Department of Human Services)
- March 5 (Department of Education)
- March 7 (Department of Community & Economic Development, Governor's Budget Secretary)

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Passed by the House of Representatives

School director petition signatures

[House Bill 227](#) (Rep. Gabler, R-Clearfield) provides that all candidates for office of school director will be required to submit 10 signatures for nomination.

Currently, the PA Election Code provides a list of various offices and the number of signatures required on nominating petitions to place their name on the primary election ballot for a given political party. However, not all offices are listed in the statute as currently written. The requirements for some offices are described simply by the class of county, city or township in which they are located. The office of school director is not listed, creating an inconsistency in situations in which a single school district spans multiple types of

municipalities, such as third-class cities and second-class townships. House Bill 227 adds school directors to the list and clarifies that all school director candidates will be required to submit 10 signatures for nomination.

[PSBA supports House Bill 227](#) because it recognizes the wide statewide variation in petition requirements and levels the playing field for candidates for school director.

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Passed by the Senate

Public employee pension forfeiture

[Senate Bill 113](#) (Sen. DiSanto, R-Dauphin) amends the Public Employee Pension Forfeiture Act for disqualification and forfeiture of pension benefits for public officials or public employees who plead guilty, no contest or are convicted of any job-related felony offense. Under the bill, any offense classified as a felony or punishable by a term of imprisonment exceeding five years will be subject to these provisions. Forfeiture will occur upon the employee's initial entry of the official's or employee's entry of a plea of guilty or no contest, or upon the initial entry of a jury verdict. The Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts must provide the State Employees' Retirement System and the Public School Employees' Retirement System with the information necessary to fulfill the duties under disqualification and forfeiture of benefits.

PSBA supports Senate Bill 113 because it serves to strengthen and close loopholes in current law and establishes clear penalties for felony offenses.

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PA State Board of Education

State Board of Education to hold public hearings on proposed changes to teacher certification regulations

The State Board of Education will be conducting four public hearings in March and April regarding the initial proposed revisions to the Chapter 49 regulations for certification of professional personnel. Here is the schedule for the hearings:

- **Philadelphia:** March 4, 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., School District of Philadelphia
- **Harrisburg:** March 14, 1:00 - 3:30 p.m., Department of Education
- **Lock Haven:** March 28, 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Lock Haven University
- **Pittsburgh:** April 23, 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Allegheny Intermediate Unit

[Click here](#) for details information regarding the hearings and how to register. Anyone wishing to testify must be registered; observers are welcome to attend. The board is also accepting written comments from the public that must be submitted by April 24. Here are the [proposed revisions](#) to Chapter 49 and the board's [summary](#) of the changes.

PSBA will be presenting testimony at the March 14 hearing in Harrisburg.

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PSBA News

Join PSBA at the Capitol on April 29 for Advocacy Day

Come to the state Capitol in Harrisburg on Monday, April 29 for Advocacy Day! All PSBA-member school directors are invited to attend; and this year PSBA will be partnering with the Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units (PAIU) and Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA) to strengthen our advocacy impact. The focus for the day will be meetings with legislators to discuss critical issues affecting public education.

There is no cost to attend, and PSBA will assist in scheduling appointments with legislators once your registration is received. The day will begin with a continental breakfast and issue briefings prior to the legislator visits. Registrants will receive talking points, materials and leave-behinds to use with their meetings. [Click here to register](#).

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Pennsylvania School Boards Association

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