



September 11, 2015

STATE BUDGET

Senate returns to Harrisburg next week

The Senate is scheduled to return to Harrisburg next week, with sessions days expected Wednesday through Friday (Sept. 16-18). The House of Representatives will return on Monday, Sept. 21. As the budget stalemate continues into the third month and negotiations continue on the final state spending plan, Republican leaders are expected to bring a stopgap budget up for a vote. No details are available on what will be contained in the stopgap plan, although it is expected to primarily benefit health and social service agencies, and schools. Last month an attempt was made to override specific line items contained in the budget bill that was vetoed in July; that amount included \$1.2 billion in state funding and the release of \$1.9 billion in federal dollars for schools. It is unclear whether Gov. Wolf would sign a stopgap bill.



USDE approves pause in the use of SPP scores

This week the U.S. Department of Education approved Pennsylvania's request to amend the state's waiver plan for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that allows for a one-year pause in the use of the state's School Performance Profile (SPP). The waiver in using the 2015 PSSA scores to calculate SPP and teacher effectiveness ratings was requested due to sweeping changes to the assessment that took effect in the 2014-15 school year. [Read more...](#)



Other amendments to PA's ESEA flexibility plan approved

This week's pause on the use of SPP scores was not the only request for change that was requested and approved by the U.S. Department of Education for Pennsylvania's flexibility plan. Other changes amend the exit criteria for low-performing Focus and Priority schools; increase the "N" number size that is the minimum number of students for individual subgroup performance; clarify that the Academic Recovery Liaisons assigned to facilitate assistance for charter schools receiving Priority status will provide updates of the charter's progress to the authorizing entity; and delay full implementation of the principal evaluation system from the 2014-15 school year to the 2015-16 school year. [Read more...](#)



PDE explains PSSA cut scores, SPP waiver

This week the PA Department of Education and PSBA presented a webinar explaining the new PSSA cut scores and the newly-approved waiver on the use of the scores for School Performance Profiles. Beth Olanoff, policy director at the Pennsylvania Department of Education, explained how the PSSAs are aligned with the PA Core Standards, how the new cut scores were set, and how the scores should be viewed by schools, students, parents and communities. **Here is the [PDF](#) of the webinar presentation slides.** **If you missed the actual webinar or would like to view the**

recording, please visit the LEARN portal at www.psba.org.

Latest News

Regulatory News

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Regulatory News

IRRC seeks clarification on proposed changes for school bus drivers

The Independent Regulatory Review Commission has issued [comments](#) seeking consistency and clarification to amendments proposed by the Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to its regulations for school bus drivers that update the minimum standards for drivers diagnosed with a brain disease, cognitive impairment or a mental or emotional disorder. The proposed changes are based on recommendations from the Department's Medical Advisory Board that reflect current medical practices and standards. The [proposed amendments](#) to Pa. Code Title 67, Chapter 71 add definitions and disqualifying symptoms for individuals, as well as outline the requirements for restoration of driving privileges.

The proposal also authorizes PennDOT to require qualifying drivers to pass a school bus knowledge and skills test. Provisions are added to allow for a waiver to be granted provided the individual remains symptom free and in the treating health care provider's opinion, the individual has stabilized and no symptoms are likely to recur. School bus drivers diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or dementia in Stage 3 or greater are prohibited from driving a school bus.

There are approximately 46,000 licensed school bus operators in Pennsylvania,

and approximately 31,000 school buses operating in the state. Roughly 75% of these are operated by bus companies; 25% by school districts.

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PSBA News

Voting Delegates will determine PSBA's 2016 Legislative Platform

Next month Voting Delegates for the PSBA Delegate Assembly will meet to determine the association's 2016 Legislative Platform. PSBA will soon be sending materials to the appointed voting delegates for the meeting that will be held on Tuesday, Oct.13, prior to the PASA-PSBA School Leadership Conference at the Hershey Lodge & Convention Center. The material included the proposed platform and other important materials relating to the meeting directly to the appointed delegates. Delegates should bring these materials to the meeting. **Click here to read the [proposed 2016 Legislative Platform](#) that was approved by the PSBA Platform Committee at its meeting in Mechanicsburg on Aug. 8.**

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