



Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators
Proud Leadership for Pennsylvania Schools

Education Update April 15, 2019

In Safety & Security News...

INFORMATION YOU NEED: Audit Criteria Regarding Safety and Security – It has come to PASA's attention that the PA State Auditor General is using the "School Safety and Security Committee Safety and Security Assessment Criteria," adopted by the PA Commission on Crimes and Delinquency in September 2018, as the criteria for auditing school safety. [CLICK HERE](#) for a copy of this document – and be aware that auditors will use it in your district audit.

Supt. of the Year: On School Safety – Franklin Regional School District's Gennaro Piraino says he's using his platform as Pennsylvania's 2019 Superintendent of The Year to elevate discussion about school security in Pennsylvania. Tuesday marks five years since a sophomore student used knives to injure 20 other students and a security guard at Franklin Regional High School. Piraino, who was appointed to a school safety and security committee commissioned last year by Governor Tom Wolf, says it's critical schools receive an established framework for conducting basic safety and security checks, measuring preparedness and applying for grants that could help offset the cost of relevant help and technology. *Listen to the interview: "[Franklin Regional Superintendent Working To Standardize School Security Across Pennsylvania](#)"* (from WESA Radio, 4/8/19).

In Legislative News...

Legislative Schedule – Only the House is in session this week. Both chambers return to session next week.

Last Week's Legislative Action –

* **[SB 144](#): Telepresence Grants; passed by the Senate, 47-0.** The bill amends the Public School Code establishing the Keystone Telepresence Education Grant Program that will give intermediate units access to a maximum of \$300,000 in funds to purchase telepresence equipment to support homebound students facing serious medical conditions. This legislation requires that PDE utilize undistributed funds not expended, encumbered or committed from appropriations made to the department for grants and subsidies, and therefore would not create a new expenditure for the Commonwealth. **PASA supports this bill.**

* **[HB 364](#): School Vehicle Lights; amended and approved by the House Transportation Committee.** As amended, the bill would authorize the use of revolving or flashing yellow lights for school vehicles smaller than school buses that transport school students, such as vans and mini-vans. The lights could only be activated when the vehicle is preparing to stop and stopped on a highway to load and unload students. **PASA supports the option to utilize these lights.**

This Week's Committee Schedule –

Monday, April 15, 2019

House Children and Youth Committee to consider:

* **[HB 835](#): Access to Records.** The bill amends Title 23 (Domestic Relations) to give county children and youth agencies access to all records relating to a child, including school records. The bill also requires those agencies to review the records in the course of investigations concerning the welfare of a child. (The bill had been on an earlier committee schedule but was not considered.)

Tuesday, April 16

House State Government Committee to consider:

* [HB 1053](#): **State Performance Audits**. The bill would require all state agencies be subject to an initial performance audit conducted by an experienced auditor and require that agencies “which may benefit from further scrutiny” be subject to additional audits every three years. All state agencies must respond to their audit and implement the “lean process principles” in order to analyze and improve their operations.

Wednesday, April 17

House Finance Committee, to consider:

* [HB 93](#): **Outcome-Based State Budget Process**. The bill would move the state budget process from an incremental budget process to a zero-based and performance-based model or outcome-based process which focuses our budget process around outcomes by requiring agencies to submit their budget requests to the governor using outcome-based budgeting.

* [HB 1087](#): **Homeschooler Access to Vo-Techs**. The bill would allow a homeschool student who has been accepted to an area vo-tech school to attend that school, with or without the school district’s consent.

House Education Committee, to consider:

* [HB 239](#): **Recruiter Access in Charter Schools**. The bill extends to charter and cyber charter schools the requirement to provide for student/parent notification of the release of student information to military recruiters, and also requires them to comply with requests for exclusion from the release of such information to recruiters.

* [HB 298](#): **Retiree Mentors**. The bill would establish a certified list of retired volunteers who would be willing to share their life-lessons, experience and hobbies with junior and high school students interested in enhancing their knowledge and skill sets. Older adults wishing to participate would be required to undergo criminal background checks and any other necessary requirements put forth by their school district. *The committee is expected to re-refer the bill to the House Aging Committee.*

* [HB 1031](#), [HB 1196](#) and [HB 1210](#): **Outdate Provisions**. The bills would repeal and remove provisions from the School Code that are outdated or inconsistent with current practice, regulation or law.

In National News...

Principal Support/School Success – Principals who've had attention at every point in their development as a school leader—including selection, preparation, hiring, placement, and coaching after they are on the job—were linked to stronger reading and math achievement and to longer tenures in their jobs at the helm of schools. Those clear findings—from a new study of six school districts that made heavy investments in strengthening their cadre of school leaders—underscore the key role principals play in their schools' academic success. The report, by researchers at RAND Corporation, looked at the six-year, \$85 million "principal pipeline" initiative supported by the Wallace Foundation. *Read the rest of the story: [“Investing in Principal Talent Pays Off in Higher Math and Reading Scores, Study Finds”](#)* (from *Education Week*, 4/9/19).

Study: Achievement Gap Update – Contrary to other research, the socioeconomic achievement gap has remained unchanged over the past 50 years, according to a new study published by Education Next. The study also found that student achievement overall has increased little from generation to generation. While students at age 14 show an overall achievement increase of approximately 0.08 standard deviations per decade, gains among students at age 17 amount to only 0.02 standard deviations per decade. Additionally, there was no improvement in older students after the 1970 birth cohort. While the study found no shrinking in the achievement gap between wealthy and less wealthy students, it did find a decline in the size of the white/black achievement gap, specifically following movements toward school desegregation in the 1950s and 1960s. *Read the rest of the story: [“Achievement Gap Between Rich and Poor Is Unchanged After 50 Years, Study Says”](#)* (from *Education Week*, 4/10/19).

Proposed Cuts to Education – The Trump administration has proposed eliminating a \$4.8 million program to

enhance American civics and history education and has called for elimination of programs that help boost student academic achievement before and after school and during the summer, boost literacy instruction from birth to age 20, support school libraries, provide professional development for school librarians and high-quality books to children and adolescents in low-income communities, offer arts education programs for children from low-income families and students with disabilities, boost community schools, and provide Public Service Loan Forgiveness and Stafford subsidized loans for low-income students. And there are plenty of other cuts the Trump administration proposed for 2020 for the Education Department. But the other cuts just haven't gotten the same attention as the outcry over a failed attempt to eliminate federal funding to Special Olympics. Said Sasha Pudelski of AASA in a recent post on Twitter, "Can we please stop talking about the never-gonna-happen cuts to the Special Olympics and start talking about real impact of budget caps to programs like IDEA and Title 1?" *Read the rest of the story:* ["The Special Olympics Funding Outcry Is Over, But It's Been Crickets over Some of DeVos's Other Proposed Education Budget Cuts. Think Civics, History, Arts..."](#) (from *The Washington Post*, 4/3/19).

Testing Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom – The feasibility and wisdom of bringing artificial intelligence into classrooms will soon be put to the test on a large scale—in Belgium. Seven hundred schools that are part of the Flemish, government-run school system in the northern European nation have reached an agreement to implement an AI learning platform developed by Century Tech, a British company. The artificial intelligence engine will be woven within a new learning platform called IXZO!, which will integrate the AI learning platform into a localized interface for Flemish students. The arrangement will apply to all regionally funded schools in Flanders—a Dutch-speaking region in northern Belgium. More than 200,000 students will have access to the platform, according to a statement from Century Tech. The school system's effort is about "enabling every learner to follow education at their own pace and, at the same time, [reducing] our teachers' administrative burden." *Read the rest of the story:* ["Coming Soon: A Huge Test of Artificial Intelligence's Role in Classrooms"](#) (from *Education Week Market Brief*, 3/26/19).

Across the Nation...

State Battles over School Funding Systems – At the beginning of this year, the National Conference of State Legislatures predicted there was a chance that more than half of states could finally overhaul the antiquated—and, advocates say, often inequitable—formulas that have been dictating their K-12 funding for years. The political and fiscal environment was ripe: Many states were flush with cash, teachers were demanding more money for schools in general along with salary increases, and there was widespread agreement among district administrators that funding formulas were both outdated and insufficient in fairly distributing school aid. But balancing state and local resources, deciding which districts should get what, and figuring out how to distribute money in a way that will spur academic achievement is tricky. Here's a snapshot of some of the most animated political battles this legislative season to replace, update, and legally grapple with school funding formulas. *Read the rest of the story:* ["Here's How 7 States Are Faring in the Battle over School Funding"](#) (from *Education Week*, 4/11/19).

On the Calendar...

April 17	Symposium on True Accountability (PASA office)
April 19	PASA office closed
April 25	PLUS Caucus Meeting (virtual)
	PASA Webinar: The Career Pathway Model
April 29	PSBA/PASA/PAIU Advocacy Day (Harrisburg)