



Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators  
*Proud Leadership for Pennsylvania Schools*

**Education Update**  
**November 20, 2023**

## **Reminder!**

**Stay connected. If you have not already done so, Renew Your Membership Today.**

**Individuals whose memberships expired on September 30 and have not yet renewed their membership, will be disconnected from key information and updates on November 30.**

**Renew your PASA membership today for the new membership year (October 1) to ensure you continue to receive the services and support provided by PASA.**

[Renew online](#) | [Download our renewal application](#)

## **Save the Date:**

### **PASA Education Briefing: Identifying, Mitigating, and Responding to Swatting Incidents**

The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators will hold a briefing to share critical information and resources to aid educational leaders in identifying, mitigating, and responding to swatting incidents on Tuesday, **November 21 at 11:30 a.m.** Swatting or false reporting continues to impact our educational entities and disrupt the learning environment. This presentation is designed to connect educational leaders with the necessary resources and agency personnel that can help inform an appropriate response.

PASA members have been sent a link to join the briefing via Zoom. If you have not received the link and would like to join, please email [pasa@pasa-net.org](mailto:pasa@pasa-net.org).

The briefing will be recorded and shared with PASA members after the presentation on Tuesday.

### **Managing the Risks Webinar Series:**

*Designed for Superintendents and Central Office Leaders*

**Join us for our next session: Instructional Materials Selection and Red Flags** on December 14 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Topics include updated student discipline and investigations; student enrollment; special education; student rights, such as speech, FERPA; and managing student aggressive behavior, as well as equity, and Title IX.

### **Additional upcoming topics for the 2023-24 school year include:**

- **Postponed:** Complex Student Issues: Avoiding Ethical and Legal Issues (Date TBA)
- Navigating Challenging Board Meetings (January 9, 2024)
- Record Retention, Right to Know, Board Conflict of Interests, and Litigation Holds (January 30, 2024)
- The Pennsylvania Public Official and Employees Ethics Act – Compliance and Potential Unintended Violations (February 28, 2024)
- *Completed and available on video for those who register for the series:* How to Navigate Bias-

## Related Incidents as Educational Leaders

Knowing upfront the recent issues that superintendents and school leaders are facing and the common missteps to avoid can prevent serious mistakes to future leadership success. Whether you are a new superintendent/school leader or a seasoned veteran, the updates and discussions presented by the panel of experts in this series will benefit all.

Register to attend the 2023 PASA Webinar Series “Managing the Risks”, built specifically to assist school leaders in gaining perspective and knowledge to be successful!

**Each Webinar is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.**, including time for participants to ask questions on the topics presented! Come listen and learn!

**Receive two sessions free when you sign up for the full seven-part series. (Past sessions are available as taped sessions).**

**Member: \$245; Non-Member: \$345**

[Learn more about each part of the series, costs, and how to register on PASA’s website.](#)

## **New Superintendent Induction Program: Mentors for New Leaders**

PASA’s New Superintendent Induction Program provides needed support and guidance for beginning Superintendents by providing an experienced superintendent mentor to help with the transition into the Superintendency. This program facilitates a working relationship between the Superintendent and an experienced Mentor that allows for open and private discussions and provides resources to sustain school system leaders.

For more information and to apply, visit [PASA’s website](#).

## **New Superintendents: Register Now for PASA’s New Superintendents’ Academy Series:**

**PASA’s New Superintendents’ Academy Series (Year 1) registration is now open!** This Year 1 Series includes:

- Part 3, *Professional and Community Leadership*, January 11-12, 2024
- (Completed) Part 1, *Strategic and Cultural Leadership* (Note: This session will be offered again in 2024.
- (Completed) Part 2, *Systems Leadership* (Note: This session will be offered again in 2024.)

Additional virtual 1-hour sharing sessions to provide additional information on critical topics as well as opportunities to stay connected with other PA colleagues.

Registration information for **Year 1** is available via our website, <https://www.pasa-net.org/workshopnsa>. Participants can register to attend the entire three-part series or select to attend individual components and are able to earn 25 hours of Act 45 credit per part (75 total hours.)

## **In Health, Safety, Equity & Learning News...**

**Recognizing Fake News Now a Required Subject in California Schools—** Pushing back against the surge of misinformation online, California will now require all K-12 students to learn media literacy skills — such as recognizing fake news and thinking critically about what they encounter on the internet. Gov. Gavin Newsom last month signed [Assembly Bill 873](#), which requires the state to add media literacy to

curriculum frameworks for English language arts, science, math and history-social studies, rolling out gradually beginning next year. Instead of a stand-alone class, the topic will be woven into existing classes and lessons throughout the school year. *Read the rest of the story: [“Recognizing Fake News Now a Required Subject in California Schools”](#)* (from Cal Matters, 11/10/23)

**Saturn Is a New App for High Schoolers. Here’s Why It Has Educators Concerned—** The app Saturn bills itself as a time-management tool, helping high school students in 17,000 schools keep track of their classes, sports practices, and extracurriculars. But that innocuous-sounding mission hasn’t stopped districts around the country including [school districts in six Florida counties](#), Louisiana’s [West Baton Rouge Schools](#), and [Alabama’s Mobile County schools](#)—from [warning parents and caregivers about the platform](#). The app—which has been growing in popularity, experts say—sparked a spate of news stories about its security flaws in August, after a father’s [viral Facebook post](#) described how easy it was to get into the app and access significant information about his child’s classmates. *Read the rest of the story: [“Saturn Is a New App for High Schoolers. Here’s Why It Has Educators Concerned”](#)* (from, EducationWeek, 11/16/23)

**Office for Civil Rights Data Collection Finds ‘Stark Inequalities’ in Pre-K-12 Education—** “Stark inequalities” persist in pre-K-12 education, with Black and Latino students having [less access to STEM courses](#), and Black students and students with disabilities being overrepresented in discipline practices. These are just two of the findings in national data from the 2020-21 school year released Wednesday from the U.S. Education Department’s Civil Rights Data Collection, which is a mandatory survey of public schools conducted by the Office for Civil Rights. It is the first CRDC information release since the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted pre-K-12 schooling. The most recent previous data collection came from the 2017-18 school year. *Read the rest of the story: [“Office for Civil Rights Data Collection Finds ‘Stark Inequalities in Pre-K-12 Education’](#)* (from K-12 Dive, 11/16/23)

## In State News...

**Fight Over Tax Money for Private School Tuition Snags Education Funding Bill Again—** A months-long stalemate over public education funding appeared likely to continue on Wednesday as state House lawmakers stripped GOP-backed school choice funding from a spending bill. The state Senate passed the legislation on Wednesday authorizing hundreds of millions in new funding for K-12 schools, community colleges, educational support units and public libraries with a 45-5 vote. [House Bill 301](#) included \$150 million in funding for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program, which provides private school scholarships for children in low- and middle-income families. Businesses that contribute to scholarships can receive tax credits of up to \$750,000. Supporters of the program say it provides education alternatives for students in poorly performing schools. *Read the rest of the story: [“Fight Over Tax Money for Private School Tuition Snags Education Funding Bill Again”](#)* (from Pennsylvania Capital-Star, 11/16/23)

**State House Passes COLA Legislation for Retired Public School Teachers and State Workers—** Retired teachers and public servants would receive a cost of living adjustment in their monthly pension payments for the first time in more than 20 years under legislation passed by the Pennsylvania House on Tuesday. [House Bill 1416](#) would provide increases of 15% to 24.5% to about 69,000 retired public school educators and other state employees, many of whom are in their 80s and 90s. The adjustment would go to those who retired before 2001 when pension enhancements took effect. The bill, passed in the House with a 160-43 vote, must be approved by the state Senate and signed by Gov. Josh Shapiro before it takes effect. *Read the rest of the story: [“State House Passes COLA Legislation for Retired Public School Teachers and State Workers”](#)* (from Pennsylvania Capitol-Star, 11/14/23)

**Lead Testing Isn’t Required for PA School Drinking Fountains. Lawmakers Want to Change That—** State lawmakers want to set aside \$30 million to help schools replace outdated water fountains with those

that filter out lead and other harmful contaminants. According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), even low levels of lead in children's blood can cause brain damage, affecting their ability to pay attention and their academic achievement. While current Pennsylvania law [encourages schools to test for lead](#) annually, districts aren't required to do so. Schools that don't test must discuss their reasoning at a public meeting. *Read the rest of the story: ["Lead Testing Isn't Required for PA School Drinking Fountains. Lawmakers Want to Change That."](#)* (from City & State Pennsylvania, 11/15/23)

**Pennsylvania Ranks Near the Bottom in National Study of Charter School Performance—** A decade's worth of testing data ranks Pennsylvania among the states with the lowest charter school performance. In a [study of students' scores in reading and math](#) on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, researchers compared charter school performance in 35 states and Washington, D.C. Alaska had the highest scores compared to the average followed by Colorado, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York. Pennsylvania ranked 31st, followed by Oregon, Michigan, Tennessee and Hawaii. The commonwealth was also among the states with the largest gap between white and Black charter students' scores, with the seventh-largest gap. *Read the rest of the story: ["Pennsylvania Ranks Near the Bottom in National Study of Charter School Performance"](#)* (from Pennsylvania Capital-Star, 11/17/23)

**Gov. Josh Shapiro is Appointing New Members to PA's Charter Appeals Board. That Could Mean More School Choice Options—** Gov. Josh Shapiro nominated new members this week to the state board responsible for reviewing charter school appeals, shaking up the little-known panel with a move that could potentially lead to more school choice options in Pennsylvania. The [seven-member Charter Appeals Board](#) is responsible for reconsidering charter school applications that are denied by local school districts. In Pennsylvania, charter schools are funded by their school districts, creating tension when new charters seek approval from school boards to open. The board has been controversial: Traditional public school advocates object to its ability to circumvent local school board decisions, while charter advocates see it as essential to ensure due process. *Read the rest of the story: ["Gov. Josh Shapiro is Appointing New Members to PA's Charter Appeals Board. That Could Mean More School Choice Options"](#)* (from The Philadelphia Inquirer, 11/17/23)

## In National and International News...

**Private School Choice Faces New Challenges as State Lawsuits Pile Up —** Critics of the rapidly growing array of private school choice policies are increasingly turning to state courts to register their objections on constitutional grounds. In the last month, private school choice critics in South Carolina and Wisconsin have filed lawsuits seeking to overturn new or recently expanded programs that allow parents to spend public dollars on private education. Dozens of districts in Ohio this year have signed onto a [lawsuit](#) asking a court to declare the state's voucher program unconstitutional. And in Texas, districts [have argued](#) that a newly revised statewide accountability system for grading schools on an A-F scale is part of an unlawful scheme to promote privatize school choice, which has been a priority of Republican Gov. Greg Abbott. *Read the rest of the story: ["Private School Choice Faces New Challenges as State Lawsuits Pile Up"](#)* (from EducationWeek, 11/16/23)

**Continuing Resolution Secures Federal Education Funds Through Feb. 2 —** Federal funding for education will continue at the fiscal year 2023 level at least through Feb. 2, according to an agreement by Congress. President Joe Biden signed the bill Thursday. The continuing resolution approved by both the House and Senate this week appears to have avoided a government shutdown at the end of the day Friday, but there's frustration from parents and early childhood education providers that additional money for child care was not made available. *Read the rest of the story: ["Continuing Resolution Secures Federal Education Funds Through Feb. 2"](#)* (from, K-12 Dive, 11/17/23)

**As High School Exit Exams Disappear Across the US, are American Grads Ready for College—** High school exit exams are dissipating in states from coast to coast, to the praise of some and dismay of

others. This week, an advisory panel in New York recommended making the state's century-old Regents exams optional instead of a graduation requirement. The dramatic change for New Yorkers comes as the dwindling number of states that still require exit exams has become even smaller in recent months and years. *Read the rest of the story: [“As High School Exit Exams Disappear Across the US, are American Grads Ready for College”](#) (from USA Today, 11/15/23)*

**Where Should Students Be Allowed to Use Cellphones? Here's What Educators Say—** To ban or not to ban? This question has been front and center for many schools recently as they strategize how to address students' ubiquitous use of cellphones. With nearly 9 in 10 teens 13 and older possessing a smartphone, these devices have become a major source of distraction and disruption in schools, especially when students' online arguments spill over into in-school arguments and physical fights. And many educators and school support staff feel that students' constant access to social media on their smartphones is harming their mental wellbeing and hurting their ability to learn. Some educators go so far to say that students are addicted to their devices. *Read the rest of the story: [“Where Should Students Be Allowed to Use Cellphones? Here's What Educators Say”](#) (from, EducationWeek, 11/16/23)*

### **Key PA Bills to Watch:**

Two separate bills were passed by the Senate and/or the House last week, House Bill 301 and Senate Bill 843. See details below. Both the amended Senate Bill 843 and the amended House Bill 301 are back with the Senate for their consideration and response. They are expected back in session the week of December 11.

**HB 301:** Passed in the Senate by a 45-5 vote (11-15-23) and later that evening, passed in the House with an amendment stripping out the funds for the EITC program (102-101 vote). The bill is now back in the Senate. The Senate approved version of House Bill 301 includes the following School Code Provisions:

- **Extends Act 91 Provisions**
- **Ends Plancon 1.0**
- **School Safety and Security Enhancements**
- **Substitute Teacher Flexibilities**
- **Classroom Monitors**
- Student Teacher Grant Program - \$10 million allocation, funding includes leftover recovery funds
- School Lunch and Breakfast Reimbursement
- **School Security Changes – (move to PCCD from PDE Safe Schools Office)**
- **School Mental Health Grants**
- **School Security Coordinator Training**
- **MOU**
- **Safe Schools Advocate**
- **School Police Officer Reporting**
- Community College Reimbursement
- EITC Funds – Changes from 80% to 90% Use of Funds (controls administrative fees to 10%)
  - Changes data reporting requirements
  - Makes data publicly available
  - Increases funds by \$150 million
- **Funding for Public Libraries**
- CTC Funding – all \$14 million increase goes directly to CTCs
- **Payments to I.U.s**
- **Financially Distressed School funding**
- **Ready to Learn Block Grants**
- **Social Security Payments**
- School Environmental Repairs

**SB 843: Passed in the House by a 114-89 vote with amendments (11-15-23):** This legislation would bring Pennsylvania into the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact (ITMC) to facilitate the mobility of certified teachers relocating to Pennsylvania to continue their teaching career. The ITMC works by having member states submit teacher certifications that are eligible for the compact and teachers who hold a compact-eligible certification can apply for the closest equivalent certification in the receiving state without having to complete additional materials, exams or coursework. No existing pathways to teacher certification would be impacted in PA and state sovereignty would be maintained for regulating teacher certifications, including requiring security clearances and background checks.

The Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact (ITMC) was created as part of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act with the goal of supporting military spouse reemployment in licensed professions. The final version of the model legislation was released in November 2022 and requires at least 10 participating states for the Compact to go into effect. As of today, 6 states have enacted ITMC legislation: Kentucky, Colorado, Utah, Kansas, Oklahoma and Florida, and legislation is pending in 13 other states including our neighbors in Ohio and New Jersey.

The amendments included many of the same provisions as HB 301, however did not include the EITC tax credit funding. All the **bolded** provisions listed above in HB 301 were similar in both bills. In addition, it also included the following provisions:

- Extends BEF Commission Report Date to January 11
- Public Job Posting Database
- Instructional Vacancy Data
- Data Transparency -Educator Workforce Data
- Interstate Teacher Mobility
- Student Teacher Grant Program – No money, funds only include appropriations, no recovery funds
- Recovery High School
- Pre-K Counts Reporting
- Attendance in other Districts (specific to Duquesne City tuition fix)
- CTC funding – Only part of the \$14 million goes directly to CTC's, part goes to PA Smart funds

#### **Legislative Updates from Session Activity Last Week:**

**SB 700: Passed in the Senate unanimously (11-14-23) and Referred to the House Education Committee (11-15-23):** This legislation, crafted in partnership with County Career Centers, would offer a simple solution to allow these schools better support their students, communities and the entire Commonwealth, by allowing instructors to be issued a Career and Technical Instructional I Certificate if they meet **one** of the following:

- A minimum of 8,000 hours (equivalent to 4 years full-time) wage-earning experience in the occupational area to be taught;
- A minimum of 8,000 hours (equivalent to 4 years full-time) experience as a volunteer firefighter or public safety officer in the occupational area to be taught, or;
- A minimum of 8,000 hours (equivalent to 4 years full-time) teaching post-secondary courses in the occupational area to be taught.
- **Amendment added Evidence of a minimum of four thousand (4,000) hours, equivalent to two (2) years full-time, of wage-earning experience in the occupational area to be taught plus a baccalaureate degree**

This bill was amended by Sen. Argall on October 24 to provide for an Instructional I Certificate and Career and Technical Intern Certificate and provide requirements to receive certificates. The amendment passed unanimously.

**HB 1848: Referred to the House Education Committee (11-14-23):** This legislation would require the instructional day for public secondary schools to begin no earlier than 8:15 a.m. starting with the 2026-27 school year. The bill would require each governing board of a public school entity to inform its school community about the health and academic impacts of sleep deprivation on secondary school students and the benefits of a later school start time, and to discuss local strategies to implement a delayed school start time.

### **Upcoming Legislative Schedule – (Subject to change)**

#### **House of Representatives:**

**Next Session:** December 11 at Noon

#### **Senate:**

**Next sessions:** December 11 at 1 p.m.

#### **November 28: Public Hearing on School Mandate Relief (10 a.m.)**

Parkland School District, Administration Center

1210 Springhouse Road, Allentown, PA

To watch the session, [click here](#).

#### **Senate Scheduled Session Days:**

December: 11, 12, 13

#### **House Scheduled Session Days:**

##### **House Session Schedule**

December: 11, 12, 13

### **On the PASA Calendar...**

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|-----------------|--|
| November 21:    | PASA Education Update Briefing: Identifying, Mitigating, and Responding to Swatting Incidents                                      |
| December 6-7:   | Second Session of PASA's 2024 Cohort of the AASA Superintendent Certification Program  |
| December 13:    | Assistant Superintendents/Supervisors Summit follow-up Webinar   |
| December 14:    | Managing the Risks: Instructional Materials Selection and Red Flags  |
| January 9:      | Managing the Risks: Navigating Challenging Board Meetings  |
| January 11-12:  | New Superintendents' Academy Series (Part 3): Professional & Community Leadership  |
| January 30:     | Managing the Risks: Record Retention, Right to Know, Board Conflict of Interest, and Litigation Holds                              |
| February 2:     | Aspiring to Leadership Workshop (Virtual)  |
| February 15-17: | AASA National Conference on Education  |
| February 17:    | PASA State Reception at Rustic Root  |
| February 28:    | Managing the Risks: The Pennsylvania Public Official and Employees Ethics Act—Compliance and Potential Unintended Violations       |
| March 13:       | PA League of Urban Schools (PLUS) Conference (Hershey Lodge)   |
| March 13-15:    | 2023 PASA Leadership Forum: Unleashing Potential: Navigating the Continuum of Creativity and Innovation in Schools (Hershey Lodge) |
| May 19-21:      | Women's Caucus Annual Spring Conference at the Hershey Hotel)  |

[Click here](#) to view the full calendar of events.