



Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators
Proud Leadership for Pennsylvania Schools

Education Update

March 4, 2024

PASA Awards of Achievement:

The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators is seeking nominations for the three special awards recognizing leadership in public education.

Service to the Profession Award

This award is presented to an administrator who demonstrates commitment to excellence as evidenced through notable service to the profession. Examples of this service may include developing an effective professional development program for school district educators, demonstrating leadership in administrator preparation programs, school study councils or other professional development efforts, or promoting the education profession through research, writing or organizational service.

Instructional Leadership

This award is presented to an administrator who demonstrates commitment to excellence in teaching and learning by developing, nurturing and supporting exemplary programs that support the academic achievement of particular student populations, enrich student learning in a particular content area, or implement strategies to enhance student learning across the curriculum.

Leadership in Public Education

This award is presented to an administrator who demonstrates commitment to school administration as a profession, to public education, and to one's colleagues, including participation in and leadership with the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators.

We need YOUR help in identifying those among us who are deserving of special recognition.

[Click here to download a nomination form.](#) Deadline for nominations is March 29.

The nomination period for a pair of awards presented annually to female leaders by PASA's Women's Caucus is now open:

Margaret Smith Leadership Award

This award is given to a female administrator who has demonstrated proven leadership in education. The award is named for Dr. Margaret Smith, first president of the Women's Caucus, a former Pennsylvania superintendent and a former PA Secretary of Education.

[Make your nomination now](#) for the 2024 award recipient by March 19.

Wanda McDaniel Award

The Wanda McDaniel Award is granted annually to a professional educator who displays outstanding leadership qualities, while aspiring to higher levels of leadership.

[Make your nomination now](#) for the 2024 award recipient by March 19.

Save the Date:

Register today for PASA's Leadership Forum!

Unleashing Potential: Navigating the Continuum of Creativity & Innovation in Schools

When: March 13-15, 2024, at the Hershey Lodge

Featured Keynotes: Kent Julian and Gregg Behr

All attendees will receive a free copy of *When You Wonder, You're Learning* by Gregg Behr and Ryan Rydzewski.

Plus: Join us Wednesday evening for our legislative panel discussion and the next two days for cutting-edge learning sessions on the latest education innovations and learning strategies happening in Pennsylvania.

Friday's session (March 13) will be dedicated to a participant-engaged workshop on unpacking and developing a new vision of public education (benchmarking off the 180 days OR 900/990 hours, and EducationNext – A Shared Vision for the Future of Public Schools)

Upon approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Leadership Forum attendees can earn 50 PIL hours by completing program requirements through PASA's Canvas learning platform.

[Click here](#) to register and make hotel accommodations.

Connecting the Dots: School District Funding, Spending, and Budgeting

When: Berks County I.U. 14 on April 3 | Westmoreland I.U. 7 on April 15 | Central I.U. 10 on April 17

Registration required!

This **no-cost** workshop is designed to encourage joint attendance by Superintendents and their CFO/Business Manager or other critical leadership staff. Participants will spend a full day discussing how to look at their school district budget to drive more effective multi-fiscal year planning. The program will include diving into the details of the Basic Education Funding and Special Education Funding and examining school district expenditure growth over time. Participants will be provided with tools and resources to map out strategies for making more accurate and thoughtful short and long-term budget decisions.

Additional topics to be discussed include the ESSER era unwind, fund balances and reserves, infrastructure needs, expenditure mandates and educational choice, resource and staff planning, as well as overarching insights on the BEF Commission's recommendations, the school funding lawsuit, and the Governor's proposed 2024-25 budget.

[Learn more and 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](#).

2024-25 Teach Plus PA Policy Fellowship

Teach Plus Pennsylvania is currently accepting applications for the 2024-25 [Pennsylvania Teaching Policy Fellowship](#). This highly selective leadership **opportunity is a paid fellowship for 30 outstanding Pennsylvania teachers** looking to deepen their knowledge of education policy and amplify

the voices of teacher leaders in Pennsylvania. With a particular focus on rural districts, which have been underrepresented, we are hoping to build a diverse cohort of teachers from across Pennsylvania, and we'd love your help with spreading the word.

You can [nominate teachers](#) and [begin your application here](#).

Learn more by signing up for one of our info sessions.

March 5th, 7-8 p.m.: [Register](#) | March 27th, 6-7 p.m.: [Register](#) | April 16th, 7-8 p.m.: [Register](#)

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

3 Ways Schools Are Taking Classes Outside to Expand Mindfulness — Ayesha Ercelawn finds that after students spend even a small amount of time outdoors, they return feeling calm, relaxed, and quiet — all signs that students have experienced a state of mindfulness. As education specialist for Green Schoolyards America — a nonprofit that supports transforming school grounds into green spaces that benefit children, the environment and communities — Ercelawn advocates for giving students time outdoors anywhere, especially in cities. She says students can enter these peaceful states of mind just by having some exposure to the outdoors and nature, even without being overtly led through a mindfulness lesson. *Read the rest of the story:* [“3 Ways Schools Are Taking Classes Outside to Expand Mindfulness”](#) (from, K-12 Dive, 2/28/24)

One School District’s Innovative Strategy in Preserving Student Services While Addressing the Fiscal Cliff: Smarter Scheduling — As the chief academic officer of Lubbock Independent School District, which serves approximately 25,000 students in West Texas, I am ever mindful of budget constraints that could impact our classrooms and students. As we prepared for the current school year, our district, like so many others across the country, faced a host of complex funding and academic challenges: The pandemic has exacerbated achievement gaps, taking a major toll on students both emotionally and academically; our enrollment has fallen approximately 9% over the span of the last five years; and the financial pressures caused by that enrollment decline are soon to be compounded by the expiration of federal ESSER funds. As we set out to make plans for the 2023 academic year, my team knew that we needed to somehow simultaneously ‘right-size’ the district while also enabling investment in new initiatives to enhance academic outcomes and the student experience. *Read the rest of the story:* [“One School District’s Innovative Strategy in Preserving Student Services While Addressing the Fiscal Cliff: Smarter Scheduling”](#) (from The 74, 2/14/24)

How One School Scaled Up Science of Reading Professional Development — In 2018-19, the first year that Lori Webster was director of Mountain Mahogany Community School, the previous school year’s data showed only 32% of students in grades 3-8 were proficient in reading, she said. To improve reading proficiency rates, the K-8 public charter school in Albuquerque, New Mexico, “started very small,” Webster said. She hired Alexandra Wilcox, a parent at the school, as a reading interventionist, who became trained in using [science of reading approaches](#), which explicitly teaches students the connections between letters and sounds. *Read the rest of the story:* [“How One School Scaled Up Science of Reading Professional Development”](#) (from K-12 Dive, 2/28/24)

In State News...

State Senate Republicans Tee Off on Shapiro Education Proposals The verbal tug-of-war over billions of dollars in potential spending increases on basic education intensified sharply on Wednesday, as Republicans who control the state Senate lashed out at Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro’s education secretary for what they called a lack of information. Khalid Mumin also took pointed criticism from Republicans on Mr. Shapiro’s proposal to put community colleges and Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education universities in a single organization. Senate Republican Leader Sen. Joe Pittman, R-Indiana, said the idea should be simplified. *Read the rest of the story:* [“State Senate Republicans Tee Off on Shapiro Education Proposals”](#) (from Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 2/29/24)

Senator Hughes, Fellow Lawmakers, Leaders, and Education Advocates Discuss Solutions to Pennsylvania's Teacher Shortage Crisis— Senator Hughes brought together a large coalition of fellow lawmakers, education leaders, and teacher advocates to address Pennsylvania's teacher shortage crisis. The press conference was held following recent reports of [record teacher shortages in Philadelphia](#) and across the Commonwealth- teacher certificates issued in PA declined by 71% between 2022 and 2011. Senator Hughes highlighted the General Assembly's responsibility to address the [Commonwealth Court decision that found Pennsylvania's education funding system unconstitutional](#). Governor Shapiro answered that call along with recommendations from the Basic Education Funding Commission in his recent budget proposal that included over \$1 billion dollars for basic education funding. *Read the rest of the story: ["Senator Hughes, Fellow Lawmakers, Leaders, and Education Advocates Discuss Solutions to Pennsylvania's Teacher Shortage Crisis"](#) (from Pennsylvania Senate Democrats, 2/27/24)*

Cyber Charter Reform Could Save Some Southwestern PA Schools More than \$1M — School districts in Pennsylvania stand to save an estimated \$262 million if cyber charter reforms included in Gov. Josh Shapiro's budget proposal are passed. That includes upwards of \$700,000 in savings for Penn Hills, Steel Valley and Woodland Hills school districts, according to calculations based on [state data from the 2021-2022 school year](#). Woodland Hills spent more on cyber charter tuition payments than any other district in the county that year, with nearly 7% of the district's total expenses going to cyber charters. *Read the rest of the story: ["Cyber Charter Reform Could Save Some Southwestern PA Schools More than \\$1M"](#) (from NPR, 2/28/24)*

GOP Senators 'Troubled' By Lack of Education Funding Growth in Shapiro's Budget — Gov. Josh Shapiro's education secretary found himself on the hot seat Wednesday defending a school funding proposal that Republican senators fear will drain the state's reserves and create a big deficit within a few years. After hearing Education Secretary Khalid Mumin tell the Senate Appropriations Committee that the administration fully supports the [approved Basic Education Funding Commission's plan](#) to boost basic education funding by \$5.4 billion over the next seven years, senators wanted to know how the governor intends to fund it. They pointed out that Shapiro's [budget plan](#) calls for a \$1.1 billion increase for basic education for 2024-25 for a total of nearly \$9 billion, but it fails to show any increases beyond next year. *Read the rest of the story: ["GOP Senators 'Troubled' By Lack of Education Funding Growth in Shapiro's Budget"](#) (from Pennlive, 2/28/24)*

Key Points From Senate Budget Hearing with Department of Education — Officials from the Pennsylvania Department of Education struggled to answer questions about Gov. Josh Shapiro's broad higher education concepts and wide discrepancies in K-12 education funding during a hearing with the Senate Appropriations Committee today. Democrats on the Basic Education Funding Commission called for a \$5.4 billion increase in Basic Education funding over the next several years. Gov. Shapiro is proposing to increase Basic Education spending by nearly \$1.1 billion in his 2024-25 spending plan, but his proposed budget shows no increases in Basic Education funding after this year, raising concerns that the administration cannot pay for the billions of dollars in promised new education spending without raising taxes. *Read the rest of the story: ["Key Points From Senate Budget Hearing with Department of Education"](#) (from PA Senate Republicans, 2/28/24)*

In National and International News...

Where Does AI Belong in Education? Teachers and Administrators Have Some Strong Opinions— The expanded use of artificial intelligence in K-12 education this school year is prompting very strong feelings, from calling it the "Terminator" to telling people to get hip, because "it's here to stay." Educators are also creating new approaches to balance the benefits and drawbacks of the new technology. Fewer seem to be calling for [outright bans](#) on large language models like ChatGPT, recognizing that students

will have to learn how to use AI in future jobs. Still, many are worried that AI, unchecked, could lead to lazier students and much more cheating. What is clear is that educators are [hungry for guidance](#) from their schools, districts, and states on how to use AI for instruction. But they say they are not getting that guidance. *Read the rest of the story:* [“Where Does AI Belong in Education? Teachers and Administrators Have Some Strong Opinions”](#) (from EducationWeek, 2/21/24)

Superintendents Know AI is Important, So Why Aren’t More Addressing It? — While a [majority of superintendents](#) understand the importance of artificial intelligence and its potential impact on K-12 education, only a small fraction of district leaders see AI as a “very urgent” need this year, according to a survey released this month by EAB, an education consulting firm. For superintendents, recruiting and hiring qualified teachers is the most pressing issue to tackle in their districts this school year, according to the EAB survey. In fact, 52% of superintendents said teacher staffing is “very urgent,” and 40% said it was “mild or moderately urgent.” *Read the rest of the story:* [“Superintendents Know AI is Important, So Why Aren’t More Addressing It?”](#) (from, K-12 Dive, 2/26/24)

A State Uses AI to Determine School Funding. Is This the Future or a Cautionary Tale?— Nevada launched an effort to change the formula that determines the number of at-risk students in each of the state’s 750 traditional public and public charter schools. State officials say the previous calculations dramatically overcounted the number of at-risk students who would most benefit from additional funding. They say they aren’t surprised the new number is much lower, and they’re happy they can target more available dollars per pupil to the students who stand to benefit the most. But education advocates and some school leaders in the state are raising alarms about the effects of the state’s attempt at a more precise approach to targeting funding to at-risk students. In recent months, they’ve sought more transparency from the state education department and a third-party contractor about how the formula functions, how it was developed and what role machine-learning technology played, and what it means. *Read the rest of the story:* [“A State Uses AI to Determine School Funding. Is This the Future or a Cautionary Tale?”](#) (from EducationWeek, 2/28/24)

Support K-12 Technology Integration with Professional Development— Many factors can hinder strong tech integration in K–12 education, such as the misconception that newer teachers already know how to use technology, even though [using social media](#) does not translate to knowing how to use technology as a teaching tool. When educational technology use isn’t measured, professional development to support integrating it can also fall lower on the priorities list. This is common when the IT team doesn’t have a seat at the table as professional development is being planned and portraits of a graduate are being created. Schools are also seeing pushback from educators and the community about tech use and [screen time for students](#) following the spike in device use during the pandemic. Instead of finding ways to use technology and digital solutions in moderation, some teachers are turning away from it altogether. *Read the rest of the story:* [“Support K-12 Technology Integration with Professional Development”](#) (from EdTech, 2/20/24)

Key Legislative Updates:

Watch: Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing with the Department of Education (2-28-24) [Part 1](#) | [Part 2](#) .

Two Bills that PASA and others are providing feedback:

[HB 663](#): Students Involved in School District Residency Disputes (McNeil)

If it is found that the parents, guardians, et., do not reside in the district and a determination is made that the child is not otherwise entitled to free school privileges, the child may not be disenrolled from the school until:

1. The parents, etc., are provided an opportunity to appeal the decision through a hearing held pursuant to an appropriate grievance policy of the district and any appeal has been exhausted.
2. After the parents, etc., have been provided notice of such a hearing, the parent, etc., decline to participate in a hearing pursuant to the grievance policy or appeals process
3. After the parents, etc., have been provided information from the district's liaison for homeless children and youth regarding the educational rights of homeless students.
4. A court enters an order directing the child to be disenrolled and enrolled in a different school.

SB 801: Educator Support in the Structured Literacy Program (Aument, et.al)

- School entity shall adopt high-quality instructional materials grounded in [scientific-based reading research] evidence-based reading instruction in accordance with the State academic standards approved by the State Board of Education.
- Assessments – 3 times a year –K-3 grade
- Professional Development – as required by Chapter 49

PASA's Concerns with Current Draft of Bill: We need to ensure local district decision on assessment tool and resources; parent notification for entering K students, definitions, "reading wars" concern as needs to be balanced, timing of professional development (currently states during teacher day); no mention of higher education receiving training on actual structured literacy).

Legislative Updates from Last Week:

HB 2063: Referred to the House Finance Committee (2-28-24): This legislation would reform our educational tax credit programs and ensure this money is serving its intended purpose by:

- Refocusing the programs on those in need of assistance by lowering the eligibility income limit for EITC and OSTC scholarships – currently the highest in the country – to 200% of the federal poverty line and adjusting definitions of household income to better align with what's used for other state programs;
- Freeing up more money for scholarships to students and being fiscally responsible by reducing the cap on administrative expenses for scholarship organizations from 20 percent (also the highest in the country) to 10 percent, and closing loopholes to make sure this money is actually spent on administering scholarship programs; and
- Expanding data collection that will allow for the meaningful evaluation of program effectiveness and that scholarships are going to those who need them.

This bill would implement multiple recommendations of the Independent Fiscal Office intended to improve the ability of these tax credit programs to achieve their goals and purposes. It also aligns program parameters to be more fiscally responsible and similar to the overwhelming majority of other states with similar programs.

Sponsor Update:

Global Professional Development Program Scholarships Announced

PASA is pleased to announce the Summer 2024 Global Professional Development Program Scholarship recipients have been selected. Please join me in congratulating:

- Dr. Barry Balaski, Superintendent Moon Area School District
- Dr. Erika Willis, Assistant Superintendent, Central Dauphin Area School District
- Dr. John Council, Assistant Superintendent Upper Darby Area School District
- Dr. Jermain Dawson, Deputy Superintendent School District of Philadelphia

They will be traveling to Japan & South Korea this July with 30 educational leaders from around the country to learn about innovations in education, explore cultural sites, and gain a deeper understanding of the rich history and innovation of these countries.

If you would like an experience like this for yourself, please consider applying for the Fall 2024 PASA/EF Annual Global Professional Development Program Scholarship October 10-14th to **Panama**. During this experience, you'll get a taste of hands-on learning as you **explore cultural sites**, analyze new **trends in STEM education**, and **participate in service-learning projects** around sustainability. You will also expand your professional network as you work collaboratively with peers exploring the importance of global competency for your district and community, all while discovering the rich history and culture of Panama.

Applications are now open. You can find out all the details and apply at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7LFTKRR> Questions? Email Michele Balliet @mballiet@pasa-net.org or Meghan Schafer meghan.schafer@ef.com

Upcoming Legislative Schedule – (Subject to change)

House Education Hearing - Tuesday, March 5th, 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

House of Representatives:

Next Session: March 18 at noon.

Senate:

Next sessions: March 18 at 1 p.m.

Senate Scheduled Session Days:

March: 18, 19, 20

April: 8, 9, 10, 29, 30

May: 1, 6, 7, 8

June: 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

House Scheduled Session Days:

March: 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27

April: 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 29, 30

May: 1, 6, 7, 8, 20, 21, 22

June: 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28

Note: Tuesday, April 23 is Primary Election Day in Pennsylvania

On the PASA Calendar...

March 5:	Artificial Intelligence: Unveiling AI Breakthroughs: Elevating Learner Support with Insights from CMU (Virtual)
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)
April 2:	Artificial Intelligence: Generative Artificial Intelligence Governance, Access, and Ethical Considerations for School Districts (Virtual)
April 3:	Connecting the Dots: School District Funding, Spending, and Budgeting (Berks I.U.)
April 15:	Connecting the Dots: School District Funding, Spending, and Budgeting (Westmoreland I.U.)
April 17:	Connecting the Dots: School District Funding, Spending, and Budgeting (Central I.U.)
April 22:	Artificial Intelligence: Opportunities, Risks, and Legal Concerns with Generative AI in K-12 Education (Virtual)
April 30:	PASA Advocacy Day
May 14:	Artificial Intelligence: Session 4 (More information to come)
May 19-21:	Women's Caucus Annual Spring Conference at the Hershey Hotel

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