



PARSS Legislative Update

March 25, 2024

Budget Hearings Conclude; Legislature Resumes Voting Sessions

The annual ritual of spring budget hearings has yielded to the return of committee meetings and floor votes. The review, analysis, questions, concerns, and reaction to the Governor’s February budget proposal at budget hearings don’t necessarily solve any fiscal disagreements between parties and between the two chambers on the state budget, but their conclusion does signal that the countdown to the end of the fiscal year is on.

So, let’s take a look at the recent activity in the General Assembly related to education bills. The House Education Committee has reported out legislation that the full House has approved and sent to the Senate. [House Bill 1875](#) was passed on March 19 by a 144 to 57 margin. The bill mandates that all school entities report every five years the advanced courses offered and the number of students taking and completing end-of-year exams to PDE. Despite the reporting mandate, the bill has a significant benefit for schools and students by creating a new grant program, the Access to Advanced Courses for All Students Grant Program, that is designed to “help ensure that all school entities have properly trained educators to meet the advanced course benchmarks...and to provide advanced course exam fee assistance to students.” To read more details about the legislation [click here](#).

The Senate Education Committee has unanimously approved [House Bill 663](#) which passed the House in November. The bill is an example of a local situation resulting in a legislative change affecting all school districts. The legislation requires a district that challenges a student's residency in the district to allow the student to remain in the district until all of the appeal procedures in the district's policy have been exhausted. According to the prime sponsor of the bill, Rep. Jeanne McNeill (D-Lehigh), a special needs student was removed from a district while residency appeals ran their course resulting in services being suspended to the student. The bill is on the Senate calendar for first consideration. Additional information on the legislation can be [found here](#).

The PA Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) has announced preliminary information on the new PA Student Teacher Support Program on their website. To be eligible to receive state funds to provide to student teachers for the next school year, you must be a school entity that meets these criteria:

- Be located in Pennsylvania.
- Be a school district, intermediate unit, private school, area career and technical school, charter school, regional charter school, or cyber charter school.
- Submit all PHEAA-required documentation for program participation.
- Employ a cooperating teacher to be assigned to the student teacher that meets eligibility requirements.
- Use 100% of the awarded funds to compensate the student teacher and cooperating teacher.

You should bookmark [this site](#) to check out additional information from PHEAA scheduled to be released in April.