



PARSS Legislative Update December 19, 2023

State Budget Finale; Happy Holidays!

The five plus months of the state budget impasse are over as the General Assembly finished the remaining pieces of the spending plan and sending them to the Governor last week. Governor Shapiro immediately signed the bills into law.

Two omnibus School Code Bills, [House Bill 301](#) and [Senate Bill 843](#), will allow some existing and some new program funding to be distributed to schools. Let's look at the shorter list of what is not in the two bills as a result of the negotiated agreement that moved the bills to the Governor. Unfortunately, the Level Up funding did not make it into the final agreement. The PASS scholarship program suffered a similar fate. In essence a priority of the House Democrats and a priority of the Senate Republicans cancelled out each other out.

What is in the legislation? A lot. Among other things:

1. \$10 million for the Educator Pipeline Support Grant Program for student teachers to address the shortage of teachers entering the work force.
2. Final technical language for implementation of the free breakfast and moving reduced lunch price recipients to free status.
3. \$90 million for School Mental Health Grants to be administered by PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency with base grants of \$100,000 to school districts and the remainder distributed on the basis of Average Daily Membership; these grants will be provided to schools prior to April 1, 2024

4. \$45 million for school safety grants
5. An additional \$150 million, an increase of 37%, in Educational Tax Credit programs with requirements for additional reporting and a reduced cap on administrative expenses.

To read more of the details in House Bill 301 (now Act 35-2023) [click here](#). For a detailed review of Senate Bill 843 (now Act 33-2023) [go here](#).

The final budget deal also included a Fiscal Code bill, [House Bill 1300](#), now Act 34. A total of \$175 million is authorized for school environmental and facilities grants.

In addition to budget related bills, Governor Shapiro also signed other bills last week including [House Bill 1507](#), now Act 56-2023. The new law changes the School Code requirement for a minimum of 180 days of instruction AND 900 hours of instruction at the elementary level or 990 hours of instruction at the secondary level to either 180 days OR 900/990 hours.