



Accomplishments & Activity of the Senate Education Committee 2010-2011 Legislative Session

Act 24 of 2011 (House Bill 1352) – Omnibus Public School Code Amendments for the 2011-2012 Fiscal Year

BILLS PASSING THE SENATE:

- Bill:** **Senate Bill 224**
Sponsor: Piccola
Subject: Strengthens requirements for background checks for prospective school employees and reporting by current employees of arrests and previous convictions and establishes a lifetime ban against employment for the most serious criminal offenses.
- Bill:** **Senate Bill 343**
Sponsor: Piccola
Subject: Permits the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to collect from institutions of higher education information that might reveal the identity of a specific student only where PDE is specifically required to do so under federal or state law and requires PDE to permit students to “opt-out” from data collection.
- Bill:** **Senate Bill 857**
Sponsor: Smucker
Subject: Repeals a provision of the Public School Code which limits a school district’s use of increases in basic education funding to create new programs and expand existing programs thereby giving districts more flexibility in allocating dollars.
- Bill:** **Senate Bill 858**
Sponsor: Waugh
Subject: Provides school districts with more flexibility in hiring of superintendents and assistant superintendents by permitting them to employ candidates who hold a graduate degree in business or finance and have at least four years relevant work experience.
- Bill:** **Senate Bill 872**
Sponsor: Brubaker
Subject: Provides districts with greater flexibility in participating in the Opportunities for Educational Excellence program, known as concurrent or dual enrollment.

BILLS PASSING THE HOUSE:

- Bill:** **House Bill 257**
Sponsor: Grove
Subject: Exempts school districts that do not seek Commonwealth reimbursement for school construction projects from the various steps required under the PLANCON process administered by PDE.
- Bill:** **House Bill 1307** (*Folmer companion*)
Sponsor: Milne
Subject: Requires that intermediate units report to PDE on subsidies and funds received on contracts greater than \$50,000 between the intermediate unit and a Commonwealth agency or between intermediate units; requires that PDE post the report on its website; and requires that PDE post on its website information from the intermediate units’ annual financial reports as filed with PDE.



Bill: **House Bill 1345**
Sponsor: Taylor
Subject: Re-establishes the Office of Safe Schools Advocate for the Philadelphia School District and places the office within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD).

Bill: **House Bill 1352**
Sponsor: Stephens
Subject: Adds the offense of Institutional Sexual Assault to the list of offenses which act as a bar to employment in public or private schools, an intermediate unit or an area vocational-technical school.

Bill: **House Bill 1363** (*Brubaker companion*)
Sponsor: Rapp
Subject: Imposes a two-year moratorium until June 30, 2013 on continuing professional development requirements for school districts and professional educators and requires the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a study of the costs and benefits of continuing professional development requirements. The study must be submitted by March 1, 2013.

Bill: **House Bill 1411**
Sponsor: Ellis
Subject: Places a two-year moratorium on certain data collection performed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare. The moratorium applies to data collected via Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information for Children Across Network (PELICAN) and the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).

OTHER POLICY PRIORITIES INCLUDED IN OMNIBUS SCHOOL CODE AMENDMENTS (PREVIOUSLY CONTAINED IN THE FISCAL CODE AND/OR PASSED THE HOUSE AND SENATE IN THE 2009-2010 SESSION AND NECESSARY BUDGET ITEMS):

- Requires that school districts have or maintain a certified safety committee.
- Establishes for the third and final year employment pools for former employees of the Scranton School for the Deaf and Scotland School for Veterans' Children.
- Provides for articulation between community colleges and State System of Higher Education (SSHE) institutions and requires that state-related institutions (Penn State, Pitt, Temple and Lincoln) identify credits they will accept for transfer.
- Allows school districts to reopen their budgets to reflect federal and state appropriations for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 fiscal years.
- Provides for distribution of community college funding for the 2011-2012 fiscal year.
- Provides for distribution of funding to libraries for the 2011-2012 fiscal year.
- Provides for the Basic Education Funding (BEF) formula for the 2010-2011 school year (payable in fiscal year 2011-2012).
- Provides for payments to school districts for special education.
- Creates alternative pathways for second-career professionals to become teachers and administrators.





Summary of Public Hearings/Briefings

- Date:** February 16, 2011 (Harrisburg)
Topic: School Choice/Vouchers
- Date:** March 7, 2011 (Harrisburg)
Topic: Confirmation, Pennsylvania Department of Education Secretary
- Date:** March 22, 2011 (Harrisburg)
Topic: Keystone Exam Briefing; Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System (PVAAS)
- Date:** June 8, 2011 (Harrisburg)
Topic: Teacher Evaluation & Effectiveness
- Date:** June 10, 2011 (Harrisburg)
Topic: Confirmation, Nominees to the Charter School Appeals Board



Legislation Voted Out of Committee

BASIC EDUCATION

Senate Bill 157

Sponsor: Fontana
Subject: Establishes a Task Force on Homeless Children's education.

Senate Bill 159

Sponsor: Robbins
Subject: Authorizes the Governor to execute a compact with one or more states to establish an Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children to remove barriers to education due to frequent moves.

Senate Bill 172

Sponsor: Washington
Subject: Establishes the MESA Initiative; provides for PDE duties and establishes the State MESA Commission.

Senate Bill 200

Sponsor: Browne
Subject: Requires the Pennsylvania Department of Health and PDE to develop guidelines and other pertinent information and forms to inform and educate students involved in interscholastic athletics about the nature and risk of concussions and head injuries including the risks associated with continuing to play after a concussion or head injury.

Senate Bill 202 *(included in Omnibus School Code amendments)*

Sponsor: Dinniman
Subject: Allows PDE to grant residency certificates and provides that post baccalaureate certification programs, including residency, intern and administrative certification programs, are equivalent training to graduation from a baccalaureate degree education program.

Senate Bill 251

Sponsor: Piccola
Subject: Provides for transparency in school district contracting.

Senate Bill 293

Sponsor: Brubaker
Subject: Raises the threshold cost at which a school construction project financed through the State Public School Building Authority must be competitively bid.

Senate Bill 296

Sponsor: Eichelberger

Subject: Significantly raises the bidding thresholds for school district goods and projects and adjusts the new amounts every five years based upon changes in the Consumer Price Index.

Senate Bill 306

Sponsor: Pippy

Subject: Permits chartered schools for the deaf and blind and private schools for students with disabilities to benefit from contributions through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program.

Senate Bill 328

Sponsor: Dinniman

Subject: Permits a driver's license suspended for truancy to be restored prior to the expiration of suspension when the suspended driver provides proof that he has completed high school, reached 21 or obtained a GED.

Senate Bill 329

Sponsor: Dinniman

Subject: Permits the suspension of certain reporting requirements where the appropriation for Commonwealth funding for basic education funding results in a reduction from the previous year's state appropriation for basic education funding.

Senate Bill 537

Sponsor: Rafferty

Subject: Requires a two-thirds majority vote for a board of school directors to increase a school district's tax millage rate above its rate on the effective date of the section.

Senate Bill 612

Sponsor: Folmer

Subject: Permits school employers to furlough professional employees for economic reasons.

Senate Bill 803

Sponsor: Piccola

Subject: Permits school districts to choose various media options to meet public notice reporting requirements.

Senate Bill 813

Sponsor: Smucker

Subject: Requires PDE to publish grade-level and classroom-level data obtained through the Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System (PVAAS). Individual student identities would be protected.

Senate Bill 814

Sponsor: Corman

Subject: Reestablishes the Mandate Waiver program within PDE and permits school districts to solicit both multiple prime and single prime construction bids with the contract awarded to the lowest responsible bidder.

Senate Bill 857 *(included in Omnibus School Code amendments)*

Sponsor: Smucker

Subject: Repeals a provision of the Public School Code which limits a school district's use of increases in basic education funding to create new programs and expand existing programs.

Senate Bill 869

Sponsor: Alloway

Subject: Makes it optional for a school district to transport a pupil to any other school outside state borders, except for students with disabilities.

Senate Bill 872 *(included in Omnibus School Code amendments)*

Sponsor: Brubaker

Subject: Reduces requirements on school entities and postsecondary institutions that choose to participate in the Opportunities for Educational Excellence program, known as concurrent or dual enrollment.



Senate Bill 873

Sponsor: Brubaker

Subject: Directs PDE to work in conjunction with the State Board of Education to review the PLANCON process and make recommendations and improvements to improve the process.

Senate Bill 933 *(included in Omnibus School Code amendments)*

Sponsor: Folmer

Subject: Requires intermediate units to submit annual financial reports to PDE and to submit annual reports on subsidies and funds they receive for providing services.

Senate Bill 1087

Sponsor: Piccola

Subject: Requires PDE to revise professional employee rating cards to incorporate student performance, a factor not currently included in the evaluation system.

Senate Bill 1127

Sponsor: D. White

Subject: Prohibits lame duck school boards from voting or taking other substantial official action.

Senate Bill 1129

Sponsor: Dinniman

Subject: Clarifies that where a host district contracts with a third party for the provision of educational services, the third party may seek payment directly from the district of residence.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Senate Bill 244

Sponsor: Kasunic

Subject: Requires at least one school staff member certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation to be present at all times during the school day.

Senate Bill 391

Sponsor: Orié

Subject: Requires training for school employees in diabetes care and management and provides for possession and use of diabetes medication and monitoring equipment.

Senate Bill 802

Sponsor: Piccola

Subject: Permits school districts to hire registered nurses who complete a training program in nursing in a school environment that has been approved by PDE.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Senate Bill 203 *(included in Omnibus School Code amendments)*

Sponsor: Dinniman

Subject: Requires each public institution of higher education to accept, with full junior standing, those students with associate of arts and associate science degrees into a parallel baccalaureate program.

Senate Bill 343 *(included in Omnibus School Code amendments)*

Sponsor: Piccola

Subject: Permits PDE to collect from institutions of higher education information that might reveal the identity of a specific student only where PDE is specifically required to do so under federal or state law and requires PDE to permit students to “opt-out” from data collection.

Senate Bill 560

Sponsor: Mensch

Subject: Creates the State Military College Legislative Appointment Initiative Program Act, educating students in both an academic and military environment.





LIBRARIES

Senate Bill 1086

Sponsor: Piccola

Subject: Amends the Library Code by establishing a new section (state-aid for 2011-2012) to provide for the distribution of state-aid to libraries in Fiscal Year 2011-2012.

SCHOOL & STUDENT SAFETY

Senate Bill 224 *(included in Omnibus School Code amendments)*

Sponsor: Piccola

Subject: Strengthens requirements for background checks for prospective school employees and reporting by current employees of arrests and previous convictions and establishes a lifetime ban against employment for the most serious criminal offenses.

TEACHING & INSTRUCTION

Senate Bill 389

Sponsor: Brubaker

Subject: Updates the definition of “vocational agricultural education.”

Senate Bill 743

Sponsor: Rafferty

Subject: Permits a person who does not hold a professional educator certification, but who is qualified as a teacher or director in a private driver education or training school, to teach driver education in a public school classroom, provided that the person passes a criminal background check and satisfies other certification requirements related to the person’s physical and mental condition.

Senate Bill 844

Sponsor: Dinniman

Subject: Provides for an exemption from continuing education requirements for superintendents and school administrators under certain circumstances.

Senate Bill 858 *(included in Omnibus School Code amendments)*

Sponsor: Waugh

Subject: Provides school districts with more flexibility in hiring of superintendents and assistant superintendents by permitting them to employ candidates who hold a graduate degree in business or finance and have at least four years relevant work experience.

Senate Bill 870

Sponsor: Eichelberger

Subject: Repeals certain provisions relating to sick leave and sabbaticals, such as providing for the payment of salaries in cases of sickness, injury or death, for alternative payment plan, for persons entitled to leaves of absence and for salary while on leave.

Senate Bill 871 *(included in Omnibus School Code amendments)*

Sponsor: Brubaker

Subject: Imposes a two-year moratorium until June 30, 2013 on continuing professional development requirements for school districts and professional educators and requires the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a study of the costs and benefits of continuing professional development requirements.



Senate Education Committee Staff:

Dave Transue

Executive Director

Matt Azeles

Deputy Executive Director

Karen Seivard

Counsel

Gale Steele

Committee Secretary