



DELAWARE COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
August 28, 2025

Table of Contents

Session Information2

News and Updates2

Federal Updates.....2

State Budget Update3

Pennsylvania Education Secretary Nomination.....4

Curriculum & Instruction4

Student Supports, Services, and Special Education.....5

Student Health & Wellness5

School Safety.....5

School Governance & Finance6

School Choice & Vouchers.....6

SB160 vs. HB1330 – K-12 Education Side-by-Side.....7

Session Information

The House added two non-voting session days and two voting session days to the schedule in August. As of August 11, 2025, the House stands adjourned until Monday, September 22, 2025, unless sooner recalled by the speaker.

On Tuesday, August 12, 2025, the Senate recessed to the call of the President Pro Tempore and stands adjourned until September 8, 2025 unless recalled sooner.

Session Days

**Additional days added (in red)*

Month	House	Senate
August	8 (NV), 9 (NV), 10, 11	12
September	22 (NV), 23 (NV), 24 (NV), 29, 30	8, 9, 10
October	1, 6, 7, 8, 27, 28, 29	20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29
November	17, 18, 19	17, 18, 19
December	8 (NV), 9 (NV), 10 (NV), 15, 16, 17	8, 9, 10

News and Updates

School districts face \$1.75B in missed state payments on August 26 by Robert Swift, *CapitolWire*
The Pennsylvania State Education Association on Tuesday [8/26] highlighted how a nearly two-month impasse over the state budget impacts local schools. The association provided dollar amounts on its [website](#) for an estimated \$1.75 billion in missed state payments during July and August to school districts, intermediate units and career and technical education centers. The website tracks specific basic education subsidy payments to school districts, early intervention payments for intermediate units and secondary career payments to career and technical education centers, as well as other payments.

Pennsylvania schools slow to embrace cellphone ban with state grants on August 1 by John Finnerty, *CapitolWire*
While more than half of the states have already implemented cellphone bans in school, an effort to encourage schools to voluntarily enact local bans found few takers in Pennsylvania. Last year, the General Assembly approved a move to allow school districts to use a portion of security and mental health grant funding to pay for lockable bags to store cellphones during the school day. [...] Eighteen grant recipients opted to devote a portion of the grant funding to support a cellphone ban, according to information provided to *CapitolWire* by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, which oversees the grant program.

Federal Updates

Federal Funds

On July 30, 2025, the US Department of Education (USDOE) released funds to states that had previously been withheld under Titles I-C, II-A, III-A, IV-A, and IV-B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as well as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

During the first week of August, Pennsylvania Acting Secretary of Education, Dr. Carrie Rowe, confirmed that the state had received approximately \$230 million in federal funds owed to the state for these

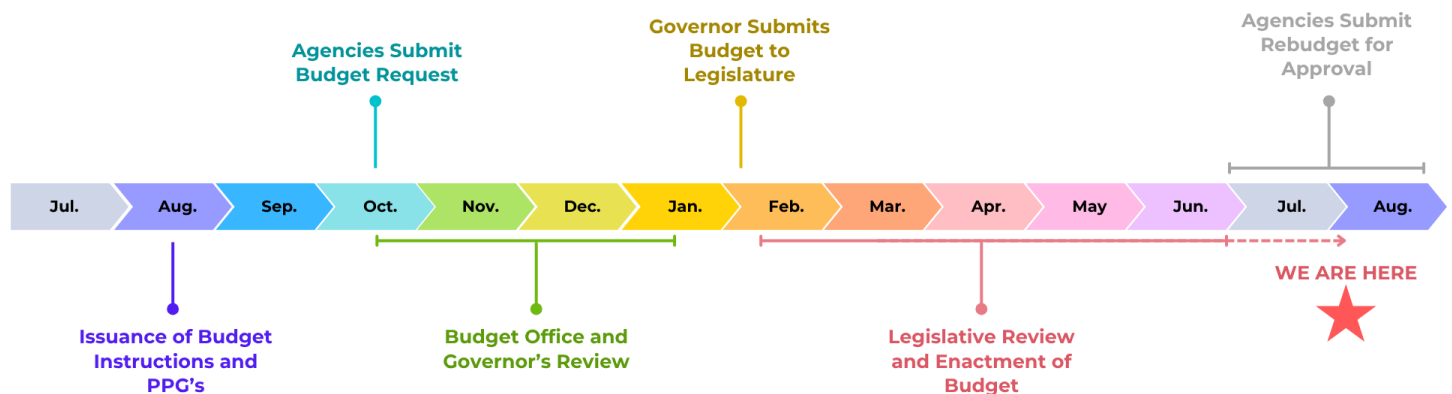
programs. However, absent a state budget providing formal authorization and appropriation of the funds for the 2025-2026 school year, Dr. Rowe indicated that PDE is not able to distribute those federal funds to local school entities.

United States District Court Case on US Department of Education “Dear Colleague Letter” and Certification Requirements

On Thursday, August 15, 2025, a United States District Court Judge for the District of Maryland found that the February 14, 2025 USDOE *Dear Colleague Letter*, which required each school administrator and each state Secretary of Education to affirmatively certify that their school entity and state complies with USDOE’s interpretations of the Title VI and the *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* (“SFFA”) US Supreme Court decision. The federal district court found the letter and certification requirements to be unlawful and vacated both expectations entirely. This decision is considered to be a final judgement at the federal district court level, and it is expected that the USDOE will appeal. The Court noted that both the Letter and the Certification Requirements were unlawful and as such ordered that they both be vacated in their entirety.

State Budget Update

Budget Process in Pennsylvania



No final agreement yet:

On August 12, the Senate approved a budget that is roughly \$3B less than the House’s July proposal. Pennsylvania is now over two months into the budget impasse. At this juncture, the House and Senate remain deeply divided on how to approach this year’s budget, particularly on the two critical issues of mass transit funding and K-12 education funding.

As a recap:

- Gov. Shapiro proposed a \$51.5 billion budget in February, emphasizing the need for increased investments in education, Medicaid, and mass transit, with \$4.5 billion drawn from reserves.
- The House advanced a slightly lower \$50.6 billion budget ([HB1330](#)) on July 14th, and it included similar priorities as the Governor, including education funding increases over \$800 million.

- The Senate passed [SB160](#) (27-22) on August 12th, which is a \$47.5 billion budget, and essentially flat funds education at 2024-25 levels. It does include, however, \$100 million for cyber charter reimbursement to school districts, which was taken out of the House proposed plan.

The House and Senate are now essentially at a standstill. The House is not scheduled to meet again until September 22nd, with the Senate scheduled to reconvene on September 8th.

Due to the delayed passage of the state budget, school districts have not received approximately \$1.4 billion in Basic Education Funding or \$255 million in Special Education Funding for July and August. In addition, state subsidies such as social security and pupil transportation payments, typically paid in August, are delayed, along with \$99 million in federal subgrant payments under Title I and IDEA. Pre-K Counts and state Head Start funds also face delays totaling \$40 million, potentially impacting ability to retain staff and enroll children.

Several school entities across the state are in the process of securing a *Revenue Anticipation Note (RAN)* that would allow entities to borrow money to pay staff and fund programs and services while the state continues to determine next steps.

Pennsylvania Education Secretary Nomination

On Tuesday, August 12, the Senate Education Committee voted unanimously, without recommendation, to confirm Dr. Carrie Rowe as Secretary of Education. The vote came six months after her nomination to the position by Governor Shapiro. The action now sets the stage for a floor vote by the full Senate chamber. Dr. Rowe's nomination is being considered during an impasse over the state budget, and it is unclear if a vote to confirm will be tied to the budget negotiations. Until the vote, Dr. Carrie Rowe continues to serve as Acting Secretary of Education.

Curriculum & Instruction

Newly Introduced Legislation

- **[HB1770: K-5 Supplemental Math Program, Rep. Freeman \(D\)](#)**
Directs the Department of Education to select and provide a free, statewide supplemental math program for grades K-5 that public and nonpublic schools may use voluntarily. The program must support self-directed practice, build fact fluency and problem-solving, work on any device with parent access, include department-set outcome measures, and be reported annually to the General Assembly.
08/04/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education
- **[SB973: Early Human Life Development Education, Sen. Brooks \(R\)](#)**
Starting in the 2026-27 school year, every school entity must provide one unit of “early human life development” once in grades 9-12 as part of biology. The course must include: a 5+ minute ultrasound video showing fetal development at multiple gestational ages (8-37 weeks), an animated presentation from fertilization through birth, and age-appropriate lessons on how alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs can harm a pregnancy.
08/15/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education

Student Supports, Services, and Special Education

Newly Introduced Legislation

- **SB984: Attendance & Truancy Reforms, Sen. Pennycuik (R)**

Tightens truancy rules to require parent notice after three unexcused absences, require attendance-improvement plans, court approval before a habitually truant student can transfer mid-year into a virtual/cyber option, and expands statewide, publicly posted attendance reporting. Makes falsifying reports a misdemeanor. Separately, cyber charter schools must require students to have their cameras on during live classes, set weekly progress benchmarks for asynchronous work, and keep teacher-recorded attendance unchanged except to correct good-faith errors.

08/27/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education

Student Health & Wellness

Newly Introduced Legislation

- **HB1768: Keystone Fresh Act, Rep. Burgos (D)**

Creates the Keystone Fresh program to help schools buy and serve Pennsylvania-grown, minimally processed foods. It establishes three grants: (1) Fresh Schools grants that reimburse school food authorities for local products used in school meals; (2) Producer grants to help farms, food hubs, and aggregators meet school market standards; and (3) technical-assistance grants to support scratch cooking and use of minimally processed local foods. Also establishes the Keystone Fresh Fund.

08/04/2025 – Introduced and referred to Agriculture & Rural Affairs

- **HB1814: Student Cell Phone Restrictions, Rep. Steele (D)**

Bans students from possessing or using cell phones inside school buildings during the school day. Students must either place phones in a secure lockbox upon arrival or keep them in a locked pouch that can't be opened until dismissal; limited exceptions (with administrator approval) apply for volunteer first responders and urgent family medical needs. Public school entities must adopt Department of Education approved policies to implement the ban.

08/20/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education

School Safety

Newly Introduced Legislation

- **SB982: Jonny's Law – Anti-Bullying Legislation, Rep. Mastriano (R)**

Requires school entities (districts, charters/cybers, IUs, CTCs) to update its anti-bullying policy within one year to: ban bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation; offer confidential reporting; notify parents within 24 hours after a confirmed incident; start investigations within three school days; designate a bullying-response counselor; include age-appropriate instruction; and train staff at least every three years and at onboarding. PDE must post a model policy within 120 days. School employee reports must go through Safe2Say and schools must submit annual anonymized bullying data via Safe2Say for state review with corrective action plans.

08/27/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education

School Governance & Finance

Legislative Actions

- **SB160: General Appropriations Act (FY 2025-26), Sen. Martin (R)**

The Senate state budget proposal for July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026. For K-12 education: \$8.16B for basic education; \$1.49B for special education; \$821.5M Ready-to-Learn; \$317.3M Pre-K Counts and \$90.9M Head Start; and \$100M for school safety and student mental health. Also, \$3.089B for PSERS and \$644.5M for school employees' Social Security, plus \$702.3M for pupil transportation, \$100M for cyber charter reimbursement, and \$100M for public school facility grants.

08/12/2025 – Reported as committed from Appropriations

08/12/2025 – Third consideration and final passage (27-22)

In the House

08/13/2025 – Referred to House Appropriations

08/13/2025 – Failed in Committee (15-22)



Newly Introduced Legislation

- **HB1767: Pension Supplement for Pre-2001 Retirees, Rep. Tomlinson (R)**

Starting with July 2025 payments, retirees in PSERS and SERS who left service before July 2, 2001 would receive an automatic monthly increase of 15%-24.5% based on their retirement date. The state would fund these increases using annual investment interest from the Rainy Day Fund.

08/04/2025 – Introduced and referred to State Government

- **SB962: Property Tax Elimination Act, Sen. Keefer (R)**

Ends school district property taxes starting with the first school fiscal year after December 31, 2029. It replaces that revenue with a county-level 2% sales/use (and hotel occupancy) tax and a local school district personal income tax up to 1.88%, which would newly tax most retirement income other than Social Security, along with state-managed distributions that match each district's "base year" property-tax collections for the first three years. The bill also creates a School District Property Tax Elimination Fund and a \$500M School District Emergency Fund (plus ongoing district contributions), requires landlords to pass through property-tax savings to tenants, and penalizes districts that try to reinstate property taxes.

07/31/2025 – Introduced and referred to Finance

School Choice & Vouchers

Newly Introduced Legislation

- **HB1799: 529 Program Expansion & Keystone Scholars, Rep. Gallagher (R)**

Expands Pennsylvania's 529 program so families can use Guaranteed Savings credits for K-12 tuition, registered apprenticeship costs, and repaying qualified education loans; also allows direct payments to K-12 schools and formally extends the investment plan to elementary and secondary education. Creates the Keystone Scholars Grant Program, providing \$100 seed grant (plus investment earnings) for every child born in 2019 or later, funded from surplus in the Guaranteed Savings Fund with annual caps.

08/13/2025 – Introduced and referred to Finance

- **SB969: Educational Freedom for Families, Sen. Mastriano (R)**

Creates Education Savings Accounts for income-eligible K-12 students assigned to schools in the bottom 15% statewide; the state would deposit roughly the average per-pupil basic education subsidy into each student's account, which families could use for private school tuition, tutoring/therapies, curriculum, homeschool costs, online programs, transportation, and educational technology. Funds are portable and follow the student; the bill also requires audits and annual parent progress reports and directs PDE to streamline charter/cyber approvals, support homeschooling, add STEM grants in low-performing schools, and create an Teacher Excellence Incentive Fund for performance-based bonuses/loan relief.

08/15/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education

SB160 vs. HB1330 – K-12 Education Side-by-Side

K-12 Line Item	SB160	HB1330	Difference (HB-SB)
Basic Education Fund (BEF)	\$8,157,444,000	\$8,232,444,000	\$75,000,000
Special Education	\$1,486,815,000	\$1,526,815,000	\$40,000,000
Ready-to-Learn Block Grant	\$821,500,000	\$1,347,500,000	\$526,000,000
Pre-K Counts	\$317,284,000	\$334,313,000	\$17,029,000
Head Start Supplemental	\$90,878,000	\$90,878,000	-
School Safety & Security	\$100,000,000	\$100,000,000	-
Public School Facility Improvement Grants	\$100,000,000	\$125,000,000	\$25,000,000
Pupil Transportation	\$702,315,000	\$735,908,000	\$33,593,000
Nonpublic/Charter Transportation	\$73,396,000	\$67,390,000	-\$6,006,000
Career and Technical Education (operating)	\$144,138,000	\$149,626,000	\$5,488,000
CTE Equipment Grants	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000	-
Authority Rentals and Sinking Fund	\$217,007,000	\$221,074,000	\$4,067,000
Teacher Professional Development	\$5,044,000	\$7,544,000	\$2,500,000
Adult & Family Literacy (incl. adult HS diploma)	\$16,310,000	\$16,728,000	\$418,000
PSERS	\$3,089,000,000	\$3,252,000,000	\$163,000,000
Social Security (school employees)	\$644,455,000	\$678,367,000	\$33,912,000
Cyber Charter Reimbursement	\$100,000,000	\$0	-\$100,000,000