

DELAWARE COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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News and Updates

[Inside the legislative effort to expel cellphones from Pennsylvania’s K-12 schools](#) by Kenny Cooper of *WHYY*

A bill aiming to impose a ban on cellphones in Pennsylvania’s K-12 schools is gaining momentum in Harrisburg as educators struggle to compete with mobile devices for their student’s attention. The Senate Education Committee unanimously voted Dec. 9 to advance the legislation to the chamber floor for consideration. If enacted, Senate Bill 1014 would amend the Public School Code of 1949 to enact a statewide “bell-to-bell phone free policy,” meaning students’ devices would be unavailable to them throughout the entire school day, including lunch and recess. There would be exceptions for certain students with specific needs. The policy would then go into effect during the 2027-2028 academic year. Implementation of the proposed ban – including how schools would store the phones, for example – would be up to individual districts.

[Area state legislators respond to Trump AI executive order](#) by Evan Brandt of *The Pottstown Mercury*
Two local lawmakers, one a Republican, one a Democrat, one in the House and one in the Senate, are continuing to press forward with efforts to regulate artificial intelligence, or AI, despite an executive order from President Trump punishing states that take such action. Both legislators – state Rep. Joe Ciresi, D-146th Dist., and Sen. Tracy Pennycuick, R-24th Dist. – head up the communications and technology committees in their respective legislative branches. On Dec. 11, President Trump signed an executive order “ensuring a national policy network for artificial intelligence.” [...] This year alone, all 50 states and

Submitted by Rebecca Smith, Coordinator of Innovation, Partnerships, and Special Projects. Sources: PA General Assembly, Capitolwire, Bill Track 50)

territories introduced AI legislation, and 38 states have adopted about 100 laws, according to Ciresi's office.

State Updates

Nominations

Senate Confirms Dr. Carrie Rowe as Pennsylvania Secretary of Education

On December 9, 2025, the Pennsylvania Senate overwhelmingly confirmed ([44-3](#)) Dr. Carrie Rowe as Pennsylvania's Secretary of Education in a bipartisan vote. Dr. Carrie Rowe brings 25 years of public education experience into her role as Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

[Read more in Governor Shapiro's press release.](#)

Session Information

The House stands adjourned until January 7, 2026, unless sooner recalled by the Speaker.

The Senate stands recessed until January 6, 2026, unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore.

Session Days

Month	House	Senate
January	7, 27, 28, 29	6 (NV), 26, 27, 28
February	3, 4, 5	2, 3, 4
March	17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26	23, 24, 25
April	7, 8, 9, 21 (NV), 22, 23, 24	13, 14, 15, 27, 28, 29
May	2 (NV), 4 (NV), 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 30 (NV)	4, 5, 6
June	2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18 (NV), 20 (NV), 23, 24, 25, 26, 30	1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
July	1, 2 (NV), 7, 8, 9, 14, 15 (NV), 16 (NV)	28, 29, 30
August	8 (NV), 9 (NV), 10, 11	
September	9 (NV), 10 (NV), 11 (NV), 22 (NV), 23 (NV), 29, 30	28, 29, 30
October	1, 6, 7, 8, 27, 28, 29	5, 6, 7, 19, 20, 21
November	11 (NV), 12, 17, 18, 19	9, 10
December	15 (NV), 16, 17	9, 10

State Legislative Update

Curriculum & Instruction

Legislative Actions

- **SB116: Graduation Credit for Employment in Congregate Care Facilities, Sen. Argall (R)**
This bill allows high school students in grades 11 and 12 who are at least 16 years old to earn elective graduation credits for working at congregate care facilities. Students can earn one elective credit for every 250 hours worked, with a maximum of two credits possible. The work can be paid or voluntary and must be at a long-term care nursing facility, personal care home, or assisted living residence. To receive credit, students must submit an application to their school with details about their employment, including hours worked, job responsibilities, and supervisor information. The school must approve the application and verify that the employment meets specific cooperative vocational education requirements. Credits may only be awarded once all documentation is complete and approved.
12/09/2025 – Reported as amended and first consideration
- **SB974: Expansion of the Dual Credit Innovation Grant Program, Sen. Hutchinson (R)**
This bill expands the Dual Credit Innovation Grant Program to allow community education councils, in collaboration with one or more institutions of higher education, to apply for grants to offer dual credit opportunities to high school students. The bill prioritizes programs aligned with high-priority occupations and those experiencing educational instability, CTE students, low-income students, historically underserved groups, and students in rural areas. It also strengthens reporting by requiring PDE to collect and publicly report new student-level outcome data on credits earned, participation, and postsecondary enrollment for students enrolled through community education council partnerships.
12/09/2025 – Reported as committed and first consideration

Newly Introduced Legislation

- **SB1103: Pennsylvania Right to Read Act, Sen. Cappalletti (D)**
This bill establishes guidelines for libraries and public school entities regarding book and material preservation, defining key terms and setting standards for maintaining educational resources. The legislation requires libraries to either adopt the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights or develop a written statement preventing book banning in order to receive state aid, and explicitly prohibits municipalities from reducing funding due to compliance with these requirements. The bill also prohibits the removal of instructional and voluntary inquiry materials from school libraries or classrooms based on various criteria, including partisan views, author demographics, personal discomfort, political or religious perspectives, character characteristics, or content related to age-appropriate sexual health education. The bill defines “instructional materials” as textbooks and supplementary classroom instruction materials, “public school entities” as including school districts, charter schools, and technical schools, and “voluntary inquiry materials” as additional non-required educational resources like books, magazines, digital materials, and multimedia content.
12/04/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education

- **SB1116: Communism Education Requirement, Sen. Mastriano (R)**

Requires school entities, beginning in the 2026-27 school year, to provide age-appropriate instruction on communism, including its origins, core tenets, global implementation, and documented human rights abuses. Instruction must also compare communist systems with the democratic principles of the United States, including constitutional limits on government, individual freedoms, and due process. The Department of Education must develop model curricula, instructional resources, and professional development, and make materials publicly available by May 1, 2026.

12/10/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education

Student Health & Wellness

Legislative Actions

- **HB1768: Keystone Fresh Act / Farm-to-School Nutrition Program, Rep. Burgos (D)**
(as Amended)

Establishes the Keystone Fresh Farm to School Nutrition Act, a statewide initiative to increase the amount of Pennsylvania-grown and minimally processed foods served in school meals. The bill creates the Local Food Purchasing Incentive Grant Program, allowing school food authorities to receive annual grants based on enrollment to buy local fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products (excluding fluid milk), grains, and other minimally processed PA foods.

11/17/2025 – Reported as amended from Agriculture & Rural Affairs

11/17/2025 – First consideration

11/19/2025 – Second consideration, with amendments and re-committed to Appropriations

12/16/2025 – Re-reported as committed

12/16/2025 – Third consideration and final passage (194-9)

In the Senate

12/22/2025 – Referred to Education



- **SB1014: Phone Free Schools, Sen. Robinson (R)**

This bill requires all Pennsylvania school entities (including school districts, charter schools, and intermediate units) to adopt a bell-to-bell phone-free policy by the 2027-2028 school year, which prohibits students from using mobile devices during the entire school day while on school property. The policy must include specific exceptions for students with medical conditions, IEP/504 accommodations, English learner supports, and limited instances where a teacher explicitly approves mobile device use as an instructional tool. Before adopting the policy, school entities must conduct a public comment period that solicits feedback from parents, employees, and students. The policy must also provide clear methods for parents to contact their children during the school day and must be posted on the school's website within five days of adoption. The bill defines "mobile device" broadly as any personal electronic device capable of internet access, messaging, recording, gaming, or video watching, and "school day" includes all instructional and non-instructional time such as homeroom, lunch, and recess.

12/09/2025 – Reported as amended

12/09/2025 – First consideration



- **HB158: Fairness in Women’s Sports Act, Rep. Gleim (R)**

Requires all athletic teams and sports sponsored by public school entities and public institutions of higher education to be expressly designated as male, female, or coed based on biological sex. The bill also creates private rights of action for students or schools harmed by violations and prohibits government entities or athletic organizations from penalizing institutions for maintaining female-only teams.

12/16/2025 – Reported from Education with a request to re-refer to Judiciary

12/16/2025 – Re-referred to Judiciary



- **HB1849: Dads Defending Daughters Act, Rep. Owlett (R)**

Requires all interscholastic, intercollegiate, intramural, and club athletic teams sponsored by public school entities and public institutions of higher education to be expressly designated as male, female, or coed based on biological sex. The bill also prohibits government agencies, accrediting bodies, and athletic associations from penalizing schools for maintaining sex-separate teams and creates private causes of action for students or schools harmed by violations.

12/16/2025 – Reported from Education with a request to re-refer to Judiciary

12/16/2025 – Re-referred to Judiciary



School Safety

Newly Introduced Legislation

- **SB1111: Upgrading Requirements for School Safety, Sen. Coleman (R)**

This bill strengthens school security personnel requirements by expanding the existing mandate that each school entity employ at least one full-time, properly trained school security personnel member on duty during the school day. Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, the bill requires each school building (not just each school entity) to have at least one full-time security personnel member who has completed approved training under the School Code, unless the entity receives a waiver from PDE.

12/05/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education

School Governance & Finance

Legislative Actions

- **SB686: Criminal Penalties for Tampering with Records Under the Right-to-Know Law, Rep. Dush (R)**

Amends Pennsylvania’s Right-to-Know Law and the state’s criminal code to strengthen protections against tampering with public records. Specifically, the bill creates a criminal penalty for intentionally and unlawfully altering, destroying, concealing, removing, or otherwise impairing the availability or authenticity of a record that has been requested under the Right-to-Know Law. While previously tampering with public records was typically considered a misdemeanor, the bill

upgrades the offense to a felony of the third degree if the record is subject of a current information request or appeal, or if the actor's intent is to defraud or injure someone.

12/15/2025 – Re-reported with request to re-refer to Commerce

12/15/2025 – Re-referred to Commerce



Newly Introduced Legislation

- HB2067: Emergency Instructional Flexibility for School Districts, Rep. Ciresi (D)**
 This bill expands school districts' emergency powers during unforeseen circumstances. Specifically, the bill allows school boards to implement temporary emergency provisions for up to four years, including the ability to modify school operations such as reducing daily instruction time, transitioning students to virtual learning (either full-time or part-time), and furloughing nonessential employees. The bill also adds a new provision that allows schools to declare an emergency and use these provisions if the General Appropriations Act has not been enacted within 60 days of the start of a new fiscal year. The changes are designated to provide school districts with more flexibility in managing unexpected challenges that might disrupt normal school operations, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.
12/03/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education
- HB2079: Budget Impasse Reimbursement Program, Rep. Dougherty (D)**
 This bill establishes the Budget Impasse Reimbursement Program, which aims to help entities that are financially impacted during a state budget impasse. The program, to be administered by the Office of the Budget, will provide reimbursement to eligible entities such as school districts, counties, human service providers, Pre-K Counts and Head Start providers, and nonprofit organizations that received state funding in the 2024-25 fiscal year. The program will compensate these entities for documented financing costs or lost interest income directly resulting from a budget impasse, which is defined as the period between July 1, 2025 and the effective date of the General Appropriation Act for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Funding from the program will come from interest generated during the budget impasse, with additional funding from the General Assembly if needed. The office of the Budget will develop application guidelines, review applications, and submit an annual report to the Governor and legislative appropriations committees detailing the total impasse-generated interest, amount disbursed, types of entities reimbursed, and the methodology used to calculate reimbursements.
12/03/2025 – Introduced and referred to Appropriations
- SB1102: Budget Impasse Reimbursement Program, Sen. L. Williams (D)**
 This bill establishes the Budget Impasse Reimbursement Program to help entities that suffered financial losses during the 2025 budget impasse (defined as the period between July 1 and November 12, 2025). The program, administered by the Office of the Budget, will provide grants to eligible entities such as school districts, counties, human services providers, and nonprofits that received Commonwealth funding in the 2024-25 fiscal year. Eligible entities can apply for reimbursement of documented financing costs or lost interest income directly attributable to the budget delay. The program will be funded by transferring impasse-generated interest from the General Fund, with additional funds from the Budget Stabilization Reserve Fund if needed. Grants will be limited to the actual financial losses experienced by each entity, and recipients must apply

within 90 days of the law's effective date. The Office of the Budget will develop application guidelines, and must submit a comprehensive report to legislative leaders detailing the total impasse-generated interest, grant amounts, number and types of grant recipients, and the methodology used to calculate grants.

12/04/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education

- **[HR377](#): School District Reorganization Study, Rep. Scott (D)**

This resolution directs the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) to conduct an effectiveness and results audit of all existing state incentives intended to promote school district consolidation and shared services. The audit must review current programs, analyze why they have not produced voluntary consolidations or widespread service sharing, and examine models used in other states. LBFC must deliver recommendations to the General Assembly within one year.

12/03/2025 – Introduced and referred to Appropriations

- **[HB2092](#): School District Debt Reduction Requirement, Rep. Grove (R)**

Requires school districts that receive state funding for construction projects to reduce their debt by the exact amount of money they receive. For construction projects approved before the bill's effective date, school districts must reduce existing debt equal to the funds received, and for projects approved after the effective date, they must use the funds specifically to reduce debt related to the construction project. Additionally, the bill mandates that as a school districts reduce their project-related debt, they must correspondingly lower their property tax millage rate.

12/09/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education

- **[HB2095](#): School Code Mandate Waiver Program, Rep. Grove (R)**

This bill establishes a Mandate Waiver Program that allows school districts and intermediate units to apply to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for waivers from certain legal provisions and regulations if doing so would help them operate more effectively, efficiently, or economically. School districts can either apply individually or work through their intermediate unit to request waivers, and must submit a detailed application explaining the need for the waiver, potential benefits, and include an evaluation procedure to measure the program's effectiveness. The Department of Education must respond to waiver applications within 60 days, and if they do not respond, the waiver is automatically approved. After five years, the school district must submit an evaluation, and if the waiver demonstrates improvements in student performance or school operations, it can be renewed. The bill specifically prohibits waivers for certain critical sections of educational law, such as those related to special education, student services, discrimination protections, and collective bargaining agreements. The bill also requires the Department of Education to publicly post all waiver requests, approvals, and disapprovals on their website, providing transparency in the process.

12/09/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education

- **[SB1125](#): Welcoming Schools Policies and Procedures, Sen. Muth (D)**

Requires all school entities to adopt and implement "Welcoming Schools" policies beginning in the 2025-26 school year, ensuring continued access to schools regardless of immigration status. The bill establishes detailed procedures governing interactions with immigration and law enforcement agencies, including warrant requirements, designated points of contact,

documentation and notification requirements, limits on information sharing, and restrictions on access to school zones and school buses. It also requires annual staff training, incorporation of welcoming schools content into professional development plans, public adoption of policies by board resolution, and incident reporting following any enforcement action on school property.

12/22/2025 – Introduced and referred to Education