

DELAWARE COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

March 2, 2026

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News and Updates

[Right-to-Know in Pennsylvania during the Age of AI](#) by Whitney Downard of *Pennsylvania Capital-Star* on February 23, 2026

The proliferation of generative artificial intelligence has upended the state’s public access process, either burdening governments with voluminous filings or increasing transparency for individuals with no legal training. In the coming weeks, state [Senate Bill 431](#) could become a vehicle for reforming the commonwealth’s Right-to-Know law, tamping down on AI’s “malicious use.” Sponsoring Sen. Tracy Pennycuik (R-Montgomery) said inspiration came from local reports of Right-to-Know requests for basic information that could be found elsewhere, such as building addresses and hours of operation.

[Senators urge House to adopt bell-to-bell cell phone ban in Pa. schools](#) by Whitney Downard of *Pennsylvania Capital-Star* on February 4, 2026

Legislation that would mandate a universal bell-to-bell cell phone ban in public and private schools across the commonwealth now heads to the House after getting the nod from senators. A bipartisan group of senators petitioned their colleagues to move the proposal, noting that Gov. Josh Shapiro has already endorsed the idea. “We’re spending nearly \$12 billion here in Pennsylvania on K-12 education this year along, but we’ll be flushing it down the drain if we can’t recapture our student’s attention,” said sponsor Sen. Devlin Robinson (R-Allegheny).

Pa. schools must teach cursive writing under bill signed by Shapiro by Maddison Montag of Penn Live on February 12, 2026

Gov. Josh Shapiro signed a bill that will require cursive handwriting curriculum in all Pennsylvania public schools. “I’m definitely rusty, but I think my penmanship was okay!” Shapiro said in his announcement. The bipartisan legislation, House Bill 17, was sponsored by Rep. Dane Watro (R-Luzerne and Schuylkill) with support from 15 other Republicans and three Democrats. Watro cited research that shows learning cursive “activates areas of the brain involved in executive function, fine motor skills, and working memory.” He also said skipping over cursive curriculum “robs students of the chance to master this age-appropriate challenge.”

State Updates

Session Information

The Senate is in session on February 4, 2026. Upon adjournment, the Senate will stand recessed until March 16, 2026, unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore.

The House is in session on February 4, 2026. Upon adjournment, the House will stand adjourned until March 23, 2026, unless sooner recalled by the Speaker.

Session Days

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

State Legislative Update

Curriculum and Instruction

Became Law

- Act No. 2 of 2026 (HB17): Mandating Cursive Handwriting, Rep. Watro (R)**
 Amends the Public School Code to require that public and private elementary schools teach print, joined italics, and cursive handwriting as part of the mandated English Curriculum.
 02/03/2026 – Third consideration and final passage (42-5)
 02/11/2026 – Approved by the Governor – Act No. 2 of 2026



Legislative Actions

- **HB460: Age-Appropriate Curriculums on Child Abuse, Rep. Daley (D)**

This bill requires school entities, nonpublic schools, and private academic schools to implement an age-appropriate, evidence-based child abuse awareness and prevention education program for students in grades K-12 beginning in the 2027-2028 school year. It also allows mandatory child abuse recognition and reporting training for school employees to count toward continuing professional education credits. The Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Human Services, must provide model guidelines and instructional materials to support implementation.

02/04/2026 – Re-reported as committed

02/04/2026 – Third consideration and final passage (105-93)

In the Senate

02/13/2026 – Referred to Education



- **HB2167: Approved Private Schools Name Change, Rep. Nelson (D)**

This bill makes technical and conforming amendments throughout the Public School Code to replace references to “approved private school” with “approved special education school.” While largely editorial, the changes apply across tuition payment formulas, funding provisions, auditing requirements, reporting, emergency permits, and regulatory references, and direct the State Board of Education and Department of Education to update regulations accordingly. The bill clarifies terminology without altering existing funding formulas, eligibility, or program requirements for special education placements.

02/04/2026 – Reported as committed and first consideration



- **HB2168: Early Intervention Terminology, Rep. Nelson (D)**

This bill amends the Early Intervention Services System Act to update terminology related to the placement of eligible young children in approved special education schools. It clarifies the Department of Education’s responsibility for funding early intervention services for preschool-aged children placed in approved special education schools or chartered schools, replacing the term “private schools” with “special education schools”. The bill aligns statutory language with existing special education terminology used in the Public School Code.

02/04/2026 – Reported as committed and first consideration



- **HB2169: Special Education Fiscal Code Terminology Updates, Rep. Nelson (D)**

This bill amends the Fiscal Code to update terminology by replacing references to “approved private school” with “approved special education school” in provisions governing Department of Education appropriations. The change applies specifically to the allocation of supplemental funding for approved special education schools with historically lower tuition rates and does not alter funding formulas, eligibility, or payment amounts. The bill is technical in nature.

02/04/2026 – Reported as committed and first consideration



- **HB2176: Social Media Literacy Education, Rep. Prokopiak (D)**

Requires the State Board of Education to incorporate social media literacy into Pennsylvania academic standards, including instruction on the mental, psychological, physical, and academic impacts of social media and mobile device use, online safety, cyberbullying, predatory behavior, human trafficking awareness, and personal device security. The Department of Education must develop and provide instructional materials to school entities and nonpublic schools and offer related programming for continuing professional education hours.

02/04/2026 – Reported as committed and first consideration



- **SB116: Addressing Pennsylvania's Long-Term Care Workforce Crisis, Rep. Argall (R)**

Permits students in grades 11 and 12, who are at least 16 years old and employed (paid or voluntary) at a congregate care facility, to earn one elective credit toward every 250 hours worked, up to a maximum of two elective credits. School entities and nonpublic schools must establish an application and approval process, verify hours worked, and ensure the employment meets cooperative vocational education requirements under State regulations before awarding credit.

In the House

02/04/2026 – Referred to Education



- **SB974: Dual Credit Innovation Grant Program Amendments, Sen. Hutchinson (R)**

This bill expands the Dual Credit Innovation Grant Program to allow community education councils, in collaboration with institutions of higher education, to receive grant funding to offer dual credit opportunities to high school students. It prioritizes programs aligned with high-priority occupations and serving students experiencing educational instability, CTE students, low-income students, historically underserved groups, and rural students, and permits funding to be awarded to additional higher education institutions if sufficient applications are not received.

In the House

02/04/2026 – Referred to Education



Student Supports, Services, and Special Education

Newly Introduced Legislation

- **HB2218: Increasing Student Success with More School Counselor Support, Rep. Steele (D)**

Requires each school entity to develop, implement, and annually review a comprehensive school counseling plan aligned K-12 and integrated into the entity's strategic plan. The plan must be delivered by certified school counselors, include defined foundation, management, delivery, and accountability components, and address academic, career, and social-emotional development through both direct and indirect services. School counselors must spend a majority of their time –

targeting at least 80% during student contact days – providing student-facing services, and school entities must post their plan publicly.

02/13/2026 – Introduced and referred to Education

- HB2253: Strengthening Mental Health Support for PA Students, Rep. Guzman (D)**
 Requires each public high school to employ at least one nonclinical “school life support coach” to provide daily social-emotional support, mentorship, crisis response, and resource connections, with staffing ratios of one coach per 300 students in high-need schools and one per 500 students in other schools. Coaches must meet minimum education and training requirements, spend time providing direct nonclinical student support, collaborate with licensed staff for referrals, and may not perform therapeutic or diagnostic functions.
02/26/2026 – Introduced and referred to Education

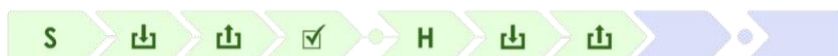
Student Health & Wellness

Legislative Actions

- HB2152: Delaying Secondary School Start Times, Rep. Cooper (R)**
 This bill expands the School Safety and Security Grant Program to allow funding for costs associated with planning, implementing, or operating later secondary school start times. To access grant funding, a school entity must adopt a policy establishing an instructional day start time at least 15 minutes later than the current start time for secondary schools. The bill also directs the Department of Education to provide guidance and support to school entities considering later start times.
02/04/2026 – Reported as amended and first consideration



- SB375: Greg Moyer’s Law, Sen. Brown (R)**
 This bill repeals and replaces existing CPR and AED provisions in the School Code and establishes new requirements for AED availability, CPR/AED training, and cardiac emergency response planning in school entities and nonpublic schools. It requires schools to offer CPR/AED instruction to employees and volunteers at least every two years; mandates that at least one trained individual be present in each school building during the school day; requires certain staff (including school nurses, coaches, physical education teachers, athletic trainers, and marching band directors) to maintain certification; and requires schools participating in interscholastic athletics to maintain AEDs, develop cardiac emergency response plans, conduct annual drills, and submit annual AED inventory reports to the Department of Education. The bill also establishes a statewide AED program, dedicates a portion of School Safety and Security Fund appropriations to AED purchases and training grants, and requires compliance within three years of enactment.
02/04/2026 – Reported as amended and first consideration



- HB1648: Mental Health Days, Rep. N. Nelson (D)**
 Requires each school entity to amend its attendance policy to permit excused absences for student mental health days and defines “mental health day” within the School Code. Students

may use up to two consecutive days for mental health reasons, with additional parameters established in local policy, and schools must integrate supports through the Student Assistance Program when appropriate.

02/04/2026 – Reported as amended and first consideration



- **HB1706: Student Mental Health Awareness, Rep. Daley (D)**

Requires the Department of Education, in consultation with the Departments of Health and Human Services, to develop and post guidelines and materials to educate students participating in athletics, their parents, and coaches about the warning signs of mental health distress and related issues. School entities must notify students, parents, coaches, and extracurricular advisors twice annually about available school- and community-based mental health services and referral partners, and must refer students to the Student Assistance Program within 14 days if they are habitually truant, demonstrate an observable behavior change, or abruptly stop participating in school-sponsored athletic or extracurricular activities without explanation.

02/04/2026 – Reported as amended and first consideration



Newly Introduced Legislation

- **HB2217: School Free-Play Recess and Lunch Periods, Rep. Friel Otten (D)**

Requires school entities, beginning July 1, 2027, to provide at least 30 minutes of daily recess for students in full-day kindergarten through grade five (15 minutes for half-day kindergarten) and at least 30 consecutive minutes of lunch for students in full-day kindergarten through grade twelve. Lunch may not be withheld as a disciplinary measure or replaced with additional instruction unless requested by the student, and instructional time in non-tested subjects may not be reduced to provide recess unless reductions are equitable across tested subjects. The bill permits recess to be withheld for disciplinary reasons and allows adjustments when the school day is delayed or shortened.

02/12/2026 – Introduced and referred to Education

School Safety

Legislative Actions

- **HB1935: Swatting Against a School Entity, Rep. Briggs (D)**

This bill amends the Crimes Code to strengthen penalties for terroristic threats directed at schools and institutions of higher education. It requires individuals convicted of making terroristic threats to pay restitution covering the full cost of evacuations and emergency response and directs the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing to establish a sentencing enhancement for threats made against school entities or higher education institutions.

In the Senate

02/13/2026 – Referred to Judiciary



Newly Introduced Legislation

- **HB2199: Gender-Based Bullying Prevention, Rep. Takac (D)**

Requires school entities to adopt or amend bullying policies to specifically address bullying based on a student's actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The policy must include disciplinary consequences, prevention and intervention programs, guidance for supporting nonbinary and transgender students, annual student review of reporting procedures, public posting requirements, and triennial policy review with annual reporting to the Department of Education. Schools must also report all incidence that meet their adopted definition of bullying, including qualifying incidents occurring outside of school settings.

02/05/2026 – Introduced and referred to Education

Facilities and Transportation

Newly Introduced Legislation

- **HB2250: Adding administrative space to the aggregate building standard in schools, Rep. Brennan (D)**

This bill amends the Public School Code to update provisions governing when school districts of the second, third, and fourth classes must hold a public hearing or voter referendum prior to constructing, leasing, or entering into contracts for new school buildings or substantial additions. It maintains the requirement for school boards to authorize maximum project and building construction costs and clarifies the aggregate building expenditure standards used to determine when voter approval is required, allowing the inclusion of administrative space for school staff, support personnel, and guidance counselors when calculating school construction costs.

School Governance & Finance

Legislative Actions

- **HB2146: Revising the Sunshine Act to Address a Recent PA Supreme Court Decision, Rep. Freeman (D)**

This bill clarifies language of the Pennsylvania Sunshine law concerning open meetings, specifically how agencies notify the public about their business and what exceptions exist. It limits last-minute agenda items to matters arising within 24 hours that are de minimus and do not involve expenditures or contracts, and it requires agencies to publicly announce reasons for agenda changes and post amended agendas by the next business day.

02/04/2026 – Reported as amended and first consideration



Newly Introduced Legislation

- **HB2247: Property Taxes for School Districts in Multiple Counties, Rep. Friel (D)**

Amends the School Code to provide an additional option for school districts that lie in more than one county to set a uniform millage rate change across the entire district in accordance with the limitations under the Taxpayer Relief Act. The bill adds this option as an alternative to existing methods for achieving tax uniformity across counties with differing assessment practices or base years.

02/25/2026 – Introduced and referred to Finance

Cyber and Charter Schools

Newly Introduced Legislation

- **HB2197: Charter School Attendance Reporting, Rep. Kazeem (D)**
Requires the school board of trustees of each charter, regional charter, and cyber charter school to report annually to the Department of Education the number of students who returned to their school district of residence or were otherwise removed from the charter school. The reporting requirement is tied to the fiscal year and adds a new subsection to the School Code governing charter attendance policies.
02/05/2026 – Introduced and referred to Education
- **HB2240: Allow Charter Schools More Than One Address, Rep. Anderson (R)**
Amends charter school application requirements to allow brick-and-mortar charter schools to have more than one facility within the boundaries of a single school district and requires charter schools to provide the school district and ownership or lease information for each facility. Charter schools must also notify the school district within 10 days of any change to facility location or ownership/lease agreements.
02/25/2026 – Introduced and referred to Education