

EDUCATION LEGISLATION BRIEF



May 21, 2021

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UPDATE FROM PREVIOUS BRIEFS:

- [HB 365: Removing Terms from School Code](#)
Re-referred to Senate Appropriations, May 11, 2021
- [HB 412: Substitute Teacher Shortage](#)
Re-referred to Senate Appropriations, May 11, 2021
- [HB 416: Epilepsy/Seizure Recognition](#)
First consideration in Senate, May 10, 2021
- [SB 73: School Mandate Waiver Program](#)
First consideration in Senate, May 10, 2021
- [SB 224: Non-Resident Teacher Certification Reciprocity](#)
Re-referred to Senate Appropriations, May 11, 2021
- [SB 237: Dual Enrollment for Charter Schools](#)
First consideration in Senate, May 10, 2021
- [SB 351: Community Engaged School Pilot Program](#)
First consideration in Senate, May 10, 2021
- [SB 552: Vexatious Requestors](#)
Re-referred to Senate Appropriations, May 11, 2021
- [SB 664: Optional Year of Education Due to COVID-19](#)
Passed Senate, May 12, 2021; Referred to House Education, May 17, 2021



HB 1343: Eye Health

An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in school health services, further providing for health services and for vision screening and examinations, providing for eye health examinations and further providing for examinations by examiners of own choice.

Summary

This bill would increase the frequency of vision screenings for students to receive one prior to admission when entering school, in fourth grade, eighth grade, and as part of evaluations for section 504, Title I reading programs, and IEPs. These screenings are in addition to the current requirement for students to receive vision screenings annually until fifth grade and every other year from fifth to twelfth grade.

Sponsors

Zimmerman, Sturla, Brooks, Hershey, Freeman, Millard, Smith, Pickett, Ciresi, Ryan, Howard, Saylor, Webster, James, Pashinski, Stephens, Pennycuick, Boback, McNeill, Hamm, Cook, Gillen, Irvin, Toohil, Guenst, Rozzi, Diamond, R. Mackenzie, Benham, D. Miller, Kulik, Kauffman and M. Mackenzie

Last Action

Introduced and Referred to House Education, May 14, 2021

HB 1401: Pipeline Safety Package

An Act amending Title 66 (Public Utilities) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in service and facilities, providing for information regarding transmission of hazardous liquids near school buildings.

Summary

This bill seeks to establish a more transparent relationship between pipeline operators and local entities. Pipeline operators fall under the

Wolf joins push for charter school reform at Pottstown High School

By Evan Brandt | Pottstown Mercury

The push to reform Pennsylvania's 24-year-old [charter school law](#), which this year will cost local taxpayers \$3 billion, was reiterated in Pottstown Wednesday.

Gov. Tom Wolf, who proposed charter reforms in his budget announcement in February, was joined by Republican and Democratic legislators, school board members and school superintendents for a press conference held at Pottstown High School.

Calling Pennsylvania's charter school law, "among the worst in the nation," Wolf was in town to support the reform bill proposed by state Rep. Joe Ciresi, D-146th Dist., House Bill 272.

Under current law, charter schools are not transparent, and not accountable either for the taxpayer money they spend or on their results, Wolf said.

Cyber charter schools in particular "are the lowest-performing schools in the state, they graduate far less than two-thirds of their students. They are draining funds from local schools without accountability," Wolf said.

jurisdiction of several federal and states agencies and often are not required to communicate plans with local officials. This bill would require that operators file a report to the commission under whose jurisdiction they fall that includes any school facilities within 1000 feet of a pipeline and an emergency response plan to be provided to the local school board. Operators are responsible for meeting with local school boards and maintaining records of the communications listed above.

Sponsors
Quinn and Webster

Last Action
Introduced and Referred to House Consumer Affairs, May 14, 2021

HB 1412: COVID-19 School Employee Bonus

An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, providing for COVID-19 school employee bonus.

Summary

This bill would establish the COVID-19 School Employee Bonus Program with the intent of distributing \$150M in funds from the American Rescue Plan as a bonus to educators from kindergarten to grade 12. PDE will be required to create an application for the program and will be responsible for allocating and distributing the funds.

Sponsors
Rozzi, Hill-Evans, Kinsey, Sanchez, Merski, Sims and Pisciotano

Last Action
Introduced and Referred to House Labor and Industry, May 14, 2021

HB 1415: Teaching LGBTQ+ History

An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in terms and courses of study, providing for LGBTQ+ history instruction.

Summary

This bill would require that LGBTQ+ history be incorporated into the social studies curriculum beginning in the 2022-23 school year. The text of the bill outlines specific

The movement to privatize public schools marches on during coronavirus pandemic

By Valerie Strauss | The Washington Post

While many Americans see 2021 as the year that may bring back something close to normalcy after the coronavirus pandemic, it has instead been declared the [“Year of School Choice”](#) by the American Federation for Children, an organization that promotes alternatives to public education and that was once headed by Betsy DeVos.

Anyone who was thinking that the departure of DeVos as U.S. education secretary would stem the movement to privatize public education should think again.

In numerous states, legislatures have proposed or are considering legislation to expand alternatives to the public schools that educate most American schoolchildren, often using public funding to pay for private and religious school.

This post looks at some of the latest state actions. It was written by Carol Burris, a former prizewinning principal in New York and now executive director of the nonprofit advocacy group the Network for Public Education, which opposes charter schools and the privatization of public education.

and general ways LGBTQ+ history can be integrated into the curriculum, including instruction on the principle of social equality and discrimination, utilizing public and private resources, and consulting with local LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations to develop materials. PDE will also be required to provide training materials on this subject matter to schools.

Sponsors

Sims, Daley, Schlossberg, Hill-Evans, Hohenstein, Isaacson, Sanchez, Burgos, Madden, Fiedler, Rozzi, Lee, Schweyer, Kenyatta, Innamorato, O’Mara and Briggs

Last Action

Referred to House Education, May 14, 2021

HB 1446: Allowing an Additional Year of School for students who are Aging out of Special Education

An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in pupils and attendance, providing for extended special education enrollment due to COVID-19.

Summary

This legislation would allow for students enrolled in special education programs to enroll in an additional year of programming free of charge, even if they would normally “age out” of the program at 21 years old. Sponsors of the bill note that state and federal dollars will be utilized to fund this; however, specific allocation guidelines are not included in the current version of the bill. SB 664 is a similar piece of legislation that includes

all students and has moved rapidly through the state senate.

Sponsors

Sonney, Boback, Brooks, R. Brown, Ciresi, T. Davis, Deasy, Guenst, Harkins, Longiotti, Moul, N. Nelson, Pickett and Staats

Last Action

Introduced and Referred to House Education, May 20, 2021

HB 1460: Internet Safety Education Curriculum

An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in terms and courses of study, providing for Internet safety education curriculum.

Summary

This legislation would require PDE to create an age-appropriate internet safety curriculum for students in kindergarten through grade twelve. The curriculum will be broad, with school districts having the option of topics and how to incorporate them into existing curricula. Some of the topics recommended by the authors of the bill include safe and responsible use of social media, awareness around providing personal information online, recognizing deceptive content, and more. Students may be excused from this curriculum at the request of their parent or guardian.

Sponsors

T. Davis, Sanchez, Guenst, Hill-Evans, Howard, O'Mara, Schweyer, Neilson, Ciresi, Hennessey, Shusterman and Lee

Last Action

Introduced and Referred to House Education, May 20, 2021

SB 693: Returning "Ghost Teachers" to the Classroom

An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in collective bargaining, further providing for definitions and providing for union leave.

Summary

This bill would end full-time union leave for teachers who are on leave from the classroom to do "union work", but still receiving compensation and benefits from the district. There is little oversight and accountability as to the work the teachers are

participating in while on union leave, and this bill seeks to fix that establishing stricter regulations on the practice. This is primarily an issue in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Sponsors

Stefano, Phillips-Hill, K. Ward, Martin, DiSanto, Aument, J. Ward and Dush

Last Action

Introduced and Referred to Senate Education, May 19, 2021

Sources

Pennsylvania General Assembly. 2021. <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/>

Brandt, Evan. *"Wolf joins push for charter school reform at Pottstown High School"*.

Pottstown Mercury. May 20, 2021.

https://www.pottsmmerc.com/local-news/wolf-joins-push-for-charter-school-reform-at-pottstown-high-school/article_c3060158-b8e1-11eb-a876-4398c9130c60.html

Strauss, Valerie. *"The movement to privatize public schools marches on during coronavirus pandemic"*. The Washington Post. May 20, 2021.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2021/05/20/school-privatization-movement-marches-on-during-pandemic/>