

CCSBLC Meeting Summary

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

6:30 to 7:55 p.m.

Members in attendance:

1. Bill Wood, CCSBLC Chair, Avon Grove School District
2. Susan Audrain, Tredyffrin-Easttown School District
3. Victoria Walker, Phoenixville Area School District
4. Caryn Ghayeb, Downingtown Area School District
5. Brian Fox, Octorara School District
6. John Melniczek, Owen J. Roberts School District
7. Wendy Litzke – Great Valley School District
8. Karen Fleming – West Chester Area School District
9. Jennifer Kehs – Oxford Area School Districts
10. Ethan Kramer – Kennett Consolidated School District

CCIU Staff in Attendance; Mary Jeanne Curley, Director of Communications and Learning Solutions; Melissa Smith, Assistant Director of Communications and Learning Solutions, Tonia Farnum, Communications Manager, Communications and Learning Solutions, and Theresa Marsden, Communications Specialist.

Special Guests in Attendance: PA State Senator Carolyn Committa; Michael Hartman, Chief of Staff, Senator Committa

1. Bill Wood, interim CCSBLC Chair, School Director, called the meeting at 6:32 p.m. and welcomed everyone, including Sen. Carolyn Committa who joined the meeting to provide an update from Harrisburg.
2. Senator Committa thanked the group for inviting her to speak to school board members. She is in her third year of serving on the Senate Education Committee.
 - a. Budget overview – the major development in education is the governor’s budget plan. It increases public education by \$1 billion this year, with targeted support inside and outside of the classroom. 8% increase in basic ed and special. Investments in childcare and early intervention. There are focuses on improved school lunches, incentives for quality teachers, and upgrades to facilities.
 - b. Grow Our Own Educators- legislation that is in response to the teacher shortage and will provide incentives to encourage graduates to become teachers and educators. Sen. Committa is redrafting her bill from last year (SB 1316) that would recruit and train teachers from within their communities and equip professionals with the resources to pursue careers in education. The bill also proposes efforts to diversify teachers.
 - c. Mental Health – Gov. Shapiro acknowledged the need for mental healthcare in his budget address. The budget proposal calls for \$500 million increase in mental health supports in schools. Sen. Committa is reintroducing legislation that requires schools to reevaluate their needs for mental health supports.
 - d. Mindfulness- Sen. Committa is working on partnership with WCU to work on stress reduction techniques to offer to parents, families and teachers. If you are interested in getting involved please reach out to Senator Committa’s office.
 - e. School Safety – Gov. Shapiro’s budget plan continues the past years work to ensure school safety and security grants to address physical safety enhancements and to provide security training. On Thursday, March 30, the CCIU is hosting the Safe Schools Summit. Sen. Committa encouraged board members to attend.

- f. March is Music in the Schools Month – Introduced SB 38 designating March as Music, Theater, and Dance in Our Schools Month. Many studies show the high value of music and art education. Sen. Committa will always support investment in these programs in our schools. Wet Chester district office is holding a music and arts open house, Friday, May 5, from 4-8pm. All are welcome.
- g. Environmental education –On April 22 from 10am-1pm at the Upper Main YMCA, Senator Committa will be hosting an Earth Day festival. These important opportunities are preparing next generation of leaders to make decision based on science and sustainability.
- h. Budget Hearing – PDE hearing is on Wednesday, March 29. It is a full day hearing and you can access more info and watch it live at www.pasenate.com/budget
- i. Contact office: 610-692-2112
- j. Questions
 - i. Is Universal Free Lunch for schools NOT participating in the National School Lunch Program? Sen. Committa did not have answer and will learn more.
 - ii. What are you seeing in the Senate as far as charter reform? Sen. Committa stated that nothing has come before the Senate Education Committee to date. She believes that during budget negotiations that cyber charter reform will be included in those discussions. The ruling on fair funding lawsuit has raised questions about what will be discussed in the budget talks. There has not been an appeal yet to the lawsuit. The have been very few conversations.
 - iii. Sen. Committa has not cosponsor any bills yet this year, but Senator Williams and Sen. Kearney have several bills that Sen. Committa is in support of.
 - iv. Right to know – all Chester County districts are suffering from it and are in support of legislation to reduce those requests.

3. Legislative Update

- a. Governor’s Budget Proposal
 - i. Basic Education Funding (BEF) – \$567 million increase (7.8%)
 - ii. Special Education Funding (SEF) – \$104 million increase (7.8%)
 - iii. No “Level up” funding – Level up funding is for the 100 least economically advantaged school districts in the state. It is not included in this budget.
 - iv. There is indication that the GOP will not be seeking an appeal to the fair funding lawsuit (rumor, not official).
 - 1. Either way, we need to get our voices out there about what our education funding needs are.
 - v. At local level, we see 5.9 – 13.7% increase in BEF across Chester County school districts. This is proposed and not definitive. \$2.8 – 16.0% in SEF increases across Chester County school districts.
 - vi. Other highlights –
 - 1. \$100 million in state appropriation for environmental repairs;
 - 2. \$38 million in school food services
 - 3. \$17.3 million increase in CTE funding
 - 4. \$1 million increase adult and family literacy
 - 5. \$10.4 million increase for early intervention
 - 6. \$30 million increase for Pre-k Counts
 - 7. \$2.7 million increase for Head Start
- b. PA House of Representatives
 - i. Democrats are now in major by 1 seat
 - ii. New special elections will be during the May primary
 - iii. Joanna McClinton is Speaker of the House
 - iv. Newly formed House Education Committee is now set. Majority chair is Rep. Peter Schweyer.

- c. Education Bills –
 - i. 39 bills filed in the House
 - ii. 59 bills filed in the Senate
- d. Legislative Breakfast
 - i. Thursday, April 20, 8:30 a.m. at TCHS Brandywine
 - ii. Hannah Barrick, Executive Director of PASBO, will give a budget presentation that will address the impact of the state budget on school district finances, the fair funding decision and charter school funding.
 - 1. Council asked if Hannah could speak on transportation funding and the audit of 12 Pennsylvania school districts.
 - 2. Ethan Kramer noted the opportunity to present our budgets as a group in order to have a unified approach to advocacy.
 - 3. The group discussed seating at the breakfast and the desire to seat attendees so that our districts are spread amongst the legislators.
- 4. School Board Member Survey Results
 - a. Asked about a variety of different topics and whether they support, oppose, or are unsure of policies.
 - b. 95% support cyber charter funding reform and accountability
 - c. In the word cloud, “funding” was word used the most.
 - d. Mary will send out the full survey with comments.
- 5. CCSBLC Round-table Discussion
 - a. Open Discussion
 - i. Brian Fox gave a reminder that PSBA Legislative Day on the Hill is April 18. Sign up if you are able to attend.
- 6. PA House and Senate Session Days
 - a. Senate:
 - i. April 24, 25, 26
 - ii. May 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10
 - iii. June 5, 6, 7, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
 - b. House:
 - i. April 24, 25, 26
 - ii. May 1, 2, 3, 22, 23, 24
 - iii. June 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
- 7. Upcoming CCSBLC meetings:
 - i. Legislative Breakfast - Thursday, April 20 at 8:30 a.m. TCHS Brandywine Campus Cafeteria 8:30 a.m.
 - ii. Wednesday, May 24 – virtual
 - iii. Wednesday, June 28 – in person
 - iv. July - No meeting - Legislature not in session
 - v. August - No meeting - Legislature not in session
- 8. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:55 p.m.

