



# CHESTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

January 2024

# AGENDA

- Welcome/Introductions - Bill Wood, Chair
- Basic Education Funding Update – Dr. George Fiore
- Legislative Update - Christa Fazio & Dr. George Fiore
- Legislative Breakfast Update
- Legislative Priorities Survey
- Member Roundtable Discussion
  - Resolutions supporting BCEF/opposing vouchers
  - Other topics suggested by members

# UPDATE SUMMARY

- Six pertinent laws passed between December 13 and 14, 2023
- No additional movement expected until at least March 2024
  - House is at a stalemate:
    - 101-101 (special election for vacancy planned for Feb. 13)
    - Needed roof repairs in the Capital building
  - Senate unwilling to move without the House
    - Minimal session days currently scheduled (1 in Jan.; 3 in Feb.)
  - February 6 Governor's Budget address
- Key Legislation to Watch
  - Mental Health

# DECEMBER 2023: ENACTED LAWS

## **Act 34 of 2023: Fiscal Code Bill (prev. HB 1300)**

- Authorizes final 25% of 2023-24 budget
- School-related provisions:
  - Payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT): increase \$2 to \$2.40 per acre for state-owned lands exempt from local property tax
  - Federal funds: PDE restricted use of unused ARPA funds
  - School improvement grants: funded through \$100 million transfer from unappropriated Level Up funding
  - School safety funding: \$5 million
  - Other miscellaneous PDE fund specifications

# DECEMBER 2023: ENACTED LAWS

## **Act 33 of 2023: School Code Bill (prev. HB301)**

Allocates...

- \$300+ million to libraries and community colleges
- \$100 million to school mental health services
- \$175 million to school facility repairs, such as mold and asbestos abatement, \$100 million comes from funding previously earmarked for the Level Up program.
- \$150 million increase to the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) programs.
- \$10 million for Student Teacher Grant Program
- \$14 million increase to CTC funding





# DECEMBER 2023: ENACTED LAWS

## Act 33 of 2023: School Code Bill (prev. HB301)

Addressing  
Teacher/  
Substitute  
Teacher  
Shortages



School  
Safety &  
Security



# DECEMBER 2023: ENACTED LAWS

## Act 33 of 2023: School Code Bill – Additional Directives

- Ready to Learn Block Grants – Static funding
- Social Security Payments
- Ends Plancon 1.0
- School Lunch and Breakfast Reimbursement
- Removal of derogatory terms
- Financially Distressed School funding
- Payments to IUs
- School Police Officer Reporting
- EITC Funds –
  - Changes from 80% to 90% Use of Funds (controls administrative fees to 10%)
  - Changes data reporting requirements
  - Makes data publicly available

# DECEMBER 2023: ENACTED LAWS

## Act 35 of 2023: School Code Bill (prev. SB843)

BEF/SEF  
Funding  
Reviews



Educator  
Workforce

Personal  
Finance



Miscellaneous



# DECEMBER 2023: ENACTED LAWS

## **Act 56 of 2023: Minimum Number of School Days/Hours**

- Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year and continuing each school year thereafter, a school entity shall provide within the school year:
  - (1) a minimum of one hundred eighty (180) days of instruction;
  - or (2) nine hundred (900) hours of instruction at the elementary level or nine hundred ninety (990) hours of instruction at the secondary level.

## **Act 55 of 2023: Dental Screenings**

## **Act 52 of 2023: Calculating ADM for College in the High School**

# Key Legislation to Watch: Mental Health

- **HB 1367**: Referred to the House Education Committee (6-12-23): This bill adds a section to the PIAA CIPPE form about understanding mental health and resources available to the student athlete and requires coaches to take a mental health training course that must be approved by the Department of Health.
- **HB 1553**: Voted out of the House Education Committee (1-18-24): This bill requires schools to include the suicide prevention hotline telephone number on student identification cards for students in grades 6-12; and, in school safety and security, further providing for school safety and security coordinator. The suicide prevention hotline telephone number provided on the student identification card must be a telephone number that can be accessed for use twenty-four (24) hours a day and seven (7) days a week by a student or other individual. The board of school directors of a school district shall work with the school safety and security coordinator under section 1309-B to implement the requirements of this section.

# Key Legislation to Watch: Mental Health

- **HB 1519:** Voted out of the House Education Committee (1-18-24): This legislation would allow students to take three excused absences for mental health reasons without requiring a doctor's note. Providing mental health days would encourage students to take care of their mental health as they would their physical health. This bill would align Pennsylvania with Oregon and Utah which have already passed bipartisan legislation to provide students with this useful mental health tool.
- **HB 1665:** Voted out of the House Education Committee (1-18-24): This legislation would create the School Counseling Services Act, which would require that schools develop a robust and comprehensive school counseling plan. The plan would ensure that academic, career planning, and social and emotional learning concerns are addressed, would include a multilevel school data review to determine student needs, and would align with guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. In addition to requiring a comprehensive school counseling plan, our bill would spell out the way in which counselors spend their time, requiring that they spend at least 80% of their working time engaged in direct and indirect services to students on days that students were in school. These services could involve academic advising, career planning, social and emotional skill building, intervening with students at risk of dropping out, orienting new and transferring students, and contributing to decision-making teams and programs that directly impact students and families. Administrative responsibilities could take up no more than 20% of their time.

# Key Legislation to Watch: Start Time

**HB 1848: Referred to the House Education Committee (11-14-23):** Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, this legislation would require the instructional day for public secondary schools to begin no earlier than 8:15 a.m. Further, it would require each governing board of a public school entity to inform its school community about the health and academic impacts of sleep deprivation on secondary school students and the benefits of a later school start time, and to discuss local strategies to implement a delayed school start time.



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# CCSBLC MEETING SCHEDULE

IN PERSON: January 24, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL: February 28, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.

Legislative Breakfast: March 1, 2023 @ 8:30 a.m.

VIRTUAL: April 24, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.

IN PERSON: May 22, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL: June 26, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.