

CCSBLC September Meeting
September 27, 2023

Attendees:

In-person - Bill Wood, Susan Audrain, Tori Baratta, Caryn Ghrayeb, Mary Curley, Melissa Smith
Virtual – Jennifer Kehs, Brian Fox, Ethan Cramer, Victoria Walker, Theresa Marsden

- I. Chairperson Bill Wood opened the meeting at 7:05pm.
- II. Legislative Update presented by Mary Curley
 - a. Budget Update/Status
 - i. Budget was passed in August; however, 25% did not have a vehicle in which to guide spending. This equates to \$1.1 billion of the spending plan which includes:
 1. \$100 million for school mental health grants
 2. \$100 million in Level Up funds
 3. \$10 million in teacher stipends
 4. \$125 million for school environmental repair grants
 5. \$50 million for school safety and security grant transfers to PCCD
 - ii. [HB 1300](#): Fiscal code bill was passed by House in June; Passed Senate at the end of August with amendments; Unsure if House approves of the changes from the Senate. Key points of the bill include:
 1. Authorized increase for state trooper complement to 4,410.
 2. 2% state aid increase for community colleges.
 3. \$70 million allocation for libraries.
 4. \$295 million for Ready-to-Learn Block Grants.
 5. Up to \$7 million to assist financially distressed school districts.
 6. Additional funds for career centers, non-public school safety initiatives, and PASSHE debt repayments.
 7. Contingency on tuition freeze for PASSHE for two academic years.
 8. Funds transfer from Game Fund to Clean Streams Fund with new distribution structure.
 9. Increased payment to rural local governments for land usage.
 10. Financial support for mental health services, ambulance services, and nursing facilities.
 11. Transfer of \$31 million from Medical Marijuana Program Fund to General Fund.
 - iii. Lack of clarity in House majority has slowed movement of bill review.
 1. Special election in mid-September did lead to a Democrat being elected and Democrats now once again hold a one-person majority; however, there is another representative running for Magistrate Judge in November that may likely lead to another empty seat and another special election. Uncertain if that might happen in November upon learning of election results or in January after being confirmed.

2. Some rumors indicating that the fiscal code bill may be pushed back resulting in timing that would be close to when the Governor will present his next year budget which may mean it could just get rolled into additional negotiations for the 2024-25 budget.
- b. [SB340](#): Online Curriculum Availability
 - i. Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year and each school year thereafter, a school entity shall post an Internet link or title for every textbook used by the school entity, a course syllabus or a written summary of each instructional course and the State academic standards for each instructional course offered by the school entity on its publicly accessible Internet website.
 - ii. Passed the House last session with a Republican majority and some Democratic support.
 - c. [SB757](#): School Voucher Program
 - i. Effort to implement the school voucher program that was line-item vetoed by the Governor during budget approval.
 - ii. Passed Senate and currently sits in House Education Committee. The bill currently lacks Democratic support.
 - d. [HB27](#): Substitute Teachers and School Safety and Security Enhancements
 - i. During the pandemic, legislators lessened some of the requirements/limitations for substitute teachers to help with shortages. That legislation was temporary and expired June 30, 2023. This bill would extend it to June 30, 2026.
 - ii. Passed House, Passed Senate with two amendments (one of which is an attempt to get the mental health funding to flow)
 - e. Education-related Bills Recently Introduced
 - i. [HB1616](#): Weapons and School Safety Loophole
 1. Introduced by John Lawrence based on local experiences.
 2. Closes transfer in lieu of expulsion hearing loophole for possession of weapons and violent acts while at school, as well as provides guidance on options available for student disciplinary actions and making appropriate placements.
 3. Some legislators don't fully understand and had some concerns around the potential of the bill denying a student's education (it actually allows opportunities to appropriately place student and enable school to get the student the help and supports they may need) and it might unduly affect black/brown students.
 - ii. [HB1507](#): School Year Days/Hours
 1. New rules for scheduling instructional time 180 days OR 900 elementary/990 secondary hours, currently is 180 days AND 900/990 hours.
 2. Already allowed for charter schools and non-public schools.
 3. If there is a year with many snow days, it provides the flexibility to work with hours rather than just days.

- iii. [SB843](#): Teacher Reciprocity
 1. PA currently has the most stringent requirements of all surrounding states.
 2. Joining the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact.
 - iv. [HB1654](#): Full-day Kindergarten Initiative
 1. Bill would require PDE to develop a state plan for FDK by 2024-25.
 2. Would require districts to provide FDK for students ages 3-5 (wouldn't change mandatory age, but parents could choose to send early).
 3. Don't see this passing – really feel it is much more an election ploy.
 - v. [HB1604](#): School Free-Play Recess and Lunch Periods
 1. Mandatory 30-minute recess for K-5 students and 30-minute lunchtime for K-12 students.
 - vi. [HB1603](#): Charter School Enrollment Cap
 1. Seeking to help public schools better account for enrollment and plan for expenditures.
 - vii. [HB1637](#): Substitute Teachers
 1. Lowering the education requirement to associate's degree for substitute teachers.
 2. Help make some of the pandemic provisions more permanent and add some additional guidelines around it.
 - viii. [HB 1628](#): Defibrillators in Schools: Provisions for external defibrillators and training.
 - ix. [SB 876](#): Addiction Continuing Education: Mandate for alcohol and drug addiction continuing education.
 - x. [SB 886](#): Definition of Excused Absence: Inclusion of mental health days for students.
 - xi. [SB 889](#): Sun Protection Measures: Policy for sunscreen usage in schools and youth camps.
 - xii. [HB 1653](#): Advanced Placement Teacher Training: Establishment of a program for AP teacher training.
- f. State Primary Date Change for 2024 Presidential Primary
- i. Two separate bills currently in play – [SB224](#) and [HB1634](#). Anticipate one of them passing, but unsure which one.
 1. Proposed shift from April 23rd to either March 19th or April 2nd
 2. Objective: Increase Pennsylvania's influence in presidential nominations and avoid religious holiday conflicts.
 3. May be problematic in pushing back petition time to get on the ballot.
- g. [HB77](#): Bar sexually violent predators from living near schools or daycares
- i. Introduced and referred to committee on House Judiciary
- III. FYI for Districts moving into contract negotiations:

- a. Four-year contracts ratified with projected salary and benefits increase by more than 20% by Shapiro administration and the Service Employees International Union Local 668 and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 13.
 - b. Pay raises of 20.25% over the contract period.
- IV. CCSBLC Meeting Schedule
 - a. VIRTUAL: October 25, 2023 @ 6:30 p.m.
 - b. IN PERSON: November 22, 2023 *tentative* (will discuss at October meeting based on the date falling right before Thanksgiving and the forecast of limited legislative movement due to elections)
 - c. No meeting in December
 - d. IN PERSON: January 24, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.
 - e. VIRTUAL: February 28, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.
 - f. Legislative Breakfast: Tentative date is March 1, 2023 @ 8:30 a.m.
 - g. VIRTUAL: April 24, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.
 - h. IN PERSON: May 22, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.
 - i. VIRTUAL: June 26, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.
- II. Member Discussion
 - a. Discussion led by Chair Bill Wood around what bills the members could agree upon and collectively work to address with their legislators. Group agreed on:
 - i. Substitute Teachers (HB27/HB1637)
 - ii. Teacher Reciprocity (SB843)
 - iii. School Year Days/Hours (HB1507)
 - iv. Weapons & School Safety Loophole (HB1616)
 - b. Discussion around armed officers in schools
 - i. Desire for better clarification on roles/description of SROs
 - ii. T/E has had some discussion around non-uniformed observers, but the Board did not elect to include the positions in their budget this year.
 - iii. Dtown currently has armed security in middle & high schools – schools in the borough are from the police dept but those not in the borough utilize an outside contractor.
 - iv. Kennett is using a collaborative model – convened 3 police departments in district and working together for coverage and coordination; sharing grants and funding.
 - v. Octorara contracts with one armed and others not.
 - vi. Oxford has armed guards that rotate through the middle school and high school.