

CCSBLC May 2024 Meeting

May 22, 2024

In-person Meeting

Attendees:

Bill Wood (Chairperson, Avon Grove), Ethan Cramer (Kennett Consolidated), Nick Rotoli (Owen J. Roberts), Jennifer Kehs (Oxford), Dan Wiser (Phoenixville), Maryann Piccioni (Tredyffrin/Easttown), Jody Allen (Unionville-Chadds Ford), Alex Christy (West Chester), Christa Fazio (CCIU), Beth Edwards (CCIU)

1. Chairperson Bill Wood of Avon Grove opened the meeting at 7:12 p.m.
2. Christa Fazio, CCIU director of communications, marketing, and engagement, provided a legislative update as follows:
 - a. 2024 Session Days – PA House and Senate
 - i. May 20, 21, 22 (House Only)
 - ii. June 3, 4, 5
 - iii. June 10, 11, 12
 - iv. June 17, 18 (House Only)
 - v. June 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
 - b. Legislation of interest:
 - i. SB 795 - Amends the Public School Code, establishing the Pennsylvania award for student success scholarship (PASS).
 1. Lifeline Scholarship Program - Moving in the Senate.
 2. Completed first and second consideration (5/8/24).
 3. If it gets passed in the Senate, this will become one of the bargaining chips as anything that has passed at least one chamber gets considered for the omnibus education bill that typically is passed when the budget gets passed.
 4. Reported as amended. Party line except Senator A. Williams.
 5. This bill moved unexpectedly; we had anticipated this moving in June.
 6. Some of our school districts have passed resolutions regarding the need for adequacy funding of our public schools and opposition to private school vouchers, such as PASS.
 7. Chairperson Wood inquired about the amendments. Christa Fazio to follow up to answer his question.
 - ii. HB 1097 - Amends the Public School Code, in terms and courses of study, providing for moment of silence on the anniversary of 9/11 in each school entity.
 1. Directs the Department of Education (PDE) to identify a model curriculum for instruction on the events and significance of Sept.

- 11, 2001, no later than 12 months after the effective date.
Specifies the information required in the model curriculum.
 2. Provides PDE shall make curriculum materials and other resources available on its website. Establishes nothing in the act shall be construed to require a school entity or nonpublic school to implement, adopt or use the curriculum, 17 materials and other resources made available by PDE. Provides a definition for school entity.
 3. The bill was unanimously reported as committed.
 4. This was a bill that was proposed by Senator Doug Mastriano in prior sessions. This bill may be used as a vehicle for the School Code.
- iii. HB 851 – Amends Public School Code, in school health services, establishing and providing for Menstrual Hygiene Products Accessibility Grant Program; and making an appropriation.
 1. Reported as amended.
 2. HB 851 was amended on May 7 to adjust the appropriation from \$100,000 to \$3 million and lower the eligibility threshold grants to schools that have just 25% free or reduced lunch. The amendment also broadens the language on where these products had to be available.
 - iv. HB 1367 – Amends the Public School Code, in school health services, providing for mental health awareness for student athletes, parents, guardians and coaches. Requires the Department of Health and Department of Education to develop materials to inform and educate students about athletic activity about the nature and warning signs of mental health distress, mental health illness, and related issues.
 1. Reported as amended.
 2. This bill was written by a student. We (PASA and education leaders) advocated for the removal of the required letter to a student’s parents/guardians upon any student deciding to quit an activity as we want to refrain from parent perception that we believe a child’s decision is based on a mental health issue. We can send a letter if we believe it is appropriate.
 - v. Budget Discussions Update
 1. There are meaningful conversations happening in regard to cyber tuition reform. It’s still too early to know how this will play out.
 2. House Updates:
 - a. Fair Funding school code – House circulated the cosponsor memo with this language:
 - i. Pennsylvania’s public education funding system is unconstitutional. It is our constitutional duty to fix it.

- ii. The Court ruled that the ‘thorough and efficient’ clause in our state Constitution “requires that every student receive a meaningful opportunity to succeed academically, socially, and civically, which requires that all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education.”
- iii. Unfortunately, as the Court ruling summarized, Pennsylvania’s overreliance on local property taxes results in low-wealth school districts never being able to provide adequate funding for staffing, courses, curricula, and facilities. The state must step up and provide adequate funding in a way that makes Pennsylvania’s constitutional promise a reality for all students.
- iv. This legislation reflects the formula recommendations in the reconstituted Basic Education Funding Commission’s majority report. Governor Shapiro’s proposed 2024-25 budget put us on the path with the call for a historic \$1.1 billion increase in basic education funding.
- v. PASA will provide a letter school leaders can use as a template to talk about basic education funding and how your schools and students will benefit from additional resources next year. Would be good for our schools to use this framework for discussions with their legislators before they come back in early June.
- vi. This legislation is the next step on that path and contains three major components:
 - 1. Increases the stability and predictability in PA’s current fair funding formula.
 - 2. With Governor Shapiro’s proposed \$1.1 billion investment, \$200 million would be distributed through the fair funding formula benefiting all 500 school districts.
 - 3. Determines an adequate spending target for each school district and commits to paying down the adequacy gap over a period of seven years.
- vii. Statewide, the state is responsible for a \$5.1 billion adequacy gap across 371 school districts.
- viii. Closing this gap over a seven-year period requires a \$735 million adequacy investment each year.

- ix. School districts are required to spend these funds on programs that are proven to improve student success.
 - x. Provides tax equity payments for the school districts with the highest tax burdens relative to their local resources.
 - xi. This funding (\$1 billion over seven years) will help 169 school districts provide property tax relief or mitigate future increases.
 - xii. Finally, this legislation will include cyber charter school funding reforms that will provide several hundred million dollars in savings to school districts.
- vi. HB2007: Online academic assessments
1. Was introduced in February of this, In April, Gov. Shapiro stated this will be implemented in the 2026-27 school year.
 2. Starting 2024-25 school year, students would be required to take the Keystones, PSSAs, and any other exam or assessment developed by PDE to every student in the Commonwealth online.
 3. Exempt students: IEP does not allow student to complete exam online or a student who is learning English as a second language.
 4. Results of exams required to be reported to school district within 10 business days.
 5. Funding support: "To the extent funding is available," PDE shall establish a grant program to help schools purchase necessary tech and internet.
 6. Passed the House on 3rd Consideration.
3. Christa Fazio of CCIU provided recap of Day on the Hill as follows:
- a. Superintendents from Octorara, Oxford, and Avon Grove were in attendance.
 - b. Emphasized the importance of advocacy, especially when legislators may be unaware of the issues that are important to districts.
 - c. Topics discussed at Day on the Hill:
 - i. Intermediate units owning property
 - ii. Career, Technical, and Customized Education funding
 - iii. Career, Technical, and Customized Education staff base – high difficulty for tradespeople to acquire the credentials to teach Career, Technical, and Customized Education courses.
4. Member Discussion:
- a. Fair Funding Press Event
 - i. Chairperson Bill Wood of Avon Grove: Press event would amplify the message for the legislators and public.
 1. Ten districts have passed various forms of the resolution.
 2. This event is on hold and may not happen.

3. West Chester had agreed to host the event, but Coatesville might be open to hosting after end of school year.
- ii. Chairperson Bill Wood of Avon Grove: Asked for attendees to talk to their superintendents about potential participation.
- b. Reposition the Act 1 Exceptions for Special Education to a state-funded rebate program.
 - i. Maryann Piccioni of Tredyffrin/Easttown: Explained that her district has had the exemption seven times.
 1. Explained that the proposal is asking the public to pay for special education twice.
 2. This reposition would transfer the burden away from taxpayers and back to the state level.
 - ii. Ethan Cramer of Kennett Consolidated: Asked if this has potential to divide the districts – is there a disadvantage if a district chooses not to participate?
 - iii. Chairperson Bill Wood of Avon Grove: Asked for an outline of the concept to take to superintendents.
 - iv. Chairperson Bill Wood of Avon Grove: Brought up that his district does not apply for the exemption.
- c. Reduce the 10-mile transportation radius to 5 miles.
 - i. Chairperson Bill Wood of Avon Grove: Mentioned that many legislators are aware of this issue.
 1. The reduction in radius would save districts considerable money.
 - ii. Dan Wiser of Phoenixville: Asked for clarification on issue.
 1. Districts required to provide transportation to private schools for students in the district.
- d. HB2043: Restrict student use of mobile devices during the school day.
 - i. Jody Allen of Unionville-Chadds Ford: Asked if any attendees have schools that are phone free.
 1. Chairperson Wood of Avon Grove: Explained that a principal in his district tried to minimize cell phone use with students and received pushback from the public.
 - ii. Ethan Cramer of Kennett Consolidated: Mentioned that parents want to be able to contact their children in the event of an emergency, which is understandable.
 - iii. Jody Allen of Unionville-Chadds Ford: Explained that his district's curriculum council is discussing this issue.
 - iv. Nick Rotoli of Owen J. Roberts: Explained that his district allows certain times of day when cell phones are permitted to be used.
 - v. Maryann Piccioni of Tredyffrin/Easttown: Mentioned that at the recent CCIU Board meeting there was a presentation from a school about the use of Yonder bags to reduce cell phone usage; she said that the school did not receive much pushback over it.
 - vi. Dan Wiser of Phoenixville: Spoke about his district's policy on this issue.

1. The consensus is to wait it out until current high school students graduate while encouraging younger students (middle school) to refrain from using cell phones during the school day; thus, future high school students will struggle less with this.
 - e. HB1032: Solar for Schools Grant Program.
 - i. Dan Wiser of Phoenixville: Asked for feedback on this from the other districts – explained that students are pushing for fully renewable resources within his district.
 - ii. Chairperson Bill Wood of Avon Grove: Explained that his district just built a new high school that does not have solar panels due to cost.
 - iii. Dan Wiser of Phoenixville: Mentioned that his district did a solar feasibility study.
 - iv. Ethan Cramer of Kennett Consolidated: Asked which budget the funding would be coming from.
 1. Jody Allen of Unionville-Chadds Ford: Answered that the funding would come from Department of Community and Economic Development.
 - f. JROTC – Houlihan Update.
 - i. Dan Wiser of Phoenixville: Explained that his district could not fill the instructor position for JROTC. He emphasized there are a lot of requirements for the role.
 - ii. Ethan Cramer of Kennett Consolidated: Suggested that JROTC could potentially become an intermediate unit effort to make the program more accessible to districts.
 - g. Chairperson Bill Wood of Avon Grove: Mentioned HB2311 – School behavior/mental health screenings required for all students.
 - h. Chairperson Bill Wood of Avon Grove: Mentioned aging out for students and the impact on the budget.
5. CCSBLC Meeting Schedule:
 - a. VIRTUAL: June 26, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.
 6. The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.