



January 13, 2020

Legislative UPDATE

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education

The House of Representatives returns to session this week and again next week. Both chambers will not be in session concurrently until the first week of February, when Gov. Tom Wolf will deliver his budget address on Feb. 4th to a joint session of the General Assembly. On Feb. 27th and March 5th, Chancellor Dan Greenstein will appear before the chambers' Appropriations Committees to discuss the System's FY 2021/22 budget request.

Before then, the 2020 drive toward a successful System Redesign is being launched. Chancellor Greenstein delivers his State of the System Address on Wednesday, Jan. 15th. He's expected to press state legislators to support not only a general education appropriations increase of 2 percent increase but also an initial \$20 million investment in an overall 5-year, \$100 million program aimed at information technology, exploring new online educational opportunities and campus support office functions. This program can generate both meaningful cost savings and new revenues.

The chancellor's State of the System Address comes on the heels of a December 19th memo by supporters in the state Legislature, asking for their colleagues to cosponsor three pieces of legislation to improve Act 188 of 1982, the law that created and governs the State System. These reforms would allow the Office of the Chancellor to improve systemwide operations, lower costs, and protect student privacy, among other things. Please call your [state Representatives](#) and urge them to sign on as cosponsors to [House Bills 2171 \(Sonney\)](#), [2172 \(Topper\)](#), and [2173 \(Schroeder\)](#).

Senate

Session & Committee Activity

[Senate Session Days](#) | [Watch Session Live](#) | [Senate Calendars](#) | [Senate Committee Meeting Schedule](#)

The chamber convened on Tuesday, Jan. 7th, and Sen. Joe Scarnati (R-Jefferson) was elected once again as President Pro Tempore. The chamber returns to session the week of Jan. 27th.

In other action, the [Executive Nominations Calendar](#) now includes new Trustee nominations. Confirmation by the full Senate could occur on these nominations as early as the week of Jan. 27th; additional nominations are under consideration by the Governor's office.

Tomorrow, Jan. 14th, a special election is being held to fill the vacancy in the 48th Senate District. The candidates are Republican Dave Arnold, the Lebanon County district attorney, and Democrat Michael Schroeder, a Lebanon Valley College professor.

Meanwhile, West Chester University hosted the Public Higher Education Funding Commission. The meeting held last Wednesday included [presentations](#) by:

- Martin Van Der Werf, Associate Director of Editorial and Postsecondary Policy at the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce
- Joan Wodiska, CEO of Pioneer Management Consulting and a former senior official at both the National Conference of State Legislatures and the National Governors Association
- Brian Fleming of the Innovation Center at Southern New Hampshire University
- Laura W. Perna, of the GSE Centennial Presidential Professor of Education and Executive Director of the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (AHEAD) at the University of Pennsylvania.

The meeting was divided into two parts, with the morning session focusing on "Skills Needed for Jobs Today and in the Future" and the afternoon session on "The Future Structure and Delivery of Higher Education."

Under [Article XX-I of the Public School Code](#), the commission is tasked with recommending a higher education funding formula and identifying factors that may be used to determine the distribution of funding among Pennsylvania's public higher education institutions. A report of its findings and recommendations is due no later than Nov. 30, 2020.

House of Representatives

Session & Committee Activity

[House Session Days](#) | [Watch Session Live](#) | [House Calendars](#) | [House Committee Meeting Schedule](#)

The House convened last Tuesday in non-voting session. It convenes in voting session today through Wednesday.

Bills of interest upon which the chamber is expected to act include:

- [HB 1069](#) (Bernstine): Amends Title 65 (Public Officers), in open meetings, further providing for public notice and providing for notification of agency business required and exceptions.

In committee activity, the **House Education Committee** meets today consider:

- [HB 2046](#) (Murt): Amends the Public School Code to delay the the implementation of the special education PK-12 certification by one year from from December 31, 2021 to December 31, 2022.

Consideration of Amendment A014425 (Sonney) is expected. The "gut and replace" amendment would permit the Pennsylvania Department of Education to continue to issue a special education PK-8 or special education 7-12 certification to any student enrolled in a teacher preparation program at an institution of higher education prior to December 31, 2021.

Looking ahead, the following special elections have been set:

- **Feb. 25:** To fill a vacancy in the 190th House District created on Dec. 13 when Democrat Movita Johnson-Harrell resigned
- **March 17:** To fill the vacancies in the 8th, 18th, and 58th House Districts due to the resignations of Republicans Ted Nesbit, Gene DiGirolamo, and Justin Walsh, respectively

Here are the lawmakers who have announced they are not seeking reelection:

- Rep. Stephen Barrar (R-Delaware)
- Rep. Cris Dush (R-Jefferson)
- Rep. Garth Everett (R-Lycoming)
- Rep. Neal Goodman (D-Schuylkill)
- Rep. Marcia Hahn (R-Northampton)
- Rep. Mark Keller (R-Perry)
- Rep. Steve McCarter (D-Montgomery)
- Rep. Harry Readshaw (D-Allegheny)
- Rep. Justin Simmons (R-Northampton)
- Rep. Marcy Toepel (R-Montgomery)

Rep. Scott Conklin (D-Centre) has announced he is running for the position of Auditor General. He would also be vying for his House seat, unless he decides not to seek both offices in the upcoming election.

Bill Tracking Report

The following information is updated during legislative session weeks.

In the House:

[HB 2205](#) (Kenyatta): Amends the Public School Code, in miscellaneous provisions relating to institutions of higher education, est. the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program and the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Fund. *Last Action:* 1-9-20 H Filed

[SB 327](#) (Argall): Amends the Administrative Code, in powers and duties of the Dept. of General Services and its departmental administrative and advisory boards and commissions, providing for report of State facilities owned or leased. *Last Action:* 12-17-19 H Reported as amended House State Government

In the Senate:

[SB 166](#) (Hughes): An Act providing for the capital budget for the fiscal year 2019-2020. *Last Action:* 12-18-19 S Received as amended in Senate and rereferred Senate Rules and Executive Nominations

[SB 905](#) (Browne): An Act providing for the capital budget for fiscal year 2019-2020; itemizing public improvement projects; authorizing the incurring of debt; authorizing the use of current revenue; and making appropriations. *Last Action:* 12-18-19 S Received as amended in Senate and rereferred Senate Rules and Executive Nominations

Co-sponsorship Memos:

[HCO2912](#) (Sonney): Addresses Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education governance, accountability, financial, legal, and statutory reform. *Last Action:* 12-19-19 Filed

This update is provided as a courtesy of the Office of the Chancellor as a preview of upcoming legislative activity and a review of action on legislative issues of interest to the State System. The Legislative UPDATE is distributed during legislative session weeks.

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