



January 21, 2020

## Legislative UPDATE

### Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education

Today, at 9:30 a.m., Rep. Curt Sonney (R-Erie), chairman of the House Education Committee, will host a press conference to unveil a package of three bills designed to improve and reform the State System.

Bills in the package include:

- House Bill 2171 (Rep. Sonney), which will reform the governance and accountability of the System's Board of Governors and the Councils of Trustees.
- House Bill 2172 (Rep. Jesse Topper, R-Bedford/Franklin/Fulton), which will make needed financial and legal reforms to the System.
- House Bill 2173 (Rep. Meghan Schroeder, R-Bucks), which will make needed reforms to streamline reporting and clarify and update statutory language.

Live webstreaming will be available, barring technical difficulties at [PAHouseGOP.com](http://PAHouseGOP.com) and [RepSonney.com](http://RepSonney.com).

"We appreciate our partners in the General Assembly who come from both sides of the aisle to support the State System, especially those who are stepping up to back System Redesign irrespective of party," Board of Governors Chair Cindy Shapira said recently in her remarks prior Chancellor Greenstein's State of the System Address. "[They] are smart and devoted to our students and the Commonwealth."

The 2nd annual delivery of the Address by the chancellor outlined a bold vision for 2020 and called on strategic partners, especially members of the General Assembly, to choose to invest in affordable and accessible public education.

That vision includes showing how students at one university can access courses and programs elsewhere in the system; the execution of budget plans to ensure all universities are financially sustainable in five years; leveraging the system's massive scale of 14 universities and more than 95,000 students to achieve cost savings; and to report out progress meeting clearly identified student and university goals. Read highlights of his remarks [here](#).

Complementary to the State System's annual general education appropriation request of \$487 million (or 2 percent increase) for 2020-21, and a new line item request for \$20 million to begin a 5-year, \$100 million effort, enactment of this legislative reform package would present an opportunity for the System to further its transformative change even more.

Chancellor Greenstein will discuss the System's appropriation request before the Senate and House Appropriations Committees on Feb. 20th and Mar. 3rd, respectively.

In advance of the House Education Committee's consideration of [House Bills 2171 \(Sonney\), 2172 \(Topper\), and 2173 \(Schroeder\)](#), please call your [state Representatives](#) and urge them to support these bills.

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## Senate

# Session & Committee Activity

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

The Senate stands in recess until Monday, January 27, 2020 at 1:00 p.m., unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore.

In special election news, voters in Lebanon, Dauphin, and York counties recently elected Lebanon County District Attorney Dave Arnold to replace former Sen. Mike Folmer, who resigned in September. Among his achievements, he holds a criminal justice degree from Kutztown University.

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## House of Representatives

# Session & Committee Activity

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The House convenes again this week in voting session, beginning today at 1:00 p.m.

Bills of interest on the **House Calendar** include:

- [HB 283](#) (Simmons): Amends the Right-to-Know Law to permit a state or local agency to charge additional fees for the search, review and duplication of records that have been requested and will be used for a commercial purpose.

There is no committee activity of interest scheduled presently.

Last week, the **House Education Committee** amended special education certification legislation:

- [HB 2046](#) (Murt): Amends the Public School Code, in certification of teachers, further providing for instructional certificate grade spans and age levels and duties of department.

The legislation was amended in committee to permit the 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 or approved alternative preparation program prior to December 31, 2021.

In committee, the sponsor explained: "Act 82 did not provide adequate transition to provide for certification overlap and that if unaddressed, it will leave some students unable to complete their dual degree programs...the bill would fix the problem by delaying the act's special education requirement to give affected students time to complete their dual degree program."

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## Bill Tracking Report

The following information is updated during legislative session weeks.

### In the House:

[HB 1069](#) (Bernstine): Amends Title 65 (Public Officers), in open meetings, to require a public agency to post public meeting agendas at the meeting location, at the agency's office location, and on the agency's website, no later than 24 hours prior to a meeting, and to prohibit an agency from taking official action on items not on the agenda. *Last Action:* 1-14-20 H Final Passage (Y:196/N: 0)

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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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