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Welcome to the Spring 2019 issue of *InformED*, a publication from your school district and the Pennsylvania School Boards Association to keep you informed regarding the education issues affecting your students. *InformED* takes parents from the Capitol, to the school district, to the classroom. Learn more and become an advocate for public education!

June is budget time for the state, school districts

As the school year winds to a close, the fiscal year for the state and school districts is also ending soon. Like the state, school districts' fiscal years operate from July to June. As required by law, school districts must pass a budget by June 30 each year. This requires a lot of planning and even some estimation since the deadline coincides with the state budget deadline – school districts do not yet know their allocation from the state when they pass a budget.

School funding comes from a complicated collection of revenue sources. The biggest pot of funding to public schools under the state budget is called the Basic Education Subsidy, and it is used to pay for the

majority of a school district's operational, programming and personnel expenses. The state also provides additional funding for special education programs and services as well as funding under a host of other smaller subsidies and grants. The actual amount that each district receives varies greatly.

At the state level, the General Assembly and Gov. Tom Wolf are stepping up negotiations for a 2019-20 state budget that will greatly affect the new school year that begins next fall. Budget talks will continue to intensify in the coming weeks as the June 30 deadline approaches. Parent and community support of your public schools is important. Even with the modest boosts in

funding that have been proposed, public schools continue to face huge increases in costs outside of their control such as pensions, charter school tuitions and many other unfunded or underfunded mandates.

Dates to Remember

News from the PA Department of Education (PDE)

Here is some news of interest for parents:

- This spring's administration of PSSA testing for students in grades 3-8 was completed with a 20% reduction in testing time. Also new this year, parents and schools are expected to receive PSSA results before the end of this current school year.
- PDE and the State Board of Education are developing a Keystone Exam composite score that would be used as one of the new pathways to graduation under Act 158 of 2018. It is important to know that school districts are still required under federal law to administer Keystone Exams for accountability purposes. While students will continue to be required to take them, passage of the exams is no longer the only pathway to graduate. These changes are effective beginning with the Class of 2022. Read a [detailed summary](#) of Act 158.
- This spring the state approved [\\$40 million in school safety grants](#) to 234 school entities. School districts, intermediate units, area vocational-technical schools, charter schools and private residential rehabilitation institutions were eligible to apply for funding to support activities related to performing school safety assessments; purchasing security-related technology and equipment; security planning; providing for trauma-informed approaches to education; and hiring school law enforcement officers, counselors, social workers and school psychologists.
- This spring a new initiative was launched to boost the number of economically disadvantaged students taking the 2019 Advanced Placement (AP) exams in high school in order to earn college credits. Through a partnership with the College Board, which administers the AP exams, PDE will pay \$33 toward the \$85 cost for each exam. Combined with the College Board's \$32 fee reduction, students qualifying for the discounts pay just \$20.

Optional 'snow day' proposal allows schools to send assignments home

Under proposed legislation, schools may be able to allow assignments to be sent home on snow days and during other emergencies when buildings are closed, and have the time count toward the 180-day requirement under law. The result? Students could continue to learn, and schools would not have to schedule make-up days.

The state Senate recently passed [Senate Bill 440](#) (Sen. Phillips-Hill, R-York), which would set into law a pilot program under the Pennsylvania Department of Education that allows schools to use Flexible Instructional Days (FIDs) in the instance of a cancellation. School districts could decide whether or not they want to participate in the program. Approved applications would be valid for three years, when the school would need to reapply. School districts could use up to five flexible instructional days per school year. The bill is now in the House of Representatives for consideration.



Find summer meals in your community

Nutritious free meals are available for children and teens 18 and younger at many locations throughout the nation throughout the summer while school is out of session. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service has created a mapping tool for parents to find a site near them. To use the map, go to <https://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks> or use the link below and follow the steps to find the 2019 summer meal sites near you.

[Click here for the 2019 Summer Meal Site Finder](#)