



# Education Update

**From the Senate Education Committee**

JANUARY 29, 2007

## Articulation Law Improves College Course Transfers

In order to make the transfer of core academic courses more efficient for students attending Pennsylvania colleges and universities, the General Assembly enacted the Higher Education Articulation Act as part of Act 114 of 2006.

Under the new law, Pennsylvania's community colleges and universities in the State System of Higher Education will accept a menu of at least 30 core academic credits that meet equivalency standards agreed upon by representatives of the institutions themselves.

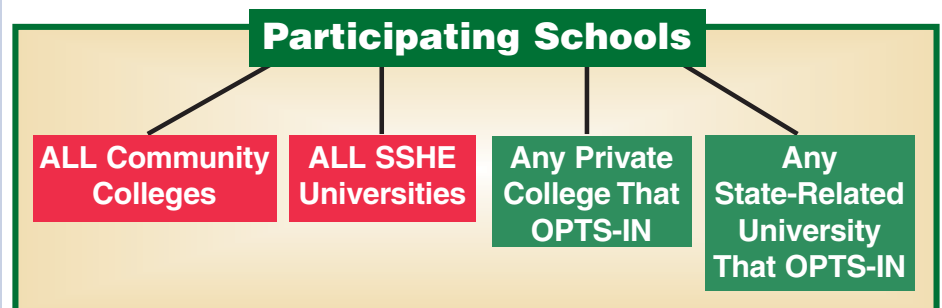
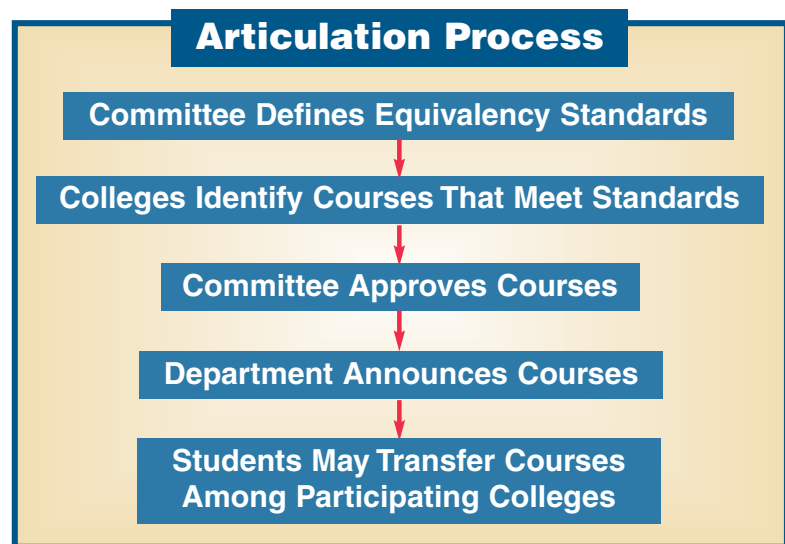
Private colleges and state-related universities have the option to participate in the system.

Equivalency standards for the core credits are established by a Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee, which includes members from each college and university that participates in the system. Each college and university then identifies core courses that meet the standards.

Those equivalent courses are ultimately approved by the committee and students

may then transfer them among the schools that are participating in the system.

The committee has recently approved the equivalency standards. Participating colleges will now begin to identify core courses on their campuses. The system, along with a publicly-accessible website identifying all courses approved for transfer, will be operational for the 2007-2008 school year.



### Senate Education Committee Activities

**Tuesday, January 30**

Room 461, Main Capitol  
10:30 a.m.

Committee Meeting  
SB 71, SB 219, SB 154, SB 155,  
SB 156, SB 157, SB 158

**Wednesday, January 31**

Room 8E-B, Capitol East Wing  
9:00 a.m.

Public Hearing  
Higher Education  
Articulation Agreements

**Senate Education Committee**

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**Senator James J. Rhoades**  
*Chairman*

David L. Broderic  
*Executive Director*

## Review Shows State Aid Directed to Least Affluent School Districts

In FY 2004-2005, the least affluent 25% of Pennsylvania's school districts received a median of 68% of their actual instructional expenditures from the state basic education subsidy. School districts in the most affluent 25% received a median of 13%.

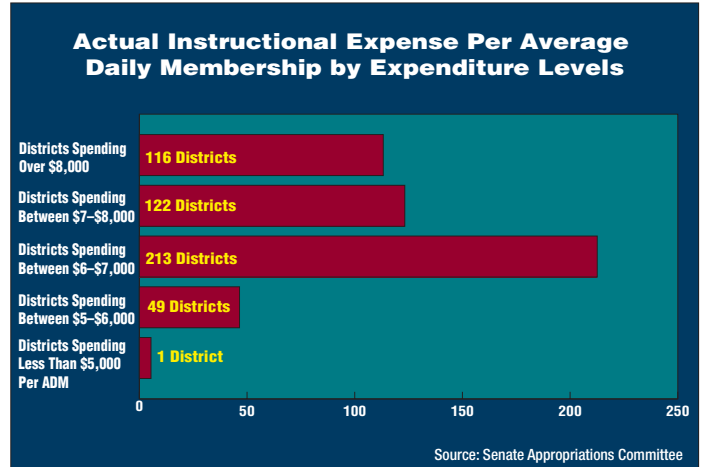
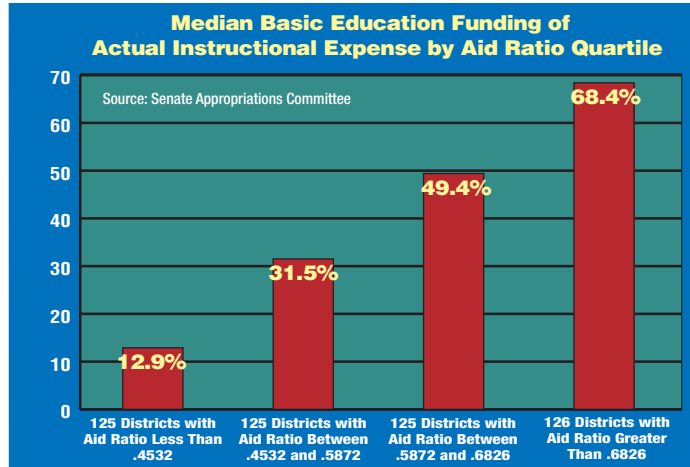
In addition, average per student

instructional spending was nearly identical in 75% of the Commonwealth's school districts.

While school districts in the wealthiest 25% spend significantly more, this spending is derived largely from local tax revenue. The wealthiest fifty school districts spend an average of \$9,277

per student on instruction, but receive an average of \$877 per student, or 8.4% of that amount, from the basic education subsidy.

Fifty-two percent of Pennsylvania's school districts have actual instructional expenditures per student of between \$5,000 and \$7,000.



## Pennsylvania Taxpayer Relief Act Expands PTRR Program

As part of the Taxpayer Relief Act that the General Assembly approved in June, Pennsylvania seniors are now eligible for expanded benefits through the Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program (PTRR).

Beginning with applications filed this year, property tax claimants with incomes of up to \$35,000 will be eligible for the program, and the maximum benefit for property taxpayers and renters will increase to \$650. This and other program expansions could add over 400,000 new participants to the program.

Claimants apply for funds to offset property taxes or rent paid in the preceding year.

Increase PTRR to \$650 Max Rebate for Homeowners with Income to \$35,000				
Household Income Range	Maximum Assistance	Estimated Number of Claimants	Average Assistance per Claim	Total Property Tax Assistance
\$0 - \$8,000	\$ 650	144,774	\$ 555	\$ 80,347,683
\$8,001 - \$15,000	\$ 500	162,295	\$ 466	\$ 75,681,367
\$15,001 - \$18,000	\$ 300	59,083	\$ 296	\$ 17,469,941
\$18,001 - \$35,000	\$ 250	214,800	\$ 247	\$ 53,155,536
<b>Total:</b>		<b>580,952</b>	<b>\$ 390</b>	<b>\$ 226,654,527</b>
			Less: Current Cost	\$ 66,184,735
			Additional Cost:	<b>\$ 160,469,792</b>

Increase PTRR to \$650 Max Rebate for Renters				
Household Income Range	Maximum Assistance	Estimated Number of Claimants	Average Assistance per Claim	Total Rent Assistance
\$0 - \$8,000	\$ 650	118,481	\$ 565	\$ 66,979,424
\$8,001 - \$15,000	\$ 500	61,586	\$ 486	\$ 29,954,525
<b>Total:</b>		<b>180,067</b>	<b>\$ 538</b>	<b>\$ 96,933,949</b>
			Less: Current Cost	\$ 65,714,541
			Additional Cost:	<b>\$ 31,219,408</b>

**For more information or detailed analyses of these topics, contact the Senate Education Committee staff at 787-2637.**