

SENATOR
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CO-CHAIR



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CO-CHAIR

BASIC EDUCATION FUNDING COMMISSION

HEARING AGENDA

October 11, 2023 – 10AM

**Pittsburgh Public Schools – Westinghouse CTE Suite
Pittsburgh, PA**

- 10:00 a.m. Call to Order and Opening Remarks
- Rep. Mike Sturla, 96th Legislative District
 - Sen. Kristin Phillips-Hill, 28th Senatorial District
 - Sen. Lindsey Williams, 38th Senatorial District
- 10:10 a.m. Welcome by Dr. Wayne Walters, Superintendent, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- 10:20 a.m. Panel One:
- Angela Mike, Executive Director of CTE, Pittsburgh Public Schools
 - Dr. Darby Copeland, President of Pennsylvania Association of Career & Technical Administrators and Executive Director of Parkway West
- 10:45 a.m. Questions & Answers
- 11:15 a.m. Panel Two:
- Dr. Robert Scherrer, Executive Director, Allegheny Intermediate Unit
 - Emily Neff, Director of Public Policy, Trying Together
 - Jeni Hergenreder, Esq., Staff Attorney, Disability Rights Pennsylvania
 - Dr. Laura Ward, Past-President of Pennsylvania School Librarians Association and Librarian of Fox Chapel Area School District
- 11:50 a.m. Questions & Answers
- 12:20 p.m. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Good morning,

My name is Angela Mike, and I am currently Executive Director for Career and Technical Education (CTE) for Pittsburgh Public Schools. I have served in this capacity since 2010.

CTE's goal is to empower its students to confidently and successfully transition into post-secondary education and career opportunities and to become positive, contributing members of society. CTE prepares students for career pathways in the global marketplace by offering experiential learning, post-secondary credits and industry certifications.

Pittsburgh Public Schools offers 16 Career and Technical Education programs of study in 6 high schools. Each program of study is linked to a state-identified high-priority occupation. Fifteen of our programs are offered using the 3-year model: Students are in our programs for 3 periods/day, 5 days/week for 3 years.

Through CTE, students can gain:

- Stackable Industry-recognized certifications
- Transcribed dual enrollment credits
- Preparation for high-wage, high-skill, high-demand careers

CTE students receive hands-on instruction in labs equipped with state-of-the-art equipment that mirror real-world work environments. Taught by teachers who are industry professionals in their respective fields, our students learn how to use the tools, techniques, software and hardware necessary to enter the world of work.

CTE provides academic and career counseling supports along with career preparation resources to help students obtain the competence and the confidence to successfully transition into their chosen career paths.

CTE Outcomes Include:

- Increased graduation rates
- Career and college readiness
- Equity for underserved students
- Student motivation and engagement
- Academic and technical proficiency
- Critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills
- Access to entry-level, career laddering jobs

The work that we do and the impact of our programs would not be possible without the funding support we receive from our government.

At the federal level, we have received **short-term support** from the **ESSER grant**, the **Business Education Partnership grant**. We receive **annual funding** from the **Perkins grant**.

At the state level, we annually receive **subsidies** for every student enrolled in a program of study (10th grade and above). We receive a **Supplemental Equipment Grant**. The state recently re-instated funding

for dual enrollment costs, and that funding will benefit CTE students. We received a grant from the **Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund**. We also recently received a **2-year grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Labor**.

How has this funding helped our programs and our students?

At the Federal Level:

Perkins funds covers salaries for our Career Counselors, English and Math Integration Teachers, and one of our Co-Operative Education Coordinators. Perkins funding is also used to pay for industry certification vouchers and testing, student transportation for job exploration field trips, equipment and technology for our learning labs, plus state-provided professional development for Perkins-funded staff.

ESSER funds were used to cover the cost of air conditioning (in 5 programs) and new lighting (in 3 programs). As I mentioned our programs are located in 6 buildings and those buildings have aging infrastructure. Though we have 16 programs, we had to prioritize which programs were in most need of air conditioning and lighting. ESSER funds covered the cost of 2 tiny house kits which have been instrumental in helping our Carpentry students build capacity.

The Business Education Partnership grant, which we received through Partner4Work (our workforce development Board), provided supplemental support for a pilot program with Allegheny Health Network that allowed our Health Careers Technology seniors to receive training as Patient Care Technicians (PCTs). Through this program, the trained seniors became paid externs earning \$16.50/hour as PCTs at Allegheny General Hospital and West Penn Hospital. Successful externs were offered the opportunity to be hired as full-time PCTs after graduation. The grant helped cover costs for onboarding certifications and student training.

At the State Level:

The **annual subsidies** help cover costs not funded at the federal level. These include CTE student supplies, uniforms, equipment and equipment replacement, specialty furniture, field trips, SkillsUSA membership fees and competition costs, and other student supports.

The **Supplemental Equipment Grant** covers the cost of equipment recommended by industry members of our Occupational Advisory Committees. The advice provided by industry helps our labs to reflect what our students will find in today's workplace, so that their training aligns with industry expectations. The last allocation was used to purchase a downdraft table for the Carpentry Program at Pittsburgh Westinghouse; a Glue Pull Repair Collision System for the Automotive Body Repair program at Pittsburgh Brashear; and an ECG Simulator, Catheterization Simulator, Human Skeleton and a Human Torso Model – for the Health Careers Technology programs at Pittsburgh Carrick, Pittsburgh Perry and Pittsburgh Westinghouse.

GEER funds helped cover the cost of virtual reality simulation systems for several of our programs. The **SimSpray Powder Training Bay** was purchased for the Automotive Body Repair students at Pittsburgh Brashear (pictured below). This is a safe and cost-effective virtual reality training tool for painters and coaters, allowing students to learn to use a paint spray gun without expending consumable supplies in the process. Hands-on experiences are emphasized, while clean-up and prep are minimized.



The **SURVIVR immersive virtual reality platform** for situational police training was purchased for use in our Emergency Response Technology program. SURVIVR is currently being used by several law enforcement agencies, and has a contract with the U.S. Air Force Security Forces to build the most realistic de-escalation simulations to date. The SURVIVR system will allow our students to more actively engage with the law enforcement component of the curriculum and gain a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities of public safety officers.



We were awarded a 2-year **Schools-to-Work grant** from the **Pennsylvania Department of Labor** in support of our state-registered Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship program (which was the first pre-apprenticeship program for high school students in the state). This grant helps cover costs that will help students transition into the Carpenter’s Union Apprenticeship program (driver’s education to help students earn their licenses, first-year apprentice toolkits, work boots and more).

Allow me to give you a few examples of the impact this funding has had on our students:

- **Aniya Givner**, a 2022 CTE Cosmetology graduate from Pittsburgh Perry passed is a licensed cosmetologist, owns 1K Styles Salon, and is an online content creator. The training she received through CTE saved her almost \$30,000.



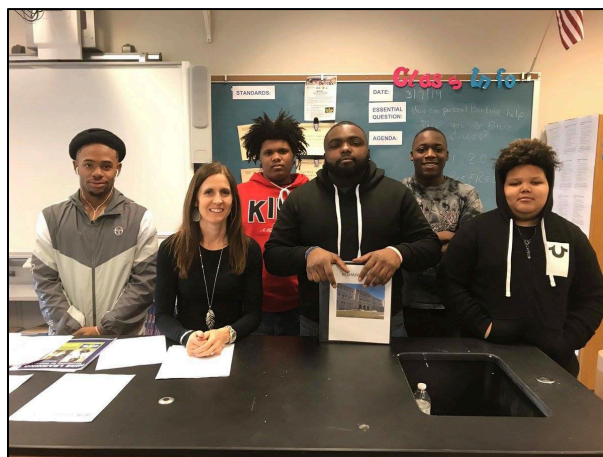
- **Madina Mada** is a 2023 CTE Health Careers Technology graduate. Not only did Madina successfully complete the AHN Junior Scholars program, she was also accepted into the Nursing Program at Carlow University. Madina accepted the entry-level position as a Patient Care Technician (which has career laddering benefits) and will work while she is enrolled in school. CTE helped open both these doors of opportunity. Funding support for the AHN program was provided by the Business Education Partnership grant.



- **Ibrahim Shumbushu** (pictured 2nd from the left) is a 2023 CTE Carpentry graduate. Ibrahim transitioned from pre-apprentice to apprentice with the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters. Ibrahim and his family are from Rwanda. Ibrahim worked past language barriers and other challenges to get where he is today, bringing pride to his family and starting on a path of success that will help them all move forward. Through the Schools-to-Work grant, we were able to cover the costs of his initial apprenticeship fees, his work boots and his first-year apprenticeship tool kit. The ESSER-grant funded tiny-house kit provided the opportunity for him to further develop his carpentry skills while working on a project that will be habitable when completed. The project also allowed him to learn directly from Union carpenters who are partnered with CTE.



- **Keshawn Brooks** (pictured 4th from the left) is a 2016 CTE B.A.S.E. program graduate (Pittsburgh Westinghouse). Keshawn went on to attend Thiel College and now works for Reach, a violence prevention initiative that partners with the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police to help prevent violent incidents in Pittsburgh high schools while also working directly with community engagement officers to provide meaningful support to high schools that have been impacted by violence and threats of dangerous behavior.



There are thousands of success stories like these that could be shared by the CTE providers in our state.

But there are challenges in continuing to provide quality programs that will yield the kind of results that our students need and that our economy demands.

CTE programs are expensive, and that expense continues to grow.

- Large equipment can cost as much as \$30,000 or more.
- Transportation (field trip buses) have more than doubled in price over the past 3 years.
- The cost for industry certification vouchers has increased.
- The cost to cover the latest technologies in our programs have increased.

We are doing as much as we can with what we have, but we need more support to help our students to be career ready.

Here are a few ways you could help us:

1) **Allow more flexibility in the use of state-sponsored equipment grant funding.**

The state currently offers CTE providers the opportunity to apply for the Supplemental Equipment Grant and the Career and Technical Education Competitive Equipment Grant.

Most career education programs are eligible for the Supplemental Equipment Grant. But the Competitive Equipment Grant requires staff to write the grant and it also requires a grant match. Many CTE programs do not have the staff resources or the partnership connections to apply for the competitive grant.

Could the funds from both grants be combined and distributed according to need, without the matching grant requirement?

2) **Allow more flexibility in the state funds allocated for career and technical education.**

- a. Provide funding to cover CTE program start-up costs.
 - i. Current funding covers existing programs and hinders our ability to keep pace with labor market needs.
 1. 2 CIP codes for aviation/aeronautics were recently added (47.0609 and 49.0101). Though these program offer an exciting opportunity, the costs are prohibitive.
 2. A new CIP was added for Education (13.0101). We could help address the nation-wide shortage of teachers through this program, but cannot afford to offer it.

Thank you for your time and attention.

ANIYA GIVNER

CTE Cosmetology – Pittsburgh Perry



IBRAHIM SHUMBUSHO

CTE Carpentry – Pittsburgh Carrick



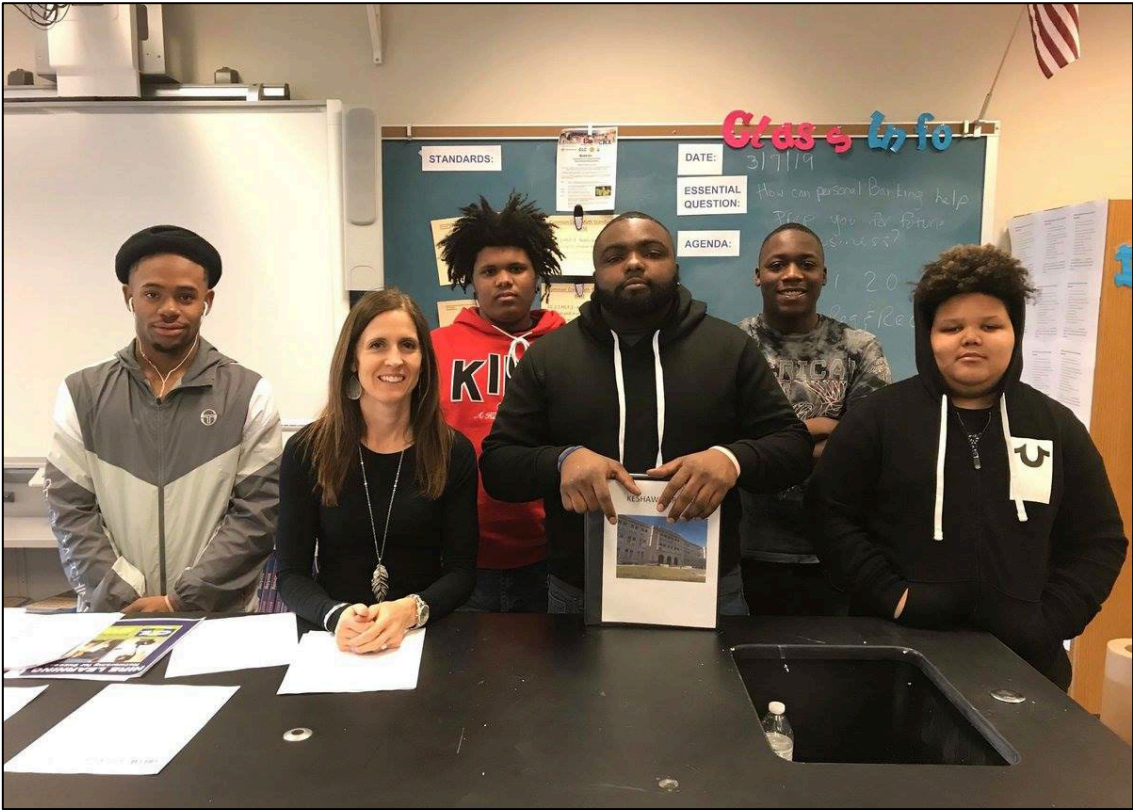
MADINA MADA

CTE Health Careers Technology – Pittsburgh Perry

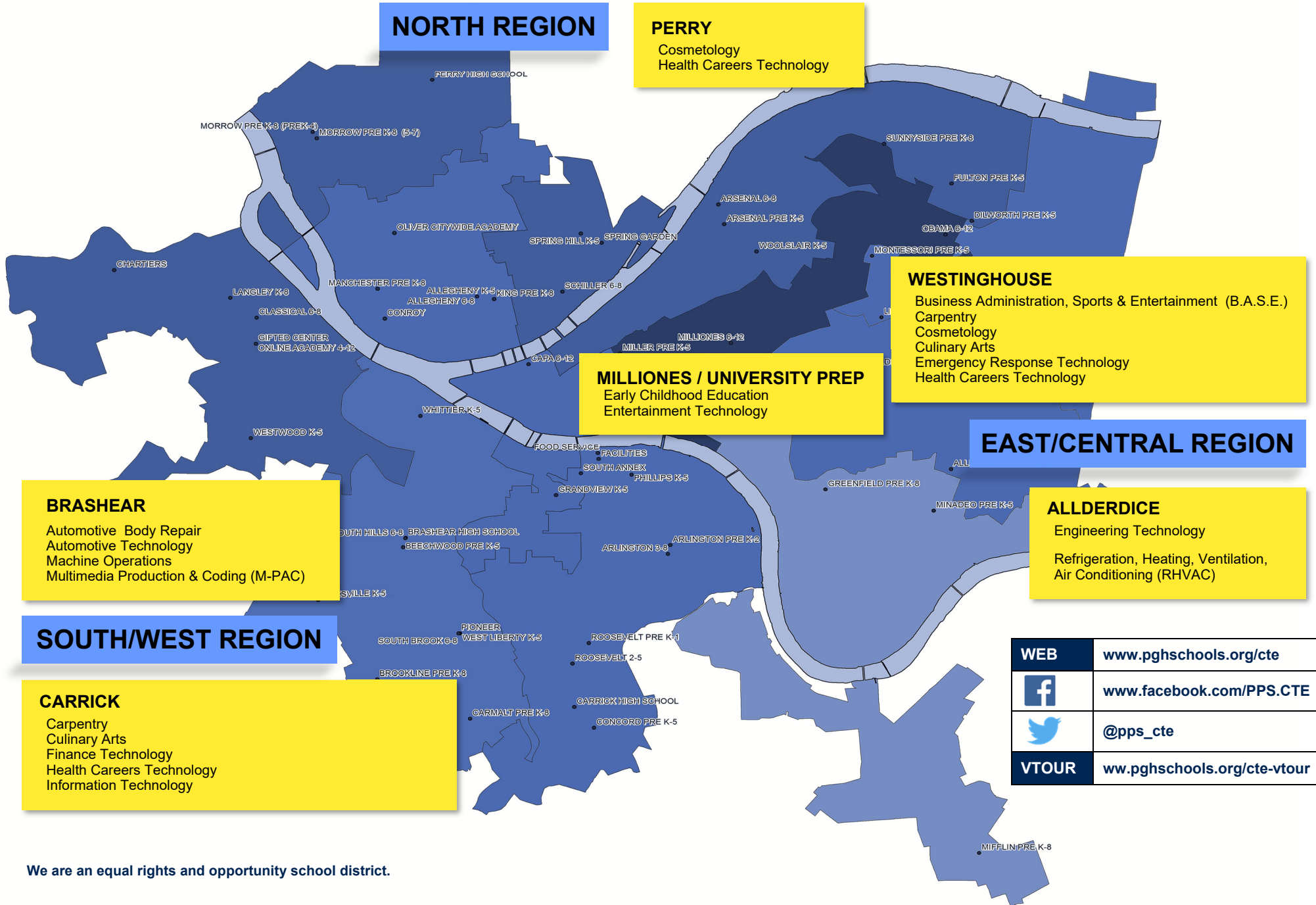


KESHAWN BROOKS

CTE Business Administration, Sports & Entertainment (B.A.S.E.) – Pittsburgh Westinghouse

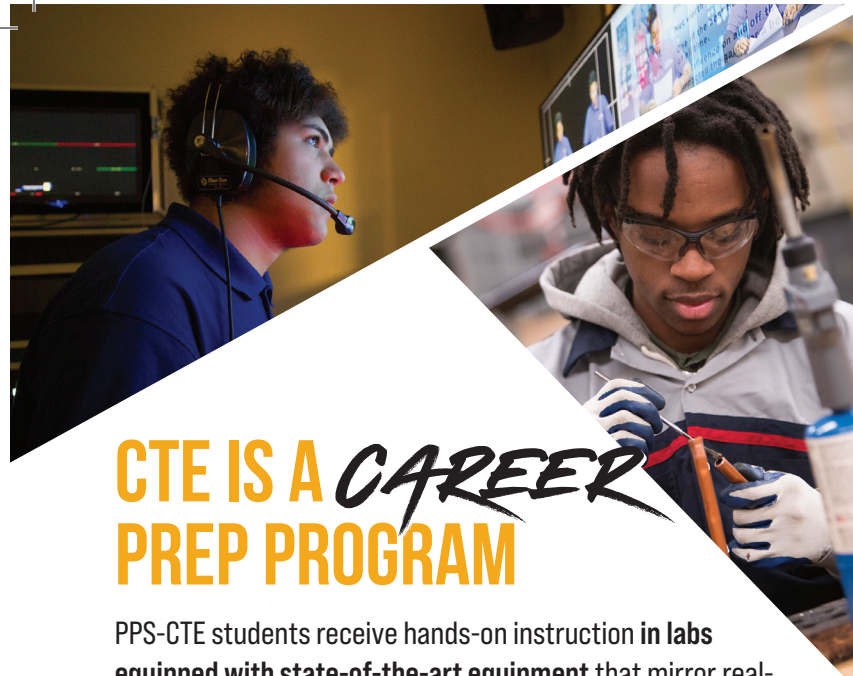


Career & Technical Education Division Map



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	@pps_cte
VTour	www.pghschools.org/cte-vtour

We are an equal rights and opportunity school district.



CTE IS A **CAREER** PREP PROGRAM

PPS-CTE students receive hands-on instruction in labs equipped with state-of-the-art equipment that mirror real-world work environments. Taught by teachers who are industry professionals in their respective fields, our students learn how to use the tools, techniques, software and hardware necessary for entry-level positions in the world of work.

CTE PROGRAMS GIVE STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS.

CTE STUDENTS:

- ▶ Participate in work-based learning activities that include **field trips to industry-specific job sites** where they can learn about the wide variety of jobs in each field and what steps to take to qualify for those jobs.
- ▶ Have **internship and job shadowing** opportunities with local employers.
- ▶ Receive opportunities to directly interact with industry professionals, who help them learn more about the qualities they look for in employees and what CTE students can do to position themselves for available jobs.
- ▶ Participate in **pre-employment skills development** initiatives to help groom them for the workforce (e.g. resume preparation, interviewing and networking skills training, elevator speech preparation).
- ▶ In the building trades participate in activities that help them **prepare for union apprenticeships**.
- ▶ Can qualify for **paid jobs** in their field of interest (after school or during the summer).
- ▶ Graduate with an **electronic portfolio** that may be used to showcase their skills, credentials and accomplishments.

APPLY ONLINE TODAY:
www.pghschools.org/cteapplication

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CTE:

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Virtual Tour: www.pghschools.org/cte-vtour
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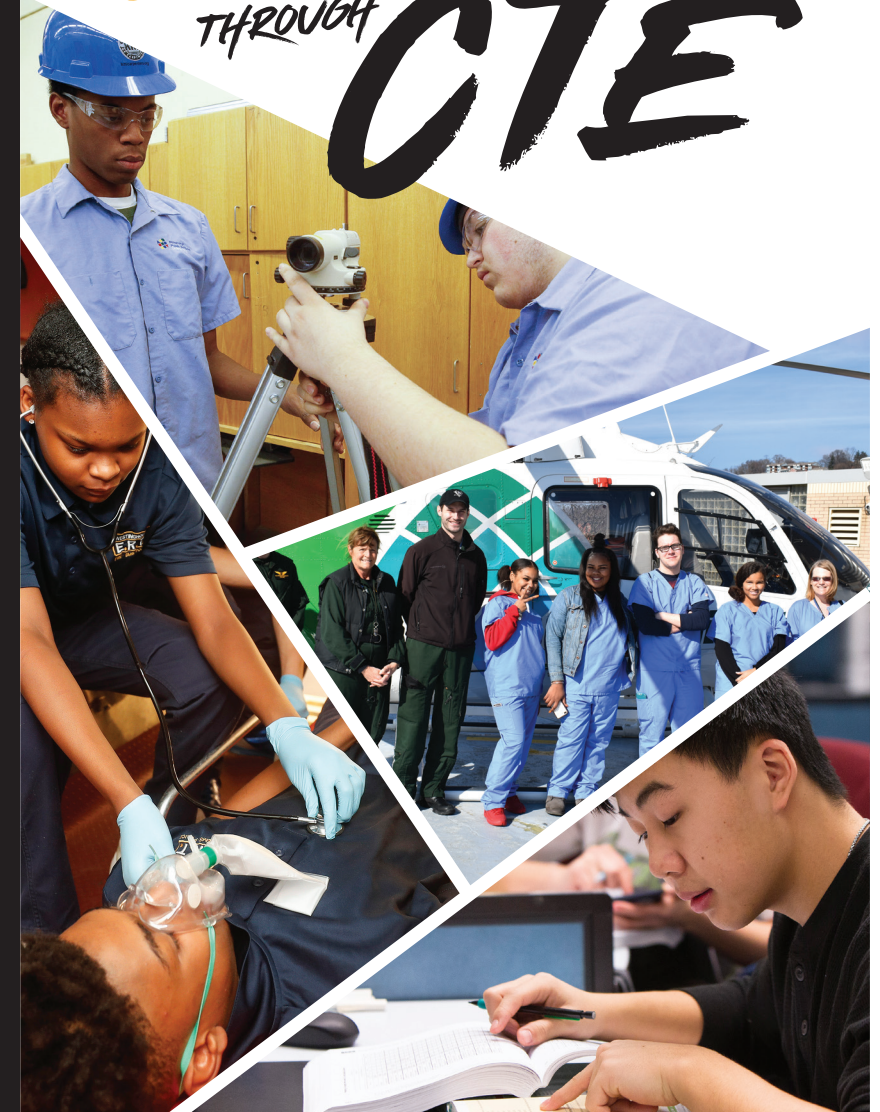
CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION



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GET COLLEGE AND/OR CAREER READY

THROUGH CTE



PREPARE FOR ENTRY-LEVEL EMPLOYMENT AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION.
CTE PROVIDES THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS.



CTE IS A COLLEGE PREP PROGRAM

CTE programs in the Pittsburgh Public Schools District not only allow students to earn college credits while in high school through dual enrollment, but can reduce the overall cost of post-secondary education. Our students can earn college credits for the CTE coursework completed in high school (through articulation agreements with colleges and universities throughout the state of Pennsylvania).

These are the CTE programs in which students may earn dual enrollment college credits at Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC):

CULINARY ARTS
3 CREDITS

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TECHNOLOGY
3 CREDITS

RHVAC
6 CREDITS

HEALTH CAREERS TECHNOLOGY
6 CREDITS

The credits earned in these courses are transcribed, meaning that the credits are applied to the student's permanent academic record and may be used toward a degree program.

The Pittsburgh Promise Scholarship covers the cost of these credits.



CTE PROGRAM

AUTOMOTIVE BODY REPAIR

AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT (BASE)

CARPENTRY

COSMETOLOGY

**CULINARY ARTS
CCAC DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
UP TO 9 CARLOW UNIVERSITY CREDITS AVAILABLE**

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE TECHNOLOGY (ERT)
CCAC DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM**

ENGINEERING

ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY

FINANCE TECHNOLOGY

**HEALTH CAREERS TECHNOLOGY
CCAC DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM**

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

MACHINE OPERATIONS

MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION AND CODING (MPAC)

**REFRIGERATION, HEATING, VENTILATION & AIR
CCAC DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM**

LOCATION(S)

INDUSTRY CERTIFICATIONS

Pittsburgh Brashear	Automotive Service Excellence (ASE); Safety & Pollution Prevention (S/P2) Collision Repair & Refinish Safety; Motor Oil; OSHA
Pittsburgh Brashear	Automotive Service Excellence (ASE); S/P2 Automotive Service Safety; S/P2 Automotive Service Pollution Prevention; OSHA
Pittsburgh Westinghouse	Microsoft Office Application Specialist (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint); OSHA
Pittsburgh Carrick, Westinghouse	American Ladder Institute; S/P2 Construction; OSHA - Construction
Pittsburgh Perry, Westinghouse	PA State Cosmetology License; S/P2 Cosmetology; OSHA
Pittsburgh Carrick, Westinghouse	ServSafe Manager Food Safety; ServSafe Food Handler; S/P2 Culinary Food Safety; Heartsaver First Aid; Heartsaver CPR; OSHA
Pittsburgh Milliones	Child Development Associate Infant/Toddler; Child Development Associate Preschool; First Aid; Infant and Child CPR; OSHA
Pittsburgh Westinghouse	Hazardous Materials First Responder Awareness; Hazardous Materials Recognition & Identification; PA Essentials of Firefighting; National Incident Management Systems; Incident Command System; Basic Life Support for Health Care Professionals; OSHA
Pittsburgh Allderdice	Autodesk Certified User; OSHA
Pittsburgh Milliones	Adobe Certified Associate, Video Communication; Adobe Certified Associate, Digital Communication; OSHA
Pittsburgh Carrick	Microsoft Office Application Specialist (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint); OSHA
Pittsburgh Perry, Carrick, Westinghouse	Basic Life Support for Health Care Professionals; Heartsaver CPR; Heartsaver AED; Personal Care Home Direct Care Staff Certificate; OSHA - Healthcare
Pittsburgh Carrick	Microsoft Technology Associate; OSHA
Pittsburgh Brashear	National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS); OSHA
Pittsburgh Brashear	Adobe Certified Associate, Web Communication (Dreamweaver); OSHA
Pittsburgh Allderdice	EPA 608 Refrigerant Recovery; American Ladder Institute; OSHA - Construction



3 CTE STUDENTS RECEIVE HANDS-ON INSTRUCTION IN LABS EQUIPPED WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT THAT MIRROR REAL-WORLD WORK ENVIRONMENTS.

Taught by teachers who are industry professionals in their respective fields, our students learn how to use the tools, techniques, software and hardware necessary for entry-level positions in the world of work.

MORE CTE FACTS:

- ▶ Since 1980, tuition and fees at public 4-year colleges and universities have risen 19x faster than average family incomes. CTE offers FREE dual enrollment college courses and those credits may be used towards a 2-year or 4-year degree program. CTE students may also be able to earn free college credits for the work that they have successfully completed in their high school programs.
- ▶ Middle Skill or “New Collar” Jobs are where significant opportunities lie. These jobs account for 53% of the U.S. labor market. They require more than a high school diploma but less than a baccalaureate degree. CTE prepares students for these opportunities.
- ▶ Eight years after their expected graduation date, students who focused on CTE courses while in high school had higher median annual earnings than students who did not focus on CTE.
(Source: Bridging the Skills Gap: CTE in High School – U.S. Department of Education 2019)
- ▶ 91% of high school graduates who earned 2-3 CTE credits enrolled in college (U.S. Department of Education).
- ▶ According to the College Board, reading and math scores of CTE students are above those of students overall, as well as their graduation and placement rates.
- ▶ High school CTE students are more likely to have a post high school plan than their peers not involved in CTE.

IN SUMMARY:

CTE programs save you money.
CTE programs make you money.
CTE programs help you succeed.

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CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION



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**CTE:
WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?**



LEARN HOW CTE CAN HELP YOU LEVEL UP



STRAIGHT OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs prepare you to hit the ground running in your career, right out of high school. Through CTE, you will be ready to take advantage of opportunities to go directly into the workforce and/or pursue a 2-year or 4-year post-secondary degree. Here are some of the ways CTE can help you achieve career success: 1) Earn stackable industry certifications; 2) Gain 21st century transferable skills; 3) Receive hands-on instruction.

1 EARN STACKABLE INDUSTRY CERTIFICATIONS.

An industry certification is a credential recognized by business and industry at the local, state or national level. CTE students can earn industry certifications by taking an industry assessment or licensure examination that measures occupational competency, proves knowledge base, and assesses the level of mastery in a particular industry. The training necessary to pass the examination is provided through CTE programs and CTE covers the cost of the exam for enrolled students, saving parents and employers thousands of dollars.

Industry certifications allow students to show that they have specific, industry-needed skills and abilities, which increases their opportunities beyond high school. They can increase job prospects, marketability to employers, and employability, as well as options for post-secondary education.

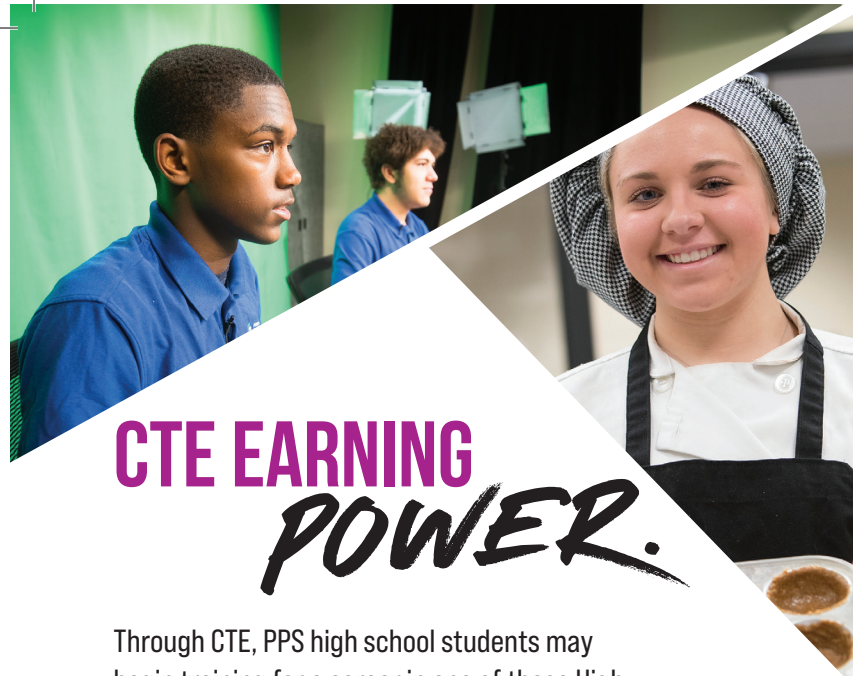
Stackable credentials help employees move up the career ladder or along a career pathway to different and potentially higher-paying jobs. CTE students graduate with up to 5 industry-recognized, state approved certifications that may also be used to meet the Keystone graduation requirements.

2 CTE PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH 21ST CENTURY TRANSFERABLE SKILLS THAT WILL BE NEEDED FOR THE WORKFORCE AND FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION.

These include:

- ▶ Communication.
- ▶ Critical thinking.
- ▶ Problem solving.
- ▶ Decision making.
- ▶ Collaboration.
- ▶ Creativity/innovation.

CTE PROGRAM	LOCATION(S)	INDUSTRY CERTIFICATIONS
AUTOMOTIVE BODY REPAIR	Pittsburgh Brashear	Automotive Service Excellence (ASE); Safety & Pollution Prevention (S/P2) Collision Repair & Refinish Safety; Motor Oil; OSHA
AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY	Pittsburgh Brashear	Automotive Service Excellence (ASE); S/P2 Automotive Service Safety; S/P2 Automotive Service Pollution Prevention; OSHA
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT (BASE)	Pittsburgh Westinghouse	Microsoft Office Application Specialist (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint); OSHA
CARPENTRY	Pittsburgh Carrick, Westinghouse	American Ladder Institute; S/P2 Construction; OSHA - Construction
COSMETOLOGY	Pittsburgh Perry, Westinghouse	PA State Cosmetology License; S/P2 Cosmetology; OSHA
CULINARY ARTS CCAC DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM	Pittsburgh Carrick, Westinghouse	ServSafe Manager Food Safety; ServSafe Food Handler; S/P2 Culinary Food Safety; Heartsaver First Aid; Heartsaver CPR; OSHA
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION UP TO 9 CARLOW UNIVERSITY CREDITS AVAILABLE	Pittsburgh Milliones	Child Development Associate Infant/Toddler; Child Development Associate Preschool; First Aid; Infant and Child CPR; OSHA
EMERGENCY RESPONSE TECHNOLOGY (ERT) CCAC DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM	Pittsburgh Westinghouse	Hazardous Materials First Responder Awareness; Hazardous Materials Recognition & Identification; PA Essentials of Firefighting; National Incident Management Systems; Incident Command System; Basic Life Support for Health Care Professionals; OSHA
ENGINEERING	Pittsburgh Allderdice	Autodesk Certified User; OSHA
ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY	Pittsburgh Milliones	Adobe Certified Associate, Video Communication; Adobe Certified Associate, Digital Communication; OSHA
FINANCE TECHNOLOGY	Pittsburgh Carrick	Microsoft Office Application Specialist (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint); OSHA
HEALTH CAREERS TECHNOLOGY CCAC DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM	Pittsburgh Perry, Carrick, Westinghouse	Basic Life Support for Health Care Professionals; Heartsaver CPR; Heartsaver AED; Personal Care Home Direct Care Staff Certificate; OSHA - Healthcare
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	Pittsburgh Carrick	Microsoft Technology Associate; OSHA
MACHINE OPERATIONS	Pittsburgh Brashear	National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS); OSHA
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REFRIGERATION, HEATING, VENTILATION & AIR CCAC DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM	Pittsburgh Allderdice	EPA 608 Refrigerant Recovery; American Ladder Institute; OSHA - Construction



CTE EARNING POWER.

Through CTE, PPS high school students may begin training for a career in one of these High Priority Occupations (HPOs). HPOs are occupations that are in demand by employers, require higher skill levels and are most likely to provide family sustaining wages.

An employee in a CTE field can earn a starting wage of \$10 to \$20 per hour (depending on the field). So workers in CTE fields can earn between \$1,920 and \$3,200 per month to start. Those are the kinds of wages that support families in good times and bad.

The average monthly take-home pay for an employee earning the minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour is \$1,024.00 (before taxes).

CTE programs are available to PPS students beginning in 10th grade. While you are in high school, you can begin to build a career in a field with proven stability.

CTE's cost-free programs provide value that cannot be measured.

AN EMPLOYEE IN A CTE FIELD CAN EARN:

\$10

MINIMUM STARTING HOURLY WAGE

\$20

MAXIMUM STARTING HOURLY WAGE

\$1,920

MINIMUM MONTHLY STARTING INCOME

\$3,200

MAXIMUM MONTHLY STARTING INCOME

VS. MINIMUM WAGE:

\$7.25

MINIMUM STARTING HOURLY WAGE

\$1,024

MINIMUM WAGE MONTHLY INCOME

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 Virtual Tour: www.pghschools.org/cte-vtour
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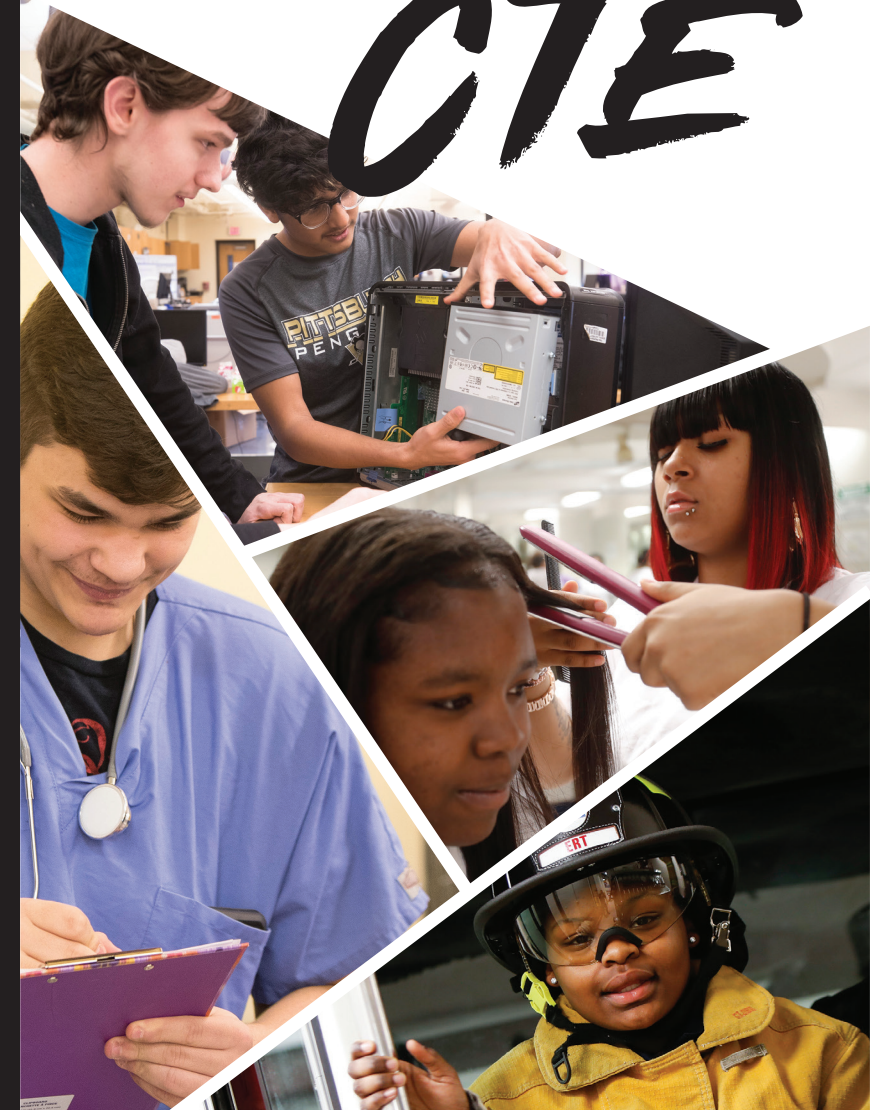
@pps_cte

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION



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“WHETHER” PROOF YOUR CAREER WITH CTE



WHETHER OUR NATION IS FACING A PANDEMIC OR AN ECONOMIC CRISIS, CTE CAREERS CAN WEATHER THE STORMS.



THE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) DIVISION OF PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS (PPS) PREPARES STUDENTS FOR

ESSENTIAL CAREERS.

As our nation faces a health crisis like COVID-19, we become more acutely aware of CTE's value in providing a skilled workforce.

CTE offers 16 programs that prepare PPS high school students for careers that are crucial to our infrastructure as a society (see chart).

THINK ABOUT THE KINDS OF JOBS THAT HAVE BEEN DESIGNATED AS ESSENTIAL...

- ▶ Healthcare
- ▶ Food Service
- ▶ Banking
- ▶ Construction
- ▶ Machining
- ▶ First Responders
- ▶ Childcare
- ▶ Business
- ▶ Entertainment Technology
- ▶ Internet Management
- ▶ Heating/Cooling
- ▶ Information Technology
- ▶ Automobile Repair
- ▶ Personal Care Services



CTE PROGRAM

AUTOMOTIVE BODY REPAIR

AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT (BASE)

CARPENTRY

COSMETOLOGY

**CULINARY ARTS
CCAC DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
UP TO 9 CARLOW UNIVERSITY CREDITS AVAILABLE**

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE TECHNOLOGY (ERT)
CCAC DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM**

ENGINEERING

ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY

FINANCE TECHNOLOGY

**HEALTH CAREERS TECHNOLOGY
CCAC DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM**

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

MACHINE OPERATIONS

MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION AND CODING (MPAC)

**REFRIGERATION, HEATING, VENTILATION & AIR
CCAC DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM**

LOCATION(S)	INDUSTRY CERTIFICATIONS
Pittsburgh Brashear	Automotive Service Excellence (ASE); Safety & Pollution Prevention (S/P2) Collision Repair & Refinish Safety; Motor Oil; OSHA
Pittsburgh Brashear	Automotive Service Excellence (ASE); S/P2 Automotive Service Safety; S/P2 Automotive Service Pollution Prevention; OSHA
Pittsburgh Westinghouse	Microsoft Office Application Specialist (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint); OSHA
Pittsburgh Carrick, Westinghouse	American Ladder Institute; S/P2 Construction; OSHA - Construction
Pittsburgh Perry, Westinghouse	PA State Cosmetology License; S/P2 Cosmetology; OSHA
Pittsburgh Carrick, Westinghouse	ServSafe Manager Food Safety; ServSafe Food Handler; S/P2 Culinary Food Safety; Heartsaver First Aid; Heartsaver CPR; OSHA
Pittsburgh Milliones	Child Development Associate Infant/Toddler; Child Development Associate Preschool; First Aid; Infant and Child CPR; OSHA
Pittsburgh Westinghouse	Hazardous Materials First Responder Awareness; Hazardous Materials Recognition & Identification; PA Essentials of Firefighting; National Incident Management Systems; Incident Command System; Basic Life Support for Health Care Professionals; OSHA
Pittsburgh Allderdice	Autodesk Certified User; OSHA
Pittsburgh Milliones	Adobe Certified Associate, Video Communication; Adobe Certified Associate, Digital Communication; OSHA
Pittsburgh Carrick	Microsoft Office Application Specialist (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint); OSHA
Pittsburgh Perry, Carrick, Westinghouse	Basic Life Support for Health Care Professionals; Heartsaver CPR; Heartsaver AED; Personal Care Home Direct Care Staff Certificate; OSHA - Healthcare
Pittsburgh Carrick	Microsoft Technology Associate; OSHA
Pittsburgh Brashear	National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS); OSHA
Pittsburgh Brashear	Adobe Certified Associate, Web Communication (Dreamweaver); OSHA
Pittsburgh Allderdice	EPA 608 Refrigerant Recovery; American Ladder Institute; OSHA - Construction

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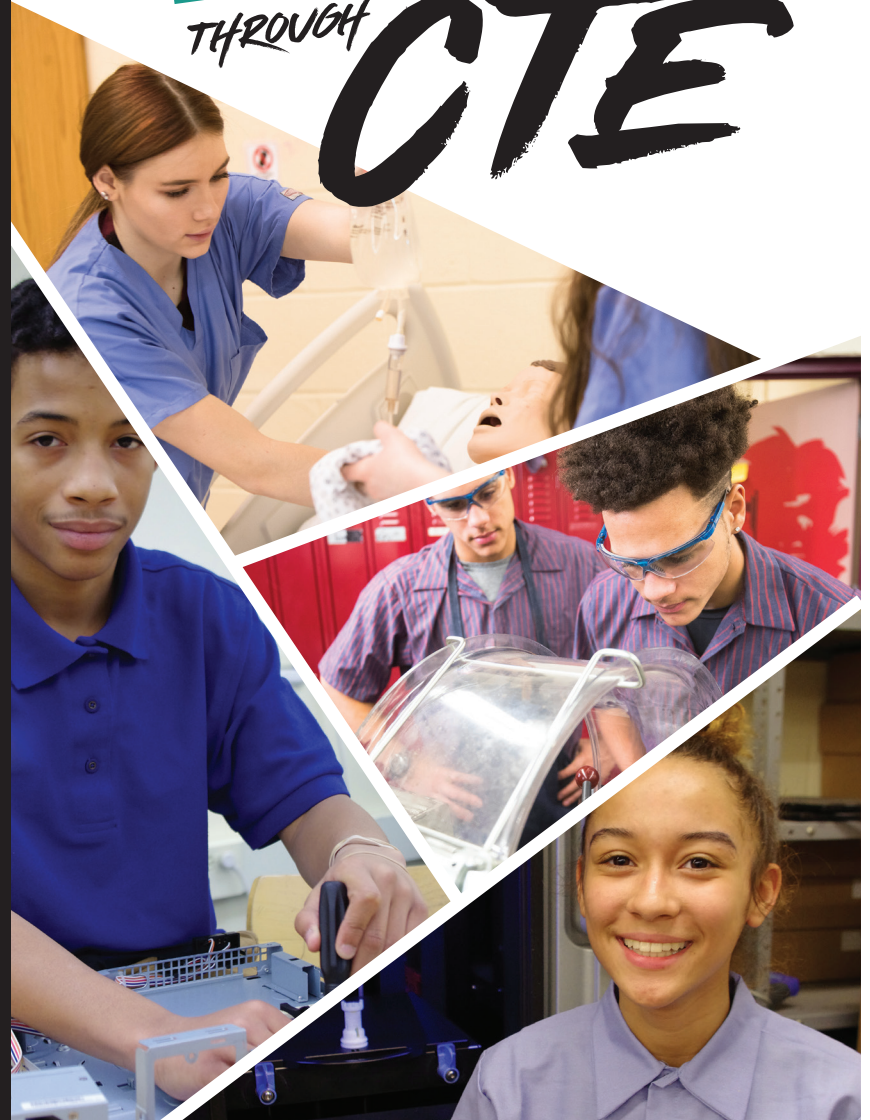
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CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION



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GET A STEM EDUCATION THROUGH CTE



CTE IS STEM ON STEROIDS



THERE ARE NUMEROUS HIGH-WAGE, HIGH-SKILL, HIGH-DEMAND CAREERS IN STEM FIELDS THAT CTE PROGRAMS PREPARE STUDENTS TO ENTER.

STEM is a curriculum based on educating students in four specific disciplines — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — using an interdisciplinary approach.

Usually when people think about STEM careers, they think mainly of scientists and engineers. **What should come to mind are the numerous high-wage, high-skill, high-demand careers in STEM fields that Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs prepare students to enter.**

STEM education is usually thought of as separate and distinct from Career and Technical Education (CTE), when in fact CTE has been on the forefront of using this method of delivering education.

WHAT CTE AND STEM HAVE IN COMMON:

SHARED APPROACHES:

- ▶ Hands-on/minds-on learning
- ▶ Interdisciplinary learning
- ▶ Authentic problem solving
- ▶ Industry partnerships
- ▶ Early career experiences

SHARED OUTCOMES:

- ▶ Increased graduation rates
- ▶ Career and college readiness
- ▶ Equity for underserved students
- ▶ Student motivation and engagement
- ▶ Academic and technical proficiency
- ▶ Creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication

CTE can make STEM learning more meaningful and engaging while helping students gain vital employability skills including collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and problem solving. Our programs are available to PPS students beginning in 10th grade.

HIGH-DEMAND STEM CAREER FIELDS	PPS CTE PROGRAMS IN THESE FIELDS & THEIR LOCATION(S)
HEALTH SCIENCES	Health Careers Technology <i>Carrick, Perry, Westinghouse</i> Emergency Response Technology <i>Westinghouse</i>
ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION	Engineering <i>Allderdice</i> Carpentry <i>Carrick, Westinghouse</i> RHVAC <i>Allderdice</i>
ADVANCED MANUFACTURING	Machine Operations <i>Brashear</i>
COMPUTER SCIENCE & IT	Information Technology <i>Carrick</i> Multimedia Production & Coding <i>Brashear</i>
TRANSPORTATION	Automotive Body Repair <i>Brashear</i> Automotive Technology <i>Brashear</i>
MEDIA TECHNOLOGY	Entertainment Technology <i>Milliones</i>
ADDITIONAL CAREER FIELDS	PPS CTE PROGRAMS IN THESE FIELDS & THEIR LOCATION(S)
HUMAN SERVICES	Cosmetology <i>Perry, Westinghouse</i> Culinary Arts <i>Carrick, Westinghouse</i> Early Childhood Education <i>Milliones</i>
BUSINESS	B.A.S.E. <i>Westinghouse</i> Finance <i>Carrick</i>





V-TOUR



TAKE THE CTE V-TOUR!

GET TO THE V-TOUR:

Start by going to the CTE Virtual Tour page
on the **Pittsburgh Public Schools** website:
<http://www.pghschools.org/cte-vtour>
Click the large on-screen image to start the tour.


SELECT A REGION:

East Region (for Allderdice, Milliones, and Westinghouse)
South/West Region (for Brashear and Carrick)
North Region (for Perry)

Select the region in which your home school is located to see the programs offered in that area, or visit a different region to learn more about all available CTE options .

NAVIGATE THROUGH THE CTE V-TOUR:


Once you select a region, our tour guide will give you an overview of the programs in that area. To learn more about a specific program, select it using the menu on the left of the screen. Use the arrow keys within the tour to move forward or backwards through the tour.

You'll be able to see a 360° image of each program lab along with other content (see menu at the bottom of the screen). Use your cursor to manually move within the 360° image or press the  icon to automatically rotate it.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

The information provided by the Virtual Tour Guide is available in audio and in written form on all platforms, including mobile.

To return to the PPS website from the tour,
do not use the "back" button on your browser.

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Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators

Testimony to the Basic Education Funding Commission

October 11, 2023

Presented by:

Dr. Darby Copeland, President, Pennsylvania Association of Career & Technical Administrators
Executive Director, Parkway West Career & Technology Center

Good morning. My name is Dr. Darby Copeland, and I am the President of the PA Association of Career and Technical Administrators (PACTA) and Executive Director of Parkway West Career and Technology Center. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the Basic Education Funding (BEF) formula, how it can impact the access to Career and Technical Education across Pennsylvania.

Our testimony today focuses primarily on the access and success of career and technical education for students.

Background

Our nation's focus on competition in the global economy has brought numerous federal and state legislative initiatives that have drastically affected public education. The list includes No Child Left Behind, Race To The Top, Every Student Succeeds Act and several versions of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. Legislation targeted and continues to focus on improving education and the quality of our workforce. Everyone agrees that our nation's education is essential to the quality of its workforce and career and technical education is essential to the development of workers' technical skills and knowledge. Therefore, the following analogy supports an economic premise for educational improvement: "basic education and especially, career and technical education" is imperative to "workforce development" and workforce development is essential to "economic development", which is vital to achieving a higher standard of living. A robust economy results in a higher "tax base" which in turn provides greater resources for schools and educational improvement. The continuum and link between education and the economy is indisputable.

Career and technical education (CTE) have undergone significant changes in the past few decades in response to the United States' focus on the global economy. To enhance our workforce competitiveness in global competition, CTE's mission is focused on "preparing students for successful careers and lifelong learning." Pennsylvania CTE educators have redirected programs to include a greater emphasis on higher level academics, preparation for postsecondary education, an emphasis on soft skills or Twenty-first Century Skills, and providing technical skill development based on nationally recognized business and industry credentials. In simple terms, today's Pennsylvania CTE high school graduates must be career ready.

Career and technical education have become an important component of educational improvement, adding rigor and relevance to academic and CTE programs of study. In leading high schools across the state and nation CTE has transitioned from an elective program to a career major and part of every student's career pathway to a high skill high wage career. In addition, there is growing evidence that career and technical education is an effective

intervention for reducing high school dropout rates, engaging students in the application of rigorous academics in a technical occupational setting.

Central to the development and delivery of a twenty-first century career and technical education program are high standards, high expectations, and continuous improvement. The process, defined by PA Department of Education standards, ensures that quality CTE programs are developed and delivered throughout the state. Quality career and technical education requires informed leadership, a supportive organizational structure, highly qualified teachers and support staff, and an uncompromising adherence to high standards and expert advice from business and industry.

Pennsylvania's career and technical centers, school districts, community colleges, and state universities collaborate in the development and implementation of Programs of Study (POS) that provide a focus on an educational pathway that is paramount to the success of program graduates. In addition, Carl D. Perkins legislation provides an emphasis on quality CTE, rigorous academics, employer engagement, industry credentials, career pathways, and accountability. Pennsylvania regulations provide a framework for an advisory structure that requires career and technology centers (CTCs) and individual CTE programs to seek support and advice from business, industry, and community stakeholders in all aspects of career and technical education. The state mandated advisory structure is vital to the quality of career and technical education, the school improvement process, and the success of CTE graduates in their chosen career. PA's business and industry employers and their incumbent technical employees are engaged in guiding career and technical educators in the development and continuous improvement and relevance of career and technical education.

High school students in career and technical education learn essential technical skills required for state and nationally recognized business and industry credentials. They also focus on soft or employability skills, and they learn and apply rigorous academics. As part of their career and technical education, students participate in work-based learning and many students enjoy paid internships or cooperative education in a modern workplace. While enrolled in CTE courses at a CTC, students can earn advanced standing in partnership with post-secondary institutions through dual enrollment/credit and they can receive credit for the industry credentials earned in CTE. The credits are the result of articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary institutions that recognize the value of industry credentials and career and technical education. Credit for credential agreements provides a valuable economic benefit to students, parents and employers. The award of college credits for industry credentials, often as high as 24 – 30 credits, encourages students to pursue further education. In many cases, students in CTE programs can leave their career and technical center with enough college credits to be considered a sophomore in college and finish their associate degree in one year and a bachelor's degree within three years of graduating from high school.

The majority of the state's CTCs also serve their communities by providing a variety of career and technical education programs for adults, and entry level employees. Many CTCs provide advanced incumbent workers and customized training programs for local employers. In addition, many career and technical schools have achieved postsecondary accreditation, which is essential for veterans and other adult students to be eligible for loans and financial aid that is essential for preparation in a technical career.

Career and technical education centers and their students face several challenges that inhibit interested high school students from gaining access to career and technical education that is vital to their college and career path. In addition, most CTCs lack minimum funding required to enhance existing programs and under current budgeting practices, are unable to open new programs necessary to support regional workforce and economic development. Yes, some CTCs have been able to modernize and expand program offerings because their member school districts supported bond financing for CTCs with facilities that are fifty years old and instructional equipment that was obsolete. However, the need to provide state-of-the-art facilities, equipment, and programs is the most critical issue facing Pennsylvania's career and technical schools.

First, we will address funding, as it is the most important factor that impacts students' access to state-of-the-art careers and technical education. Then we will address access to careers and technical education; followed by the concerns relevant to facilities. We will conclude with a summary of recommendations for consideration by the Basic Education Funding Commission.

Funding

Career and technical centers in Pennsylvania receive most of their funding from three primary sources. Approximately 3% of a CTC's budget comes from Carl D. Perkins federal funds. Perkins funding is a critical revenue source for our state's secondary and postsecondary CTE schools. Pennsylvania and its CTE schools continued funding under the Perkins Act is dependent on strict accountability in the achievement of performance measures and standards that are reflective of student achievement in high quality career and technical education (CTE).

Across the state many CTCs use much of their Perkins allocation to support enrollment of special education students in academic and CTE subjects. School districts receive IDEA federal funding in support of special education students; however, the money does not follow the students when they enroll part time or full time (all day) at the CTC. The CTCs include the excess cost of providing support for special education students in their budgets which inflates the overall cost of CTE, and a disproportionate amount of Perkins funds are spent in support of special education students; thus, reducing the amount of federal dollars available for CTE instructional equipment and program improvements. Career and technical education is an excellent education option for all students. Ultimately, most school districts support CTC budgets but their primary reason for reducing CTE enrollments is the "high cost of CTE".

With a factor being the lack of dedicated special education funds to provide support services needed to ensure the success of special education students enrolled at the CTC.

The State CTE Subsidy equates to less than 8% (on average) of the cost of CTE, while member school districts' share of the CTCs' budgets has increased to approximately 90%. Due to demographic indicators and decreasing federal funds and less state subsidy per student, some school districts' portion of their CTC's budget can exceed 90% of the total cost of providing career and technical education.

The current method of funding CTCs was determined in the mid 1960's by guidelines from PDE. The state provided a template for the articles of agreement to establish and govern AVTSs, now CTCs. The template identified two costs incurred by CTCs: 1.) **capital costs**, which are funded by the member school districts based on their tax assessed value as determined by the State Tax Equalization Board, and 2.) annual **operating costs**, which are determined by average daily membership (ADMs) at the CTC. The operating cost calculation created a "pay for use" concept. Unfortunately, the pay for use concept has had a devastating impact on CTE enrollments. Many school districts reduce or restrict CTC enrollments, believing they reduce their costs. When school districts employ this logic, they are denying students their right to an education that ultimately leads to high skill, family wage sustaining career. In addition, reducing CTC enrollments increases the cost per student and seldom results in savings for the school district. An unintended consequence of the method of funding CTE in Pennsylvania is the impact on our employers' ability to find highly skilled employees needed to sustain their operation and contribute to the State's economy. Employers provide invaluable support for CTE, but we are unable to meet their demand for CTE graduates.

Career and technical centers are not tuition schools. Their budgets are based on the cost of delivering quality CTE programs (**program-based budget**) and traditional fixed costs. Career and technical education cost more than basic education and that is the primary reason it is offered on a consortium basis at a CTC. The consortia approach also enables the state's CTCs to offer a greater number and variety of CTE courses.

When students have unrestricted access to the CTC the enrollment increases and the cost per student decreases. CTE program budgets represent a capacity to serve students, employers and the economy.

Facilities

The requirements driven by business and industry advice and the need to support state and regional workforce development priorities established a demand to modernize existing CTE programs and add new programs in support of emerging occupations. The need to open new and additional programs presents a financial challenge to CTCs due to the nature of costly occupational specific instructional facilities and equipment. The Act 1 index does not apply to CTCs, but every member school district is governed by the base index which is driven by the

state average wage calculation. Therefore, CTCs cannot increase their budgets higher than the legal limitations imposed on school districts and CTCs cannot claim exceptions that are granted to school districts. CTCs, like school districts, are experiencing unprecedented increases that total more than the allowable budgetary increase under Act 1. This unintended consequence of the Act 1 limit has restricted CTCs' ability to adequately modernize CTE programs and add new programs. The cost of adding one new technical program typically exceeds the allowable index for an increase to the general fund budget. The cost of modernizing existing CTC programs and/or adding a new program is borne by member school districts.

The PA Legislature and PA Department of Ed has provided supplemental and competitive equipment grants and the funding has made a significant difference in resourcing CTC programs, but the amount is less than the amount needed for modernizing some of the more equipment-intensive programs.

The funding has been proven to address critical equipment needs that were not included in the schools' instructional budgets due to budget revenue limitations. For many CTCs across the state, the PDE competitive equipment grants, and the PA Legislature's supplemental funding have provided the only source of revenue for instructional equipment. Without this vital funding, many CTCs would not have been able to buy instructional equipment that is needed to prepare students for high value industry credentials.

In addition to equipment many CTCs need funding to address facility renovations and upgrades. The environment to education and mirror an industry setting is critical to CTE students' success.

Access

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, school districts determine which students are enrolled in career and technical education. The process of selecting students and when they can attend a CTC can vary from school district to school district. The process is ultimately controlled by the school district. There can be many factors or criteria involved in the selection process or it can be very subjective and arbitrary. The guidance office is usually the primary and possibly the only source of information about CTE and the CTC. Marketing materials and activities about CTE and the CTC are often limited because the money usually comes from member school district tax supported dollars and marketing expenditures are included in the career center's general fund budget. School districts rely on the CTC to provide information about CTE, but they also approve the CTC's budget, so the amount of money budgeted for CTE information and marketing is conservative. Employers, students, and parents often say; "CTE is the best kept secret", and that reflects our ability to market career opportunities in CTE.

Student access to career and technical education has been restricted for a number of years for several reasons. In some instances, it is a direct result of cost cutting measures by school districts. Some school districts have decided to limit the number of students they send to CTCs to reduce their budgetary costs.

In other situations, school districts have reduced staff as a money saving effort and as a result, school counselor positions have been eliminated and/or have gone unfilled. School counselors have a difficult assignment addressing the wide variety of tasks they perform on a daily basis. In addition, most counselors lack expertise in workforce demographics and emerging technical careers; as a result, many students do not receive adequate career guidance. Without career guidance, students fail to take advantage of the offers at their CTC and the impact is a lack of adequate CTE enrollments that are needed to meet the workforce demands of area employers.

The reduction in counselors has the greatest impact on the least fortunate students, both academically and economically disadvantaged. They are typical of the profile of most students enrolled in career and technical education. Yes, CTE serves a wide variety of students with diverse abilities and interests, but a great number of disadvantaged students depend on career and technical education for their (only) entrance to their career pathway. Many disadvantaged students are unaware of the postsecondary and career opportunities available through CTE, and they often get minimal specific career information from their counselor. The increased demands and reduction in counselors and the general lack of knowledge about industry credentials, emerging career and educational opportunities at a CTC by school district counselors has been well documented. The combination of reduced counseling staff and their lack of knowledge of career and postsecondary education opportunities has had an unfavorable impact on career bound students, all of whom can benefit from career and technical education.

Recommendations

The quality of career and technical education and its ability to support Pennsylvania's workforce and economic development has been compromised because of the deterioration of the federal and state funding for CTE, the cost of career and technical education, and the rising cost of basic education at school districts. The method of funding career and technical education in Pennsylvania places the majority of costs on school districts.

Maintaining the stable base for Basic Education Subsidy (BEF) would result in higher CTE access and a greater number of graduates would be available to sustain economic growth in Pennsylvania. Economic growth results in a higher standard of living, which produces a greater tax base for the State and local school districts. Career and technical education is recognized by business and industry as a vital component of the workforce and economic development in Pennsylvania.

We recommend the PA Legislative Supplemental Funding for CTE instructional equipment be appropriated at the same or higher level.

We recommend the Pennsylvania Legislature provide additional funding to support modernizing and/or the development of new CTE programs in high priority occupations as identified by the PA Department of Labor and Industry.

We recommend funding be established to increase the availability of career counseling and information to all Pennsylvania students.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today.



ALLEGHENY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

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October 11, 2023

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c/o Sen. Kristin Phillips-Hill, Co-Chair
Room 362 Main Capitol
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Harrisburg, PA 17120-3028

Re: WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF ROBERT SCHERRER, ED.D.

To the Basic Education Funding Commission:

I welcome the opportunity to submit this written testimony in connection with the Commission's public hearing regarding student services.

My Background

I am a product of Pennsylvania's public education system, having attended public schools and two state-supported universities. I have spent my entire 27-year career in public education, most of it in school districts in and around Allegheny County: first as a classroom teacher in the Baldwin-Whitehall School District; then as a building administrator in the Woodland Hills, Peters Township and Pittsburgh Public school districts; and most recently as assistant superintendent and superintendent in the North Allegheny School District. To an extent, these districts represent a microcosm of Pennsylvania's public schools – some suburban and relatively affluent, others urban or semi-urban with greater socioeconomic challenges.

For the past three-plus years, I have served as executive director of the [Allegheny Intermediate Unit](#) (AIU). I am also a parent of children who attend, or attended, public schools. My daughter, Olivia, is a special education teacher in the Duquesne City School District. My son, Max, a student who is on the spectrum, is a senior at North Allegheny.

About the AIU

The AIU is one of the Commonwealth's 29 intermediate units (IUs), established by the General Assembly in 1971 to provide support to school districts and other school entities, in place of the former countywide boards of education. The AIU is the largest IU in terms of member school districts, comprising all 42 Allegheny County districts outside the City of Pittsburgh. It is one of the larger school entities in the state, with about 1,200 employees and combined budgets exceeding \$200 million in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. IUs have no direct stake in Basic Education Funding (BEF), as they do not receive any.¹ IUs are, however, authorized by the Public School

¹ In fact, IUs have not received any general operating revenue from the Commonwealth for decades.

Code to serve as liaisons to the state and federal governments on behalf of their member districts. [24 P.S. § 9-914\(a\)\(5\)\(vi\)](#). I am providing this testimony, in part, in that role.

The term “intermediate unit” aptly describes where IUs sit in Pennsylvania’s public education system – between the Department of Education (PDE) and other school entities – but not so much what IUs do. The AIU’s overarching mission is to advocate and advance equitable opportunities for every learner. Below are some examples of the services AIU provides.

Traditionally, IUs have played an important role in special education. The AIU’s Special Education and Pupil Services Division continues to operate three special education schools for students with disabilities who cannot be effectively educated in their home school districts. We provide special education and related services to many other students in their home schools in Allegheny County and beyond, as well as preschool early intervention services to eligible 3- to 5-year-olds in suburban Allegheny County. Nearly 9,500 students between the ages of 3 and 21 in Allegheny County receive direct support from our Special Education and Pupil Services Division.

Our Teaching and Learning Division provides professional development and technical assistance to school entities, in addition to implementing many PDE initiatives. The division also provides direct services to English language learners (ELLs) in public schools and to students in nonpublic schools.

Our Early Childhood, Family and Community Services Division operates a variety of high-quality early childhood programs, including dozens of Head Start and Pre-K Counts locations. The division maintains two alternative education schools for students excluded from their home schools for disciplinary reasons and educates juveniles incarcerated at the Allegheny County Jail. Our 10 family support centers offer resources, opportunities and experiences that promote effective parenting.

Finally, the AIU is increasingly providing its member school districts with noneducational services. The AIU’s Finance and Business Operations, Human Resources, Technology Services, and Marketing and Strategic Communication departments provide expert support that helps other school entities maximize resources.

[This brochure](#) explains who we are. [This one](#) provides an overview of our services. The AIU’s five-year Strategic Plan is available [here](#).

Basic Education Funding

As the commission’s name suggests, its focus is BEF, the Commonwealth’s largest subsidy for K-12 public education. BEF plays a singularly important role in influencing whether the Commonwealth’s public education system is adequately and equitably funded.

Even after the historically large increase in BEF for 2023-2024, only a quarter of BEF is distributed through the student-weighted funding formula enacted in 2016, commonly called the Fair Funding Formula (FFF). The remaining 75 percent of BEF consists of the “base” amounts equal to each district’s allocation during the 2013-2014 school year. The base

allocations largely derive from the amount each district received based on average daily student membership in the mid-1990s, which increased incrementally over the years as the Commonwealth devoted more money to BEF. This means that the allocation of the lion's share of BEF bears no rational relationship to current student population, student need or local revenue capacity. Such a funding method can hardly serve as the foundation for the “thorough and efficient” system of public education guaranteed by the Pennsylvania Constitution.

For this reason, bills have been introduced in both houses of the General Assembly² to require that all BEF be distributed through the FFF, phased in over a period of years. Even with a transitional period, this reform alone is not a viable option. Any change in funding methodology will increase revenue for some districts and decrease it for others. Allocating all BEF for 2023-2024 through the FFF would have diverted money from nearly two-thirds of school districts to the remaining one-third. But not all of the “winners” would be under-resourced and disadvantaged districts, nor would all of the “losers” be at least adequately resourced and affluent. For example, of the seven school districts whose lawsuit resulted in a ruling that the Commonwealth's public education system is unconstitutionally inadequate, two would actually *lose* subsidy if all current BEF were allocated based on the FFF, and one would receive a very small increase.

This pattern holds true in Allegheny County, where most districts outside the City of Pittsburgh would benefit from such a change. Still, some districts with significant challenges and student needs – including Clairton City, Duquesne City, South Allegheny, Steel Valley and Wilkinsburg Borough – would lose BEF under the FFF, assuming the same total BEF allocation. Meanwhile, some of the county's wealthiest, best-resourced districts – such as Avonworth, Fox Chapel Area, Moon Area, Montour, Mt. Lebanon, North Allegheny, and Quaker Valley and Upper St. Clair – would receive windfalls, rewarding them for their population growth or stability relative to other districts.

Moreover, some of the “loser” districts could not realistically offset such a loss in BEF with an increase in local revenue. A prime example is the South Allegheny School District, made up of four small boroughs along the Monongahela River. Nearly two-thirds of the district's students (64.6 percent) are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. The district's student achievement data show mixed results. At the high school level in 2021-22, 54.3 percent of the district's high school students scored proficient or advanced on state assessments in English language arts/literature (statewide average: 54.1 percent); 58.3 percent, in mathematics/algebra (statewide average: 71.8 percent); and only 31.4 percent, in science/biology (statewide average: 54.4 percent).

Allocating all current BEF through the FFF would cost the district about \$4 million annually. Its budgeted revenue for 2022-2023 was \$28.7 million, including \$9.3 million from local sources. One mill of real property tax raises only \$400,000 in revenue. Making up \$4 million would require a property tax increase of about 40 percent. Even if the district were willing and able to

² [HB 114](#) (Rep. Ciresi) would shift all BEF to the FFF over five years; [SB 930](#) (Sen. Boscola), over two years.

raise such an amount through property taxes, it would take the better part of a decade because of the limitations imposed by the Taxpayer Relief Act (Act 1).

More likely, even if all BEF were shifted to the FFF gradually, districts such as South Allegheny would be forced to cut spending to match their ability to raise revenue. Because personnel costs are the largest portion of any school district’s budget, a significant loss of revenue would translate to reductions in staff and corresponding cutbacks in student programming. Over time, decreased investment in students would likely drive down achievement and cause further population loss, as families in search of better-funded schools and lower tax burdens choose to live elsewhere. Fewer students mean less state subsidy through the FFF, resulting in yet higher taxes, scaled-back services or both: a vicious circle that could become a death spiral for already disadvantaged communities. Strong communities depend on strong public schools at their core. The Commission must be wary of potential unintended consequences of its policy recommendations.

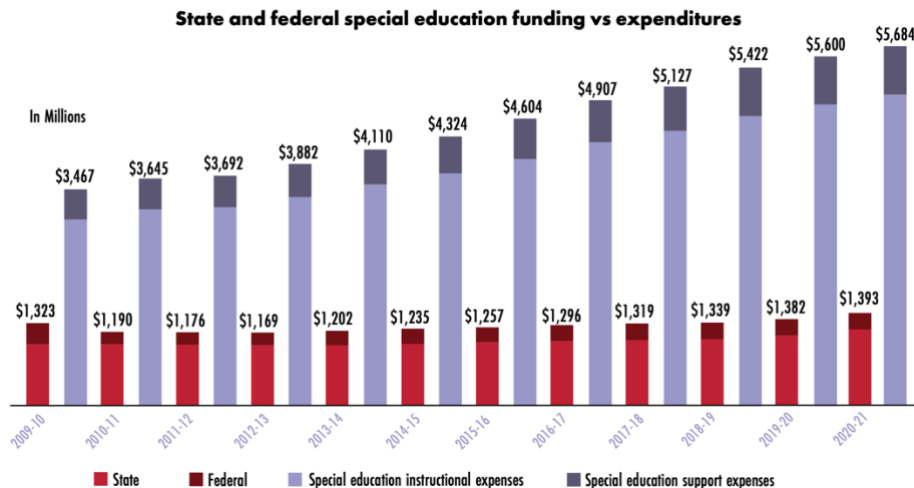
While I cannot recommend an ideal level of BEF or specific changes to the FFF, I can say this: For the sake of communities and students across the Commonwealth, it is imperative that the General Assembly increase BEF and modify or supplement the FFF to ensure that no school district must rely on local revenue that it cannot realistically raise.

Special Education

The term “Basic Education Funding” is a misnomer, because BEF supports more than “basic” education. That is because other subsidies, including Special Education Funding (SEF), are insufficient to cover the needs they are intended to address.

Special education is a largely unfunded mandate: Federal and state law require school districts to identify students with qualifying disabilities and to provide them with special education and related services that enable such students to receive a free appropriate public education. According to the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA), the percentage of students receiving special education services in the Commonwealth has increased significantly in the past decade, from 15.1 percent in 2009-2010 to 18.1 percent in 2020-21. During the same period, special education expenditures rose at several times that rate, 63.9 percent. Yet state and federal

subsidies to Pennsylvania school districts increased only 5.3 percent, as illustrated by PSBA in this chart. Subsidies covered only about a quarter of school districts’ special education costs in 2021-22. As a result, districts pay for required special



education services in large part with BEF and local revenue – leaving even less money available for “basic” education.³ Thus, an inadequate or inequitable allocation of BEF hinders a district’s ability to fulfill *all* students’ rights to an effective public education.

Early Childhood Education

A “thorough and efficient” system of education begins even before kindergarten. The Commonwealth offers two high-quality preschool programs to 3- and 4-year-olds from low- to moderate-income families: Head Start Supplemental Assistance (HSSAP), for families earning up to 100 percent of the federal poverty level,⁴ and Pre-K Counts, for families earning up to 300 percent of the poverty level.⁵ The AIU is the exclusive operator of Head Start in Allegheny County outside the City of Pittsburgh, and it also maintains 14 Pre-K Counts classrooms in various parts of the county.

Although the General Assembly has increased funding for both programs during the past decade, they require even more investment – both overall and per enrolled child. Combined, both programs serve only 44 percent of eligible children statewide, indicating a need for the Commonwealth to fund additional “slots.” Even as overall funding has increased, per-child funding has often stagnated. On a per-child basis, the AIU and other HSSAP program operators have been flat-funded for four of the past eight years, as illustrated below. Pre-K Counts operators received no per-child increase for five years during the same period. When per-slot increases have been granted, they have generally been modest: below 4 percent, except for double-digit percentage increases in 2022-2023. The 2023-2024 enacted budget was the first in a decade to forgo *both* an overall increase and a per-child increase for these vital programs. (Governor Shapiro had proposed a 10 percent per-child increase for Pre-K Counts and 3 percent for HSSAP.)

AIU Per-Slot Early Childhood Education Funding

Year	Federal Head Start	Year-to-year increase	HSSAP (State Head Start)	Year-to-year increase	Pre-K Counts	Year-to-year increase
15-16	\$10,777.95	N/A	\$9,222.96	N/A	\$8,189.06	N/A
16-17	\$11,070.35	2.71%	\$9,577.31	3.84%	\$8,500.00	3.80%
17-18	\$11,267.30	1.78%	\$9,712.91	1.42%	\$8,500.00	0.00%
18-19	\$11,395.48	1.14%	\$9,712.91	0.00%	\$8,500.00	0.00%
19-20	\$11,599.79	1.79%	\$9,712.91	0.00%	\$8,500.00	0.00%
20-21	\$13,503.18	16.41%	\$9,712.91	0.00%	\$8,750.00	2.94%
21-22	\$13,638.54	1.00%	\$10,007.99	3.04%	\$8,750.00	0.00%
22-23	\$14,000.22	2.65%	\$11,880.00	18.71%	\$10,000.00	14.29%
23-24	\$15,047.29	7.48%	\$11,880.00	0.00%	\$10,000.00	0.00%
Average		4.37%		3.38%		2.63%

³ Substantial increases in SEF are warranted, as discussed by Sherri Smith, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators, in her written testimony to the Commission dated September 28, 2023.

⁴ In 2023, \$30,000 for a family of four.

⁵ Currently, \$90,000 for a family of four.

Like the cost of doing business or raising a family, the expenses associated with operating early childhood programs go up every year: salaries, benefits, rent,⁶ utilities, supplies, insurance. In a tight labor market, the AIU and other early childhood education providers are increasingly struggling to attract and retain qualified staff at salaries supported by current funding. The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), which administers Pre-K Counts, recommends a starting teacher salary of \$45,000. At least for the AIU, such a figure is unrealistic and unsustainable in relation to per-slot funding. Our starting salary for Pre-K Counts teachers, who are required to have PDE certification, is less than \$36,000. Affording even that salary is challenging within current funding constraints, especially when future per-slot increases are speculative. We encounter similar issues with HSSAP. During the same period when the state has often flat-funded HSSAP, the federal government has provided regular per-slot increases for the Head Start classrooms it funds, with average year-over-year increases exceeding 4 percent, as shown in the chart above. Consequently, the AIU now receives significantly more per-slot funding for its federally funded early childhood classrooms than for its state-funded ones.

The General Assembly should provide reasonable annual increases in funding for HSSAP, Pre-K Counts and other early childhood education programs – on an overall basis, to expand the number of children served, and on a per-child basis, to compensate providers for ever-increasing costs and to enhance employee compensation. These programs are critical to supporting the Commonwealth’s economic health, not only by improving long-term outcomes for children entering our public schools, but also by providing child care that enables working parents to more fully participate in the labor market.

Other Reforms

In its decision finding Pennsylvania’s public education system constitutionally inadequate, the Commonwealth Court stated that potential reforms are “virtually limitless,” going far beyond simply providing more funding. While this Commission focuses on one component of the revenue side of the equation, it should consider the expense side as well. After all, Pennsylvania school districts spend more per student than their counterparts in most other states.

One way districts can reduce costs and maximize educational resources is by sharing services with other school or public entities. The AIU is a statewide leader in offering shared services to districts. We provide:

- School-based ACCESS services to 39 districts, facilitating reimbursement for services covered by Medical Assistance.
- Business office services, such as payroll, accounts receivable, accounts payable and benefits management, to two districts (and soon three), using cloud-based Oracle Fusion applications.

⁶ All AIU early childhood education locations are leased; the Public School Code authorizes intermediate units to own only offices and warehouses, not educational facilities. 24 P.S. § 9-914-A(11).

- Technology services, managing certain or all aspects of the information technology departments for five districts.
- Marketing and communication services, including media relations, publications, websites, social media, crisis communications and related functions, for eight districts and one other intermediate unit.

Bills have been introduced in both houses of the General Assembly to incentivize school entities to enter into shared-service arrangements. [HB 110](#) (Rep. Ciresi) and [SB 931](#) (Sen. Boscola) would establish a shared services grant program within PDE. The program envisioned by SB 931 would provide funding “to improve and enhance the capabilities of school districts through shared services activities between partners that may include other school districts, other schools, universities and colleges, businesses, municipalities, nonprofits and community health centers to provide agreements for services such as pupil transportation, purchasing, administration, safety and security, health services or food services and nutrition.” Such a grant program could help offset implementation costs that otherwise create a barrier to achieving long-term efficiencies. These and other measures that encourage school entities to realize savings through streamlining noneducational functions are worthy of the General Assembly’s support.

Another area in which the AIU and other intermediate units have helped school districts conserve resources is cyber education. For many years, the AIU’s Waterfront Learning program has negotiated contracts with providers of online curriculum and instructional services at consortium rates. The AIU resells these services to school districts, which incorporate them into their own cyber education programs. Waterfront Learning serves about 70 school districts statewide, with thousands of students enrolling for one or more courses annually. These districts pay lower rates than they would if they contracted with the providers on their own, while retaining students who might otherwise attend a cyber charter school – at several times the cost to the district. Bills introduced in the House and Senate⁷ would incentivize school districts to offer their own cyber education programs comparable to those in cyber charter schools, by relieving such districts from paying cyber charter school tuition. [HB 1422](#) (Rep. Ciresi) would establish a statewide cyber charter school tuition rate (initially, \$8,000) that is much closer in cost to services provided by the AIU and other intermediate units than to current cyber charter tuition. Such measures would afford school districts meaningful financial relief.

These are a just a couple of examples of reforms that could help school districts maximize the extent to which available resources are devoted to direct student services.

⁷ [HB 132](#) (Rep. Bizzarro); [SB 337](#) (Sen. Schwank).

Conclusion

On behalf of the AIU and its 42 member school districts, I thank the Commission for the opportunity to share my perspectives. I am happy to answer any questions or provide other information that the Commission may need.

Thank you for your service on the Commission and for your support of public education.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Scherrer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Scherrer, Ed.D.



**Emily Neff, Director of Public Policy, Trying Together
Written Testimony for the Basic Education Funding Commission**

October 11, 2023

Pittsburgh

Chair Sturla, Chair Phillips-Hill, and members of the Basic Education Funding Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony focused on early childhood education.

Trying Together supports high-quality care and education for young children by providing advocacy, community resources, and professional growth opportunities for the needs and rights of children, their families, and the individuals who interact with them. Trying Together is pleased to partner with PennAEYC to support the Pittsburgh Chapter of PennAEYC. Additionally, Trying Together is a principal partner of the statewide coalition Early Learning PA (ELPA) which includes the Pre-K for PA, Start Strong PA, Childhood Begins at Home, and Thriving PA campaigns. The campaign priorities cover infant and toddler child care, pre-k, evidence-based home visiting, and early intervention. Regionally, Trying Together partners with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services and The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers to support the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Region 5 in Allegheny County. ELRCs are single points of contact for families, early learning providers, and communities to access information and resources, including child care subsidies for families and quality coaching and technical assistance for professionals.

Overview - Why ECE?

The role of early childhood education must be addressed in adequate and equitable school funding to ensure all children in our state have the opportunity to start strong, succeed, and thrive beginning with high-quality pre-k.

Throughout public testimony regarding K-12 funding in Pennsylvania, access to pre-kindergarten has consistently been mentioned from educational researchers to administrators and teachers. Dr. Matthew Kelly pointed out the great need for pre-kindergarten in his testimony estimating it would cost an additional \$1.1 billion for school districts to serve three- and four-year olds who are eligible for pre-k but not served. Dr. Steven Barnett, founder and co-director of the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University presented research on the benefits of pre-k during the school funding trial - citing the gains and successes for students who had access to high-quality pre-k, especially for young children living in poverty. Superintendents shared that children entering kindergarten who did not attend pre-k struggled with foundational cognitive, social, and emotional skills compared to their peers who had the opportunity.

Additionally, the federal Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA) envisions a pre-kindergarten through grade 12 continuum. ESSA encourages alignment and collaboration in the birth through third grade continuum by providing more flexibility for states and districts to use federal investments for evidence-based early education opportunities. The state ESSA plan includes pre-k, identifying it as a factor for students to become college and career ready. The state board's Master Plan for Basic Education also highlights the importance of high-quality pre-k and highly qualified teachers.



The Early Childhood Continuum

Often early childhood education is characterized only as pre-k, however, the early childhood continuum is defined as birth through age eight.¹ In Pennsylvania the early childhood certification is for pre-k through fourth grade which is aligned with research-based child developmental periods. While my testimony will focus primarily on expanding access to pre-k for three- and four- year olds, pre-k is only one part of the early childhood continuum that begins at birth and spans into the early years of elementary school.

Early learning experiences are cumulative and serve as the foundation for all future learning. Research shows that the most rapid period of brain development occurs in the first five years.² Yet the way early care and education is structured and financed does not align with what we know about early childhood development. Unlike K-12 education, birth-to-five opportunities are not considered a “public good”.

Pennsylvania also has established the [Early Childhood Learning Standards](#) which are research-based standards that build off each other in age and developmental stages beginning with infants and continuing through second grade. The standards include foundational skills in the following areas: approaches to learning through play; language and literacy development; mathematical thinking and expression; scientific thinking and technology; social studies thinking; creative thinking and expression; health, wellness, and physical development; and social and emotional development. Hands-on, play-based experiences are how young children learn best. During these years, children master basic skills to lay the scaffolding for developing more complex academic skills throughout their educational journey.³

The benefits of high-quality early learning (birth through age five) reach their full impact when children continue in high-quality, developmentally appropriate early elementary school experiences. Most importantly, this includes developmentally appropriate, high-quality kindergarten. Currently, kindergarten is not mandatory in Pennsylvania and some districts still only offer half-day programs which can be as little time as two and a half hours a day.

The transition to kindergarten marks a critical point in the lives of children and families and serves as a bridge for children and families between the birth-to-five system and the K-12 system. Hi5!, led by the United Way, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, and Trying Together, engages with nearly all 43 school districts in Allegheny County to ensure on-time kindergarten registration and supports schools to implement effective kindergarten transition activities. Through our work with Hi5!, kindergarten teachers and elementary school principals have shared that children who have mastered basic social, emotional, and communication skills in pre-k are ready to begin mastering the core academic skills needed to read by third grade. A survey of kindergarten teachers found that 96% agree that students who attend a high-quality pre-k program are set up for success in kindergarten.⁴

Pennsylvania’s Early Care and Education Landscape

High-quality pre-k builds on high-quality infant and toddler child care. It’s important to acknowledge how pre-k exists within the early care and education system. The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) administers birth-to-five programming and is jointly overseen by the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education.



As one part of the early care and education system, pre-k is offered in various settings known as a mixed delivery system. This includes child care centers, group child care homes, family child care homes, public schools, and private schools. The options of a mixed delivery system offer parental choice and meet the needs of families. Early care and education is a complex market and system that is mostly private-pay with many families paying nearly as much as their rent/mortgage and in-state college tuition. While Pennsylvania provides income-eligible families with public funding for early care and education programs, there is still a great deal of unmet need for families and the reimbursement rates don't cover the full cost of care for early learning programs.

State funded birth-to-five programs include:

- Child Care Works - subsidy program for families with an income at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or below and who meet the work requirements; for children ages birth through age 12
- Pre-K Counts - state funded high-quality pre-k program for three- and four-year-olds from families with an income at or below 300% of the FPL
- School district pre-k
- Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program - additional state funding to federal grantees to serve three- and four-year-olds living in families at or below 100% of the FPL
- Evidence-Based Home Visiting - Services include in-home prevention services to support and empower families with children from birth to age five funded through the federal Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV), State Family Centers, and Nurse Family Partnership
- Early Intervention - provides special education and intervention services for children ages birth through five; Part C (infants and toddlers) & Part B (preschoolers)

Unfortunately, not all children have access to high-quality early learning experiences. Only 65,922 eligible children attend high-quality, publicly funded pre-k, while more than 87,000 eligible children are unserved. An additional 4,364 pre-k classrooms are needed to serve the remaining eligible children based on the criteria above. If the state wants to provide high-quality pre-k for all three- and four-year-olds across Pennsylvania, an additional 6,451 classrooms are needed.⁵ Currently, there are 350 school districts without a public pre-k program.

Established in 2014, the Pre-K for PA campaign has a vision that every three- and four-year-old in Pennsylvania will have access to high-quality pre-k. The campaign supports the need for continued investments to provide our youngest children access to a quality early childhood education.

Pre-K for PA defines high-quality, publicly funded pre-k as:

- State- and Federal-Funded Head Start
- Pre-K Counts
- School district pre-kindergarten
- Philadelphia pre-k (PHLpreK)
- Child care provided in Keystone STAR 3-4 centers and group child care homes participating in the Child Care Works subsidy program for preschool-age children



Four types of high-quality providers are eligible to receive Pre-K Counts funding to support their pre-kindergarten program including:

- Head Start grantees
- Keystone STAR 3-4 child care centers and group child care homes
- private academic nursery schools
- school districts

The mixed-delivery system of pre-k programming is a strength of Pennsylvania’s current ECE system, and offers the potential to expand access for families with a variety of options. For example, a pre-k program may run for as little as three hours a day and as long as six, however, most families need at least eight hours of programming for their child to align with their work schedule. Child care providers offer the before and after care (wraparound services) to supplement the pre-k program. The majority of Pre-K Counts providers are in high-quality child care programs, accounting for 46% of the Pre-K Counts locations across the state.⁶ As access to pre-k is considered as a factor for an adequate and equitable education, pre-k expansion must occur across all settings in order to meet the needs of three- and four-year-olds.

Expanding access to high-quality pre-k provides an opportunity for a more equitable approach to early learning experiences. A recent report from Penn State University found that white preschoolers accounted for the majority of program participants in Pre-K Counts, and white children were increasingly more likely to be enrolled in a high-quality pre-k program compared to Black children. White children were enrolled in high-quality programs at higher rates than Black children.⁷ Recommendations called for Pennsylvania to increase funding for pre-k access and to serve more Black children from urban and high-poverty communities.

Currently, full-day Pre-K Counts slots are reimbursed at a base rate of \$10,000, and half-day slots are reimbursed at a base rate of \$5,000. HSSAP slots are reimbursed at a base rate of \$13,413. Child care programs participating in public pre-k programs rely on the reimbursements to help supplement the high cost of caring for infants and toddlers, and to operate their programs, and retain staff. Continuing to invest funding for increased rates will help to stabilize the sector and help address the ECE workforce crisis which is essential in expanding access for young children.

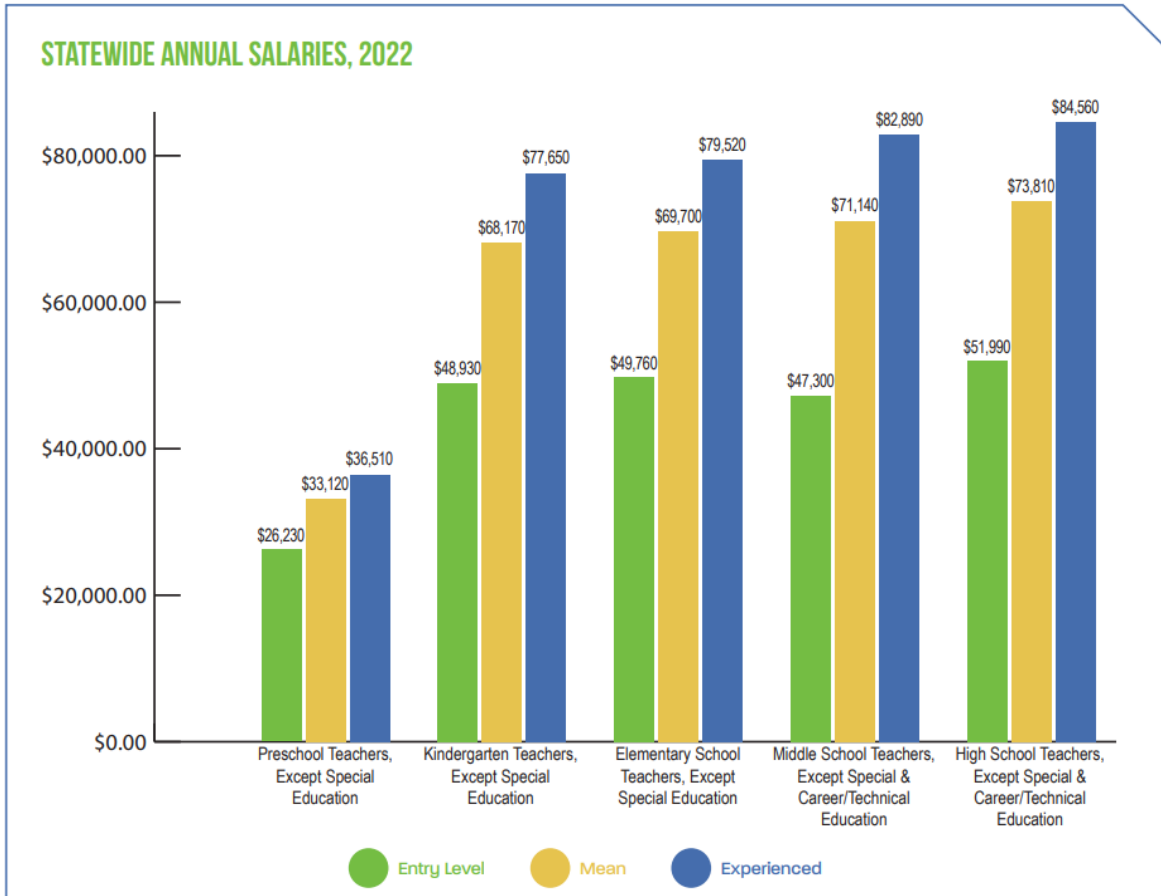
The Importance of Early Childhood Educators

I recognize there have been questions and concerns raised about 2,800 unfilled seats in the Pre-K Counts program. Any account of unfilled seats is a point in time snapshot and the number fluctuates over the year, just as an elementary school’s enrollment may change. However, the number of unfilled pre-k seats does not paint a full picture of the current situation and misses the root cause and solution for serving more children. We know the demand for high-quality pre-k is high and the majority of eligible children remain unserved. The reality for families is that they are stuck on a waiting list for high-quality pre-k while the nearby child care program has closed classrooms because there aren’t enough qualified staff. This is an issue of supply of high-quality teachers.

[In a February 2023 survey from the Start Strong PA campaign, statewide early learning programs reported that they had nearly 4,000 open staffing positions resulting in more than 38,300 children on waiting lists.](#) Programs in Allegheny County reported more than 500 open positions leaving 5,581 children on waiting lists.

Early childhood education is among the lowest paying professions in the United States, yet the country’s workforce is dependent upon the field to teach and care for their children while they are at work. In the state of Pennsylvania, the average hourly wage of an early education teacher is \$12.43 an hour which equates to under \$26,000 annually.⁸ The retention and recruitment challenges have placed the industry in the middle of a hiring crisis. The current public funds do not enable child care programs to pay a livable wage and many owners/directors have shared that they “can’t compete with the hourly wages at Target or Sheetz.” Programs also can’t continue to raise the rates of middle-class working families enough to cover the cost of wages. Parents can’t afford to pay anymore and child care providers won’t survive with the current funding system.

The scarcity of qualified educators remaining in the field presents many issues for access to high-quality care and education which leaves early learning programs, families, and communities at a loss. The graph below is pulled from Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children’s 2023 [State of Early Care and Education](#) report and compares the earnings of early childhood teachers to their counterparts in K-12 (using Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry data from Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics).





A skilled and stable teaching workforce maintains a high-quality early learning environment. While quality expects and demands the appropriate knowledge and credentials of professionals, the compensation for pre-k teachers remains significantly lower than their colleagues in K-12 settings. The following table* compares lead teacher education and training for Head Start, Pre-K Counts, and elementary school teachers with a Pre-K-4 teaching certificate.

Head Start	Pre-K Counts	PK-4
<p>Education: Associate's, Bachelor's, or advanced degree in child development or ECE- or in a related field with coursework equivalent to a major relating to ECE and experience teaching preschool children</p> <p>Complete a minimum of 15 clock hours of professional development per year</p>	<p>Education: Bachelor's degree and ECE certificate</p> <p>Must complete a minimum of 24 post baccalaureate credits to convert from Instructional Level I to Level II within six years</p> <p>Participate in a PDE approved teacher induction program</p> <p>150 hours of Act 48 approved professional development every five years to maintain certification</p>	<p>Education: Bachelor's degree and ECE certificate</p> <p>Must complete a minimum of 24 post baccalaureate credits to convert from Instructional Level I to Level II within six years</p> <p>Participate in PDE approved teacher induction program</p> <p>150 hours of Act 48 approved professional development every five years to maintain certification</p>

*Retrieved from the Pre-K for PA and Trying Together report [Invest in Quality: A Case for Paying Closer to What High-Quality Pre-K Costs](#).

Regarding concerns about funds for the unfilled seats, programs are still spending the funds on the current children in the program to ensure high-quality care and education, just as school districts do when student enrollment declines. While teachers are the center of quality, and personnel accounts for the majority of costs at early learning programs, basic expenditures such as rent, utilities, classroom materials, and food also impact the quality of care and education provided. Well-equipped and resourced facilities play an important role in developing the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills of children. No program is sitting on funds, they are investing in their staff, in quality environments, and ultimately making good use of the funds to meet the needs of the children in their care.

Short- and Long-Term Academic, Health, Social, and Economic Benefits

Regardless of family income, research has shown both short- and long-term academic and health benefits for children who attended high-quality pre-k. The impacts are even greater for children facing systemic economic and social challenges, helping to reduce achievement gaps between low-income and affluent children.⁹ Over the course of the academic career, benefits include reduced grade repetition, reduced special education placements, and increased graduation rates. Health impacts such as reduced heart disease, depression, substance use, and diabetes have also benefited participants over their lifetime.¹⁰



Specifically, a 2021 study of Pennsylvania’s Pre-K Counts program by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, found children who participated in the program had higher levels of language and math skills and gained between four and five months of learning compared to children who did not participate.¹¹

In addition to academic and health benefits, there are economic and societal benefits for investing early. The return on investments estimates range from \$2 to \$17 for every dollar spent on high-quality pre-k programming.¹²

The early care and education field is the workforce behind the workforce and a critical piece to economic recovery. Pre-k is not only essential to supporting the growth of our youngest learners, it also serves as part of the infrastructure for getting families back to work.

For nearly 20 years, Pennsylvania has continuously invested in high-quality pre-k for eligible three- and four-year-olds through Pre-K Counts and the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program. In the 2022-23 budget, policymakers supported a historic investment of \$79 million, increasing the total investment to over \$390 million, thanks to bipartisan support. Unfortunately in the most recent budget, pre-k did not receive an increase and 33 counties lost Pre-K Counts seats, including 101 in Allegheny County.

[In a report published by Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children in 2022, Pennsylvania ranks 14th in per capita state spending compared to the other 26 states with similar quality ratings for their pre-k programs.](#)

The state’s per capita spending is \$1,103, far less than neighboring West Virginia, which spends nearly 2.5 times the amount of Pennsylvania per capita on high-quality pre-k education.

Closing

The evidence is clear that access to high-quality early childhood education provides a strong foundation and offers a pathway to future success. Unfortunately, Pennsylvania currently falls short in providing these opportunities and investing in our early care and education workforce.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify and share more about why early childhood education is an important factor for a comprehensive and equitable education. The rapid brain growth in the early years demonstrates the need to ensure all children have access. High-quality early learning opportunities are the basis for future learning and skill development.

A coordinated and connected early childhood continuum involves early childhood programs, school districts, families, and stakeholders in the community, and local, state, and federal government. The need for a mixed-delivery system and pay parity cannot be overstated as a foundation for success in pre-k expansion. Pennsylvania has the infrastructure to work towards providing every child—regardless of race, ethnicity, geography or income—access to high-quality early care and education. Thank you for your consideration of early childhood education in the review of basic education funding.

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Additional Resources

[Early Care and Education Landscape](#)

[Pre-K and Child Care Public Funding](#)

[Trying Together Public Policy Agenda](#)



Disability Rights Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Basic Education Funding Commission Testimony

Provided by:

Jeni Hergenreder
Staff Attorney
Disability Rights Pennsylvania
October 10, 2023

Good Morning Chairwoman Phillips-Hill, Chairman Sturla and members of the Basic Education Funding Commission.

My name is Jeni Hergenreder. I am a Staff Attorney at Disability Rights Pennsylvania. Disability Rights Pennsylvania is the federally mandated protection and advocacy agency designated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We provide legal and advocacy services to people with disabilities of all ages in Pennsylvania. We are one of only a few organizations in the Commonwealth that families of children with disabilities can call for free legal advice about special education issues. It is typical for us to handle hundreds of calls from parents each year.

On behalf of Disability Rights Pennsylvania, and the individuals that we serve, I would like to thank you for soliciting our views on the educational needs of students with disabilities.

Overview of Special Education:

There are both state and federal laws that impose obligations upon public schools to provide students with disabilities a free and appropriate public

education or “FAPE.” Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, public schools must, at no cost to the student or family, develop an individualized educational program (or “IEP”). The IEP itself is a written document that summarizes the student’s educational needs, how the school will meet those needs through accommodations, supports, and services, and where the student will receive those services – for example in a general education classroom, special education classroom, or in a private school placement.

The IDEA requires schools to educate students with disabilities in inclusive settings, where they can learn alongside their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent possible. This takes both careful planning and significant resources. Under the IDEA, all students with disabilities are legally entitled to an individualized educational program that is reasonably calculated to allow the student to make appropriate progress in light of the student’s unique circumstances and giving the student the chance to meet challenging objectives.¹ Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, providing FAPE means designing a student’s support plan to meet their individual needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.² The state law counterpart to each of these federal laws are referred to as Chapter 14 and Chapter 15 respectively.

These laws (rightfully) impose significant obligations on school districts to ensure that all students with disabilities – no matter how extensive their academic, emotional, behavioral, or medical needs – receive the special education and related services they need to make meaningful progress on individualized goals. A student’s individualized plan typically includes a list of supports and accommodations the school has agreed to provide as well as a list of related services the student needs. Related services include but are not limited to: speech and language pathology and audiology services, interpreter services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, counseling services, orientation and mobility services, school health and nursing services, medical services for diagnostic and evaluation purposes, parent counseling and training, and transportation services.³ The obligation to provide transportation to students with disabilities includes transportation to and from and between schools, travel in and around school buildings, specialized equipment required to provide special transportation.⁴

Funding for Basic Education and Special Education:

Obviously, all of these services cost money and the reality is federal and state funding cover a mere fraction of the cost. In 2020-2021, state and federal revenue accounted for only 24.5% of special education expenses.⁵ Even more

alarming is that the percentage of state and federal special education funding as compared to the percentage borne by local school districts has decreased significantly over the past ten years. In 2010, state and federal revenue accounted for 38.2% of special education expenses and by 2020 it had fallen to 24.5%.⁶ The remaining percentage was born by local districts who undoubtedly had to make difficult decisions about how to shift funding away from other student programs in order to cover special education expenses.

Post COVID Trends for Student Special Education Needs:

Following the pandemic, there has been an increase in the number of children who are eligible for special education services and the cost of services. According to data compiled by the advocacy group PA Schools Work, between 2008 and 2017, the cost of providing special education services in Pennsylvania increased 18 times faster than the aid the state offered to cover those costs.⁷ Students have lost educational opportunities and academic attainment is behind pre-pandemic trends. According to a recent study by the Pew Foundation, 20.2% of students in Pennsylvania are enrolled in special education -- the second highest percentage in the country.⁸ The Pennsylvania Department of Education estimates that 30% of school aged children will experience a behavioral, mental, or developmental condition in any year. The increase in eligibility will no doubt continue as assessments and diagnosis of disability improves. At the same time, staffing various positions – including teachers, support staff and nurses, has become more expensive due to demand.⁹

There is also an increase in the number of students with mental health needs who need support at school.¹⁰ Mental health is an essential part of overall health. The pandemic exacerbated health disparities that already existed.¹¹ According to 2021 data from the Centers for Disease Control, 42% of high school students felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks that they stopped doing normal activities.¹² Kids spend the majority of their time at school. We need more counselors and therapists working in school to support students and help them manage in the moments when they need it most. Mental health supports are crucial to student success and educational equity.

While kids should theoretically be able to access mental health services outside of school through their medical insurance, countless families report that securing an appointment with a mental health provider is extremely difficult. This is particularly true in rural areas of the Commonwealth, where provider access is often more limited. We commonly hear stories of people waiting six months or more for an appointment with a mental health professional. Ensuring that mental

health supports are integrated into schools is crucial to student success, avoiding mental health crises, and supporting students to achieve their educational goals.

Impact of School Funding on Students with Disabilities:

In closing, I'd like to leave you with a few examples of students with disabilities whose families contacted DRP because they were struggling to obtain something their child needed from their public school, where the school's resources were clearly at play:

- The first example is an elementary-aged student with physical disabilities who wore leg braces and sometimes used a wheelchair. The student's elementary school was inaccessible to him. It had two floors connected by stairs, but no ramps or elevators. The student was not able to access the second floor of the elementary school, where some of his classes were held, until the school district agreed to pay for and install a stair lift.
- The second example is a student with medical issues, including a history of seizures, who required the administration of a rescue medication if he had a seizure lasting longer than five minutes. Because the student required constant supervision and a nurse to administer the emergency medication, the school needed to provide the student with a 1:1 nurse for the bus ride and school day. It is difficult and expensive to recruit nurses for school jobs. There were periods of time when the school did not have a nurse for the student and, as a result, he could not come to school. Some of these periods were extensive and the student missed months of school at a time.
- The third example is a student with Autism who displayed self-injurious behaviors including punching himself in the face when he became frustrated. To keep the student safe and provide him with the instruction and support needed to modify his behavior, the school needed to pay for a specialized, padded helmet, a 1:1 aide, training for school staff on de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques and a behavioral specialist to complete a specialized evaluation called a functional behavioral assessment.

I hope these examples gave you a sense of how critical adequate funding is for individual students who rely on specific and sometimes costly services to be able to attend school safely and on an equal basis as their peers.

Thank you for your time.

Disability Rights Pennsylvania

Disability Rights Pennsylvania has been the federally mandated protection and advocacy system in our state for over 45 years. Our mission is to protect and advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities so they may live the lives they choose, free from abuse, neglect, discrimination, and segregation. Our vision is a Commonwealth where people of all abilities are equal and free.

Endnotes

¹ [Endrew F. v. Douglas Cty. Sch. Dist., 137 S. Ct. 988 \(2017\)](#)

² [34 CFR § 104.33 \(b\)\(1\)\(i\)](#)

³ [34 CFR § 300.34](#)

⁴ [34 CFR § 300.34 \(c\)\(16\)](#)

⁵ [Special-ed-funding_state-budget-FINAL.pdf \(psba.org\)](#)

⁶ [Id.](#)

⁷ [Special Education Is Getting More Expensive, Forcing Schools to Make Cuts Elsewhere \(edweek.org\); SCHOOL DISTRICT DATA - PA Schools Work](#)

⁸ [Key facts about US students with disabilities, for Disability Pride Month | Pew Research Center](#)

⁹ [Promises and limitations of financial incentives to address special education staffing challenges | Brookings](#)

¹⁰ [The Landscape of School-Based Mental Health Services | KFF](#)

¹¹ [Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Mental Health and Mental Health Care During The COVID-19 Pandemic - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

¹² [Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2011-2021 \(cdc.gov\) at 60](#)



a closer LOOK



The 2022-23 state budget: The need for greater investments for special education

The education of children with disabilities is one of the most important responsibilities of public education. School districts strive to give children an equal opportunity for a good education and under state and federal law cannot refuse services to a child with special needs. Special education, by its very nature, is costly. Children with physical or mental disabilities require specialized instruction and, often, a wide array of support services to enable them to further benefit from the standard educational program. These are costs that public schools typically do not bear for other children in a regular classroom setting. As these costs continue to swell and contribute to other growing state-mandated financial burdens, Pennsylvania's school districts are beginning to face a very real financial crisis. To aid public schools in providing special education, both state and federal budgets include appropriations intended to help pay for educating students with disabilities. However, state and federal financial support for special education has failed to keep up with the increased cost to public schools.



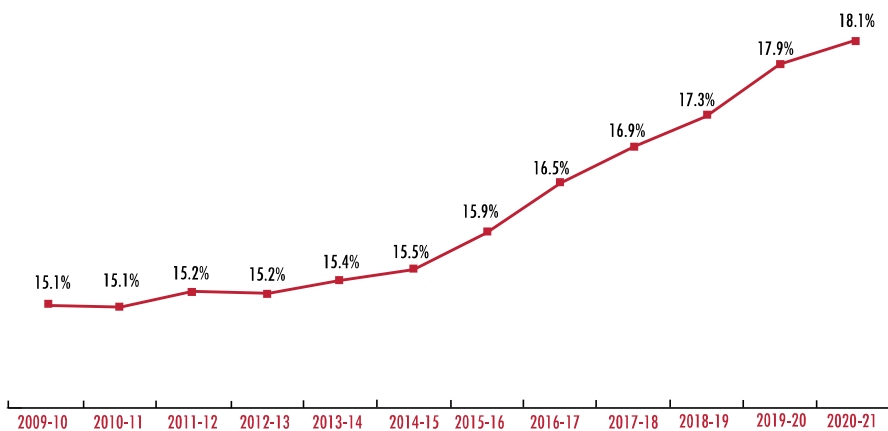
School districts are seeking an additional investment in the 2022-23 state budget of at least \$200 million to help keep pace with increases in mandated expenses for special education and reduce the reliance on local property tax revenues to pay these mandated costs.

Of all the cost drivers on school district budgets, special education is one of the hardest to control.

Public schools are required by federal law and state regulations to provide students with disabilities specialized programs, services and supports that allow them to receive an education. These programs, services and supports come with substantial additional expenses because they are individualized for each student. And because special education costs are mandated, school districts have very little, if any, control over those costs and how they increase year over year.

The percentage of students identified for special education has been steadily increasing. In 2020-21, more than 307,000, or 18.1% of public school students, received special education programs and services. This represents a 13.9% increase over the last 12 years while overall public school enrollments are down 4.7% in that same time. The required specialized programs and services for these growing numbers of students continue to put very real financial burdens on school district budgets.

Percentage of students in special education

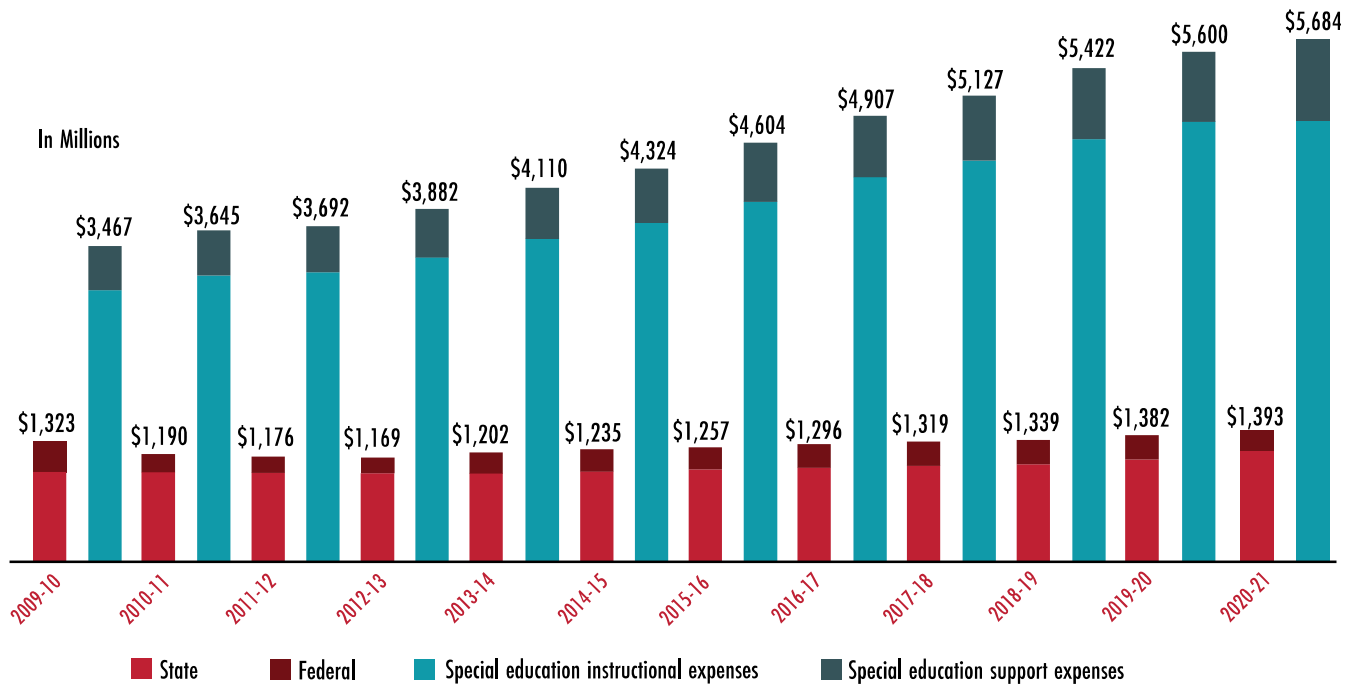


Increases in special education expenses outpace revenues. With the number of students requiring special education growing, so too have the expenses for public schools. Between the 2009-10 and 2020-21 school years, state and federal special education revenue increased 5.3% while mandated special education spending increased 63.9%.

The state and federal shares of special education expenses have been steadily decreasing because they have not kept up with the increases in expenditures. In 2009-10, state and federal revenue accounted for 38.2% of special education expenses but that percentage fell to 24.5% by 2020-21. Because state and federal special education funding has failed to keep pace with the growth in expenses, most school districts have been forced to pay a larger share of special education expenses entirely from increases in local funding sources, such as property taxes. With state and federal funding making up less than a quarter of what schools spend for special education in the most recent school year, the remaining 75%, or nearly \$4.3 billion, will have to come from other, primarily local, sources of revenue.

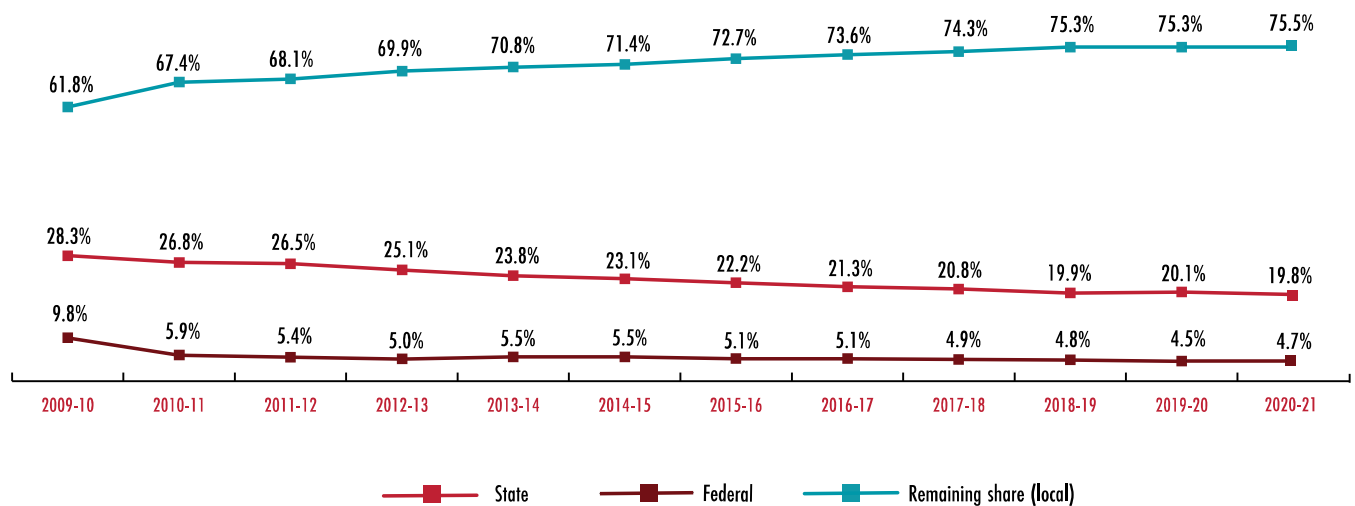


State and federal special education funding vs expenditures



Special education is a budget pressure. The lack of sufficient state and federal special education funding creates significant pressure on local school districts and their taxpayers. Pennsylvania’s public schools need help. To be clear, school districts are in no way suggesting or recommending that the requirements related to providing special education be eliminated. Because special education costs are mandated, school districts have very little, if any, control over those costs and how they increase year over year. Increasingly, school districts are experiencing the need to raise local taxes or redirect existing outlays to cover the growing cost of special education, due to insufficient state and federal special education funding.

Percent of special education funding by source





Pennsylvania School Librarians Association

Hello, my name is Dr. Laura Ward. I am the librarian at Fox Chapel Area High School, I am also a past president of the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association, PSLA, with whom I am still the communications committee co-chair. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to share with you some highlights about my profession. Becoming a school librarian has been a dream come true for me. I have been the high school librarian for the last 11 years and completed my doctoral dissertation on the impact school librarians had on student reading test scores in my home state of West Virginia. I am passionate about the impact school librarians have on students and not just on student test scores, but on students' lives.

Recognizing librarians as a critical piece in every school is vital to student success, both academically and also socially and emotionally. Ensuring every school across the commonwealth is fully, fairly, and equitably funded is crucial to the future of our state. During the 2017-2018 school year, the PSLA reported there were 1,686 school librarians in the state of Pennsylvania. In the 2021-2022 school year, only 1,538 school librarians were reported during the annual staffing survey. Yes, this decrease is in part due to the pandemic, but it is also due to failing to replace school librarians when a retirement occurs and is also due to reassigning school librarians to the classroom instead of the library. In the 2021-2022 school year, the PSLA found that 52 school districts, which is 10% of school districts across the commonwealth, did not have a school librarian assigned to the library. Another reason school districts do not have library programs is illustrated with the Aliquippa School District in Beaver County, a Title I district. When I spoke with someone about the Aliquippa School District, I was told they felt they didn't need a school librarian since they have a great public library. I'm thrilled when I hear that students live in a community with a good public library. However, having a public library is not enough. Students must have easy access to the library, and libraries in schools provide this opportunity. It is not a guarantee that every child will live near a public library or will have access to visit the public library regularly. However, all children are provided transportation to their school. It is important to remember that one type of library is not a replacement for the other. Public and school libraries are not mutually exclusive.

I want to point out that having a great relationship with the local public library is encouraged for school librarians. In an effort to support each other and help both the community library and the school district achieve the goal of supporting the same people, Fox Chapel Area School District works with the Cooper-Siegel Community Library to ensure every student in the district receives a library card. This has opened the door for students to have access to so many more resources at no cost to them.

Over the years, the PSLA has worked with legislators who saw the impact school librarians have on students' lives. These legislators were willing to circulate memos trying to mandate that every school district in Pennsylvania enforce the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) guidelines CSPG 48, which requires that an education agency must employ at least one certified library science educator when providing a school library program. Some legislators even introduced recent bills to require a certified school librarian be employed in every public school building in the state. Currently, SB 610, introduced by Senator Schwank, and supported by Senators Costa, Haywooe, Collett, Brooks, Fontana, Hughes, Flynn, Kane, Brewster, Street, Cappelletti, Comitta, L. Williams, and Muth states "each public school in this Commonwealth shall employ at least one professional librarian who is certified under 24 Pa.C.S. relating to certification of library personnel." HB 640, introduced by Representatives Ciresi, R. Mackenzie, Guent, Waxman, Rabb, Freeman, Isaacson, M. Mackenzie, James, Khan, Hanbidge, Burgos, Probst, Kinsey, Madden, Sanchez, Dellosa, Shusterman, Warren, N. Nelson, Neilson, Otten, Green and Malagari, is the companion bill currently circulating in the Pennsylvania House. Historically, these bills have many co-sponsors; however, they failed to gain traction. Similar bills have been introduced over many years, and all failed to go further, yet PDE mandates that schools have a librarian if they have a school library program. This equates to an unfunded mandate.

One reason it is so easy to dismiss the school librarian is the lack of consistency in the position title. The American Association of School Libraries (AASL) recommends the term "school librarian," however it is not required. Right here in Allegheny County, I am a school librarian within the Fox Chapel Area School District, but over in Blackhawk School District in Beaver County, they have teacher librarians. In Westmoreland County at Penn-Trafford High School, they don't have a "library," instead they have a "media center" with a media specialist at the helm. In an effort to clarify the role of a school librarian, the AASL identified six common beliefs central to the profession. These beliefs were created using the AASL official position statement and reflect the Every Student Succeeds Act definition on school libraries. The second of these beliefs is that a qualified school librarian should lead school libraries. Meaning, this belief is "qualified school librarians have been educated and certified to perform interlinked, interdisciplinary, and cross-cutting roles as instructional leaders, program administrators, educators, collaborative partners and information specialists." If a school removes their traditional school library for a media center, do you need a librarian, or can a classroom teacher with a free period in their schedule oversee the media center?

The PSLA revised the association's strategic priorities in 2022 to better reflect the goals of our members and the association as a whole. One goal is to communicate, through various methods, the impact of appropriately staffed school library programs on academic achievement to stakeholder groups, such as teachers, administrators, board members, parents/guardians, community members, and legislators. The outcome of this goal would be the increase in stakeholders' understanding of the critical importance of school libraries and the impact that certified school librarians have on children.

Through another goal of the association's strategic priorities, the PSLA will continue to provide varied professional learning opportunities for school librarians and other educational partners to develop and implement best practices that impact academic achievement of learners and the needs of our members

recognizing and highlighting members who demonstrate, employ, and/or share innovative school library practices that can be replicated through the system. This goal goes hand and hand with another strategic priority for the association; “Foster a culture that values diverse and inclusive school library programs, inquiry-based learning, ethical and effective information literacy, the love of reading, and the commitment to lifelong learning to prepare learners for college, career, and life.” By addressing this critical issue, the PSLA will be proactive in response to shifts in education and the school library profession (please see “Strategic Priorities” attached). This includes providing resources and support when facing challenges to a school library’s collection. Over the last three years, the PSLA has seen a drastic increase in book challenges by community members seeking to remove books they feel are inappropriate. The association has provided numerous workshops and webinars for its members to learn how best to defend their school library’s collection in these situations. The Advocacy Committee created an Intellectual Freedom Task Group (<https://sites.google.com/view/pslaiftg/home>) complete with a Rapid Response Team to support any school librarian in Pennsylvania, not just PSLA members, during this stressful time.

I hope this gave you a better understanding of the importance of accessible school libraries, as well as the importance of school librarians. It is also my hope that you can see that all Pennsylvania schools need to be funded fully, fairly, and equitably in order for the school library to function to its fullest potential providing all students with the highest level of success. School librarians are impacting students each and every day, and not simply through circulating books. Their impact goes far beyond that. Our librarians are making a difference for our students, not just academically, but by helping them acquire social and emotional skills as well and making a difference in their lives.

Resources

American Association of School Librarians (2018). *National school library standards for learners, school librarians, and school libraries*. Chicago: ALA Editions.



Pennsylvania School Librarians Association Strategic Priorities 2022-2025

Professional Learning and Leadership Development

Critical Issue: Leadership Development

How can PSLA develop effective leaders?

Goal One

Refine clear pathways, such as the leadership academies, committee involvement, task force coordination, board participation, and open lines of communication that help members set and meet leadership goals

Goal Two

Enhance new leaders through better onboarding and a more helpful transition of power and knowledge from the past leadership team

Outcome: PSLA will increase interest in and develop skills and dispositions necessary for serving in a leadership position, such as safe, small groups with feedback loops. PSLA will work to retain leaders with strong voices that are heard throughout PSLA programming

Critical Issue: Professional Learning

How can PSLA develop an inclusive culture that encourages continuous learning and supports professional learning goals?

Goal One

Provide varied professional learning opportunities for school librarians and other educational partners to develop and implement best practices that impact academic achievement of learners and the needs of our members

Goal Two

Recognize and highlight members who demonstrate, employ, and/or share innovative school library practices that can be replicated through the system

Outcome: PSLA will provide multiple pathways for professional learning, leading, and sharing for librarians across the state in an equitable, inclusive, and diverse manner.

Communication and Organizational Excellence

Critical Issue: Association Relevance

How can PSLA be proactive to ensure that school librarians are essential partners in the success of learners?

Goal One

Advocate for the implementation of best practices for school librarianship with stakeholders and enhance collaboration between school librarians and partners of learning in our communities

Goal Two

Foster a culture that values diverse and inclusive school library programs, inquiry-based learning, ethical and effective information literacy, the love of reading, and the commitment to lifelong learning to prepare learners for college, career, and life

Goal Three

Continue to be an agent that advocates for the school library profession and for all Pennsylvania students

Outcome: By addressing this critical issue, PSLA will be proactive in response to shifts in education and the school library profession

Critical Issue: Membership Development and Retention

How can PSLA grow and strengthen its community?

Goal One

Demonstrate the value of membership in PSLA as an inclusive, effective, and responsive organization

Goal Two

Retain current members by providing opportunities accessible to and representative of all members

Outcome: By capitalizing on the expertise of the membership, PSLA will engage members and market the value of membership in the organization to potential members, including those with diverse professional backgrounds, to build a larger learning community

Critical Issue: Internal and External Communication

How can PSLA strengthen and expand our communication network?

Goal One

Continue to refine an effective infrastructure that facilitates communication and allows for feedback within the PSLA organization

Goal Two

Develop new partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships with professional organizations

Goal Three

Seek opportunities to include the diverse voices of our membership in order to further the organization and to affect organizational change

Outcome: By supporting a communication network, maintaining partnerships with other professional organizations, and valuing diverse perspectives, the reach of PSLA will continue to grow

Advocacy for Libraries and the Profession

Critical Issue: Public Perception of School Libraries

How can PSLA foster a wide understanding of the critical relationship between learner success and quality school library programs?

Goal One

In collaboration with the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, utilize the *Guidelines for Pennsylvania School Library Programs* as a framework and share information annually with all stakeholders*

Goal Two

Communicate the impact of appropriately staffed school library programs on academic achievement to all stakeholders*

Outcome: PSLA will increase stakeholders' awareness of the critical importance of school libraries and certified school librarians

Critical Issue: Integrated Advocacy

How can PSLA increase support for school libraries?

Goal One

Build positive relationships with all stakeholders* to increase support for school library programs and to communicate the critical impact of the certified school librarian in each school

Goal Two

Strengthen relationships with PA Department of Education to identify school library staffing across the state

Goal Three

Support Pennsylvania school librarians to amplify their voices with their school community

Outcome: PSLA will be a strong advocate for school libraries and librarians across the state

*Stakeholders: pre-service and practicing librarians and teachers, school library education programs, administrators, board members, learners/parents/guardians, community members, and legislators.



Survey of Library Staffing in PA Public School Districts, 2021-2022
 Results as of March 4, 2022
 Conducted by Pennsylvania School Librarians Association

100% of 500 School Districts Responded: 2,640 schools in 500 school districts
 NOTE: Staffing data was affected for the 2020-2021 collection year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data was adjusted based on this year's survey results.

Professional Staff: Certified School Librarians

Professional Staffing (Certified School Librarians) in 500 School Districts

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Positions	1,686	1,640	1,629.05	1,544.8	1,537.94

Professional Staffing Reductions Year to Year

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Positions Eliminated	31.5	58	34.95	93.05	90.56
Districts	45 (9%)	40 (8%)	33 (7%)	55 (11%)	88 (17.6%)

Professional Staffing Gains Year to Year

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Positions Gained	35.75	16	15.5	17	82.7
Districts	23 (4.6%)	16 (3.2%)	15 (3%)	8 (1.6%)	65 (13%)

Professional Staffing Changes Year to Year

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Net Positions Lost	-4.25	-42	-19.45	-76.05	-7.86

Professional Staffing Profile

- No Certified School Librarian

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Districts	22 (4.4%)	23 (4.6%)	29 (5.8%)	48 (9.6%)	52 (10%)
Number students affected	40,932	52,633	59,634	86,745	99,685

- One Part-timed Certified Librarian Serving Entire District

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Districts	0 (0%)	2 (0.4%)	1 (.2%)	9 (1.8%)	10 (2.0%)
Number students affected	0	1,269	579	8,878	11,958

- One Full-time Certified Librarian Serving Entire District

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Districts	115 (23%)	118 (23.6%)	120 (24%)	123 (24%)	118 (23.6%)

- Enrollment Breakdown for District With One Certified School Librarian Serving Entire District

District Enrollment	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
< 500	10	12	14	11	8
500-1,000	45	37	44	48	41
1,001-1,500	37	37	32	37	34
1,501-2,000	5	13	11	20	14
2,001-3,000	14	15	13	10	7
> 3,000	4	4	6	6	10

- Districts with at Least One Librarian Serving Multiple Buildings

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Districts	252 (50%)	327 (65%)	321 (64%)	320 (64%)	303 (61%)

- Districts with One Certified School Librarian for Each Building

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Districts	131 (26%)	148 (30%)	150 (30%)	132 (26%)	130 (26%)

- Number of Certified Librarians by Type of District. Data based on PDE urban-centric and metro-centric locale codes.

Type of District	Districts	2021-2022 Librarians	Total Students	Students per Librarian
City-Large	2	43	135,350	3,148
City-mid-size/small	18	101	143,418	1,420
Suburban	237	930.24	852,174	916.1
Town	76	146.7	134,783	919
Rural	167	309	259,155	838.7

NOTE: "No Certified Librarian" + "One Librarian Serving Multiple Buildings" + "One Librarian For Each Building" = 500 school districts

Paraprofessional Staffing

Paraprofessional Staffing in 500 School Districts (In 2021-2022, only 234 school districts reported data about their paraprofessional staff; year-to-year totals may differ due to varying districts responding)

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Positions	1,223	1,185	1,194	1,040.15	443.2

Paraprofessional Staffing Changes Year to Year (In 2021-2022, only 234 school districts reported data about their paraprofessional staff; year-to-year totals may differ due to varying districts responding)

- Positions Eliminated **(Based on 234 school districts' reporting data)**

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Positions Eliminated	54.5	56	60.25	153.85	35.55
Districts	42 (8.6%)	40 (8%)	44 (9%)	86 (17%)	26 (11%)

- Positions Gained **(Based on 234 school districts' reporting data)**

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Positions Gained	26	24.75	12.5	8.7	25
Districts	20 (3%)	22 (4%)	10 (2%)	10 (2%)	12 (5.1%)

Paraprofessional Staffing Profile **(Based on 234 school districts' reporting data)**

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
No Paraprofessional Staff	158 (32%)	159 (32%)	168 (34%)	199 (39.8%)	99 (42%)
One Paraprofessional Staff for Entire District	105 (21%)	95 (19%)	84 (17%)	91 (18%)	40 (17%)
Part-time Paraprofessional Staff for Entire District	no data	10 (2%)	15(3%)	8 (1.6%)	7 (3%)
Paraprofessional serving multiple buildings	139 (28%)	232 (48%)	121 (25%)		
Paraprofessional for each building	93 (19%)	100 (20%)	102 (21%)	46 (9%)	31 (13.%)

Independent Schools Data

Years	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Schools Responded	37	33	49	32	30
Number of Libraries	68	47	74	48	35
Professional Librarians	65.5	48.5	68	43	27
Paraprofessional Staff	33.5	16.25	34	19.5	15.5

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 610 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY SCHWANK, COSTA, HAYWOOD, COLLETT, BROOKS, FONTANA,
HUGHES, FLYNN, KANE, BREWSTER, STREET, CAPPELLETTI, COMMITTA,
L. WILLIAMS AND MUTH, APRIL 17, 2023

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, APRIL 17, 2023

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An
2 act relating to the public school system, including certain
3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial
4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the
5 laws relating thereto," in professional employees, providing
6 for professional librarian.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known
10 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding a
11 section to read:

12 Section 1116. Professional Librarian.--Each public school in
13 this Commonwealth shall employ at least one professional
14 librarian who is certified under 24 Pa.C.S. § 9319 (relating to
15 certification of library personnel).

16 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 640 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY CIRESI, R. MACKENZIE, GUENST, WAXMAN, RABB,
FREEMAN, ISAACSON, M. MACKENZIE, JAMES, KHAN, HANBIDGE,
BURGOS, PROBST, KINSEY, MADDEN, SANCHEZ, DELLOSO, SHUSTERMAN,
WARREN, N. NELSON, NEILSON, OTTEN, GREEN AND MALAGARI,
MARCH 21, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 21, 2023

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An
2 act relating to the public school system, including certain
3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial
4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the
5 laws relating thereto," in professional employees, providing
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14 librarian who is certified under 24 Pa.C.S. § 9319 (relating to
15 certification of library personnel).

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Professional Development Opportunities

Create Community

One Book, One Association
Book Club
Yoga for School Librarians
Sit & Stitch crochet event
Meet & Greet with the Board
Author Lit Duo presentation

Connect

PSLA creates 9 Issues of the News for PA School Librarians to share with librarians statewide. This online newsletter offers teaching tips, current events, and the latest in professional development tools.

Communicate

Exploring the Work that Matters
4-part Workshop
School Library Journal Session on Collection Development
Managing Difficult Conversations
Annual Pre-conference sessions on AASL Standards, facing book challenges, and the Model Curriculum

CHALLENGES to Pennsylvania SCHOOL LIBRARIES

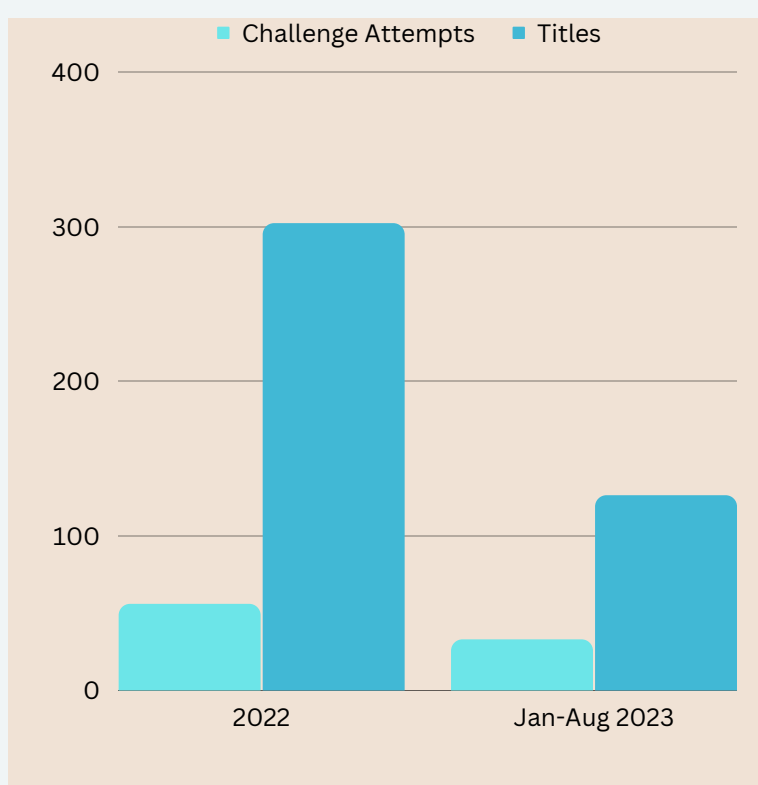
**2022
Pennsylvania**

Attempts to restrict book access:

56

Number of titles challenged:

302



**2023
Pennsylvania**

Attempts to restrict book access:

33

Number of titles challenged:

126

January-August
2023

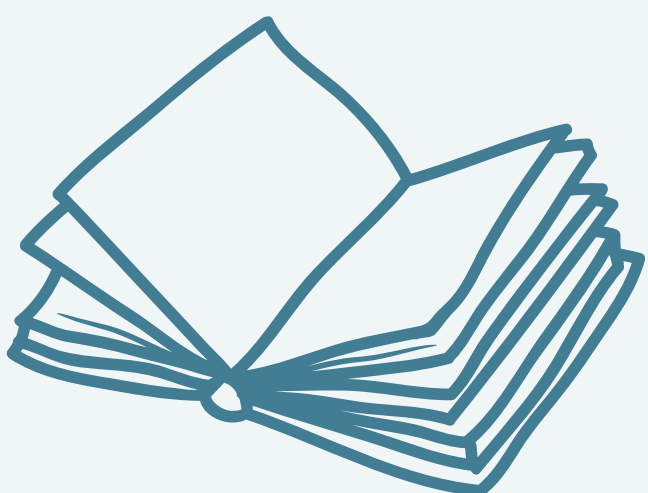
**2022
National**

Attempts to restrict book access:

695

Unnique Titles Challenged

1915



Over **100** Challenges In 2023

Colorado

Ohio

Connecticut

Pennsylvania

Florida

Idaho

Tennessee

Missouri

Texas

North Carolina

Virginia



Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners

**Testimony for Basic Education Funding Commission
Wednesday October 11th, 2023
Anne-Marie Crawford, MSN, RN, NCSN, President
Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners**

Background:

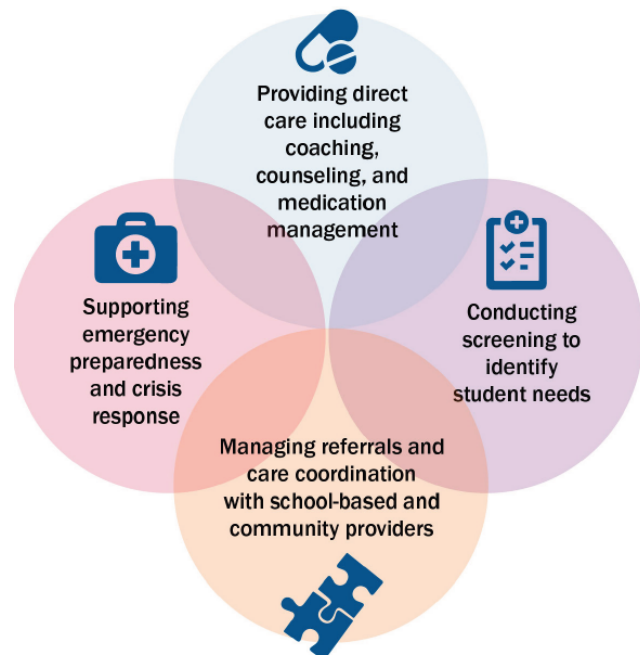
My name is Anne-Marie Crawford, President of the Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners (PASNAP). I am a Certified School Nurse in the North Allegheny School District. PASNAP's members represent the interests of Pennsylvania's 2,200 certified school nurses (CSNs) in Pennsylvania's 500 school districts. As CSNs, we are certified, licensed, and registered clinical healthcare professionals who have a Bachelors of Science in Nursing, followed by 12-18 credits of post-baccalaureate coursework and clinical preparation required for certification. Our practice allows supervision of others on the nursing care team, often RNs or LPNs, to assist in serving our students.

A significant part of the Basic Education Funding Commission's (BEFC) mission is to recommend how best to fund schools and how the funding flows down to student services. PASNAP asks you to consider how essential this funding is for us as school nurses. Our goal is to inform the

Commission on the importance of school

funding outside of what you may typically think – brick and mortar buildings, teachers, school supplies and textbooks. Funding for other support professionals within schools is an essential

School nurses are key members of SBMH care teams and support student mental and behavioral health by...



part of the services designed to provide children with the opportunity to learn and succeed to the best of their ability.

In driving the key success for children, our services help to promote the well-being, health and welfare of every child within our schools. Our duties are not limited to applying band-aids to school yard accidents. We are oftentimes the first line of defense in the wrap-around social welfare for students in our districts.

First Line of Defense in Mental Health, Attendance, Reduction of Communicable Diseases, Safe Staffing Ratios:

School nursing was originally established in New York City in 1902 to address both immediate medical conditions and decrease absenteeism within the classroom. By implementing simple measures like assessing immunization records and screening for communicable diseases, reductions in communicable diseases and truancy were seen and the importance of school nursing became clear. By addressing small, acute care conditions at the time of the need, there is not always a need to send a child home from school or skip multiple sessions of classes.

Today, in 2023, the same notion stands. Our certified school nurses are doing the same things Lillian Wald established over 120 years ago. By addressing these health concerns, from diabetes monitoring to assisting children who may not ever have access to other health care professionals, we are the front line of defense within our schools. This allows the child more time to focus on educational impacts and success in the classroom.

Opening the Doors for Mental Health Care and Other 504 and IDEA Supports:

While we have made great strides in reducing the stigma related to mental health, some children may still be too anxious to see or ask to see the school counselor. Since the students see me every year for screenings, I am a trusted adult, and they come to me, but oftentimes under the guise of something else.

The school nurse is the recognized healthcare expert in the school setting (AAP, 2016) and is usually the only health care professional in the building. School nurses have the unique knowledge and experience essential to evaluate the health of students in order to identify health-related barriers to learning and the accommodations necessary to provide students proper access to education (ESSA, 2015). School nurses work collaboratively with other team members to identify, evaluate, and develop plans for students in need of educational accommodations and special education services. School nurses are integral to ensuring the civil rights of all students so that they can achieve optimal educational success and well-being at school (Halbert & Yonkaitis, 2019).

For example, a child may originally come to the nurse to discuss a stomach ache, headache, tiredness, or a rash. As a certified school nurse, after I triage immediate concerns, I see some of these issues could be related to anxiety, especially if I am seeing this child multiple times a week with the same issue. This same student may have never known these issues are related to anxiety, let alone felt comfortable enough to visit the school guidance counselor or social worker. By keeping my doors open to the impact mental health can have on physical health, faculty can now work in tandem to support students who came into our care through my doors. The support system that wraps around the student in school may be the only support received by some students whose home lives are often disruptive and chaotic.

Reduction in Chronic Absenteeism:

In order for a child to learn, they must be engaged deeply with their teachers and their curriculum. This is why our team of school nurses' priority remains to keep children within their classrooms as much as possible. To successfully decrease chronic absenteeism it is essential that "school nurses routinely be included as integral members of school attendance teams" (Rankine et al., 2021, para 38). Research shows that the "presence of a school nurse is associated with reduced absenteeism and missed class time" (Yoder, 2020, p. 49).

To resolve chronic absenteeism, it is critical to first identify underlying root causes. "Absenteeism is a cross-cutting issue and cannot be solved alone by any one person, department or agency" (Attendance Works, 2020, para 7).

Our nursing care teams focus on reductions in chronic absenteeism by providing initial outreach to student families to help them meet their individual needs. Whether this be by connecting directly with students' physical and mental health care providers, providing in school medication monitoring, or monitoring frequent flyers of chronic tardiness and/or early dismissals, we view time out of the classroom as an indicator for additional support. In this role, we educate families and even our own school faculty members on ways in which to assess students that may be in need of additional support. If a student is struggling within a certain class, perhaps there is a need for assessment of an IEP, a learning disability, or unseen diagnosis that the family and school environment can work to address for the betterment of the student's academic success.

Many complex factors contribute to chronic absenteeism. Causes are often related to health, academic, school, family, community, or structural factors (Allison et al., 2019). Students who have been diagnosed with chronic physical or mental health conditions tend to miss more days of school, as do students experiencing the multiple effects of living in poverty. Unaddressed health and behavioral health issues may also play a role in school attendance patterns (Attendance Works & Everyone Graduates Center, 2021).

Communicable Diseases:

As one of our primary duties within our roles, each year our certified school nurses provide a comprehensive review and audit of our students' immunization records to help reduce the spread of childhood communicable diseases within our buildings.

Childhood immunization has been so effective in preventing death and disease that many parents today have not encountered diseases that were common years ago. As a result, increasing numbers of parents believe that vaccine-preventable diseases (VPD) are mild or "natural," and that vaccines are no longer necessary (Navin, 2018). In the past 10 years, the number of parents refusing vaccinations or choosing alternate vaccination schedules has increased (Eby, 2017). In addition to their lack of concern about VPD, some parents cite worries about vaccine safety, fear of discomfort, and religious objections as reasons for not adhering to vaccination schedules (Navin, Wasserman, Amhmad, & Bies, 2019; Kubin, 2019).

For many of these reasons and more, decreasing vaccination rates, coupled with the ease of international travel and waning vaccine titers, has resulted in an increase in VPD outbreaks in the United States. Pertussis (whooping cough) cases—which declined from over 100,000 per year to fewer than 10,000 per year between the 1940s and 1965, after the vaccine's

introduction—rose to over 18,000 in 2017 (CDC, 2017). Measles is also resurgent, with more cases confirmed in 2019 than since the disease was declared eliminated in 2000 (CDC, 2019b).

Now more than ever, it is important to review these immunization records and continue to bridge the divide between schools and parents on the importance of immunizing their children.

Safe Staffing in Our School Buildings:

Currently, school nurses provide services to as many as 1500 children, and sometimes more, within a district. Many of our certified school nurses are working as part of a care team, overseeing multiple RNs or LPNs across multiple buildings. There are often times we have no school nurse even available at a school building. This is largely due to funding availability and filling these roles across the state.

However, safe staffing of our nurses is paramount not only for the well being of the practitioner, but for the personalized care necessary for each of our children. The American Academy of Pediatrics (2016) recommends that all schools have a minimum of one registered certified school nurse to provide health services. The authority to practice nursing is granted to registered nurses (RNs) and LPNs/LVNs through a state nursing license which protects the public by setting minimum qualifications and competencies for entry-level practitioners (National Council of State Boards of Nursing [NCSBN], 2019).

For many of us, we are not in the same building every day – stretching our capabilities across multiple schools at the same time.

PASNAP supports a revision of the current staffing ratio of 1500 students to one CSN to bring more certified school nurses to our buildings, ones that are able to address the needs of students in a long term type of capacity.

While the City of Philadelphia has worked to address this shortage in part with short term contract nurses, ultimately, our desire is to fully fund at least one certified school nurse in every building, depending on school size. By ensuring the physical presence of a nurse in each building, we can work to address gaps in coverage and care for our students who need this one-on-one attention most.

The Economic Value of the School Nurse:

- For every dollar spent on school nursing, society saves \$2.20 in terms of increased attendance, decreased health costs, including ER expenses and reducing parents' lost wages (Wang et al 2015 CDC High Impact Prevention2019)
- School nurses assist students in learning to manage their health conditions, like diabetes or asthma, increasing time in the classroom and decreasing absenteeism: this saves costs to the school district and increases academic success (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention And Health Promotion (NCCDPHP 2017)

- School nurses save time for principals, teachers and staff. [A school nurse in the building](#) saves principals, teachers, and clerical staff a considerable amount of time that they would have spent addressing health concerns of students.

A school nurse in the building saves:

- Principals almost an hour a day
- Teachers almost 20 minutes a day
- Clerical staff over 45 minutes a day
- The average pay for a CSN in Pennsylvania is approximately \$65,000. This makes it difficult for school districts to attract school nurses who can command much higher salaries and signing bonuses in different work settings.

Summary:

In closing, we ask that as you look to address the best way to fund our schools and what an adequate target should be for each school, PASNAP implores the members of the BEFC to look deeper into the support services needed for each student to thrive. By championing our efforts around these students, we hope the BEFC Commission is able to see the importance of many of our support services, certified school nurses included, and recommend adequate funding for these essential services.

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