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## **PA Department of Education Highlights Importance of Higher Education Funding at Pennsylvania Highlands Community College**

**Johnstown, PA** – Pennsylvania Department of Education Acting Secretary Eric Hagarty today visited Pennsylvania Highlands Community College to discuss the impact the Nellie Bly Scholarship Program would have on students across the commonwealth and the importance of continued investments in higher education.

“As a product of community college education myself, I know that Pennsylvania’s community colleges offer students a high-quality education at an affordable price. However, we also know that across the nation, young people are entering the workforce with unmanageable student debt,” Hagarty said. “The Nellie Bly Scholarship Program would make higher education more accessible and affordable to more students, helping them pursue their interests and begin a meaningful career without undue financial burden upon graduation.”

Governor Tom Wolf’s 2022-23 budget proposal includes a \$200 million investment in the Nellie Bly Scholarship Program. The program would help make obtaining a college education more attainable for thousands of students in Pennsylvania who pursue programs where the commonwealth’s workforce needs are greatest, including education, healthcare, and public service. Students who take advantage of the program must stay in Pennsylvania to work for the same number of years that they received the scholarship benefit.

“Community colleges provide access to affordable and quality educational opportunities to the communities that they serve. For many students, institutions like Pennsylvania Highlands Community College offer an ideal location for attaining a college degree,” said Dr. Steve Nunez, president of Pennsylvania Highlands Community College. “I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the college’s mission and the importance of robust state funding for community colleges with Acting Secretary of Education Hagarty so that community colleges in Pennsylvania remain affordable.”

In his 2022-23 budget proposal, Governor Wolf includes a \$125 million increase in funding for higher education institutions, continuing his support for increasing postsecondary access and completion.

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