



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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**Governor Shapiro Highlights Most Significant Reform and Investment
in Higher Education in Decades at Cheyney University to Give Every
Pennsylvanian the Freedom to Chart their Own Course and the
Opportunity to Succeed**

Governor Shapiro made higher education a priority again in Pennsylvania, and now the Commonwealth is making the first significant progress on higher education in three decades.

2024-25 budget establishes a new State Board of Higher Education, provides more support for public universities, and invests in making a college education more affordable for Pennsylvania students.



Cheyney, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and Pennsylvania Department of Education **Secretary Dr. Khalid N. Mumin** were joined by state and local legislators, higher education leaders, and students at Cheyney University for a ceremonial bill signing of the higher education reforms that Governor Shapiro signed into law as part of the 2024-25 budget.

The [2024-25 budget](#) makes the first significant progress on higher education in three decades and delivers on the Governor's key priorities to give Pennsylvanians the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed. Thanks to the investments in the budget, Cheyney University is set to receive an additional \$992,500 for next year, bringing their total state appropriation to more than \$21.7 million for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

"Every Pennsylvanian deserves the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed — and that's exactly what this budget delivers," said **Governor Shapiro**. "My Administration has made higher education a priority again, and this budget represents the first significant progress on higher education in 30 years. We're developing a new vision for higher education — one focused on competitiveness and workforce development and grounded in access and affordability. That vision places an emphasis on Pennsylvania's HBCUs — like Cheyney — so they can continue to open doors to opportunity for Pennsylvania students for generations to come."

Founded in 1837 as the Institute for Colored Youth, Cheyney University is the oldest of all historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the United States. In 1983, Cheyney University became a part of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE).

“Pennsylvania’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities, like Cheyney, produce nearly 20 percent of all African American college graduates, and nearly 25 percent of all African American STEM graduates — and it is critical that we invest in these institutions so they can continue to prepare learners for the jobs of the future,” said **Secretary of Education Dr. Khalid N. Mumin**. “The Shapiro Administration takes that commitment seriously and is making progress for the first time in decades — building a stronger higher education system that meets Pennsylvania’s needs long term and makes higher education more affordable for more students.”

In his first budget address, Governor Shapiro called on state leaders to rethink higher education in the Commonwealth. Over the past year and a half, the Shapiro Administration brought together stakeholders, legislators, higher education leaders, union members, students, families, and more to have meaningful conversations about higher education in Pennsylvania, and to build on the Administration’s blueprint.

Now, Pennsylvania has a budget that delivers real solutions for higher education. This budget:

- **Creates a new State Board of Higher Education** that will, for the first time, coordinate every sector of higher education in Pennsylvania and utilize student-level data to determine what’s working and what’s not. The board will ensure higher education in Pennsylvania supports critical workforce needs and serves as an economic driver for generations to come. The board will also create a performance-based funding council that will develop recommendations on how to create a performance-based funding formula to drive funds to state-related institutions.
- **Invests in public higher education institutions**, including a \$15.7 million increase – a 6 percent increase – for community colleges and \$35.1 million increase for PASSHE schools – also a 6 percent increase.
- **Makes higher education more affordable for students** with over \$120 million in increased funding for scholarships and grants, including \$28 million for scholarships to students pursuing a degree in a high-demand field, a \$54 million increase to PHEAA student grants, and \$5 million for disadvantaged students’ scholarships. This includes the [Horace Mann Bond-Leslie Pinckney Hill Scholarship Program \(Bond-Hill\)](#), which provides financial assistance to highly qualified Pennsylvania students from Cheyney University and Lincoln University who pursue approved professional and graduate programs at the Pennsylvania state-related universities and PASSHE universities.

- **Doubles funding for student teacher stipends** for a total of \$20 million to ensure student teachers are compensated for their hard work.

The Governor was joined for a ceremonial bill signing by Cheyney University President Aaron A. Walton, Cheyney University student Veronica Redden, and state legislators.

“Today is a historic day for higher education in Pennsylvania – Cheyney University proudly stands with Governor Josh Shapiro as he signs this transformative bill,” said **Cheyney University President Walton**. “His commitment to investing in our institutions, especially Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), ensures we can continue to provide exceptional education to our students. This investment acknowledges the critical role of HBCUs in shaping future leaders and opens doors to countless opportunities for our community.”

“My journey began four years ago as I was filling out college applications, and I can remember it was a time of uncertainty as to how I was going to pay for the education I was seeking,” said **Veronica Redden, a senior at Cheyney University**. “That was until I got a call from the Admissions Office at Cheyney stating that I qualified for the Keystone Scholarship, a full tuition scholarship in Cheyney University’s Honors Academy. The promise of a free education motivated me to not just attend college but to excel during my time at Cheyney. I’ve been encouraged to take advantage of every opportunity that would open up for me – prioritizing my learning and growth without the worries of tuition. It’s the reason why I’m able to stand here today to introduce Governor Shapiro as he signs this bipartisan budget, bridging more gaps than one. This budget will provide students like me with the support they need to pursue higher education.”

“This year’s budget marks a significant milestone for Pennsylvania, championing the future of our higher education system. We are investing in our community colleges and PASSHE universities with substantial funding increases—\$15.7 million for community colleges and \$35.1 million for PASSHE schools,” said **House Majority Appropriations Chairman Representative Jordan Harris**. “These investments, coupled with a tuition freeze for PASSHE schools, underscore our commitment to making college more affordable and accessible for all. Additionally, over \$120 million in scholarships and grants, including a \$54 million increase to PHEAA student grants and \$5 million for disadvantaged students’ scholarships, further highlight our dedication. By enhancing transparency, ensuring continuity, and establishing the state Board of Higher Education, we are paving the way for a brighter, more educated future for Pennsylvania.”

“Today, is a historic moment for Pennsylvania students and our post-secondary institutions. This bill not only champions transparency in higher education but also paves the way for a seamless transfer process between public institutions,” said **Senate Democratic Appropriations Chairman Senator Vincent Hughes**. “By fostering clarity and accessibility, we empower our students to make informed choices about their education, ensuring that every pathway leads to success.”

“We partnered with Governor Shapiro to fundamentally reimagine how we paid for basic education in Pennsylvania this year, but we also made incredible strides toward building a student-focused future for colleges, universities and trade schools, too,” said **House Majority Education Committee Chairman Representative Peter Schweyer**. “Today is a celebration, but it’s also a reminder of how much more we can and should do to make it easier for students to graduate – and graduate without debt.”

“As Chair of the Student Debt Caucus and as a PHEAA board member, I have been working for years with my colleagues to come up with solutions to make higher education attainable for all Pennsylvanians – House Bill 897 is a huge step in the right direction,” said **Representative Jennifer O’Mara**. “With millions of dollars of critical investments in our PASSHE schools, community colleges, and PHEAA grants and scholarships, as well as supporting apprenticeships, nurses, and teachers, we are not only making college more affordable, but also growing our workforce where it is needed most.

“This new law is a down payment on public higher education, and we are only getting started,” said **Representative Mary Isaacson**. “While a new Board will work to bring stakeholders together, this law will enable our public higher education systems to make college more affordable and accessible to Pennsylvanians looking for training and career paths. Dual enrollment will forge new and simplified paths to earn college credits for our students, and articulation credit acceptance will make classes like English 101 the same no matter where you sat in the classroom for it. These are meaningful reforms for students who thought they may never receive their diplomas, and this law is a win for students all across the state.”

“It’s special to see our state budget making real investments in higher education and here at the first HBCU in the country,” said **Senator John I. Kane**. “This budget backing will open up big opportunities for our schools and students. Thanks to the Governor’s budget, we’re making solid progress in improving our commonwealth schools. These investments are paving the way for a brighter future for our schools and the next generation of leaders.”

“I am proud of the significant investments and reforms we made in higher education this year in a widely bipartisan fashion. We increased funding for colleges and universities, expanded scholarship programs, and supported our historically black colleges and universities,” said **Representative Craig Williams**. “We are ensuring that every student has the opportunity to pursue higher education, while setting in place accountability measures to maximize Pennsylvania’s return on investment – an educated public and work force. This moment is a sterling example of how government should work for our public. I am proud to be a part of it.”

For more information on how the 2024-25 budget will create opportunity for Pennsylvanians, visit shapirobudget.pa.gov.

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