



# GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday, March 3, 2025

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Governor's Press Office, [ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov](mailto:ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov)

**Solving the Education Workforce Shortage: Governor Shapiro Visits Farmersville Elementary School to Highlight Investments in Student Teachers Stipends to Grow Pennsylvania's Education Workforce**

*Governor Shapiro's 2025-26 budget proposal builds on two years of progress addressing the teacher shortage, doubling funding for the PA Student Teacher Support Program to help more new teachers finish their schooling and get in the classroom.*

*Last year, the Commonwealth awarded 2,000 student teacher stipends of up to \$10,000 – but demand was so high that all of those stipends were accounted for in the first few hours after the application opened, leaving thousands more student teachers without any assistance.*

*The Governor's proposed budget is a commonsense plan that solves the problems facing Pennsylvania's education workforce and puts more teachers in the classrooms.*





**Bethlehem Township, PA** – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** visited Farmersville Elementary School in Bethlehem Township, Northampton County, to highlight how his [2025-26 proposed budget](#) makes strategic investments to solve Pennsylvania’s education workforce challenges. With nearly 5,500 teacher vacancies statewide, the Governor’s budget proposal doubles funding for the successful **PA Student Teacher Support Program**, from \$20 million to \$40 million annually, ensuring more aspiring educators can complete their training and enter the profession, further strengthening the Commonwealth’s educator pipeline.

“My budget puts a special emphasis on workforce development — especially our education workforce — because we need more great teachers in our classrooms,” said **Governor Shapiro**. “Right now, we have thousands of teacher vacancies across Pennsylvania, but we can solve that by increasing our support for student teacher stipends. Aspiring educators are required to student teach to complete their training, but they’re often not paid for their work. There’s real demand for these stipends — last year,

they were all taken in the first few hours after the application opened — so let's double the amount of funding going to this initiative and solve this problem."

During his visit, **Governor Shapiro** was joined by **Pennsylvania Department of Education Acting Secretary Dr. Carrie Rowe**, **Bethlehem Area School District Superintendent Dr. Jack Silva**, **Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) Senior Vice President Nathan Hensch**, **Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) Vice President Jeff Ney**, **Senator Lisa Boscola**, **Senator Nick Miller**, **House Majority Education Committee Chairman Representative Peter Schweyer**, **Representative Steve Samuelson**, and **student teacher Giavanna DeMarco**, along with students, teachers, and school administrators. They discussed Pennsylvania's teacher shortage and the Governor's proposal to strengthen the educator pipeline.

In his first year in office, **Governor Shapiro** signed [Act 33 of 2023](#) into law, creating the **Educator Pipeline Support Grant Program** to provide stipends for student teachers. Administered through the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA), this program helps to address the state's teacher shortage by reducing financial barriers for those entering the profession and fills critical staffing gaps in schools.

In the [2024-25 budget](#), **Governor Shapiro** secured an additional \$10 million, doubling funding to **\$20 million** and enabling more than 2,000 student teachers from 84 postsecondary institutions to [receive](#) \$10,000 stipends, driving out this critical funding last fall. When the application opened last year, demand was overwhelming — within hours, all available stipends were claimed, leaving thousands more student teachers still in need of support. To address this high demand, the Governor's 2025-26 budget proposal calls for a \$20 million increase — bringing the total amount available for student teacher stipends to **\$40 million** annually — ensuring even more aspiring educators can complete their training and enter Pennsylvania classrooms.

**PHEAA will open the application window for next year's stipends on Thursday, March 6**, ensuring continued support for future educators. The program provides \$10,000 to eligible student teachers and up to \$2,500 to cooperating teachers who mentor them, with recipients committing to teach in Pennsylvania for three years after certification. Those planning to student teach or currently in the process of applying for a 2025-26 position are eligible to apply.

"I was once in the position many of our student teachers are in today, starting my student teaching in Greenville, PA. I remember the excitement, but also the hardships, because we didn't have a program like this. One of the great things about working for the Shapiro Administration is that stuff gets done with common sense. It makes perfect sense to me that student teachers — who will become our next generation of educators — shouldn't have to worry about rent or groceries while they're learning to teach," said **Acting Secretary Dr. Rowe**. "The student teacher stipend symbolizes the valuable work they're doing, and I'm thrilled that Governor Shapiro has proposed doubling this funding in the recent budget. This is a crucial opportunity for student teachers everywhere."

"PHEAA is proud to be a partner in the PA Student Teacher Support Program, a valuable initiative that helps ease the financial burden on student teachers as they complete their in-classroom experience," said **Hench**. "While we are wrapping up the 2024-25 program year, I'm pleased to announce that on March 6, applications for the 2025-26 Student Teacher Support Program will open at [PHEAA.org/studentteacher](https://PHEAA.org/studentteacher). Anyone planning to student teach or currently applying for a student teaching position for the 2025-26 award year is encouraged to apply early. We look forward to another year of supporting Pennsylvania's future educators as they complete this critical step in their training."

**DeMarco**, a student teacher at Farmersville Elementary School in the learning support classroom, is completing her master's in special education at Gwynedd Mercy University and received a stipend for the Spring 2025 semester. She spoke about how the program helped to ease financial burdens and allowed her to focus on her passion for teaching.

"I started my academic journey aiming for a career in pediatric neurology, but what began as a master's in neuroscience turned into a passion for helping neurodivergent students in special education. Without a background in education, I couldn't work a full-time job while student teaching," said **DeMarco**. "Thanks to this stipend, I'm able to focus solely on my students and learning support. I've been welcomed into a community that operates as a well-connected team, allowing me to provide high-quality support and help students defy expectations. With the educator shortage in our state, this stipend allows aspiring teachers to receive the training they need and gives more people the opportunity to make a lasting impact on children's lives."

**Dr. Silva** highlighted how the program helps recruit and attract teachers to the education field by reducing financial barriers and supporting aspiring educators. "A major goal of our school district is to attract and retain a high-quality, diverse teaching workforce where every classroom is led by an excellent role model teacher. We've made a lot of progress, but one thing that holds us back is the financial burden of student teaching, which is essentially an unpaid internship that future teachers struggle to afford. That's why our district and community strongly support Governor Shapiro's effort to expand student teacher stipends," said **Dr. Silva**. "Currently, we have 45 student teachers, 8 of whom are receiving those stipends. There are many more future teachers who would benefit from this program. These stipends are crucial tools that will help build the future workforce of the Bethlehem Area School District and invest in the long-term success of our community."

"I am so proud to represent the 177,000 PSEA members across Pennsylvania, including about 7,000 student PSEA members. These student members are the future of Pennsylvania education—they are the young people studying in our colleges and universities to become the next generation of educators," said **Ney, who is also a fifth-grade teacher in the Wilkes-Barre Area School District**. "They were a driving force behind the creation of the Student Teacher Support Program. They met with their elected leaders, shared their stories, and made the case for this life-changing program."

You all listened to them. You heard the stories of our student PSEA members, and you took decisive action. The Student Teacher Support Program has removed a major barrier to becoming an educator in Pennsylvania, and it has created a strong incentive for aspiring educators to stay and teach right here in our state."

**Governor Shapiro's** 2025-26 budget proposal makes strategic investments to address Pennsylvanian's education workforce shortages. In addition to increasing funding for student teacher stipends, the Governor is proposing:

- **An additional \$2.5 million for teacher professional development** to provide educators with the training and tools they need to support students effectively.
- **A \$526 million increase in education funding** through the bipartisan adequacy formula, ensuring resources reach the schools that need them most.
- **A \$40 million increase in special education funding**, bringing the total investment to over \$1.5 billion.
- **A new statewide base cyber charter tuition rate**, projected to save school districts \$378 million annually.
- **\$125 million for school infrastructure repairs**, building on the \$275 million already invested in school district upgrades.

"In his budget address this past February, the Governor made education a key priority, and this stipend program is just one important piece of that effort. The future of our communities depends on teaching — we need an educated workforce, and it all starts with our teachers," said **Senator Boscola**. "We need to double this funding because it's not fair that some student teachers receive this support while others don't. Every single student teacher in Pennsylvania should have this opportunity. That's why I'm standing here alongside the Governor today — he gets it, he works across the aisle to get things done, and he leads with common sense. That's exactly what we need in this Commonwealth."

"Education is my top priority, and in the Senate Democratic Caucus, we deliver for education. We deliver for farmers and small businesses, but education is the foundation of our communities," said **Senator Miller**. "As mentioned earlier, eight recipients of this program are in the Bethlehem School District — but there is still much more work to do. We need to invest in our facilities, strengthen the student teacher pipeline, and ensure every aspiring educator has the support they need."

"I've had countless conversations with Governor Shapiro and Acting Secretary Rowe over the past two years, focusing on one critical issue — strengthening the workforce in our schools. Any parent knows that the key to their child's success is having a great teacher in the classroom, but the reality is, we simply don't have enough teachers," said **House Majority Education Committee Chairman Representative Schweyer**. "As the proud parent of two public school kids in the Allentown School District, I see firsthand



how students are thinking about their futures. What's remarkable is that more students are now considering careers in education, something we didn't see just a few years ago. One of the biggest reasons for this shift is the bipartisan commitment — between Democrats and Republicans, the House and Senate, and Governor Shapiro's administration — to breaking down barriers and making it easier for aspiring educators to enter the profession."

"I want to thank Governor Shapiro for being such a champion of education. His three budgets have each set historic highs for education funding — \$1.1 billion in additional funding for education across Pennsylvania. This has had a tremendous impact on communities across the state," said **Representative Samuelson**. "The student teacher stipend program is a key part of this effort. It helps more students consider a career in teaching, eases the financial burden during that crucial semester, and will have a lasting impact on the young people those future teachers will influence for many years to come."

### **Solving Problems by Investing in Education and Workforce Development**

**Governor Shapiro's** commitment to workforce development extends beyond education to address critical shortages in industries like health care and child care — sectors essential to Pennsylvania's economic growth. Under his leadership, Pennsylvania has expanded workforce development and increased funding for vo-tech programs, career and technical education (CTE), and apprenticeships by nearly **\$65 million**, investing 50 percent more in workforce development than when the Governor took office. Since taking office, **Governor Shapiro** has made education and Pennsylvania's students and teachers a top priority, securing **\$2 billion** in new funding for K-12 schools over two years, including **\$200 million** in student mental health, **\$275 million** in school environmental repairs, and delivered universal free breakfast for **1.7 million** Pennsylvania students, with over **90 million** meals served last year. As a result of the Governor's commitment, the Commonwealth is now investing over **\$11 billion** in public education annually.

**Governor Shapiro's** proposed budget builds on this progress by making strategic, targeted investments to address Pennsylvania's workforce needs. By doubling the funding for student teacher stipends and continuing to invest in educator recruitment and retention, the **Shapiro Administration** is ensuring Pennsylvania remains a leader in education and every student has the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed.

Watch **Governor Shapiro's** full budget address to a joint session of the House and Senate [here](#). See the Governor's full remarks as prepared for delivery [here](#). Read more about [Governor Shapiro's 2025-26 budget proposal](#). Explore the Governor's 2025-26 Budget in Brief [here](#), or visit [shapirobudget.pa.gov](http://shapirobudget.pa.gov) to learn more.

# # #