



## Pennsylvania Department of State

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### **Shapiro Administration Announces 33 PA High Schools Earn Governor's Civic Engagement Awards for Helping About 5,000 Eligible Students Register to Vote**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The **Shapiro Administration** announced today that 33 Pennsylvania high schools won [Governor's Civic Engagement Awards \(GCEA\)](#) for their student-led efforts to register their eligible peers to vote during the 2024-25 school year.

Nineteen schools won Gold Level Awards for registering to vote at least 85 percent of their eligible students, and 14 schools won Silver Level Awards for registering 65 to 84 percent of their eligible students.

In total, 555 students in schools across 16 counties helped register about 5,000 voting-eligible peers to win these awards, which are presented by the departments of State and Education.

"Students at these winning schools worked hard to register their eligible classmates to vote and hopefully launch them on a lifelong habit of voting," **Secretary of the Commonwealth Al Schmidt** said at a press conference today in the Capitol. "The future health of our representative democracy depends on engaging the next generation of voters, and students who participate in the GCEA program help make that happen."

**Angela Fitterer, Pennsylvania Department of Education's Executive Deputy Secretary**, said, "Civics education must do more than teach the structure of government. It must empower students to participate actively, responsibly, and knowledgeably in civic life. Voting is at the heart of that mission. This work rises above politics because a well-informed, engaged citizenry is the foundation of a healthy democracy. That's why programs like the Governor's Civic Engagement Awards are so essential—they not only celebrate student achievement, but also elevate the lifelong importance of civic responsibility."

**Schmidt** and **Fitterer** were joined today in the Capitol Media Center by students from Building 21 High School in Allentown City School District, which won a Gold Level Award for the seventh year in a row.

"Working as a poll worker on Election Days has had a big impact on my own willingness to participate in my community," said **Jennitza Claudio**, a senior who oversaw Building 21 High School's student voter registration drive during the 2024-25 school year. "Being able to help everyone get together and take control of our future gives me strength to use my voice.

"I know I'm not just a part of history, I'm making history," she added.

In addition to the voter registration awards, GCEA recognized juniors and seniors who also served as poll workers in the November 2024 general election. Students must be at least 17 years old to be a poll worker, and they must get permission from their parent or guardian and the school's principal.

This year, 476 students were honored for serving at precincts in their communities on Election Day 2024. Of that number, 451 were from schools in Philadelphia; the other 25 were from schools in Armstrong, Centre, Erie, Lehigh, and Washington counties.

"Approximately 30% of the student poll workers we're honoring today are bilingual, so they were able to help make the ballot box accessible to eligible voters whose second language is English," **Schmidt** said. "These student poll workers helped ensure their eligible community members could cast their vote and make their voices heard in the November 2024 election."

The full list of today's winners can be found on the Department of State's website at [vote.pa.gov/gcea](https://vote.pa.gov/gcea).

### **About GCEA**

The Governor's Civic Engagement Award program celebrates the efforts of Pennsylvania high school students to educate, engage, and inform their fellow students about how to get involved in the voting process. The departments of State and Education began the program in the 2017-18 school year.

Since the program's inception, high school students have helped about 25,000 eligible peers register to vote.