



# GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Governor Shapiro and PDE Acting Secretary Rowe Hold Roundtable Discussion with Educators, Students, and National Education Leaders to Highlight the Commonwealth's Investments in Career and Technical Education**

*As students across the Commonwealth benefit from historic funding secured by Governor Shapiro for K-12 education, the School District of Philadelphia is putting those resources to work for its students, expanding access to CTE.*

*State funding for the School District of Philadelphia has increased by \$390 million — over 25 percent — in Governor Shapiro's first two years, allowing the district to significantly expand its hands-on career and technical education programs, offering students training and industry certifications in high-demand fields like biotechnology, barbering, and culinary arts.*

*Since Governor Shapiro took office, Pennsylvania has increased CTE and vo-tech funding by nearly 50 percent — a \$65 million boost — resulting in more than 3,000 additional students enrolling in programs that prepare them for jobs in high-demand industries.*



**Philadelphia, PA –** Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and **Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Acting Secretary Carrie Rowe** joined the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President **Randi Weingarten**, the Center for American Progress (CAP) President & CEO **Neera Tanden**, Philadelphia Mayor **Cherelle Parker**, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, and leaders from the School District of Philadelphia at **Murrell Dobbins Career and Technical High School** to highlight how Pennsylvania is leading the way on career and technical education (CTE) — giving more young people the freedom to chart their own course and build careers right here in Pennsylvania.

Since taking office, **Governor Shapiro** has secured more than **\$2 billion** in additional funding for K-12 education — the largest investment in Pennsylvania history — and increased funding for vo-tech, CTE, and apprenticeships by nearly **\$65 million**, a 50 percent increase compared to before he took office. Thanks to these investments, more than 3,000 additional students are now enrolled in CTE programs across the Commonwealth.

“Creating opportunity for students starts in the classroom — and that means investing in every pathway to success, whether it’s college, the workforce, or the military,” said **Governor Shapiro**. “We’re showing what’s possible when you invest in career and technical education — giving students hands-on training, connecting them to apprenticeships, and preparing them for good-paying jobs in high-demand fields. Here at Dobbins, students are gaining real-world experience that will set them up for success, and my Administration will keep working to expand opportunities like this all across Pennsylvania — ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed.”

Murrell Dobbins Technical High School educates nearly 800 students in grades 9–12. Students can pursue training in programs including biotechnology, barbering, digital media, fashion design, culinary arts, and property maintenance — building skills and earning industry-recognized certifications to help them succeed after graduation. In the 2024-25 school year, more than 400 Dobbins students were enrolled in CTE programs, supported by state resources like the Secondary Career and Technical Education Subsidy and the CTE Supplemental Equipment Grant.

Dobbins has also benefited from Commonwealth investments to improve facilities and expand opportunities, including:

- **\$1.46 million CTE Supplemental Equipment Grant** to purchase instructional equipment and tools for hands-on training
- **\$500,000 PAsmart Innovation Grant** to create mobile agriculture learning stations and increase enrollment in ag-related CTE programs
- **\$220,412 Solar for Schools Grant** to install solar panels and advance renewable energy education

These resources are part of the **Shapiro Administration’s** broader commitment to breaking down barriers to opportunity and prioritizing skills and experience. Since January 2023, Pennsylvania has registered 165 new apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, enrolling more than 15,000 new apprentices. In total, over 34,600 Pennsylvanians have entered registered apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs since **Governor Shapiro** took office.

"You can't tell me that education isn't an economic strategy — and that's exactly what we're seeing with the investments Governor Shapiro is making," said **Acting Secretary Rowe**. "Education in general, and Career and Technical Education specifically, are being prioritized. The Governor has emphasized pathways for every student, respecting different paths to success. He's elevated CTE as a premier pathway, aligning academics, integrating learning with community partnerships, and building strong connections. This is how we create a more prosperous future right here in Pennsylvania."

That progress has made Pennsylvania a national model. In May, the **American Federation of Teachers (AFT)** — which represents 1.8 million members nationwide, including more than 36,000 in Pennsylvania in 93 local affiliates, including teachers and

school staff, health care professionals, higher education faculty, and state employees — [launched](#) its new **Education and Apprenticeship Accelerator** to expand CTE and apprenticeship opportunities for young people. Pennsylvania was one of just six inaugural member states invited to join this partnership, which brings together unions, educators, and business leaders to dramatically expand career pathways across the country.

**Governor Shapiro and his Administration** have partnered with AFT to connect this effort to Pennsylvania's education system and workforce needs, particularly around infrastructure jobs. The **Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)** and **PDE** have formed a working group to help schools build earlier career pathways, which has already begun holding career days and creating free resources for schools.

This work reflects a broader national push for high-quality work-based learning opportunities. In April 2024, the Center for American Progress (CAP) released a [report](#) urging policymakers to collaborate with educators and industry leaders to build equitable models that expose students to the skills needed in today's workforce. By aligning with that vision, Pennsylvania is ensuring more students can explore career pathways that match their interests while preparing them for long-term success.

"When you meet students' passions and connect them to purpose, you open up possibilities — and that's what pathways do," said **AFT President Randi Weingarten**. "They help students see what's possible. We need to create these kinds of choices for kids in high school, offering opportunities where they can explore, experiment, and engage with the world. In today's rapidly changing world — with AI and new technologies — it's critical that students develop problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, learn to collaborate with others, and build resilience so they can get back up when they fall. These are the skills that will prepare them for the future."

"Students should be able to succeed and have the opportunity for a strong middle-class life, whether they go to college or not," said **CAP President & CEO Neera Tanden**. "It's essential that we invest in all students, because the jobs of tomorrow will require multiple pathways — not just college, but also career and technical education. Experiential learning can often be the most profound learning a student experiences."

These efforts are also positioning Pennsylvania to meet the needs of private-sector partners investing in the Commonwealth. Earlier this summer, Amazon Web Services [announced](#) an initial **\$20 billion** investment to build innovation campuses across the state, and **Governor Shapiro** [committed](#) **\$10 million** in workforce training funds to ensure Pennsylvanians can seize those opportunities.

The **Shapiro Administration** has made its commitment to prioritizing skills and experience clear from day one. On his first day in office, **Governor Shapiro** signed an [Executive Order](#) instructing the **Pennsylvania Office of Administration** to emphasize skills and experience in Commonwealth job postings. As a result, 92 percent of Commonwealth jobs do not require a college degree.

In his first two years, **Governor Shapiro** brought Democrats and Republicans together to begin work to fix Pennsylvania's unconstitutional school funding system — agreeing to a new adequacy formula that delivers more resources to the schools that need them most. The **Shapiro Administration's** investments are showing real results:

- Over **90 million breakfasts** were served to students last year — 10 million more than the year before
- **778 schools** expanded mental health services using flexible state funding
- **317 school repair projects** have been funded to address environmental challenges and make needed infrastructure upgrades
- Pennsylvania **certified more new teachers last year** than at any point in the past seven years

As a result, Pennsylvania has been [ranked](#) by Consumer Affairs as one of the top five states in the nation for public education quality. The Shapiro Administration is creating a replicable model for how states can expand CTE opportunities, connect education to apprenticeships, and build the workforce of tomorrow.

**Governor Shapiro's** visit today reinforced a clear message: the historic investments we've made are working — and we must keep going to ensure every student has the freedom to [chart their own course](#) and the opportunity to succeed.

Read more about Governor Shapiro's [2025-26 budget proposal](#), explore the [Budget in Brief](#), or visit [shapirobudget.pa.gov](https://shapirobudget.pa.gov).

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