

News Advisory

Wilbert Pless

717-720-2509

wilbert.pless@pheaa.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shapiro Administration Announces New Student Teacher Stipend Grants to Reduce Teacher Shortage in Pennsylvania

Student teachers who meet program requirements can receive up to \$15,000 in financial aid; teacher mentors eligible to receive up to a \$2,500 stipend

Harrisburg, PA (February 1, 2024) – The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) is partnering with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to announce a groundbreaking student teacher stipend program aimed at addressing the alarming shortage of teachers in Pennsylvania. Ten years ago, Pennsylvania certified approximately 20,000 new teachers every year; now, the Commonwealth certifies approximately 5,000-6,000 new teachers each year.

Last month, Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro signed into law Act 33 of 2023, establishing the \$10 million Educator Pipeline Support Grant Program (PA Student Teacher Support Program), which provides grants of up to \$15,000 to student teachers in Pennsylvania. PHEAA was selected as the administrator of the program.

“Teachers devote their careers to supporting and educating our kids – and it’s up to us to make sure they have the resources and support they need to be successful,” said Governor Josh Shapiro. “By making sure student teachers get paid for their hard work, we will encourage more young people from all backgrounds to choose this path of public service and put more teachers in our classrooms. That’s good for our kids, good for our schools, and good for our communities – and it’s another example of how we get stuff done for the people of Pennsylvania.”

“PHEAA is honored to play a pivotal role in administering this groundbreaking teacher stipend program,” said Senator Wayne D. Fontana, PHEAA Board Chairman. “By providing financial support to support teachers, we are not only investing in the future of education but also addressing the critical teacher shortage in our Commonwealth.”

Traditionally, student teachers face the challenge of undertaking unpaid work as they complete their education, creating a financial barrier to entry into the teaching profession. This program aims to alleviate this burden by awarding eligible student teachers in Pennsylvania with a minimum stipend of \$10,000.

To further incentivize teaching at a school entity with a high rate of open teaching positions or an area that attracts few student teachers, an additional \$5,000 may be granted. Additionally, teachers who take the time to mentor these student teachers may be eligible for a stipend of \$2,500 under the program.

“This teacher stipend program is an important step to address the challenges faced by educators in our state,” said Pennsylvania Secretary of Education Dr. Khalid N. Mumin. “It not only recognizes the invaluable contributions of student teachers but also cultivates a stronger, more vibrant education system

in Pennsylvania by lowering financial barriers for those who want to serve as teachers. This is an important addition to PDE's work to support teachers and reduce the shortage of qualified teachers in our classrooms."

PDE is working hard to deliver additional resources for teachers and build a robust teacher pipeline. Two years ago, PDE unveiled the [Pennsylvania Educator Workforce Strategy](#). The Shapiro Administration is actively taking steps to recruit and retain teachers by:

- o Creating [a new CTE pathway](#) for high school students who want to be teachers.
- o Distributing [grants](#) to help teachers get certified in [Special Education](#) more efficiently.
- o Lowering [certification time](#) to less than one week for most in-state educators (a more than three-month improvement); and
- o Building the [Teach in PA](#) website to provide resources for individuals interested in becoming teachers in PA.

To qualify for the stipend, students must commit to working as teachers in Pennsylvania for a minimum of three years after completing their education.

Additional requirements include:

- Be enrolled in an approved PDE Educator Preparation Program at an institution of higher education in the Commonwealth
- Meet the required academic performance standards (GPA)
- Be placed in a student teacher position (students should work with your institution of higher education to ensure the position meets graduation and certification requirements)
- Obtained all required clearances

Pursuing a career in education often includes additional financial challenges for prospective teachers in Pennsylvania who must grapple with the economic strain of forgoing income during student teaching along with additional expenses such as commuting or purchasing professional attire.

The stipend aims to mitigate these challenges, making the teaching profession more accessible and financially viable for aspiring educators.

"The stipend program is a beacon of hope for prospective teachers, breaking down financial barriers that often deter individuals from entering the teaching profession," said Senator Vincent Hughes, PHEAA Board Member and sponsor of the Senate version of the bill. "I'm proud for PHEAA to lead this impactful initiative."

"I sponsored this bill with my colleague to address the teacher shortage impacting our kids with crowded classrooms and limited options," said Senator Ryan Aument, PHEAA Board Member and co-sponsor of the bill. "This initiative offers financial aid to aspiring educators, breaking down barriers, making it easier for them to reach their dream. I am thrilled to see this program come to fruition for our Commonwealth."

For more information regarding the PA Student Teacher Support Program, please visit www.pheaa.org.

Students and families are encouraged to visit PHEAA on Facebook, X (@PHEAAaid), and LinkedIn where they can learn more about the college financial aid process, register for reminders of financial aid deadlines, and get information pertaining to planning for college. Additionally, video tutorials explaining the student aid process and types of aid available can be found at [YouTube.com/PHEAAstudentAid](https://www.youtube.com/PHEAAstudentAid).

About PHEAA

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) was created by the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 1963 to provide affordable access to higher education for PA students and families. Through the years, PHEAA has evolved into one of the nation's leading providers of student financial aid services, including the Commonwealth's first state-based student loan program – PA Forward. PHEAA also serves millions of students through its loan guaranty, loan servicing, financial aid processing, and other programs. PHEAA conducts student loan servicing operations nationally as American Education Services (AES).

PHEAA's press releases are accessible at <https://www.pheaa.org/about/press-releases/>