PA EdVentures



May's EdVentures: Message from the Secretary, Literacy Symposium, Phones in Focus Survey, & More!

This May, we announced twelve **2027 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year finalists**, representing the work teachers do to make students feel seen, challenged, and supported in and out of the classroom. We also announced **grant funding for ten schools** who will join a pilot program designed to teach K-12 students about the political, economic, and social contributions of individuals with disabilites.

Throughout the month, we also highlighted Remake Learning Days events, including at a STEM-based event at **Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center** and at a **collaborative "Future Driven Schools" event** with a coalition of 47 Pittsburgh area school districts. The work being done supports learners of all ages through hands-on learning at schools, libraries, community centers, and more throughout the month of May.



From the Secretary's Desk

As we reflect on the 2025-2026 school year, it is clear to me that Pennsylvania's schools and libraries have a lot to celebrate. Together, educators, school leaders, librarians, and community partners continued the important work of creating opportunities for learners in every corner of the Commonwealth, including:

- **Advancing literacy instruction** through the continued implementation of evidence-based reading practices to support early learning success and expanded professional learning opportunities for educators.
- **Expanding student opportunity** with increased access to career and technical education, dual-credit programs, apprenticeships, and hands-on learning experiences that

help students prepare for college and careers.
- **Supporting educators** with investments in student teacher stipends and educator workforce initiatives designed to recruit and retain high-quality educators across Pennsylvania, as well as recognizing the extraordinary work happening every day in schools and libraries.
- **Strengthening libraries and student well-being** through sustained investments in public libraries & community partnerships that expand access to learning opportunities, digital and information literacy resources, and education across generations. We continue to focus on student mental health, school safety, and creating supportive learning environments where students can thrive academically and personally.

I know that none of this work happens in isolation and that progress at this scale requires dedicated professionals like you to show up every day for learners with care, creativity, and expertise. Thank you for helping students discover their strengths, build confidence, and prepare for what comes next. While there is always more work ahead, I hope you'll take time to reflect on and celebrate all that we've accomplished this school year together.



Structured Literacy Focused Syposium

PaTTAN is hosting the 2026 Literacy Symposium: From Evidence to Action, June 16 - 18, 2026. This three-day virtual program learning series is designed to deepen educators' understanding of literacy research and translate that knowledge into effective classroom and systems-level practice. Participants will be eligible for Act 48 and ASHA credit.

Across the three days, participants will examine the cognitive and linguistic foundations of literacy development, analyze instructional and assessment practices through a research-aligned lens, and apply evidence-based strategies within classrooms, schools, and MTSS frameworks. Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of the science of learning, practical tools for instructional decision-making, and strategies to support lasting improvement in student literacy outcomes. For additional information and to register, please visit the **PaTTAN Conference Details webpage**.

Conference Details & Registration

Complete Your Act 13 Evaluations with PEERS: A Hands-On Tour

Join us on **June 17,** at **1:00PM** for a relaxed, interactive virtual session to explore Pennsylvania Educator Effectiveness Rating System (PEERS), the no-cost tool you can use

to complete your Act 13 evaluations. With a modernized look and feel, PEERS is easy to navigate and use. Whether you're a current user with questions or just curious about what PEERS has to offer, this session is for you. We'll walk through features together, and you'll be encouraged to follow along in your own account. Bring your questions - we'll leave plenty of time for discussion and exploration!

To register, please use the **IU13 Webinar form.**

PSA Winner for Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Program

This month, PDE, in collaboration with IU-13, conducted its annual PSA challenge for students in grades 9-12. This year's challenge was to demonstrate why being an organ donor is crucial using the theme, "The Power of One" to showcase how one organ donor can save up to eight lives and enhance the lives of 75 people through tissue donation.

This year's winner from Altoona Area High School won first place, which includes an award of $3000, a traveling trophy, and a permanent trophy engraved with the school's name. Congratulations to all participants and the work they have done to recognize the importance of Organ & Tissue Donation Awareness! To watch the video, press the play button or visit the **2026 Organ Donation PSA Contest webpage**.



2025-26 SY Flexible Instructional Days (FID) Annual Survey

Per Section 1506 of the Public School Code, the Department of Education is required to issue an annual survey on the efficacy of flexible instructional days (FID) to each public school entity with an accepted application for the 2025-26 school year. Your school entity currently has an active FID application; therefore, you must complete the survey *regardless of whether an FID was used during the 2025-26 school year.*

Since the inception of the FID program, PDE has had 100% compliance in submitting surveys. The data has been very valuable in assessing the efficacy of the program. You may find data and findings using the **FID Program Stats PowerPoint**.

Please **complete and return the FID Program survey** by **June 30, 2026.**

Important Reminder – Please check your program's termination date on PDE's website list of **FID Accepted Programs**.

If your termination date is 6/30/26, then you need to reapply now during the 2026-27 SY FID application window (4/1/26-6/1/26) if you want to continue to use FIDs. If you do not reapply, then you will lose the program; you will be able to reapply in the future. By law, PDE cannot grant extensions on the deadline.

If your termination date is **6/30/27** or **6/30/28** then you need **not** reapply now. Regardless of your termination date, you must submit the FID Annual Effectiveness Survey by **June 30**.

Questions or issues accessing the survey should be directed to: RA-FID@pa.gov.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

FID Program Survey



PHEAA: How the OBBBA Impacts Student Loans

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) has introduced new laws to update how the US Department of Education administers financial aid. This includes new rules for undergraduates, graduate students, and parents.

Some of the OBBBA requirements started immediately after the bill was signed. However, most OBBBA requirements for Direct student loans and financial aid will start on or after **July 1, 2026**.

For additional information on how this may impact you and your student loans, please visit the **PHEAA OBBBA Student Loan webpage**.

Unlocking the Power of PVAAS Reports: A 101 Overview (Act 48 Eligible)

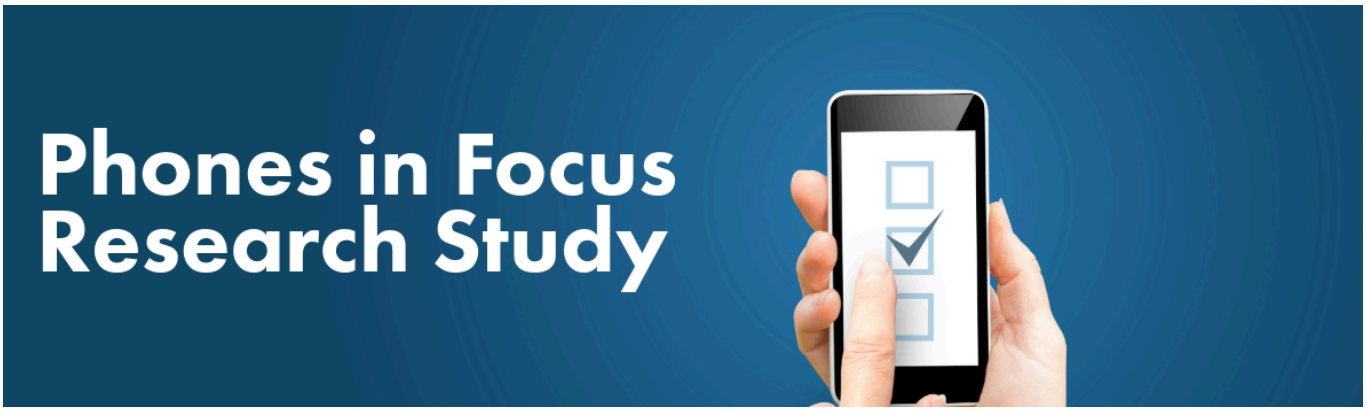
In this interactive and collaborative session, LEA district and school administrators, as well as teacher leaders, will explore will explore the foundational aspects of PVAAS reporting to expand their knowledge and use of the major reports. Come ready to engage! This two-hour webinar is highly interactive and will provide opportunities for practice and application within participants' own data. Participants will receive an information-rich digital guide that will be used during the webinar and can also support data analysis after the fall release.

Whether you are new to your role or would just like a refresher, join us to discover how the data can inform next steps, highlight successes, and identify areas which might benefit from instructional support and enhancements. Act 48 credits will be awarded for participation in this two-hour session.

Attend either of the live webinars for Act 48 credits on:

Thursday, June 25, 10:00am-12:00pm
Monday, June 29, 12:30pm-2:30pm

Register for Unlocking the Power of PVAAS Reports.



Phones in Focus Research Study

This **5-minute** survey is **100% confidential**. Participation is limited to **educators** at K-12 public schools in the U.S.

Phones in Focus is a national research study led by University of Pennsylvania Professor Angela Duckworth and other researchers. Their aim is to give educators an opportunity to inform and improve school cell phone policies and their implementation.

At the end of the survey, you'll receive an instant, **real-time snapshot** of cell phone policies across the country. You will also have the opportunity to be entered into the Phones in Focus Giveaway! 10 lucky educators will win their choice of $500 gift card (from Target, Walmart, Amazon, or VISA).

Learn more at the **Phones in Focus survey.**

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