PA EdVentures



October's EdVentures: Free Trainings, New Driver Work Zone Safety Program, & More!

In October, we recognized historic investments in **student mental health through school safety and mental health supports at Gettysburg Area School District**. We also announced more than **$243,000 in grants to Commonwealth libraries** to help fund high-impact projects that strengthen library services and create lasting community benefits.

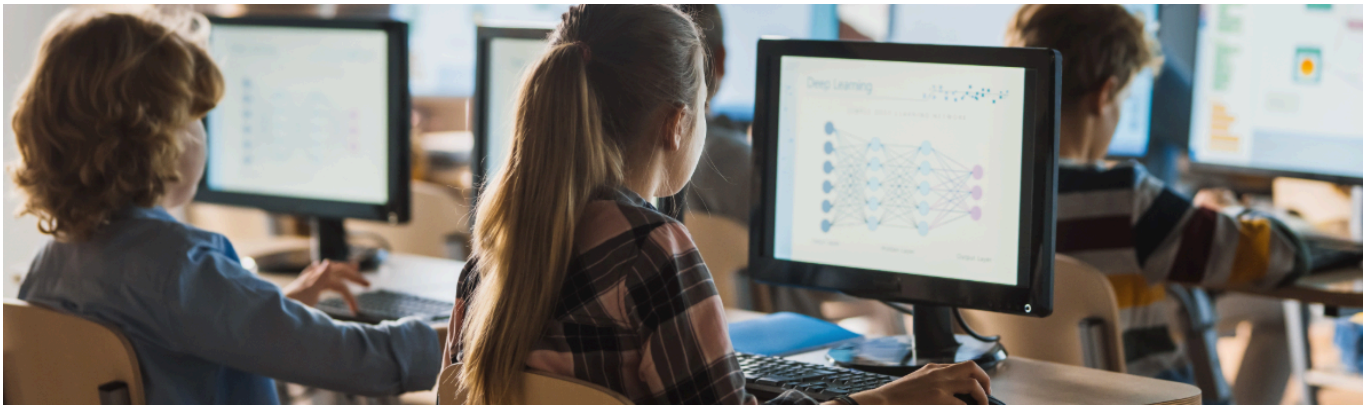
Throughout the month, Secretary Rowe visited **Bradford Area School District**, **Titusville Area School District**, and **Dauphin County Technical School** to highlight the Shapiro Administration's commitment to increasing funding for Career & Technical Education programs, preparing students for in-demand careers across multiple fields.



Investments in Structured Literacy

In October, the Pennsylvania Department of Education announced that **$10 million in grant funding has been awarded to 54 schools in 21 counties** to help implement structured literacy curriculum in their classrooms. This funding will help schools build the systems, instructional capacity, and evidence-based resources necessary to meet structured literacy requirements under the law. **The awardees can be found on PDE's website.**

Additionally, PDE worked with the **Reading Leadership Council** to create a list of resources designed to help educators translate research into effective classroom practice – no matter where they are in their literacy journey. Educators can find a wealth of structured literacy resources on the **PDE Standards Aligned System (SAS) website**, including free and on-demand professional development, and Act 48 and Act 45-approved courses, which keep Pennsylvania teacher and administrative certificates active.



The Unseen Threat: Protecting Our Kids from Online Dangers In-Person Training

Join the PA Attorney General's Office, the Office of Homeland Security, in partnership with the Pennsylvania State Police on **December 3** from **9 a.m. - 3 p.m.** at the Best Western Premier at 800 East Park Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17111.

Learn to recognize warning signs, promote safe digital habits, and better protect children in an increasingly connected world. Protecting children in today's digital world and understanding the growing online threats they face has never been more important. This training is designed for **teachers, school administrators, coaches, youth group leaders, and anyone who works with our youth**.

Topics will include: **The Effect of Social Media & Youth Mental Health** (American Academy of Pediatrics), **Roblox Safety & Online Predators** (PA State Police), **Digital Danger Zones for Educators** (PA Attorney General's Office), **Raising Awareness of Nihilistic Violent Extremism** (PA Criminal Intelligence Center/PA State Police)

For more information or to register, please visit **the Unseen Threat training registration webpage**. **Lunch will be provided**.

The Office of Homeland Security, in partnership with the Pennsylvania State Police, is offering this training at no cost to participants through grant funding, underscoring a strategic investment in prevention-focused training efforts that advance community safety and reduce targeted violence and attacks.

To learn more about training opportunities that help build preparedness and strengthen communities, visit **the Governor's Office of Homeland Security webpage**.

Free Act 48 Approved Course in Organ Donation Education

Pennsylvania secondary educators now have access to a new, free, on-demand professional development course that makes it easier than ever to bring accurate, engaging lessons about organ and tissue donation into classrooms across the Commonwealth. The Lancaster-Lebanon IU13 Online Toolkit: Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness provides educators with four hours of Pennsylvania Act 48-approved continuing education while equipping them with classroom-ready lesson plans, activities and instructional resources aligned with Pennsylvania's Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness (OTDA) curriculum.

Developed through a statewide collaboration led by the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Health along with Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13, the self-paced online course expands access to Pennsylvania's expert-developed curriculum by allowing educators to complete training anytime, anywhere. Designed for 9-12 educators, the course is appropriate across all content areas in those grade levels. Participants who successfully complete the course will earn four Pennsylvania Act 48 continuing education hours.

In addition to providing Act 48-approved continuing education, the course introduces educators to **Pennsylvania's OTDA Grant Program,** which provides funding and support to help schools implement organ and tissue donation education initiatives. Together, these innovative statewide resources help schools expand access to high-quality donation education and prepare more students to make informed, evidence-based decisions.

To learn more, visit [IU 13 Organ & Tissue Donation Awareness webpage](#).



Facilitation Guides, Printable Materials Now Available for the New Driver Work Zone Safety Program

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PA Turnpike) teamed up to develop the **[New Driver Work Zone Safety Program](#)** to teach new drivers how to navigate work zones safely and confidently. While students are still encouraged to take the free, 35-minute online course, facilitation guides and printable materials are now available to support teachers in presenting work zone safety programming through classroom instruction.

Materials include facilitation guides, a PowerPoint presentation, and printable activity materials and can be downloaded at **New Driver Work Zone Safety Resources & Materials webpage**.

The facilitation guides outline activities that can be used in a variety of settings and are intended to be adapted by individual instructors based on their teaching style and preferred approach to presenting the information. Content and instructions for each activity are provided either as printable handouts or within the PowerPoint presentation, depending on the activity.

Please review these materials and consider how they may be incorporated into your work zone safety instruction.

The **New Driver Work Zone Safety Program** emphasizes 'the why' behind work zone safety for drivers and for the road crews working alongside traffic. The program covers key aspects of work zone safety, including driving practices in work zones, real-life scenarios drivers might encounter, and work zone laws. Work zones can be hazardous for both drivers and workers, but by understanding our state's work zone laws, we can prepare Pennsylvanians to safely navigate the road ahead. Learn more about the program online at the **New Driver Work Zone Safety Program webpage**.



Pennsylvania School Counselor Selected as Finalist for ASCA National School Counselor of the Year

Diana Chandra, Camp Hill Middle School Counselor, has been selected as a finalist in the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National School Counselor of the Year competition!

Celebrating 20 years, the ASCA School Counselor of the Year program honors exemplary school counseling professionals who devote their careers to serving as advocates for the nation's students, helping them achieve success in school and in life. For additional information on the finalists and the School Counselor of the Year program, please visit the **2027 Finalists press release**.



2028 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year Nominations Open

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) encourages Pennsylvanians to nominate an outstanding educator to be the Commonwealth's 2028 Teacher of the Year.

"Pennsylvania is home to some of the best and brightest educators in the nation, who serve their learners and communities with compassion, integrity, and fidelity," **said Secretary of Education Dr. Carrie Rowe.** "The Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year exemplifies what it means to be an excellent educator—to inspire young minds, embrace learners' unique potential, and shape the future of our Commonwealth."

The Teacher of the Year program celebrates excellence in teaching and honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions to learners in Pennsylvania. **Teacher of the Year Nominations** will be accepted until December 11, 2026.

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