

PA EdVentures



November's EdVentures: Budget Information, Virtual SAS Institute Programming, & More!

In November, we recognized [11 Postsecondary Institutions for Supporting Mental Health and Preventing Suicide on College Campuses](#). Since May, we have named 26 institutions of higher education PA CARES campuses for their work to ensure students have access to support and resources to stay safe, healthy, and well. In other good news, Pennsylvania recently earned the top spot in a [national study of how schools across the country are preparing middle school students for careers](#).

This month, we celebrated major policy wins in the 2025-2026 budget with Acting Secretary Rowe highlighting these investments at a recent [event at Lewisburg Area School District](#) and saw firsthand the work the Shapiro Administration is doing to set students up for long-term success.

A Message from the Acting Secretary on the 50th Anniversary of IDEA



This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, an historic law that reshaped the future for millions of children and families across the nation. Pennsylvania played an early role in that story. A landmark court case decided here in our Commonwealth helped establish the principle that every child has value and deserves a public education tailored to their needs. That principle continues to guide our work today.

Over five decades, IDEA has opened classroom doors, strengthened family partnerships, and raised expectations for what students with disabilities can achieve. In Pennsylvania, we see the impact every day. Children receive early intervention that sets a strong foundation for learning. Students are supported in general education classrooms where they learn alongside their peers. Educators and related service providers bring skill and care to each decision, and families remain trusted partners in every step of a child's educational journey.

IDEA's anniversary is a moment to honor the progress made through determination, collaboration, and advocacy. It is also a moment to look ahead. Our charge is to continue breaking down barriers and to keep raising the bar for what every student can achieve. The next 50 years begin now, and I believe it will be defined by how well we listen to students and families, and by how boldly we advance opportunity for all.


C. Rowe

Information Regarding the 2025-2026 Budget

Following last year's record-setting K–12 funding, the 2025–26 budget delivers more than \$900 million in additional funding for public education. Under Governor Shapiro's leadership, Pennsylvania has increased funding for our schools by nearly \$3 billion over the past three years. The investments in this year's budget include:

- **\$565 million** in new adequacy funding to expand support to all school districts across the Commonwealth and a **\$105 million increase** for Basic Education Funding. The adequacy funding formula was expanded to drive out more money to schools.
- **\$40 million increase** for Special Education Funding, continuing the Governor's commitment to equitable education for all students.
- **\$125 million** for school infrastructure improvements to create safe, healthy learning environments — including \$25 million for the Solar for Schools program to lower energy costs and promote sustainability.
- **\$100 million** in annual mental health and school safety funding for K–12 schools, ensuring every student has access to the resources and support they need to thrive, continuing the Shapiro Administration's strong commitment to expanding access to mental health care and support across the Commonwealth.
- Expanded access to school meals, providing universal free breakfast for more than 1.7 million students and free lunch for 22,000 eligible students, with nearly 93 million breakfasts served during the 2024–25 school year — a 13.8 percent increase over two years — including over 70 million meals for students at risk of hunger or from low-income families.

For additional information, please read the [Shapiro Administration Secures Major Policy Wins in 2025-26 Budget, Expanding Educator Workforce, Strengthening Literacy Initiatives, & Reforming Cyber Charter Law press release](#).



**2027 Pennsylvania
Teacher of the Year
Nominations Open**

2027 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year Nominations Now Open

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) encourages Pennsylvanians to nominate an outstanding educator to be the Commonwealth's 2027 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 Acting 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 15, 2025.



SAS Institute 2025: Virtual Interactive Option Now Available

We are thrilled to announce that the **SAS Institute is proceeding as planned!** All sessions will be presented face-to-face at Hershey. In addition to our in-person gathering, we are enhancing the experience by introducing a **dynamic virtual interactive option** for those attendees unable to travel.

The **virtual interactive option** offers an immersive experience, including:

Livestreaming and chat access for **ALL sessions**.

Interactive **Connection Cafés** and **Wednesday's Proaction Café**, featuring an online facilitator to foster engagement with all virtual attendees.

[New Virtual Option Registration](#) -- for people who **have not registered yet** and want to sign up directly for the virtual interactive experience.

[Change Current Registration to Virtual](#) -- for those who **already registered** for the in-person event but now want to switch to the virtual interactive format.



Litter Hawk Youth Award Now Open

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is excited to announce that the Litter Hawk Youth Award Program is back.

This year's theme is **Celebrate America250 – Keep It Beautiful**, inviting Pennsylvania students in grades K–6 to share their creativity and inspire pride in our communities as we approach America's 250th anniversary.

Whether through art, writing, or video, these young leaders show us how powerful their voices can be. Please help us promote this opportunity to schools, youth groups, and families in your network.

As an added bonus, winners will be announced in April 2026 in coordination with an awards ceremony at the PA State Capitol Building! All winners and their families, guardians and teachers are welcome to attend. Special guests will include representatives from the Department of Environmental Protection and America250PA.

The program deadline is January 31, 2026. Contest details and application can be found here: [Litter Hawk Youth Award Program - Keep PA Beautiful.](#)

Together, we can lift up the next generation of environmental stewards.



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