

# News Advisory

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## PA Student Teacher Support Program Begins Award Distribution

*More than 2,000 student teachers selected to receive \$10,000 awards*

**Harrisburg, PA (September 19, 2024)** – The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) has announced that more than 2,000 student teachers have been selected to receive a \$10,000 stipend through the PA Student Teacher Support Program and fund disbursement has begun.

The PA Student Teacher Support Program was established by Act 33 of 2023, to address an increasingly growing need for teachers throughout the Commonwealth by addressing the obstacles student teachers face, which may deter them from entering the field of education. Many student teachers face financial challenges as they often forgo income while incurring additional expenses, such as transportation and professional attire.

“There is a real need to invest in our student teachers. We saw how many people applied last year when we made these stipends available for the first time ever — 4,000 student teachers applied in just the first few hours — so in the bipartisan budget I signed into law this summer, we doubled the amount of funding available for student teacher stipends in Pennsylvania,” said Governor Josh Shapiro. “This is a commonsense investment to make sure student teachers are fairly compensated for their work — and it will help lower the barriers that keep Pennsylvanians from pursuing a teaching degree, so we can get more dedicated, qualified teachers into our classrooms.”

The program provides \$10,000 to eligible student teachers. The program also provides up to \$2,500 to cooperating teachers who will be working with and mentoring student teachers throughout the student teacher experience. Program recipients must commit to teaching in Pennsylvania for 3 years following the completion of their teaching certification.

The PA Student Teacher Support Program is designed to:

- Address the financial strain caused by student teaching requirements
- Incentivize completion at local education agencies and non-public schools that struggle to attract educators
- Reduce teacher shortages in Pennsylvania
- Incentivize cooperating teacher participation

“Investing in education is investing in our future. And ensuring that Pennsylvania is attracting and retaining teachers is essential to our future success,” said Senator Wayne D. Fontana, PHEAA Board Chairman. “The Student Teacher Support Program has proven to be an effective and powerful tool, which is why there is bipartisan support at the Capitol and high participation across the Commonwealth.”

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The 2,000 selected recipients come from 84 postsecondary institutions state-wide.

PHEAA is administrating the program for the Commonwealth. Fund disbursement begins this week. The recipients have been awarded on a first come, first served basis per term basis.

"I am glad this funding is beginning to flow to student teachers, who for too long have had to work multiple jobs or take out additional loans to complete the mandatory 12-week student teaching experience in order to become a certified teacher," said Senator Vincent Hughes, PHEAA Board Member and sponsor of the Senate version of the bill. "I am thankful for PHEAA and their hard work over the last year, and I look forward to seeing this program expanded to meet the demand."

"I am thrilled for those who will receive this critical funding, which signifies an important first step in addressing Pennsylvania's troubling teacher shortage," said Senator Ryan Aument, PHEAA Board Member and co-sponsor of the bill. "Our goal in creating this program was to remove this financial barrier and incentivize more students to finish their teaching degree, get placed in Pennsylvania classrooms, and provide high-quality education to our children. I think we've done just that, and I forward to seeing the results of this first round of funding."

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#### 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/>.