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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
COMMONWEALTH *of* PENNSYLVANIA

*House Democratic Policy Committee Hearing*

**Educator Pipeline**

Thursday, May 23, 2024 | 10:00 a.m.

**Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus**

**OPENING REMARKS**

10:00 a.m.      Rep. Regina Young, D-Philadelphia, Montgomery  
Sen. Art Haywood, D-Montgomery, Philadelphia

**PANELISTS**

10:10 a.m.      Danielle Martin, Academic Success Coordinator  
*Temple University Harrisburg*

Sharif El-Mekki, Chief Executive Officer  
*Center for Black Educator Development*

Shelby Jones, Instructional Coordinator  
*Harrisburg School District*

Tamira Howard, Assistant Principal  
*Central Dauphin East High School*

*Q & A with Legislators*

Diversifying the Educator Pipeline  
Dr. Danielle Martin  
Academic Success Coordinator  
Temple University Harrisburg

Today, I bring you warm greetings on behalf of educators across the state. My name is Dr. Danielle Martin, Academic Success Coordinator at Temple University Harrisburg and Adjunct Assistant Professor with the College of Education and Human Development at Temple University. I have served 22 years in the field of education which includes teaching our youngest learners in elementary school, growing with middle school scholars as they find out who they are, preparing high school students as they embark on life post-secondary. Currently, I am teaching undergraduate students and high school students enrolled in dual enrollment programs. I am a proud supporter and advocate for PA Teach PLUS and PA Needs Teachers. I have also served as the Central Region Director for The PA Black Conference on Higher Education and will be moving into the Vice President/President Elect role in June of this year. As you may or may not be familiar, the organization was founded by the late K. Leroy Irvis, the first African American Speaker of the House in Pennsylvania. This organization was formed with the mission to ensure equal education for African Americans and other minorities in higher education in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. (For more information on this, please go to [www.pbcohe.org](http://www.pbcohe.org)).

I thank you for your time and open mind as you listen to this testimony. I also want to thank you for this time to speak about a very important issue today: Diversifying the Educator Pipeline.

As I sit and reflect on this important topic, I think about my own experience and journey. I have always known I wanted to be a teacher. I have also wanted to make a difference serving and touching lives through teaching. I started my formal education in the fall of 1984, entering kindergarten in the Harrisburg City School District. Even though the student population of the district was mostly African American, I did not have African Americans as classroom teachers until I attended the Harrisburg Middle School in the fall of 1990. As I finished my middle school

career, my family moved into the Central Dauphin School District. As you can imagine, this was a completely different environment that I had to adapt socially, racially and in terms of class. I entered Central Dauphin East Sr. High School in the fall of 1993, only having one African American teacher my entire four years there. I would not encounter another African American teacher/professor until the fall of 2019, in my doctoral program. As you are reading and thinking about this, you are most likely thinking about your own experience. It is important that you are reflective of your own journey. The other thing you should think about is how your mind, life and even perspective could have been changed or even more open, if you were taught by someone who was different from you.

Let us explore just a few reasons why diversifying the educator pipeline is beneficial.

**Reason #1** It is important that the educator pipeline is diversified. Representation.

***Representation matters.*** It is critically important for students of color to be able to see themselves and identify as success stories, rather than “stereo-typed, dehumanized” individuals that society and at times, the media portrays. According to Teach For America, it is important that black students have teachers, principals, counselors, deans, etc. who look like them not only to be a role model but also to be a voice for the voiceless.

**Reason #2-Relatability** Not only do African American educators provide a voice, but we are also able to relate to students of color in different ways. We are important because we disrupt the institutional inequalities that help with widening the social, economic, and academic gaps between people of color and our counterparts. (*Why Are Black Educators Important? | Teach for America*, n.d.).

**Reason #3-Diversifying the pipeline will promote achievement and cultural competency.** As we look at the world around us, it is not made up of individuals who look the

same. We come from all walks of life and have unique characteristics that make us diverse. This is to be celebrated. Diversity matters a great deal to students, and it makes complete sense to have a teacher workforce that is reflective of the communities and world in which we serve. This helps to ensure that students are more accepting of people around them. Students are also able to gain knowledge and a different perspective from diverse teachers. Research shows that exposure to teachers of color has a positive impact on students of all races, and particularly on students of color. Despite these positive effects, only 4% of Pennsylvania's teachers are people of color. This percentage is not only one of the lowest in the nation, but it is also starkly disparate from Pennsylvania's own student population, where 29% of students are people of color. (Lapp et al., 2018). According to Research for Action, across the 501 school districts in the state of Pennsylvania, in 2022-23, over 1,358 Pennsylvania schools (46% of all schools) and 155 entire school districts (31% of all districts) employed zero teachers of color. There were 596,852 students (including 103,621 students of color) enrolled in Pennsylvania schools that only had Caucasian teachers.

Not only is it beneficial to have more teachers of color, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 77% of all teachers identify as women, while only 23% identify as men. Our students also need to see male teachers and role models in our classrooms. Again, representation matters. Students being able to connect with diverse teachers benefits all students and their communities.

Lastly, **Reason #4-Sustainability for the Education Profession**. Allowing students to see and experience teachers who reflect their culture and gender could inspire more students to become educators. Having a diverse teaching force is critical to the growth and development of the educator workforce. (Aranda & Jenkins, 2024).

In closing, again, I would like you to reflect on your own educational journey after hearing some of those statistics. You are where you are now, of course, by the grace of God but also because of a teacher. Reflect on how diverse your teachers were or were not. Reflect on what positive changes you can make from the seat that you are holding. I recently heard Senator Vincent Hughes say, “teaching is the profession that allows everything else to occur.” Let us all be the positive change we want to see. This starts by acknowledging an issue, developing a plan of action and implementation to make it happen. What will be done to ensure that our children are receiving instruction from more diverse teachers in classrooms across the states?

Respectfully submitted,

*Dr. Danielle Martin*

Dr. Danielle Martin

Temple University Harrisburg



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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**House Education Committee**  
**Joint Hearing with the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus**  
**May 2, 2024**

Good morning, Chair Schweyer, Chair Topper, Chair Nelson, and Members of the House Education Committee and PA Legislative Black Caucus. Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the uniquely important and irreplaceable role that Pennsylvania's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) play in the Commonwealth. My name is Dr. Kate Shaw, and I am the Deputy Secretary and Commissioner of Higher Education in the Department of Education.

Pennsylvania is fortunate to be home to two of the most distinguished and longest-serving HBCUs in the country. Cheyney University is the oldest HBCU in the country, and Lincoln University holds the status as the first degree-granting HBCU in the country. While the two universities play distinctly different roles in our higher education ecosystem, they are united in their mission and commitment to center and honor the Black experience, and to provide a uniquely important combination of scholarship, leadership opportunities, and an unwavering commitment to making the world a better place. Both universities are nationally ranked for their long track record of ensuring that their graduates achieve social mobility, and their small class sizes provide the kind of personalized student/faculty relationships that can and do transform lives.

As you know, the Governor has proposed a bold new plan for revitalizing higher education in Pennsylvania. This plan—Pennsylvania's Blueprint for Higher Education—is designed to address the longstanding challenges facing our colleges and universities. Pennsylvania currently ranks 49<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in its investment in higher education per capita; our students carry the third highest debt load in the country at close to \$40,000 on average; and a lack of coordination has created postsecondary education deserts, with a lack of state-supported community colleges and universities in the majority of our counties. The result is that college is more expensive and harder to access for Pennsylvanians – and enrollment rates at Pennsylvania institutions of higher education have dropped accordingly. PASSHE enrollment has dropped 30% over the past decade, and community college enrollment has dropped 37%. Across the board, Pennsylvania has seen a 7% drop in the percentage of high school graduates attending college from 2017 through 2022. These facts, coupled with declining populations and a growing workforce credential gap, which currently stands at 61,000 and is anticipated to grow to 218,000 in 8 years if the status quo remains, point to the need to take action.

The Blueprint will build on Cheyney and Lincoln's already considerable strengths, reversing decades of disinvestment in higher education by the Commonwealth, and investing in them with the resources and capacity they need to propel Pennsylvania's economic and social wellbeing for decades to come. To meet these goals, the Blueprint is comprised of three, interrelated elements:



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1. **Create a new public higher education system** that unites PASSHE universities and community colleges. This will strengthen stackable credential pathways, expand access, ease transfer processes, shorten time to degree, and increase effectiveness and coordination.
2. **Make College More Affordable.** No student from a family making at or below the average median income will pay more than \$1,000 per semester for tuition and fees if they attend a university in the new system. And if a qualifying student chooses to attend a state-related or independent university, they will receive an additional \$1,000 per year in PHEAA grants. These proposals will directly address cost barriers for students and their families that drive down enrollment, increase enrollment at all higher education institutions in Pennsylvania, and reduce student debt, which in turn will expand access to our world-class colleges and universities.
3. **Reinvest in publicly-funded colleges and universities** via a predictable and transparent funding formula that aligns state dollars with the needs of the Commonwealth. By focusing on quality outcomes, building in accountability measures, and implementing a robust data tracking system, the Commonwealth and the publicly funded universities become better stewards of taxpayer money. Consequently, bolstering the capacity of colleges and universities to retain and graduate students will provide an unprecedented level of transparency and accountability in our higher education sector.

The Blueprint's return on investment will be high both for those who obtain new college credentials and for the Commonwealth writ large. The Blueprint will:

- ✓ Provide greater access and affordability:
  - 68,000 students—both adults and recent high school graduates will be eligible to receive additional financial aid.
  - The average debt burden will be reduced by \$2,500 for community college graduates, \$4,500 for PASSHE graduates, and over \$3,000 for state-related and independent college or university students on average.
  - Enrollment in Pennsylvania higher education institutions will increase by 5% on average—both adults and recent high school graduates.
- ✓ Increase attainment & address workforce credential gap and create clear, affordable credential pathways aligned to regional workforce needs:
  - 48,000 additional credentials will be earned by Pennsylvania workers by 2032.
  - Sustained year over year investment for the next four years would yield 160,000+ credentials.
  - Expand access in Pennsylvania's postsecondary deserts.





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- ✓ Generate \$19.8 billion in economic impact over a decade.

While the Blueprint is designed to strengthen the postsecondary sector writ large, I want to point out some of the many ways that it will be particularly beneficial to Cheyney and Lincoln universities:

- First, the financial aid element of the Blueprint will provide additional resources to many students attending Cheyney and Lincoln. We are targeting those new dollars to students who come from families making at or below the median adjusted gross income in Pennsylvania—which in 2024 is slightly over \$70,000 per year. We know that 77% of Cheyney students and 69% of Lincoln students qualify for Pell grants and therefore will also qualify for the increased financial aid proposed in the Blueprint. These dollars will reduce student debt on average by \$4,400 for Cheyney students that receive the additional aid and by \$1,280 for Lincoln students who qualify. That’s real money back in the pockets of our students.
- Second, the funding formula through which state appropriations will flow will include varying degrees of weights to provide institutions with more dollars up front for students that need additional resources to graduate. While the specifics of the formula have not yet been proposed, and will require additional input and conversations with many stakeholders and the legislature, it is likely to include these weights for a variety of categories that aim to benefit a substantial proportion of Cheyney and Lincoln students—for example the number of enrolled Pell grant recipients, underrepresented minority students, adult students, and students from low-performing school districts. These up-front dollars are designed to ensure that our colleges and universities are focused on what they do best, which is educating and supporting students from day one to graduation day. And when they deliver on their commitment to students, the formula will provide additional financial rewards.
- Third, the new state system will strengthen the ability for students to transfer to other institutions, thereby driving more community college students to Cheyney University.
- Finally, these proposals aim to recognize the unique and distinct mission of each university which is particularly important as we have a responsibility to support the two oldest HBCUs in the United States.

The Shapiro Administration is excited about this bold plan to turn around decades of disinvestment and rightfully center our colleges and universities as the engine of economic and workforce development that the Commonwealth needs to ensure a prosperous future. Cheyney and Lincoln universities and their students will benefit from the Blueprint—further strengthening these uniquely important institutions and expanding their capacity to serve the Commonwealth.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to your comments and questions.



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**House Education Committee**  
**Public hearing on Teacher Certification/Teacher Pipeline Initiatives**  
**May 3, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Schweyer, Chair Topper, and distinguished members of the House Education Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about Pennsylvania's educator shortage and the Department of Education's efforts to address this challenge. My name is Dr. Carissa Pokorny-Golden, and I am the Bureau Director for School Leadership and Teacher Quality at the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). With me is Raymond Fields, the Chief Talent Officer for PDE. Mr. Fields oversees recruitment and retention efforts within the education workforce with a focus on increasing participation in education jobs among communities with low engagement.

**Teacher Certification Trends and Pipeline Initiatives**

We are excited to report that our most recent Act 82 report shows a nearly 28% increase in initial teacher certifications in 2022-2023 and that the number of students in our educator preparation programs continues to rise. That's great news. But we know that this is only the beginning of the work we must undertake to combat the teacher shortage in Pennsylvania – across the Commonwealth, there are 5,500 teacher vacancies. The shrinking pipeline of new teachers, particularly in the areas of special education, career and technical education, STEM, foreign languages, and bilingual/English language instruction, has dire implications for schools and the future of the Commonwealth's workforce. This systemic issue particularly affects our urban and rural areas, low-income communities, and students of color.

The Administration, Department, and General Assembly have employed several solutions to date:

- Funding Grants to Improve the Teacher Pipeline
  - On April 10, Governor Shapiro announced that the application period for the new student teacher stipend application, the PA Student Teacher Support Program, would open on April 11. The program provides up to \$15,000 to eligible student teachers. Administered through the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA), the program will help address the teacher shortage in Pennsylvania and fill staffing gaps for critical education positions. The program is a huge success, as thousands of aspiring teachers submitted applications to obtain

funding.

- On April 19, PDE announced that \$1.5 million in grant funding is available to help schools create learning opportunities that will bolster the Commonwealth's next generation of special educators. The 2024-2026 Developing Future Special Educators grants are available to all local education agencies.
- Last summer, PDE announced \$1.5 million in grant funding to establish or expand opportunities for practicing paraeducators in Pennsylvania schools to become special education teachers at no cost while actively learning and working in their school.
- Expanding Teacher Intern Programs
  - We know that we have over 8,000 emergency-permitted teachers and that those numbers continue to rise – in 2022-2023, there was a 27% increase in emergency permits. This can be problematic because these emergency-permitted teachers are not certified in their content areas. Many do not have experience in teaching and haven't taken courses in education pedagogy and classroom management. We need to get better qualified and better supported teachers in the classroom with our students, and providing pathways for these emergency-permitted teachers to attain full certification is one way of doing that.
  - To reach this goal, the Department is working with educator preparation programs to expand their teacher intern programs and reduce the number of individuals entering the classroom via emergency permit. This is important for several reasons:
    - We need more skilled educators in the classroom. Individuals with an intern certificate have passed the content test demonstrating that they have the knowledge to teach in a content area.
    - Rather than re-applying every year for emergency certifications, interns have three-year certificates, giving them the chance to complete their student teaching while working and getting paid as a teacher of record.
    - Because interns have passed their content tests, they only have to complete their professional core education work and student teaching, often needing only 18-24 credits to become fully certified.
    - Educator preparation programs complete regular observations of interns to provide an additional layer of support as they complete student teaching.
- Reducing Certification Times
  - The Department has greatly reduced the time it takes to process teacher certification applications, which means that these applicants can be hired more quickly and placed in classrooms. Since 2022, PDE has nearly doubled the number of employees in the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality.
  - As a result, the processing time for Instructional I certification has dropped from 10-12 weeks to just one week. The processing time for in-state Level II certifications has been reduced to 3 weeks, emergency permits take less than a week, and add-on certificates take a week. Applications that require additional review, such as out-of-state and specialty applicants, take 5 weeks to process, down from approximately 10 weeks.

- Acts 33 and 35 of 2023
  - The Student Teacher Support program, in collaboration with PHEAA, provides stipends up to \$15,000 to assist students during student teaching. Since its launch this month, the program has received more than 4,000 student teacher applications, demonstrating the great need to provide funding to Instructional I students during student teaching.
  - The legislative reapproval of Classroom Monitor permits and the continued employment of annuitants, day to day substitutes, those with inactive certifications, graduates of education preparation programs, and a subset of those serving as student teachers to be employed as substitutes by public schools have helped fill gaps in coverage.
- Continuation of Act 55 of 2022 Solutions:
  - The Pathways to Pennsylvania certification for out-of-state teachers, including career and technical education teachers. According to the Act 82 report, we've seen an increase of 57 out-of-state teachers in 2022-2023.
  - The PA Mental Health Education Learning Program in Schools (PA HELPS) was established within PHEAA to support Pennsylvania students completing their field internships to be certified as a school nurse, school counselor, school social worker or school psychologist.
  - The waiving of the Basic Skills assessment for undergraduate education candidates until July 2025.
  - The development of a career and technical education (CTE) Program of Study (POS) in Education to engage and prepare secondary students to pursue education careers. We now have 12 approved programs across nine counties.

### **Data Collection Requirements**

Collecting and releasing educator workforce data is a vital tool which drives evidence-based decision-making, fosters accountability, and ensures equitable access to high-quality education for all students across our Commonwealth. Act 55 of 2022, Section 1508-K, and Act 35 of 2023, Section 131, represent pivotal legislative measures aimed at enhancing data collection and transparency regarding the diversity of the education workforce. These statutes mandate the annual collection and dissemination of comprehensive demographic information pertaining to various facets of the education workforce.

Under Section 1508-K of the School Code, the Pennsylvania Department of Education is tasked with collecting and publicly posting a wide array of demographic data, including but not limited to:

- Demographics of individuals enrolled in teacher preparation programs.
- Pass rates of educator certification test takers.
- Demographic data relating to teaching certificates issued.
- Demographic data on new teacher applicants and hires.
- Annual teacher retention rates.
- Demographics of individuals enrolled in superintendent or principal certification programs.

- Demographics of individuals who have completed superintendent or principal certification programs.
- Current school year's professional employees, including classroom teachers, principals, and non-teaching professional staff.

The Department has made significant strides in releasing pertinent information to the public. Notable releases include reports on professional vacancies, detailed emergency permits, teacher preparation programs, educator certification, and race data on teachers and administrators.

This transparent approach to data dissemination not only facilitates evidence-based decision-making but also empowers stakeholders to advocate for policies and initiatives that promote diversity, equity, and excellence in education.

### **Educator Talent Recruitment and Retention**

The Governor has proposed a \$5 million increase to the student teacher stipend program established under PHEAA, which would bring the total allocation to \$15 million. Additionally, the Governor's budget proposes \$10 million for PDE's previously unfunded Talent Recruitment Account (providing for the talent recruitment grant program) to increase participation in the education workforce by covering tuition, fees, supplies or other costs that serve as barriers to employment; and a \$450,000 increase in funding to support the Talent Recruitment Office in the Department. This funding builds on pre-existing mechanisms and gives the Department the capacity it needs to address the educator shortage and incentivize highly qualified educators to join and remain in the profession in Pennsylvania.

Once an individual becomes an educator, we must continue to support them by listening to their needs and helping them feel prepared to address the challenges they experience in the classroom. The Governor's proposed budget includes a \$5 million increase for teacher professional development, which would allow PDE to better support current educators to retain a strong workforce through efforts such as developing a toolkit on information literacy for teachers and parents and providing training to educators on how to address difficult topics in the classroom, as well as to continue to provide professional development to educators on new standards and requirements adopted by the State Board of Education such as the science of reading and personal finance.

### **CTE Pathway for Educators**

To encourage secondary students to engage with and enter the educator profession, the Department has developed a Career and Technical Education Program of Study in education. PDE's Bureau of Career and Technical Education (BCTE) approved 12 career and technical education pathways for educators. Eleven of those programs enrolled approximately 100 students during the 2023-24 school year. An additional 15 programs across nine counties are currently under review. The BCTE continues to host a series of webinars for the field showcasing current approved programs and demonstrating how to apply and open a program in a Career and Technical Center or School District. A new grant package is currently in development to incentivize the expansion and opening of new CTE programs, including the educator pathway.

We appreciate the House Education Committee affording the Department this opportunity to provide information regarding our educator workforce strategy. PDE is committed to helping to bring more qualified, well-trained teachers into Pennsylvania classrooms and working with schools to train and retain those teachers. We welcome further collaboration with the General Assembly to ensure a robust educator workforce across the Commonwealth.