

**ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

222 North Seventeenth Street • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-1299  
Telephone: 215-587-3585 • Fax: 215-587-5644 • e-mail: [amclaughlin@archphila.org](mailto:amclaughlin@archphila.org)

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Good Morning Chairman Argall, Chairwoman Williams, and the rest of the Senate Education Committee members. Thank you for inviting me to testify on the critically important topic of “Teacher Shortages”. My name is Dr. Andrew McLaughlin. I am the secretary for elementary education at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The Archdiocese is the third largest Catholic education system in the nation. We are only smaller than Los Angeles and Chicago. We have 160 schools. We serve over 56,00 students. Our system is made up a set of 25 elementary and secondary private schools, 14 independent mission schools, 15 Archdiocesan secondary schools, three schools of special education. I supervise the Archdiocesan elementary schools which are all Pre-K to 8 schools. There are 102 archdiocesan elementary schools and they serve more than 32,000 children throughout the five-county metropolitan Philadelphia region.

We strive to deliver a strong academic program, a spiritual setting, and a safe environment where students can learn and become productive members of society. By fostering a Christ-like spirit of compassion, humility, and charity, we challenge students to listen, share, and work together. By upholding a rigorous academic standard, we give children the critical skills needed to understand Scripture, as well as the many diverse subjects they encounter throughout their studies. One of our greatest successes was our ability to sustain high academic achievement. Last year, Spring 2022, we demonstrated that our students made two full years of growth, despite the challenges of the pandemic. Additionally, at every level, more than 30% of students performed in the top national quartile. The students’ mean achievement scores were above the national mean in every content area and at every grade level tested.

Our teachers are dedicated professionals committed to our mission. Although they do not earn the same compensation as they could in public institutions, they are strongly committed to the educational environment we foster and the goals of our mission. In our elementary schools alone, we employ about 2,500 teachers. Traditionally, every summer, we replace about 200 teachers and have a full staff at the start of school. However, in the summer of 2022, we needed to replace over 300 teachers. At the start of school year, we still were in need of 65 teachers. In these cases, principals were forced to go in to the classroom and serve as the teacher. Obviously, this scenario was very disruptive to the learning environment and took vital time away from the important administrative workload for many principals.

Obviously, non-public schools play an important role in total education landscape in Pennsylvania. Imagine if the 56,000 students we serve in Archdiocese of Philadelphia were to return to their local school districts. This would have a massive impact on these local schools.

I would also like to take a minute to address the teacher shortages topic with our colleagues in the nonpublic school arena in Pennsylvania. They have faced similar teacher shortage challenges since the COVID pandemic as we have. I asked PACAPE to reach out to its membership schools for additional teacher shortage data. PACAPE is an affiliate of the national Council for American Private Education (CAPE) and was founded in Pennsylvania in 2007. Through its common commitment to quality education, PACAPE serves to unify its member jurisdictions and schools while respecting their diversity. PACAPE represents over 93% of the total nonpublic school community in Pennsylvania and its members have mentioned the following regarding teacher shortages; qualified candidate pools have decreased, especially in disciplines like the sciences and languages. They also have difficulties hiring part-time and substitute teachers, along with mid-year hirings due to teachers leaving the profession.

I am here today to bring the details of this issue to your attention and ask for consideration for additional support in helping the non-public schools hire and retain our staff. Some suggestion includes:

1. Establishing a day or month recognizing and thanking all teachers and administrators for public and nonpublic schools.
2. Some type of state sponsored Student-loan forgiveness program for public and nonpublic school teachers and administrators.
3. Some type of state sponsored full high-quality family medical coverage program for public and nonpublic school teachers and administrators.
4. Some type of state sponsored graduate education tuition coverage program for Masters/Doctorate degrees for public and nonpublic school teachers and administrators.
5. Some type of state sponsored additional retirement benefits program for public and nonpublic school teachers and administrators.