



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Senate Education Committee**  
**Public Hearing on the Educator Workforce Shortage**  
**February 28, 2023**

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Good morning, Chairman Argall, Chair Williams, and distinguished members of the Senate Education Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about Pennsylvania's educator shortage. My name is Dr. Tanya Garcia, and I am the Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for Postsecondary and Higher Education at the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). With me is Dr. Carissa Pokorny-Golden, the Bureau Director for School Leadership and Teacher Quality.

The prosperous future of Pennsylvania – from healthy children and families to a thriving economy with vibrant and civically engaged neighborhoods and communities – depends on a healthy and robust educator workforce. The Department defines educators broadly to include early childhood professionals, teachers, school and district leaders, and other school support staff professionals like school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, mental health professionals, speech pathologists, health professionals, librarians, and others.

Yet, over the past 10 years, Pennsylvania's educator workforce has been shrinking, especially in rural and urban districts and hard-to-fill areas like elementary education, special education, career and technical education, English language instruction, foreign languages, and STEM.<sup>1</sup> This is due, in part, to fewer high school students entering college after high school and even fewer students pursuing education careers. Currently, 55% of Pennsylvania's high school graduates enroll in postsecondary education within one year of earning their high school diploma.<sup>2</sup> In 2020-21, PA colleges enrolled more than 650,000 students; only 20,000 of those students were enrolled in educator preparation programs (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PA Department of Education, Teacher Information Management System (TIMS) 2021-22 data, Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) 2021-22 data, and Pennsylvania Course Certification Requirements (PCCR) 2021-22 data

<sup>2</sup> National Student Clearinghouse, Student Tracker for High Schools, Pennsylvania data, 4/21/2022.

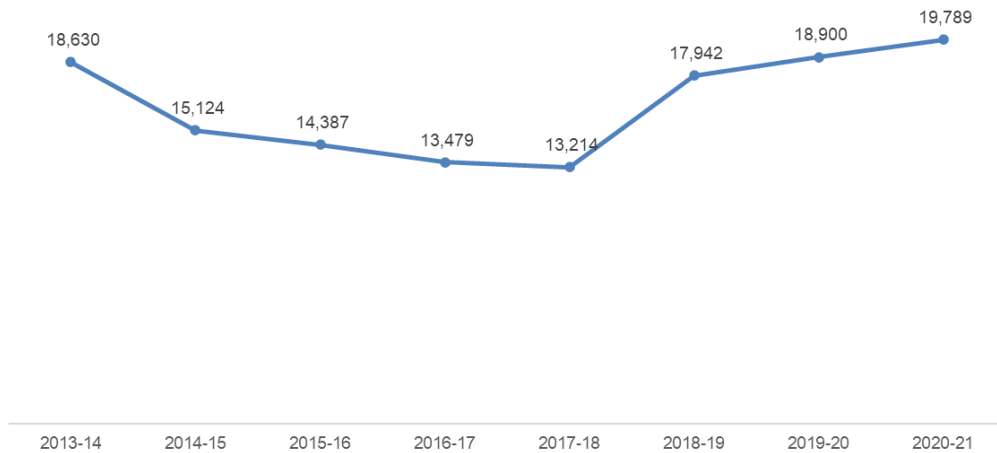
<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Title 2 Public Report, [State User Home Page \(ed.gov\)](#).



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**Figure 1. Enrollment in Educator Preparation Programs Has Increased Since 2017-18**

Enrollment in Educator Preparation Programs



Pennsylvania has 125 providers that offer 3,272 educator preparation programs<sup>4</sup> and the state’s certification requirements are recognized as among the most rigorous and comprehensive in the nation. As such, Pennsylvania has long been regarded as an epicenter of US educational preparation and has a long history of exporting its former excess of newly certified educators to teach in neighboring states.

In 2010-11, the Department issued Instructional I certificates to more than 21,000 new educators; these are the certificates that are typically awarded to individuals entering the educator workforce for the first time. In 2021-22, the Department issued only 6,153 Instructional I certificates – a 71% decline.<sup>5</sup> While the number of Instructional I (provisional) and II (permanent) certifications has risen slightly in the past five years (Figure 2), the number of newly certified educators each year may not be sufficient to replace the thousands of educators who leave the profession each year.

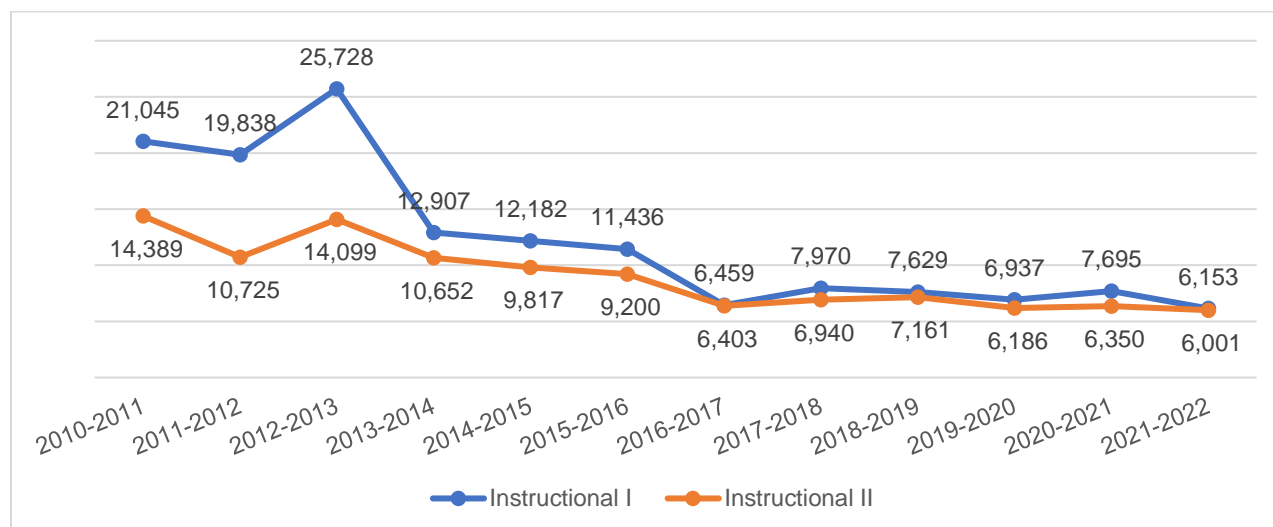
<sup>4</sup> PA Department of Education, Teacher Information Management System (TIMS) 2021-22 data.

<sup>5</sup> PA Department of Education. 2022. *Act 82 of 2018: Report on Educator Preparation and Certification* (forthcoming).



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**Figure 2. Instructional I and II Certifications Issued in Pennsylvania, 2010-2022<sup>6</sup>**



Recent analyses and research from Teach Plus PA and the National Center on Education and the Economy, Research for Action, and the Penn State College of Education has drawn attention to reasons that educators are leaving the teaching profession, a trend that predates the COVID-19 pandemic and continues today. You will hear more about the findings from education leaders later this morning; the Department is appreciative of and applauds their efforts.<sup>7</sup>

### Various Educator Shortage Solutions to Date

To address the decline in supply and growing shortages, schools have become increasingly reliant on substitute teachers. In December 2021, the General Assembly passed **Act 91 of 2021** to increase the pool of substitute teachers and provide temporary relief during the pandemic. Act 91 enabled public schools to employ annuitants, day-to-day substitutes, educators with inactive certification, graduates of educator preparation programs, and a subset of those serving as student teachers to be employed as substitutes. Together with the waivers provided under Acts 13 and 136 of 2020, these legislative actions have eased the pressure on schools and educators by

<sup>6</sup> In September 2007, the State Board of Education amended the Chapter 49 regulations related to certification of education professionals. Educators certified after January 1, 2013 began receiving the new certificates. As such, in 2012-13, a significant number of students accelerated their studies to complete their current certification programs rather than switch to the new programs.

<sup>7</sup> Teach Plus PA and the National Center on Education and the Economy. February 2023. [#PANeedsTeachers: Addressing Pennsylvania's Teacher Shortage Crisis Through Systemic Solutions](#); Research for Action. November 2022. ["Worn & Weary" Black Teachers' Storied Experiences and Recommendations around their Attrition and Retention in Philadelphia Schools](#). Center for Evaluation and Education Policy Analysis. Fall 2022. [Pennsylvania Teacher Staffing Challenges](#). The Pennsylvania State University College of Education.

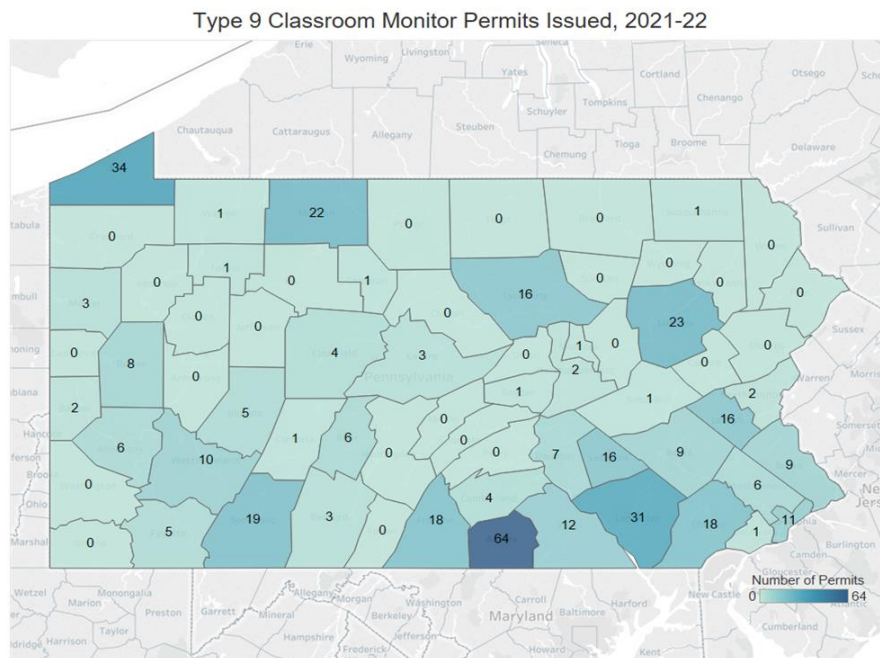


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providing short-term solutions to substitute teacher shortages and providing additional time for educators to meet certain professional development requirements.

Act 91 also created a new Classroom Monitor Permit that allowed individuals to deliver assignments preplanned by certified educators in the school.<sup>8</sup> While not considered substitute teachers because they do not plan or create lessons or grade work, classroom monitors are another way schools can staff classrooms and provide future educators the field experience they need to be successful. The Department is on track to collecting the necessary data to comply with Act 91 to make a recommendation to the General Assembly on whether to extend the availability of these permits beyond their expiration on June 30, 2023. To support this effort, the Department has developed a survey for schools to get their input on the utility of Classroom Monitor permits. Figures 3 and 4 show the number of Classroom Monitor permits requested in the 2021-22 and to date in the 2022-23 school years, respectively.

**Figure 3. Classroom Monitor Permits Requested During SY2021-22**



<sup>8</sup> Please reference the Act 91 of 2021 Guidance on the Department’s [website](#).





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program assessment, which will signal to schools and early childhood centers that high school graduates are “on their way” to becoming teachers across the commonwealth. School districts, charter schools, and career and technical centers approved by the Department to offer the new POS in Education will be eligible to receive federal Perkins funding for the program beginning in the 2024-25 school year.

Last but not least, this year the Department awarded nearly \$5 million in state and federal grant funding to strengthen partnerships between schools and educator preparation programs across the Commonwealth through three grant programs.<sup>9</sup> **Aspiring to Educate: STEM/Computer Science** (A2E STEM/CS) grants are intended to make simultaneous progress to diversify the teacher workforce and increase the number, diversity, and cultural awareness of STEM-CS teachers. **Innovative Teacher Preparation to Practice** (Prep2Practice) grants incentivized the creation of highly cohesive and innovative clinical experiences for teachers that make explicit connections across the three stages of clinical experience: as first-year candidates, during their capstone clinicals, and induction. **Innovative Principal Prep2Practice** grants focus on the development of highly cohesive and innovative clinical experiences for principals. A total of [7 partnerships](#) received A2E STEM-CS grants, [23 partnerships](#) received Innovative Teacher Prep2Practice grants, and [9 partnerships](#) received Innovative Principal Prep2Practice grants.

We appreciate the Senate Education Committee providing the Department with the opportunity to provide these educator workforce updates. We welcome further collaborations to ensure a robust educator workforce across the Commonwealth.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.education.pa.gov/Postsecondary-Adult/A2E/Grants/Pages/default.aspx>



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**Biographical Information**

**Tanya I. Garcia, Ph.D.** is Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for Postsecondary and Higher Education at the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). In this position, she oversees long-range planning for higher education in Pennsylvania, the implementation of statutory and regulatory responsibilities governing postsecondary education, and educator certification and preparation. Before joining PDE, Dr. Garcia served as Associate Director of Postsecondary Policy Research and Associate Research Professor at the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. Prior to Georgetown University, she held various roles in state government, national nonprofits, and philanthropy where she dedicated her work to improving policies and practices for all students from high school to postsecondary to the workforce. A first-generation student, Dr. Garcia earned a BA in Philosophy and a BS in Biology at Florida International University. Her MA in Higher Education Administration is from The George Washington University. She earned a PhD in Public Administration at American University.

**Dr. Carissa Pokorny-Golden** has 26 years of experience in secondary and postsecondary education. Most recently, she served as the Associate Dean of the College of Education at Kutztown University. Prior to that she taught English and Journalism at Pleasant Valley High School in Brodheadsville for eight years, composition and literature at Lehigh Carbon Community College in Schnecksville for three years, and composition, literature, methods, and student teacher supervision at Kutztown University for thirteen years. During her teaching career, Carissa served in the United States Navy Reserve for over 24 years, retiring as a Chief Petty Officer in 2017. She holds a PhD in English from Temple University, a MA in English from Binghamton University, an MS in Education from Wilkes University, a BA in English and a BS in Secondary Education English/Communications from the Pennsylvania State University. She also completed certification classes in ESL through the Colonial Intermediate Unit in 2004.