



# **PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS**

*Key facts and data on the state's public schools, educator and support staff compensation, school district staffing, funding, and enrollment, and student performance.*

**SEPTEMBER 2025**

## Executive Summary

The Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) has compiled this comprehensive report to highlight key facts and data on the state's public schools, educator and support staff compensation, school district staffing, funding, and enrollment, and student performance.

The report is designed to be a resource for educators, support staff, students, parents, elected leaders, community members, and the press — with up-to-date facts and information about Pennsylvania's public schools.

While the report is largely factual, researchers did make the following key findings:

- Both Pennsylvania's average starting educator salary and average teacher salary have declined relative to inflation over the past three decades.
- Test scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2024 National Report Card indicate that Pennsylvania's public schools continue to be among the best in the nation.
- Pennsylvania is a leader in post-secondary education and ranks high in the percentage of full-time college students who complete their bachelor's degrees.
- The basic education subsidy continues to rise as the state invests more in school funding but remains well below its 1973-74 peak of 55 percent.
- Greater investment in public schools is particularly needed given Pennsylvania's relatively high rate of children living in poverty.

As Pennsylvania's 1.7 million public school students begin a new school year, we hope this report will be a resource for everyone who cares about Pennsylvania's public education system and wants our schools to be the best they can be.

# Pennsylvania School Entities, Staffing, and Enrollment

## Total school entities in 2024-25: 776

- 500 school districts
- 27 intermediate units (IUs)
- 71 career and technical centers (CTCs)
- 178 charter schools (154 brick and mortar, 14 cyber, 10 regional)
  - Number of cyber charter schools PSEA represents: 4

## Total educators in 2024-25: 137,816

- School districts: 118,039
- CTCs: 2,258
- IUs: 5,055
- Charter and cyber charter schools: 12,464

*(Note: "Educators" includes special and regular education teachers, school counselors, nurses, school psychologists, therapists, reading specialists, ESL instructors, and librarians.)*

## Educator information in 2024-25:

- Average salary: \$79,432
- Percent with master's degrees and beyond: 61.3 percent
- Average years of experience: 14.8 years

*(Note: "Educators" includes special and regular education teachers, school counselors, nurses, school psychologists, therapists, reading specialists, ESL instructors, and librarians.)*

## Total student enrollment in 2024-25: 2.0 million

- 1.7 million students, or 86.5 percent of all students, are enrolled in public schools (school districts, IUs, CTCs, and charter schools).
  - School district, IU, CTC enrollment: 1.5 million
  - Charter schools enrollment: 104,658
  - Cyber charter schools enrollment: 64,343
- Private and non-public school enrollment: 282,149

## Largest school districts in 2024-25, by number of students:

- Philadelphia City SD (120,148; represented by PAAFT)
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Pittsburgh SD (19,581; represented by PAAFT)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Central Bucks SD (16,941; represented by PSEA)
- 4<sup>th</sup>: Allentown City SD (16,770; represented by PSEA)

## Smallest school districts in 2024-25, by number of students:

- Austin Area SD (154)
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Midland Borough SD (227; no high school)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Harmony Area SD (234)
- 4<sup>th</sup>: Turkeyfoot Valley Area SD (253)

## **Pennsylvania Department of Education 2028-29 public and private school enrollment projections:**

- Public school enrollment projection, including charter schools, cyber charter schools, and CTCs: 1.6 million
- Private and non-public school enrollment projection: 348,957
- Total public and private school enrollment projection: 1.95 million

## **Examples of differences in school district sizes based on general fund budgets and student enrollment in 2024-25:**

- Central Bucks SD:
  - General fund budget: \$418.4 million
  - Student enrollment: 16,941
- Austin Area SD:
  - General fund budget: \$4.8 million
  - Student enrollment: 154

## **Examples of differences in school district student population density:**

- Austin Area SD and Forest Area SD have fewer than one student per square mile of land area.
- Reading SD, Upper Darby SD, and Jenkintown SD have more than 1,200 students per square mile of land area.

## **Salaries and Wages**

### **The average starting educator salary in 2024-25 is \$51,814.**

- This is 12 percent (\$7,091) lower than the inflation-adjusted 1995-96 average starting salary of \$58,905.
- Maryland is implementing a law that will bring the minimum salary for all teachers to \$60,000 by July 1, 2026.

### **The average teacher salary in 2024-25 is \$79,078.**

- This is 16.6 percent (\$15,744) lower than the inflation-adjusted 1995-96 average salary of \$94,822.

### **Relative to comparable professionals, teaching already has a growing pay disadvantage.**

- The pay disadvantage of teachers relative to comparable professionals is now at 15.8 percent in Pennsylvania, according to the most recent data from the Economic Policy Institute.

### **Relative to comparable professions, the teaching profession has a growing disadvantage in working conditions.**

- Teachers' workloads are increasing, their working conditions are worsening, and their chances of working at home are minimal.
- The teaching profession is now competing with jobs that pay more and offer work-at-home options. Just under 60 percent of new hires in 2024 in all occupations work part-time or fully remote work schedules.

### **Total wages, excluding benefits, paid to all school employees in Pennsylvania were:**

- 3.59 percent of total Pennsylvania private-sector wages in 2023-24.
- This is down from 5.20 percent of total Pennsylvania private-sector wages in 2002-03.

### Total school district expenditures for salaries and benefits were:

- 59.6 percent of total school district expenditures in 2023-24.
- This is down from 71.7 percent of total school district expenditures in 1992-93.

*(Note: Salaries and benefits represent total compensation for all school employees. Figures do not include state reimbursement for pension (PSERS) and Social Security benefits; (net) district expenditures for salaries and benefits are lower when reimbursement payments to school districts are included.)*

### The total number of public school support staff in Pennsylvania in 2023-24 was **91,822**.

- In the fall of 2024, the average wage of education support professionals belonging to PSEA was \$20.65 per hour.

## School Funding

### The estimated basic education subsidy for all school districts is \$8.16 billion in 2024-25. The basic education subsidy increased by:

- 3.6 percent (\$284 million) in 2024-25;
- 7.8 percent (\$567 million) in 2023-24;
- 11.4 percent (\$750 million) in 2022-23; and
- 4.8 percent (\$300 million) in 2021-22.

### The total amount of state revenues available to school districts was \$14.6 billion in 2023-24.

- This figure includes state subsidies for basic and special education, the Ready to Learn Block Grant, student transportation, school construction subsidies (among other line items), and PSERS and Social Security reimbursements.
- The total state revenues available to school districts was \$8.9 billion in 2011-12.
- Total state revenues distributed each year to school districts increased by an average of \$471 million between 2011-12 and 2023-24.

### The basic education subsidy as a share of total school district expenditures:

- Was 40 percent in 2024-25. (Note: This figure includes the increase in Ready to Learn Block Grant appropriation in 2024-25.)
- Peaked at 55 percent in 1973-74.
- Reached its lowest point at 30.4 percent in 2020-21.

### Expenditures per student (ADM) were \$20,192 in 2023-24.

- The highest spending district was Forest Area at \$36,591 per student.
- The lowest spending district was Wilkes-Barre Area at \$13,565 per student.

*(Note: "Expenditures" **include** spending on instruction, support services, and operation of noninstructional services. This **excludes** expenditures on facilities acquisition, construction and improvement, and expenditures classified as other expenditure and financing uses, a category that includes debt service payments and fund transfers.)*

### Percentage of children in poverty and Pennsylvania's rank.

- In 2023, 15 percent of Pennsylvania children between the ages of 6 and 17 lived in families with incomes below the federal poverty level.
- Pennsylvania ranked 17<sup>th</sup> among U.S. states in the percentage of children in poverty (1 being the highest poverty level and 50 the lowest).

## Student Performance

Test scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2024 Nation's Report Card indicate that Pennsylvania schools are among the best in the nation.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading

- Only four states have statistically significant higher fourth-grade reading scores than Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>
- Only one state has a significantly higher percentage of fourth-grade students who scored proficient or above (the two highest levels) than Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup>

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading

- Only four states have statistically significant higher eighth-grade reading scores than Pennsylvania.<sup>3</sup>
- Only two states have a significantly higher percentage of eighth-grade students who scored proficient or above (the two highest levels) than Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup>

### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

- Only three states have statistically significant higher fourth-grade math scores than Pennsylvania.<sup>5</sup>
- Only one state has a significantly higher percentage of fourth-grade students who scored proficient or above (the two highest levels) than Pennsylvania.<sup>6</sup>

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

- Only six states have statistically significant higher eighth-grade math scores than Pennsylvania.<sup>7</sup>
- Only three states have a significantly higher percentage of eighth-grade students who scored proficient or above (the two highest levels) than Pennsylvania.<sup>8</sup>

### Pennsylvania college attendance and AP, SAT, and ACT scores

- More than six out of 10 Pennsylvania high school graduates plan to continue their education after high school.
- During the 2023-24 school year, Pennsylvania was among the top eight states in the percentage of public high school students who scored high enough on AP exams to qualify for college credit when taking the exam.
- Pennsylvania ranked 29th in average state SAT score (Total Score; 1 being the highest score and 50 the lowest), and 21st in the proportion of students taking the SAT. (Since Pennsylvania has one of the highest proportions of students taking the SATs, an overall lower ranking among states is not unexpected.)
- Pennsylvania ranked 15th in average state ACT score (Composite Score; 1 being the highest score and 50 the lowest), and 44th in the proportion of students taking the ACT. (Since Pennsylvania has one of the lowest proportions of students taking the ACTs, an overall higher ranking among states is not unexpected.)
- Pennsylvania ranks 17th in the nation in the percentage of full-time college students who complete their bachelor's degrees.

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1 Colorado, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Wyoming.  
2 Massachusetts  
3 Colorado, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey  
4 Massachusetts, New Jersey  
5 Massachusetts, Florida, Wyoming  
6 Massachusetts  
7 Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin  
8 Massachusetts, New Jersey, Wisconsin

## About NAEP

- The NAEP is the most appropriate test for use in comparing performance among states. In 1988, Congress created the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to devise procedures for interstate comparisons of test scores. For example, unlike Student Achievement Test (SAT) data, NAEP procedures require a scientifically valid sampling plan in which 100 schools are randomly selected to represent all public schools in the state.
- While the NAEP tests are a valid manner in which to compare relative academic performance by students in different states, it is important to remember that states still differ in the characteristics of their populations. Some states have many more students from urban areas, those who have lower socioeconomic status, and lower levels of parental education than do other states. So, while the NAEP tests can be used as an accurate barometer of student performance, the question remains as to what meaning to give to any observed differences between the states.

## About ACT and SAT

- In 2022 and 2023, there was, across all states, a very strong (highly correlated) inverse relationship between participation rates and SAT and ACT scores, i.e., the greater the percentage of students in a state taking the test, the lower the average (Composite or Total) score. For this reason, it is not appropriate to use either SAT or ACT scores to compare states.
- The College Board, the organization that sponsors the SATs, says it is invalid to use the SAT to compare states. (“Relationships between test scores and other background or contextual factors are complex and interdependent. Caution is warranted when using scores to compare or evaluate teachers, schools, districts, or states, because of differences in participation and test-taker populations.”)
- Statisticians from Education Testing Service (ETS), the organization that produces the SATs, have written extensively about why the SAT is an invalid measure – and a measure that cannot be statistically rehabilitated – for ranking states.
- Both the SAT and the NAEP tests are produced by Education Testing Services (ETS). ETS, as noted, specifically warns against using the SAT to compare states and has developed the NAEP tests expressly for the purpose of comparing states.

## Citations

### School entities, total educators, personnel data:

- **Number of educators and salaries:** 2024-25 Professional Personnel File, Pennsylvania Dept. of Education (as adjusted by the PSEA Research Division). Salary analysis based on full-time, primary assignment, excluding observations significantly below contractual starting salary: <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/ProfSupPers/Pages/ProfPersIndStaff.aspx>
- **Number of school entities:**
  - Basic Ed., CTCs, IUs: <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Enrollment/Pages/PublicSchEnrReports.aspx>
  - Charters: <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Charter%20Schools/Pages/default.aspx>
  - Number organized: PSEA Field Division

### Student enrollment figures and projections:

- **Public, school district, CTCs, IUs, also largest/smallest school districts:** <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Enrollment/Pages/PublicSchEnrReports.aspx>
- **Charters and cyber charters:** <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Charter%20Schools/Pages/Annual-Reports-Data-and-Resources.aspx>
- **Private and non-public:** <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Enrollment/Pages/PrivateNPEnrRpts.aspx>
- **Enrollment projections:** <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Enrollment/Pages/EnrProjections.aspx>

### General fund budget figures for school districts:

- **Budget data:** <https://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20-%20Administrators/School%20Finances/Finances/GFBData/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Actual data:** <https://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20-%20Administrators/School%20Finances/Finances/AFR%20Data%20Summary/Pages/AFR-Data-Summary-Level.aspx#.VZwCqmXD-UI>

### Population (student) density figures:

- PSEA Research Division computations using enrollment (see above) and land area data

### Starting salaries:

- PSEA's contract database

### The inflation adjusted teacher salary:

- 2024-25 Professional Personnel File, Pennsylvania Dept. of Education (see above for analysis details) and inflation-adjusted using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index (CPI-U), All Items, for January of each year (<https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost?cu>)

### Teacher salaries vs. comparable professions:

- Allegretto (Economic Policy Institute, September 2023) "Teacher pay penalty still looms large: Trends in teacher wages and compensation through 2022" (<https://www.epi.org/publication/teacher-pay-in-2022/>)



### **Remote work information:**

- National Association of Colleges and Employers (2024) “Hybrid Work Modality for Entry-Level Hires Matches Student Desires,” Data from NACE’s Job Outlook Report 2024 (<https://www.nacweb.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/individuals-with-disabilities/ready-willing-but-still-underemployed/cfea0f8e-4c18-4c36-b4ab-5eb1ce74c6ee>)

### **Total wage data:**

- Total wage data for school employees is based on school district financial data which is collected by the commonwealth from individual school districts on form PDE-2057. Total wages in the private sector is a figure jointly collected by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and is published in the Quarterly Census of Employment Wages (QCEW).

### **District expenditures data (salaries, benefits, and total expenditures):**

- Based on school district financial data which is collected by the commonwealth from individual school districts on their Annual Financial Reports, form PDE-2057.

### **PSEA Education Support Professional Wage Survey:**

- October 2024 PSEA survey of 4,903 of PSEA ESP members.

### **Total number of support staff in Pennsylvania:**

- Pennsylvania Department of Education Support Staff Summary 2022-23: <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/ProfSupPers/Pages/SupportStaffSum.aspx>

### **Basic education subsidy information:**

- Based on school district financial data which is collected by the commonwealth from individual school districts on their Annual Financial Reports, form PDE-2057.

### **Total revenues to school districts:**

- Based on school district financial data which is collected by the commonwealth from individual school districts on their Annual Financial Reports, form PDE-2057.

### **Expenditure per student (Average Daily Membership):**

- Computations PDE expenditures and average daily membership (ADM) data: <https://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20-%20Administrators/School%20Finances/Finances/AFR%20Data%20Summary/Pages/AFR-Data-Summary-Level.aspx>
- Expenditures from districts’ Annual Financial Reports, form PDE-2057

### **Percentage of children in poverty:**

- Population Reference Bureau computations using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2022 (via the Annie E. Casey Foundation website). <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data?location=USA#USA/1/0/char/0>

### **NAEP scores:**

- <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile?sfj=NP&chort=1&sub=MAT&sj=&st=MN&year=2022R3>

### **High school graduate plans:**

- <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Graduates/Pages/default.aspx>

### **AP exam information:**

- <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/school-report-of-ap-exams-grades-11-12-2023-2024.pdf>

**ACT score data:**

- graduating class of 2024; <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/2024-Average-ACT-Scores-by-State-Average-Score-by-Section.pdf>

**SAT score data:**

- <https://blog.prepscholar.com/average-sat-scores-by-state-most-recent>

**Percentage of full-time college students who complete their degrees:**

- <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/trendgenerator>