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Shapiro Administration Honors 35 PA High Schools With Governor's Civic Engagement Awards for Helping About 8,000 Eligible Students Register to Vote

Harrisburg, PA – Secretary of the Commonwealth Al Schmidt announced today that 35 Pennsylvania high schools won [Governor's Civic Engagement Awards \(GCEA\)](#) for student-led efforts to register their eligible classmates to vote during the 2025-26 school year.

Twenty-one schools won Gold Level Awards for registering to vote at least 85% of their eligible students, and 14 schools won Silver Level Awards for registering 65 to 84% of their eligible students.

For the first time in the GCEA's nearly 10-year history, two schools – Delta High School in Centre County and Union Area Middle/High School in Lawrence County – registered 100% of their eligible students.

In total, about 2,000 students from public, private, and charter schools in 21 counties helped register approximately 8,000 voting-eligible classmates to win these awards, which are presented by the departments of State and Education.

"These students worked hard to register their eligible classmates to vote, inform them about the electoral process, and hopefully launch them on a lifelong habit of voting," **Secretary of the Commonwealth Al Schmidt** said at a press conference today in the Capitol. "Students in the GCEA program engage the next generation of voters, which is critical for the continued health of our representative democracy."

In addition to the voter registration awards, GCEA recognized juniors and seniors who also served as poll workers in the November 2025 general election. Students must be at least 17 years old to be a poll worker, and they must get permission from their parent or guardian and the school's principal.

This year, 633 students were honored for serving at precincts in their communities on Election Day 2025. Of that number, 572 student poll workers were from schools in Philadelphia; the other 61 student poll workers were from schools in Armstrong, Berks, Bucks, Centre, Chester, Dauphin, Erie, and Fayette counties.

“These student poll workers help counties staff polling places and assist voters in making their voices heard on Election Day,” **Secretary Schmidt** said. “About 32% of the student poll workers we are honoring today are bilingual, so they also helped make the ballot box accessible to eligible voters who do not speak English as their first language.”

The GCEA program continues to grow. This year, a higher number of schools across more counties participated and 165 more student poll workers were honored compared to last year.

“Strong communities and a healthy democracy depend on informed and engaged citizens,” said **Pennsylvania Department of Education Secretary Dr. Carrie Rowe**. “The Governor’s Civic Engagement Awards recognize young people who are developing the habits of informed citizenship, public service, and civic responsibility that strengthen Pennsylvania’s future.”

Schmidt was joined today by student poll workers from Franklin Towne Charter School in Philadelphia, which won a Gold Level award.

“By working the polls, students like me got real-world experience, learned responsibility, and discovered what it actually means to be an active citizen,” said **Kayla Marshall, a senior at Franklin Towne Charter School**. “I’m also proud to say that, for the first time in Franklin Towne history, our school earned Gold recognition through the Governor’s Civic Engagement Award. On top of that, Franklin Towne is becoming one of Philadelphia’s leading schools for student poll worker participation, helping fill a major need in the Lower Northeast.”

The full list of today’s winners can be found on the Department of State’s website at vote.pa.gov/gcea.

About GCEA

The Governor’s Civic Engagement Award program celebrates the efforts of Pennsylvania high school students to educate, engage, and inform their fellow students about how to get involved in the voting process. The departments of State and Education began the program in the 2017-18 school year.

Since the program’s inception, high school students have helped about 33,000 of their eligible classmates register to vote.

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