

**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF EDUCATION  
FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET TESTIMONY  
APRIL 1, 2026**

**INTRODUCTION**

Good morning, Council President Johnson and Members of City Council. I am Dr. Debora Carrera, Chief Education Officer for the City of Philadelphia. Joining me today are Sharon Ward, Deputy Chief Education Officer, Sarah Hollister, Senior Director for College and Career Readiness, and Dr. Eshe Price, Director of Operations for Extended Day/Extended Year (EDEY). I am pleased to provide testimony on the Mayor's Office of Education's Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget.

**DEPARTMENT MISSION & PLANS**

**Mission:** The Mayor's Office of Education (MOE) is dedicated to transforming Philadelphia's education system by fostering innovation and ensuring world-class learning opportunities for all residents, regardless of age or socioeconomic background. By facilitating collaboration among City departments and educational institutions, MOE creates a unified, effective strategy for educational advancement and supports the Mayor's vision of a safer, cleaner, and greener Philadelphia with access to economic opportunity for all.

MOE actively engages educational stakeholders citywide, ensuring efforts align with the Mayor's goals and contribute to a world-class education for Philadelphia's learners. MOE identifies gaps in existing services, scales successful programs, and launches new initiatives to meet evolving needs, expanding access and opportunity across all communities.

**Plans for Fiscal Year 2027:** The Mayor's Office of Education's priority programs advance the Mayor's goal of a government that residents can see, touch, and feel, and provide access to economic mobility for young people and adults. Education is the foundation of economic opportunity, and our approach is to align education programs with workforce goals and create transparent pipelines from educational institutions to City, School District, and private-sector employment. We work for adequate and equitable state funding for all Philadelphia public schools and develop programs that serve Philadelphians who face the greatest barriers. Our FY27 priorities include further expansion of the Extended Day/Extended Year Program to new District- and charter-operated schools, as well as a new initiative that will help Philadelphians burdened by student loan debt navigate federal loan program changes and support eligible individuals in securing Public Service Loan Forgiveness. We will begin planning for One Philadelphia Community Schools, which will double the number of high school community schools, bring a new focus on career exploration and preparation, and identify new partnerships to expand adult education programs for adults seeking workforce training or employment. We will also continue our work to attract and retain teachers in our District- and charter-operated schools.

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Extended Day/Extended Year. The EDEY program has grown to 40 schools in just two years, 30 District-operated and 10 charter-operated. EDEY provides before- and after-school programming, specialized enrichment and clubs, academic programs, and winter, spring, and summer break programming at no cost to families.

In FY27, we will expand further from 40 to 47 schools by adding two additional charter schools and adding EDEY programming to five Community Schools. The EDEY Community schools will continue to focus on reducing barriers to student success and on community partnerships, and students will benefit from before-school programming five days per week, winter and spring break programs, new clubs, and specialized enrichment and academic programs. The Proposed FY27 Budget includes an additional \$289,340 to support programming at the two additional charter schools.

It is our intent this year to build and strengthen our programs. Each of the EDEY District schools includes at least one school-based academic program, plus pilot tutoring programs in six schools. We plan to expand the academic programs to additional District-operated schools and add academic and tutoring programs to the 10 current charter-operated schools.

EDEY is designed to close enrichment gaps and, by exposing students to new programs, clubs, skills, and interests, help each participant find something they love to do, increasing their attachment to school and ultimately improving attendance. The results are promising; for the first half of this year, 78% of EDEY students in District-operated EDEY schools attended school 90% of the time, compared to 70% of all K-8 students in District-operated schools.

### Student Loan Borrower Support Program

More than 230,000 Philadelphians hold a combined more than \$9 billion in student loan debt. The high cost of student loans threatens economic gains already made by Philadelphians with college degrees and creates an obstacle to economic mobility. People of color in Philadelphia have the highest loan debt and continue to have high loan balances even after 20 years of payments. Some of the Philadelphians who are most affected have loan debt but have not completed a degree. The Mayor's Office of Education has partnered with the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity (CEO) to develop a Student Borrower Help Center to help borrowers navigate what is a very complex and changing program. Services will include information to help borrowers manage their loans, find affordable options, and avoid default and delinquency, and will partner with nonprofits to provide individual counseling for the most urgent and complex cases. We will also work with City employees to help eligible employees secure Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) and develop a new program for educators and nonprofit employees who may also be eligible for PSLF. The demand for information on this topic is high; 850 individuals signed up for and 500 individuals joined MOE's first webinar.

### One Philly Community Schools.

Philadelphia has 20 Community Schools, funded through the Philadelphia Beverage Tax, that work to remove barriers to student learning through program development and partnerships, with the goal of improving attendance and academic achievement. Coordinators support volunteer recruitment, coordination of school events, and regular partner meetings. Community Schools focus on monitoring and implementing quality core

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partner services to support implementation of barrier-reducing services, such as school attendance supports, case management activities, food distribution, and Out-of-School Time.

MOE is working to build on the Community model and align its work to support economic mobility for high school students. In FY27, we will begin a year-long planning process to expand the number of Community Schools high schools from five to 10. The expansion will bring new career-focused programming to five new comprehensive high schools.

The goal is to ensure that all students have a post-graduation plan, and those students who do not plan to attend college have clear pathways to job training and, ultimately, to jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and provide opportunity for advancement.

### Supporting the Teacher Pipeline

Every year, Philadelphia District-operated and charter-operated schools must fill 2,000 teaching positions, and for the 2024-25 school year, more than 400 positions remained vacant on October 1. The Mayor's Office of Education is a partner in the Citywide Talent Coalition and advances strategies to recruit and retain new teachers and increase certification rates.

We partner with Philadelphia Works, which established a landmark program to provide funds for incumbent worker training to help teachers become certified. We work with the Center for Black Educator Development to expand the Freedom School and Teaching Academy programs. This year, with a grant from the William Penn Foundation, we launched the Philly Catto Teacher Scholar program, a partnership with four-year teacher preparation programs to provide free tuition and books, a monthly stipend, coaching, and tutoring for students to pass the required teacher qualifying exam (Praxis exam) for interested Catto scholars from the Community College of Philadelphia. In the first year, we supported six Catto Teacher Scholars and expect at least 20 more for the second cohort. Teachers will graduate the program almost debt free and are required to work in Philadelphia District- or charter-operated schools for two years upon program completion.

### Assisting Adult Learners

Adult Education Philadelphia (AEPHL) supports adult learners of Adult Basic Education and GED programs, Digital Literacy, and English language learners through programs located in many of the city's most vulnerable neighborhoods. In FY25, AEPHL served more than 6,600 Philadelphians and conducted more than 15,000 digital literacy assessments through a network of providers. We work with learners who are eager to improve their skills to enter job training programs or employment. This year, we plan to reprise the [2021 Adult Education Landscape Report](#) to assess Philadelphians' progress and inform our next round of investments. We are partnering with the City College for Municipal Employment (CCME) to develop programs to help Philadelphia employees with the greatest barriers to advancement develop skills necessary to move upward in their careers.

**PROPOSED BUDGET OVERVIEW & OTHER BUDGET DRIVERS**

<b>General Fund Financial Summary by Class</b>						
	FY25 Original Appropriations	FY25 Actual Obligations	FY26 Original Appropriations	FY26 Estimated Obligations	FY27 Proposed Appropriations	Difference: FY27 Proposed-FY26 Estimated
Class 100 - Employee Compensation	\$949,098	\$670,141	\$4,402,104	\$4,412,795	\$4,627,859	\$215,064
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$0	\$0	\$4,673,399	\$4,673,399	\$5,112,739	\$439,340
Class 300/400 - Materials, Supplies & Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$134,937	\$134,937	\$153,787	\$18,850
	<b>\$949,098</b>	<b>\$670,141</b>	<b>\$9,210,440</b>	<b>\$9,221,131</b>	<b>\$9,894,385</b>	<b>\$673,254</b>

<b>Contracts Summary (Professional Services only)</b>			
	FY26	FY26 YTD (Q1 & Q2)	FY27 Projected
Total amount of contracts	\$2,399,349	\$1,340,461	\$2,453,349
Total amount to S/LBE	\$0	N/A	N/A
Total amount to M/W/DSBE	\$0	\$48,000	
S/LBE Participation Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A
M/W/DSBE Participation Rate	0%	4%	

*\*Note that MOE had no contracts in FY23-25 as it was a newly established department. S/LBE not yet available as the City works to build the S/LBE registry and begin setting small and local business participation goals.*

<b>Total S/LBE Contract Participation Goal (Public Works; Services, Supplies &amp; Equipment; and Professional Services combined)</b>			
	FY25	FY26	FY27 Projected
S/LBE Contract Participation Goal	N/A	N/A	N/A

*\*S/LBE not yet available as the City works to build the S/LBE registry and begin setting small and local business participation goals.*

**Proposed Funding Request:**

The proposed Fiscal Year 2027 General Fund budget totals \$9,894,385, an increase of \$673,254 over Fiscal Year 2026 estimated obligation levels. This increase is due to support the expansion of EDEY to two additional charter schools, the establishment of a Student Loan Borrower support pilot program, and exempt wage increases.

The proposed budget includes:

- \$4,627,859 in Class 100, \$215,064 increase over FY26 estimated obligations due to the addition of seven new positions and exempt employee wage increases. This funding will support payroll costs for MOE's staff.
- \$5,112,739 in Class 200, an increase of \$439,340 over FY26 estimated obligations. This increase in funding will support EDEY programming at charter schools and counseling services to student loan debt holders.
- \$153,787 in Class 300/400, an increase of \$18,850 over FY26 estimated obligations, attributable to the EDEY expansion. This funding will support programming at EDEY and Community Schools for food distribution, school-based events, and supplies.

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**STAFFING LEVELS**

The department is requesting 85 budgeted positions for FY27, an increase of seven positions over FY26.

The increase is attributable to new positions in the education program two new administrative positions, three new staff positions to support EDEY expansion, and two new positions to support the Student Loan Borrower program.

<b>Employment Levels (as of November 2025)</b>			
	FY26 Budgeted	Filled as of November 2025	FY27 Proposed
Number of Full-Time Positions	78	54	85
Number of Exempt Positions	78	54	85
Number of Executive Positions (deputy level and above)		10	
Average Salary of All Full-Time Positions		\$81,159	
Median Salary of All Full-Time Positions		\$71,817	

**NEW HIRES**

<b>New Hires (from 7/1/2025 to November 2025)</b>	
	Total Number of New Hires
Black or African American	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>

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New Hires (from November 2025 to March 2026)	
	Total Number of New Hires
Black or African American	3
White	3
Total	6

VACANCY RATE AND ALLOWANCE

Vacancy Rate Summary (General Fund)						
	FY25 Actual Vacancy Rate	FY26 Budgeted Vacancy Allowance	FY26 Vacancy Rate	FY26 Budgeted Vacancy Allowance Rate	FY27 Budgeted Vacancy Allowance	FY27 Budgeted Vacancy Allowance Rate
Departmental Total	44.4%	N/A	26.4%	N/A	(\$150,931)	3.2%

*\*The Department had no budgeted vacancy allowance in FY26.*

**OTHER BUDGETARY IMPACTS**

**Federal and State (Where Applicable)**

MOE receives a federal Americorp grant of \$532,688 for the Foster Grandparent Program, which mobilizes older adults—many of whom are long-time Philadelphians—to serve in classrooms and childcare centers across the city. Their service supports student achievement while also reducing social isolation among older adults and creating meaningful connections across generations.

**CONTRACTING EXPERIENCE**

*The department has no large professional services contracts to report.*

<b>Non-Profit Vendor Demographics</b>		
Beyond Literacy	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	62.22%	68.88%
Executive	66.67%	100.00%
Board	61.90%	52.38%
Congreso de Latino Unidos, Inc	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	90.79%	83.26%
Executive	61.53%	77.00%
Board	83.33%	33.33%
Goodwill of Southern NJ & Phila	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	55.74%	50.43%
Executive	30.00%	40.00%
Board	7.14%	14.29%
New World Association of Emigrants from Eastern Europe	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	21.05%	68.00%
Executive	0.00%	100.00%
Board	0.00%	25.00%
Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	67.57%	75.68%
Executive	75.00%	75.00%
Board	62.50%	62.50%

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### **PROGRAM BASED BUDGETING:**

**Program Name:** Mayor's Office of Education

**Program Number:** 04

**FY27 Proposed General Fund:** \$9,894,385

**Program Description:** MOE unifies efforts to support Philadelphia students from kindergarten through college and career readiness by developing policies, fostering collaboration, and advancing strategic education initiatives. Key programs include Extended Day, Extended Year (EDEY) initiatives, recruiting and retaining quality educators, and increasing access to affordable postsecondary training and education opportunities.

MOE programming reaches across the education system continuum. K-12 programming includes Extended Day, Extended Year; the Community Schools initiative, which partners with City departments and external organizations to reduce barriers to education and enhance student and family well-being; and the Foster Grandparents Program, which places low-income seniors in PreK and elementary classrooms to support learning, bridging generational gaps while supporting academic and emotional development. Postsecondary and adult education programs include the Catto Scholarship – a free college initiative in collaboration with the Community College of Philadelphia, and Adult Education, which supports adult basic education and digital literacy programming for over 6,500 adult learners annually. Finally, MOE works closely with the City College for Municipal (CCME) Employment to bring CCME programming into public high schools and increase the number of youth accessing living-wage jobs after high school.

### **FY27 Strategic Goals:**

- MOE will continue food distributions to all EDEY school sites, including charter schools, and seek additional external funding to expand and increase the frequency of distributions where appropriate.
- MOE will deepen the enrichment opportunities available to EDEY schools.
- MOE will increase the Philly Catto Teachers Scholars cohort from six future educators to 26.
- MOE will leverage existing resources and explore external funding to develop a high-impact program that will increase and enhance age-appropriate student exposure to career awareness, vocational discovery, and engagement in Philadelphia schools.
- MOE will work with the Citywide Talent Coalition to secure external funding to increase the percentage of new teachers being retained in Philadelphia public schools.
- In partnership with the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer and the Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity, MOE will launch the One Philly Student Loan Debt program to connect student loan borrowers with information, counseling, and resource referrals as part of the City's economic mobility strategy.

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- Currently, there are 10 Community Schools that are also EDEY schools. In FY27, the five remaining elementary Community Schools will be brought into the EDEY program to make them “EDEY Community Schools.”

**FY27 Performance Measures:**

Measure	FY25 Actual	FY26 Target	FY27 Target
Foster Grandparents: Percentage of students participating in the program who demonstrate improved academic engagement	92%	≥ 90%	≥ 90%
Number of participants in Extended Day/Extended Year programs	5,945	8,750	12,515
Adult Education: Number of learners who accessed adult education services <sup>1</sup>	6,657	5,500	6,500
Adult Education: Number of digital literacy assessments completed	15,781	≥ 10,000	≥ 15,000
Catto Scholarship: Number of new enrolled Catto students	973	950	950
Catto student retention rate (Fall to Fall) <sup>2</sup>	68%	≥ 65%	≥ 65%
Community Schools: The percent of students in Community Schools who attended at least 90% of school days	54%	≥ 60%	≥ 60%

<sup>1</sup> A conservative target was set for FY26 due to turnover in staff.

<sup>2</sup> A retention rate of at least 65% represents a higher retention rate than the general Community College of Philadelphia student population.