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Gov. Shapiro's 2026-27 budget address to a joint session of the General Assembly in the House Chamber at the State Capitol took place today in Harrisburg.

The proposed General Fund expenditure for this budget is \$53.3B, marking a \$2.7B increase, or 5.4% over the fiscal year 2025-26 spend number. The proposed budget does not include a broad-based tax increase and is projected to maintain a \$3.3B surplus.

The budget address calls for continued flat funding in operating (\$277.338M) and capital (\$54.611M) for Pennsylvania's 15 community colleges. The Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges (PACCC), which represents the Commonwealth's community college sector, requested a 6% increase in operating funds for this budget.

From Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges President Dr. Tuesday Stanley:

"The Pennsylvania community college sector acknowledges this is a difficult budget year for the Commonwealth. Flat funding will further pressure our 15 institutions, who take great pride in providing affordable, accessible and high-quality education to the citizens of Pennsylvania.

"An increased allocation in operating funding for our sector will provide a significant return on investment. Our community colleges contribute over \$13.6 billion annually to the state's economy. The majority of our graduates stay in the Commonwealth, while over 90% of our transfer students move on to a Pennsylvania college or university to pursue a bachelor's degree.

"With additional investment, Pennsylvania's community colleges could further expand our impact across the Commonwealth through enhanced workforce development programs, public safety/first responder training, and dual enrollment initiatives. Our sector looks forward to continuing productive dialogue with key stakeholders in these areas and by working together to increase funding to further allow us to fulfill our mission across Pennsylvania."

A summary of the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges operating budget:

Community colleges represent the very best of higher education opportunities for many Pennsylvanians. We offer affordable, accessible education to students from diverse backgrounds, equipping them with the skills necessary to succeed in the workforce. Last year, we collectively educated over 264,000 students, many of whom are the first from their families to attend an institution of higher learning. However, funding for operating costs has not kept pace with inflation, recent increases in student enrollment, and the growing cost of maintaining high-quality programs.

As the demand for education and training continues to grow, it is essential our institutions receive a 6% increase in the operating funds for community colleges. This increase in operating funds will allow institutions to continue offering high-

quality programs such as registered nursing. Seventy-five percent of the Commonwealth's RNs are trained by one of our state's community colleges.

Further funding will help us to retain qualified faculty and staff and ensure that students have access to the resources and services they need to succeed. Such an investment will continue to pay dividends for Pennsylvania. Our community colleges contribute \$13.6 billion annually to the state's economy.



6% Increase to the Operating Line Item

- Supports the rising costs of delivering affordable, high-quality education and workforce training programs.
- Expands access to cutting-edge technology and programs that align with Pennsylvania's workforce needs, such as renewable energy, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing.
- Invests in targeted initiatives to reduce barriers for rural, urban, and first-generation students, ensuring equitable opportunities for success.



Why An Increase in Operating Funding Matters

Fueling Pennsylvania's Economy

- Community colleges contribute over \$13.6 billion annually to the state's economy.
- Over 90% of students transfer to a Pennsylvania institution.

Expanding Educational Access

- Community colleges serve over 264,000 students annually including a significant percentage of underserved and first-generation college students.
- Increased funding keeps tuition affordable, reducing the financial burden on Pennsylvania families.

Meeting Workforce Needs

- Community colleges partner with over 1800 employers statewide to align training programs with workforce demands.
- Funding supports programs addressing shortages in high-demand fields such as nursing, skilled trades, and STEM.
- First responders are the frontline heroes who keep our communities safe. Community colleges are integral to providing high-quality training to police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and other first responders across the state.