

# Act 91 of 2021 Report on Classroom Monitor Permits

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*April 2023*



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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## Introduction

Act 91 of 2021 (Act 91) amended the School Code to address the substitute teacher shortage in commonwealth schools. Act 91 gave schools more flexibility when employing 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. The law also temporarily established a new permit for schools to hire classroom monitors and directed the Pennsylvania Department of Education to issue a report on the effectiveness of the Classroom Monitor Permit and recommendations for improvement or continuation of the permit after June 30, 2023.

In accordance with Act 91, this report explains how the Department implemented the Classroom Monitor Permit, provides data reported by school entities to the Department regarding the use and utility of the Permits, and includes the evaluation conducted by third-party evaluators from Grove City College and Cabrini University.

## Background

The Classroom Monitor Permit is established in section 1218 of the School Code (24 P.S. §12-1218). The Classroom Monitor Permit (Type 9 Emergency Permit) allows individuals to deliver assignments preplanned by certified educators in schools; it does not allow those individuals to plan or create lessons or grade work or serve as substitute teachers.<sup>1</sup> Rather, classroom monitors offer another way for schools to staff classrooms and provide future educators the field experience they need to be successful.

To qualify for a Classroom Monitor Permit, an individual must meet the following criteria:

- Be at least 25 years old;
- Have completed at least 60 semester hours or equivalent courses at an accredited college or university in this commonwealth, or have at least three years of school entity experience as a paraprofessional and be currently employed in a school;
- Meet background check and clearance requirements under the School Code and Child Protection Service Law; and
- Complete classroom management training developed by an intermediate unit and approved by the Department in accordance with 24 P.S. § 12-1218.

Intermediate units statewide developed and offered classroom management training for classroom monitors. The training included topics to prepare classroom monitors with basic classroom management skills along with other requirements, such as the need for some form of participant reflection ensuring the participants fulfilled the learning objectives and successfully completed the course. All training was approved by the Department. Intermediate units with approved training issued a certificate of completion to participants, as evidence of meeting the training requirement. Training and certificates are valid through June 30, 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> [Act 91 of 2021 Guidance \(pa.gov\)](https://www.pa.gov/act/91)

## Issuance of Classroom Monitor Permits

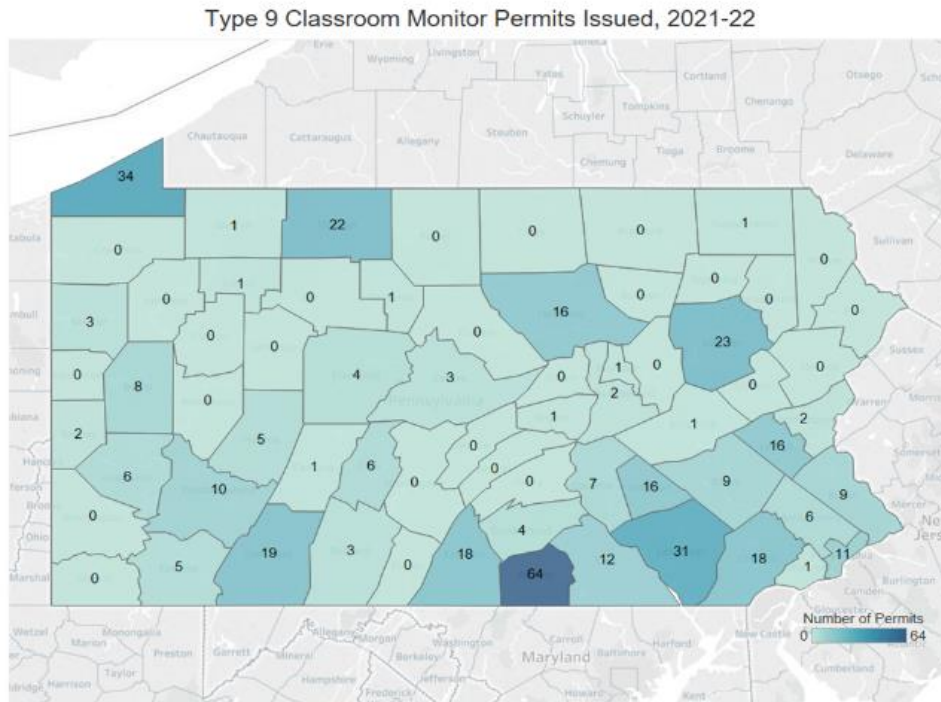
Since the enactment of Act 91 in December 2021, the Department has issued a total of 884 Classroom Monitor Permits to 125 school entities. As seen in Table 1, there were 403 permits issued in 2021-2022 and an additional 481 permits issued in 2022-2023 (as of March 31, 2023). See Appendix A for the full list of school entities.

**Table 1: Number of Classroom Monitor Permits Issued for School Years 2021-22 and 2022-23 (as of March 31, 2023)**

	2021-2022	2022-2023 (as of 3/31/23)	Total
<b>Number of Permits</b>	403	481	884

Permits were issued to school entities from 46 of 67 Pennsylvania counties. The figures below show the number of Classroom Monitor Permits issued in each county during school years (SY) 2021-22 and 2022-23.

**Figure 1. Classroom Monitor Permits Requested During SY2021-22**





Data collected from 629 questionnaire respondents showed that of the 86 school entities that requested and used Classroom Monitor Permits:

- 546 individuals served as classroom monitors during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years;<sup>2</sup>
- Collectively, school entities used the services of classroom monitors for a total of 5,690 days. More than 60 percent of monitors were used from one to 15 days; and
- The average number of school days per school year that school entities used classroom monitors was 49.6 days, ranging from less than one day to 143.5 days in a school year.

Based on the questionnaire responses, in the 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years, school entities that did not utilize the services of classroom monitors had a higher average day-to-day substitute pay rate than those who did utilize classroom monitors. The amount being paid for day-to-day substitutes rose each year from 2020-2021 to 2022-2023.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 2. Day-to-Day Substitute Teacher Compensation Rates**

School Year	School Entities That Did Not Use Classroom Monitor Permits			School Entities That Used Classroom Monitor Permits		
	Average	Low	High	Average	Low	High
<b>2020-2021</b>	\$110.79	\$30.00	\$250.00	\$107.53	\$80.00	\$150.00
<b>2021-2022</b>	\$119.54	\$40.00	\$250.00	\$116.76	\$44.00	\$200.00
<b>2022-2023</b>	\$127.67	\$40.00	\$262.50	\$127.07	\$44.00	\$200.00

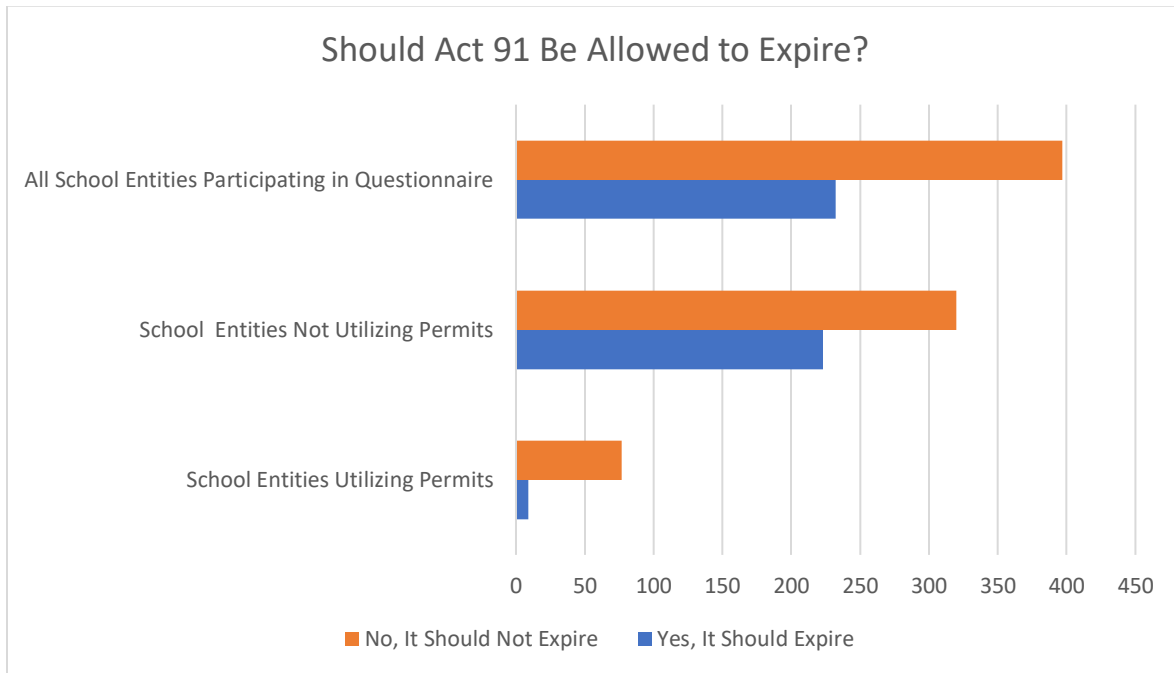
**Overall, the majority of school entities recommended that Classroom Monitor Permits be allowed to continue past June 30, 2023.**

Sixty-three percent of respondents (397) stated that the Classroom Monitor Permit should not be allowed to expire, while 37 percent (232) stated that it should be allowed to expire. Figure 3 shows responses overall and by whether the school entity issued Classroom Monitor Permits.

<sup>2</sup> Sixteen school entities that issued permits did not respond to the Act 91 questionnaire and are not included in this number.

<sup>3</sup> The average represents the pay for beginner substitutes (many school entities base pay on day ranges that vary).

**Figure 3: Responses Regarding Whether Classroom Monitor Permits Should Expire**



## Independent Evaluation

Act 91 required an evaluation of the permit and its effectiveness by an independent research organization which may include a college or university accredited by a regional accrediting agency. Accordingly, the Department partnered with evaluators from Grove City College and Cabrini University, both accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, to review the questionnaire data and provide recommendations for continuation of the Classroom Monitor Permit.

The evaluators' findings are as follows:

- Classroom Monitor Permits provide an effective way to staff classrooms when certified substitutes are not available.
- The classroom monitor provision has existed for only a short time. However, given the number of permits issued rose 20 percent from SY2021-22 to SY2022-23 and the department received more than 375 responses in support of its continuance, the evidence strongly suggests that school entities would benefit from continuing to have the Classroom Monitor Permit as an option.
- The Department can improve use of the permits by providing stronger direction and oversight regarding how school entities obtain the Classroom Monitor Permit. This recommendation is based on the fact that 28 school entities replying to the questionnaire indicated that they are using classroom monitors, but the Department does not have a record of their permit applications.



- Data further indicates that most school entities that used the Classroom Monitor Permits did so for less than 15 days, with the majority using the permits for one to five days. One reviewer suggested the Department consider reducing the number of days that an individual can serve under a Classroom Monitor Permit to 20 days or less per school year.
- Finally, reviewers suggested that if the Classroom Monitor Permit is continued, the Department should collect more data to examine the permit's effectiveness, as well as collect additional information to determine why school entities in certain counties are using Classroom Monitor Permits more than others.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, analysis of the use of the Classroom Monitor Permit, as well as feedback from the field, strongly suggests that those holding Classroom Monitor Permits filled critical personnel gaps in school districts across the Commonwealth over the last two school years. While the permits are not designed to be a permanent solution to shortages in classroom personnel, evidence suggests the permits should continue while the Department works on longer-term solutions to the teacher shortage.

**Appendix A: School Entities that Requested Classroom Monitor Permits During SY2021-22 and SY2022-23 (as of March 31, 2023)**

1. Antietam SD	64. Mariana Bracetti Academy CS
2. Appalachia IU 8	65. Marion Center Area SD
3. Arts Academy CS	66. Memphis Street Academy CS @ JP Jones
4. Armstrong SD	67. Midd-West SD
5. Bangor Area SD	68. Millersburg Area SD
6. Beaver Valley IU 27	69. Millcreek Township SD
7. Berks County IU 14	70. Montessori Regional CS
8. Bellwood-Antis SD	71. Northeast Bradford SD
9. Berlin Brothersvalley SD	72. North Hills SD
10. BLaST IU 17	73. North Penn SD
11. Blue Ridge SD	74. Northern Bedford County SD
12. Bristol Township SD	75. Northern Lebanon SD
13. Boyertown Area SD	76. Northern York County SD
14. Bradford Area SD	77. Norwin SD
15. Bucks County Technical High School	78. Old Forge SD
16. Cameron County SD	79. Oswayo Valley SD
17. Capital Area IU 15	80. Otto-Eldred SD
18. Carlisle Area SD	81. Pace School
19. Central Dauphin SD	82. Palisades SD
20. Central Fulton SD	83. Palmyra Area SD
21. Central Susquehanna IU 16	84. Philadelphia City SD
22. Chester County IU 24	85. Philadelphia Hebrew Public CS
23. Children of Joy Christian Academy	86. Port Allegany SD
24. Clairton City SD	87. Portage Area SD
25. Colonial IU 20	88. Premier Arts and Science CS
26. Conewago Valley SD	89. Propel CS-Braddock Hills
27. Council Rock SD	90. Propel CS-Homestead
28. Cumberland Perry Area Career & Technical Center	91. Propel CS-Northside
29. Cumberland Valley SD	92. Quakertown Community SD
30. Dallas SD	93. Rockwood Area SD
31. Danville Area SD	94. Salisbury Township SD
32. Derry Area SD	95. Salisbury-Elk Lick SD
33. Donegal SD	96. Seneca Highlands IU 9
34. Dr Gertrude A Barber Center	97. Seneca Valley SD
35. DuBois Area SD	98. Seven Generations CS
36. Duquesne City SD	99. Shade-Central City SD
37. East Lycoming SD	100. Shanksville-Stonycreek SD
38. Eastern York SD	101. Shamokin Area SD
39. Executive Education Academy CS	102. South Eastern SD
40. Fairfield Area SD	103. South Middleton SD
41. Ferndale Area SD	104. South Western SD
42. Forbes Road SD	105. South Williamsport Area SD
43. Forest Area SD	106. Southern York County SD
44. Galeton Area SD	107. Tidioute Community CS
45. George Crothers Memorial School	108. Tri-Valley SD

46. Gettysburg Area SD	109. Tuscarora SD
47. Greater Nanticoke Area SD	110. Uniontown Area SD
48. Greenwood SD	111. United SD
49. Hanover Public SD	112. Warrior Run SD
50. Harmony Area SD	113. Warwick SD
51. Hatboro-Horsham SD	114. Wattsburg Area SD
52. Hazleton Area SD	115. Waynesboro Area SD
53. Kane Area SD	116. West Branch Area SD
54. Karns City Area SD	117. West Phila. Achievement CES
55. Kutztown Area SD	118. Westmoreland IU 7
56. Lakeview SD	119. Wilkes-Barre Area SD
57. Lancaster-Lebanon IU 13	120. Williamsburg Community SD
58. Laurel Highlands SD	121. Wilson Area SD
59. Ligonier Valley SD	122. Wissahickon CS
60. Lincoln IU 12	123. Wyoming Area SD
61. Lincoln Leadership Academy CS	124. Young Scholars CS
62. Luzerne IU 18	125. Young Scholars of Central PA CS
63. Manheim Central SD	