



ALLEGHENY INSTITUTE
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

*Local Government Employment
in Pennsylvania,
2001-2009*

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Key Findings

- According to the U.S. Census, as of January 2009 Pennsylvania had 442,000 employees (full time equivalents) employed in local government.
- Headcount in all areas of local government increased 14 percent from 2001 through 2009. Over the same time period the state's population increased 3 percent.
- No area of local government employment grew as significantly as elementary/secondary education, which increased 24 percent, or eight times as fast as the state's population. This came during a decade where public school enrollment fell.
- All other areas of local government employment grew 3 percent in total, identical to the state's population increase.
- Only one area—health and welfare—declined in headcount over the decade.

Introduction

Pennsylvania's system of local government consists of 67 counties, 2,562 municipalities, 500 school districts, and over 2,000 authorities. The first three categories are separated into either classes (based on population) or types (cities, boroughs, townships, home rule) or both (classes that exist within types of cities and townships). General purpose governments, which counties and municipalities are, carry out a variety of functions related to public safety, public works, health, courts, etc. Special purpose governments like school districts and authorities are charged with providing a specific service outside the scope of the functions provided by general purpose governments.¹

Of course, in order to provide the menu of local services local governments must employ workers. According to the most recent Census data there were over 442,000 full time equivalent (FTE) local government employees in the Commonwealth. The types of employees within this total are as diverse as the services provided: managers, analysts, firefighters, sanitation workers, teachers, bus drivers, etc.²

The purpose of this analysis is to examine the growth in local government employment in Pennsylvania through the last decade, focusing specifically on four main categories, and looking at those categories based on population and performance indicators related to their specific service.

Local Government Employment in Pennsylvania

The U.S. Census Annual Survey of Public Employment and Payroll shows that Pennsylvania had 442,024 local government employees in 2009, the most recent available year of data. This represents about 4 percent of all local government employees in the U.S. in 2009.³

The Census counts close to thirty separate categories of local government employees in the Survey. This report will group those categories into six general areas:

- Elementary and Secondary Education
- Local Administration
- Law and Public Safety
- Public Works
- Other Education
- Health and Welfare

¹ Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development, Governor's Center for Local Government Services "Pennsylvania Local Government Fact Sheet"

² This report will use data on full time equivalents when references to employees or employment are made

³ U.S. Census Bureau, Government Employment and Payroll, 2009 Local Government
(<http://www.census.gov/govs/apes/>)

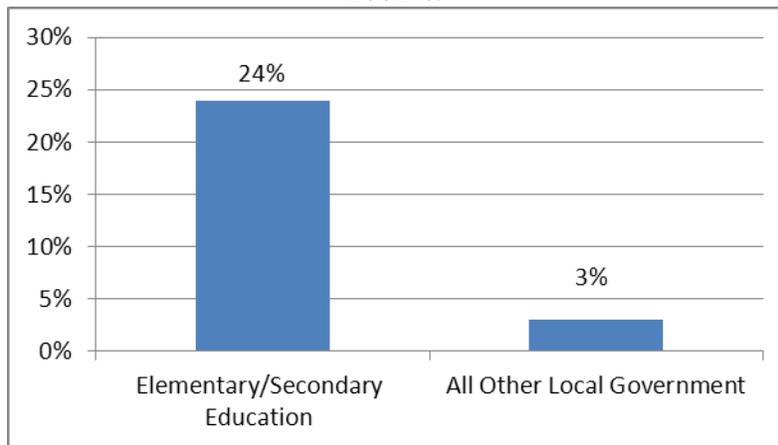
The table below shows the employment counts for 2009 and over the last decade, beginning in 2001. Compared to the change in population for the state (3%), total local government employment grew 14 percent, or four times faster than population.

Local Government Employment in Pennsylvania, 2001-09⁴

Employee Class	2001	2009	% Change, 01 to 09
Total Local Govt	386,907	442,024	14
Elementary/Secondary Education	214,968	265,620	24
Local Administration	17,866	19,537	9
Law and Public Safety	59,748	61,895	4
Public Works	44,859	47,862	7
Other Education	8,498	8,610	1
Health and Welfare	34,069	32,366	-5
Other and Unallocable	6,899	6,134	-11
PA Population	12,281,054	12,604,767	3

As can be seen the area that stands far and above as experiencing rapid growth is that of elementary/secondary education. All other local government employment—not counting that area—grew 3 percent, or at the rate of population growth.

Elementary/Secondary Education Employment Growth and All Other Local Government Employment Growth, 2001-09



⁴ Ibid, population from annual estimates from Census

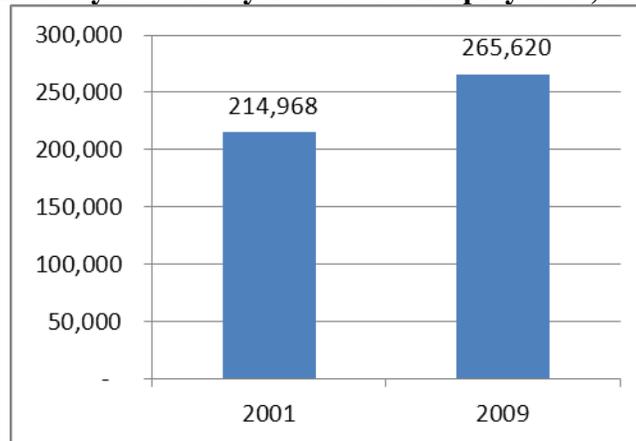
Elementary/Secondary Education

This area includes the categories of “elementary and secondary instruction” and “elementary and secondary other”. The former includes teachers and the latter includes administration and staff related to educational administration in public schools, also known as non-teachers.

This was the largest area of local government employment in the state representing 60 percent of total employment in 2009. This was an increase over 2001, when the share was 56 percent. It also had far and away the most rapid rate of growth over the last decade at 24 percent. This was eight times faster than population in the state and came at a time when public school enrollment actually fell 2 percent.⁵

It also happened during a decade when SAT performance in Pennsylvania was not stellar. Reading suffered a slight decline while math remained unchanged.⁶

Elementary/Secondary Education Employment, 2001-09



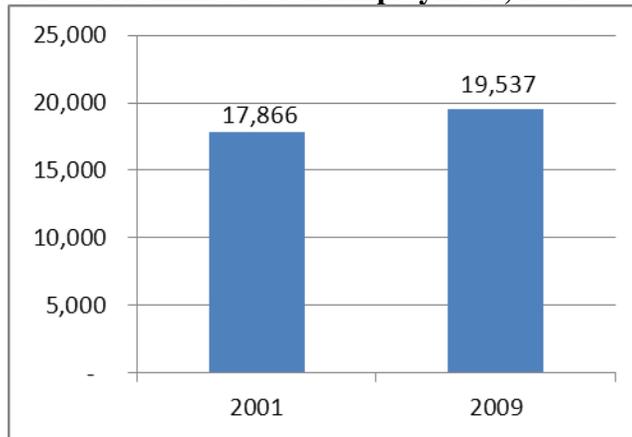
⁵ Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Education, Public School Enrollment Reports (http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/enrollment/7407/public_school_enrollment_reports/620541)

⁶ College Board “State Profile Report: Pennsylvania” (http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/PA_09_03_03_01.pdf)

Local Administration

This area includes the categories of “financial administration” and “central administration”. A relatively small share of total local government employment (4.4% in 2009) these administrative categories grew a combined 9 percent over the past decade. Local administration is likely involved in managing a piece of the more than 3,000 local pension plans which have a combined asset portfolio of \$17 billion and promised liabilities of \$25 billion. They are also responsible for collecting and allocating some \$33 billion in local government revenues, nearly half of which is raised through local taxes.⁷

Local Administration Employment, 2001-09



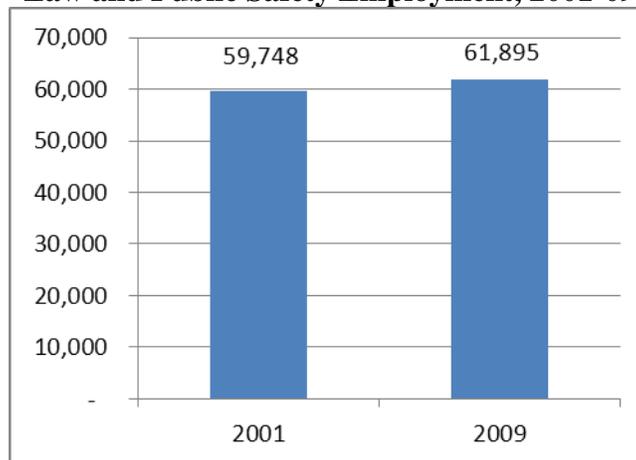
⁷ Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Public Employee Retirement Commission 2011 Status Report on Local Government Pensions (http://www.perc.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/perc_home/2513/recently_published_reports/491325) Department of Community and Economic Development, Governor’s Center for Local Government Services Taxation Manual (http://www.newpa.com/webfm_send/1520)

Law and Public Safety

This area contains the categories of “judicial-legal”, “police officers”, “police-other”, “firefighters”, “fire-other” and “corrections”. It is second to elementary/secondary education employment in terms of share of total employment, albeit a distant 14 percent. This area grew 4 percent over the decade.

Obviously these are critical services provided at the municipal and county level in Pennsylvania: the state’s Uniform Crime Report shows that close to 1 million crimes were reported statewide in 2009, up from the beginning of the decade. In addition, there are close to 40,000 calls related to building, vehicle, and other fires. And in 2009 the average in house daily population at the 63 county prisons in Pennsylvania averaged 34,387 inmates.⁸

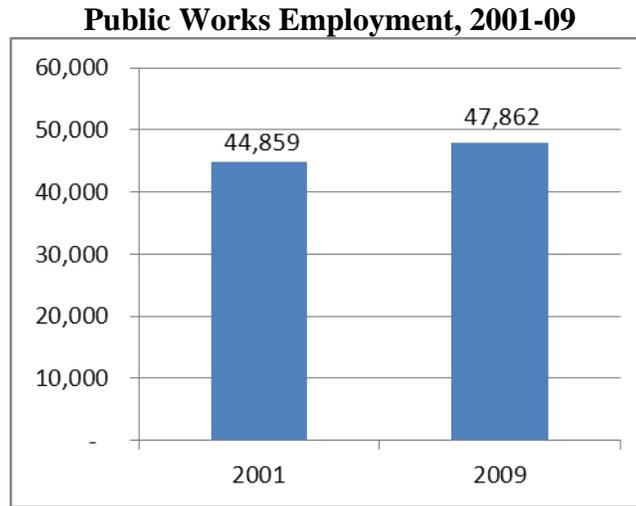
Law and Public Safety Employment, 2001-09



⁸ Pennsylvania State Police Uniform Crime Report (<http://ucr.psp.state.pa.us/UCR/Reporting/Annual/AnnualSumArrestUI.asp>), Pennsylvania Office of the State Fire Commissioner “Fire Information Reporting System” (<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pennfirs/9935>) Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, Statistics and General Information (http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/hidden_county_jails/11433/statistics_and_general_info_/771425)

Public Works

This area contains the most categories: “streets and highways”, “airports”, “water transport”, “solid waste management”, “sewerage”, “parks”, “natural resources”, “water supply”, “electric”, and “transit”. The past decade saw this employment area grow 7 percent. It comprises almost 11 percent of the 2009 total.



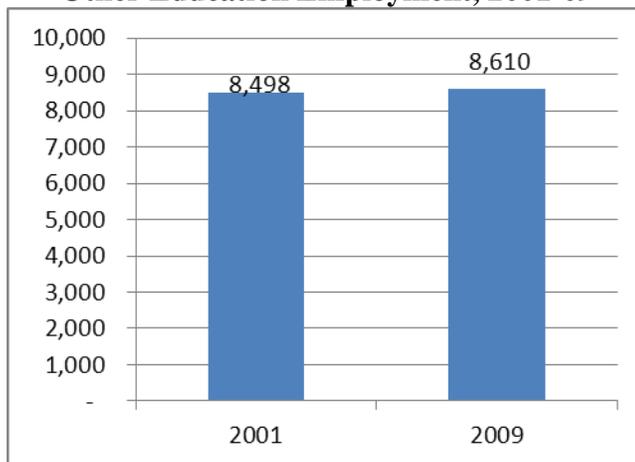
There are plenty of places where this employment area has impact. For instance, there are more than 121,000 urbanized and rural miles of roadway; the state’s directly operated mass transit systems conducted over 447 million unlinked passenger trips; and there are over 100 public airports.⁹

⁹ Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, “Mileage: Small Urban, Rural, and Urbanized” (ftp://ftp.dot.state.pa.us/public/pdf/BPR_PDF_FILES/Documents/Traffic/Highway_Statistics/Annual_Report/2010/6%20-%20Mileage%20-%20Rural,%20Small%20Urban,%20Urbanized%20Areas.pdf); National Transit Database “Transit Operating Statistics: Service Supplied and Consumed” (www.ntdprogram.gov/ntd/program/data.htm); Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Public Airports (<http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Internet/Bureaus/pdBOA.nsf/AviationHomepage?openframeset>)

Other Education

This area contains the categories of “higher education instruction” and “higher education-other” along with “local libraries”. Employment in this area remained virtually unchanged over the decade, increasing 1 percent.

Other Education Employment, 2001-09



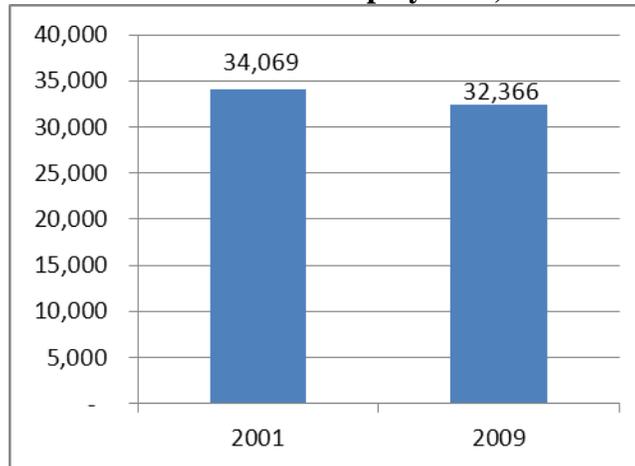
There are 20 community colleges in the state with a combined full- and part-time enrollment of more than 131,000. There were 637 state-aided library service outlets (consisting of library system members, independent libraries, branches and bookmobiles) and 61 non-state-aided library service outlets for a total 698 library service outlets¹⁰

¹⁰ Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Education Higher Education Statistics. (http://www.pde.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/higher_education/8684) Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Education, Bureau of Library Development (e-mail communication).

Health and Welfare

This area contains the categories of “public welfare”, “health”, “hospitals”, “social insurance administration”, and “housing and community development”. This was the only area of employment to see a downward trend over the decade, with employment falling 5 percent over the time frame.

Health and Welfare Employment, 2001-09



Far and away the majority of these employees are in the category of public welfare (20,819 FTE in 2009).

Conclusion

The budget proposed for fiscal year 2011-12 will represent a severe departure from the status quo in Pennsylvania, especially for the critical function of elementary and secondary education. With the budget axe prepared to fall, districts have openly discussed furloughs, tax increases, school closures, mergers, pay freezes, and other austerity measures. It is inevitable that after such a period of high employment growth in the face of minimal population growth and enrollment decline that the education industry is going to scale back.

Other areas of employment in local government will likewise have issues to face. This includes everything from prison population to public assistance rolls to funding for road repairs and mass transit to libraries and higher education.

Appendix: FTE Rates per 10,000 Pennsylvanians

Employee Class	2001	2009
Elementary/Secondary Education	175.0	210.7
Local Administration	14.5	15.5
Law and Public Safety	48.6	49.1
Public Works	36.5	37.9
Other Education	6.9	6.8
Health and Welfare	27.7	25.7