

**includes new  
requirements**

**CPA Exam in  
Pennsylvania**  
*Get the facts you need to pass*

**PICPA**  
*Experience the value!*<sup>®</sup>  
Pennsylvania Institute of  
Certified Public Accountants

**CPAzone.org**  
*Discover the Value!*<sup>™</sup>

## valuable links:

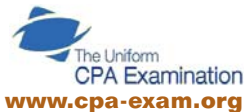


PICPA's student and educator Web site features CPA Exam resources.



PICPA's Web site includes information for PICPA members and employers who want to assist their employees taking the CPA Exam.

- Candidate tracking tool
- Featured articles



American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Web site explains the structure and format of the Uniform CPA Examination.



National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) Web site lists the requirements to become a certified public accountant in Pennsylvania.



Thomson Prometric Web site registers those taking the Uniform CPA Exam

# **CPA Exam in** **Pennsylvania** *Get the facts you need to pass*

Education, work experience, testing windows, simulations. These are covered by Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA) on its complete list of what CPA examinees can expect and need to know before taking the Uniform CPA Exam.



# **CPA Exam in** **Pennsylvania**

**Get the facts you need to pass**

<b>chapter 1</b>	<b>What's required? . . . . . 1</b>
<b>chapter 2</b>	<b>What's the cost? . . . . . 5</b>
<b>chapter 3</b>	<b>How do I take the exam? . . . . . 7</b>
<b>chapter 4</b>	<b>How do I prepare? . . . . . 11</b>
<b>chapter 5</b>	<b>CPA Exam fast facts . . . . . 15</b>



*chapter 1*  Requirements

## **chapter 1 :: requirements**

Gov. Edward Rendell signed Senate Bill 838 into law on July 10, 2008, amending the Pennsylvania CPA Law. The hallmark of this legislation, now Act 73 of 2008, is increased CPA mobility to practice across state lines. To achieve this, the law brings Pennsylvania up to a national standard of 150 credit hours and one year of public accounting experience – in addition to the successful completion of the CPA Exam – before the granting of a CPA license. The education and experience changes will go into effect Jan. 1, 2012.

**IMPORTANT:** If you graduate before 2012 – You must pass at least one part of the CPA Exam before Dec. 31, 2011 for the current requirements to apply.

### ***current education requirements - up to dec. 31, 2011***

---

Candidates must have graduated with a bachelor's or master's degree from an accredited college or university approved by the Pennsylvania State Board of Accountancy (SBOA), and completed at least 24 semester-credit hours in accounting subjects. These subjects include accounting and auditing, business law, finance, or tax subjects sanctioned by the SBOA.

Candidates who have completed an optional 150 semester-credits must have 24 semester-credits in the accounting subjects noted above, plus an additional 12 semester-credits in accounting, auditing, and tax subjects. Those who choose this option will have a shorter experience requirement to become certified (see below).

### ***current experience requirements - up to dec. 31, 2011***

---

In addition to passing the CPA Exam, CPA candidates need to satisfy work experience requirements before becoming licensed.

Work experience must be in the following areas:

- Public accounting
- As an internal auditor if the internal audit function reports to an independent board or similar body
- Or as an auditor with a unit of federal, state, or local government

All positions must be supervised by an individual who is currently licensed to practice public accounting as a CPA in Pennsylvania or another state.



Until Dec. 31, 2011, CPA candidates who passed the exam have two options to meet the experience requirement. An individual with a bachelor's degree must complete two years (3,200 hours) of experience, including 800 hours of attest activity. An individual with 150 hours of education needs one year (1,600 hours) of experience, including 400 hours of attest activity.

The amount of education completed at the time of application for the certificate is directly related to the amount of work experience necessary to obtain licensure. The number of credit hours must be submitted with your first examination application. Individuals taking the CPA Exam for the first time before Dec. 31, 2011, must complete their work experience within 10 years (120 months) of application for the CPA certificate.

### ***current requirements to sit for the CPA exam***

#### ***UP TO DEC. 31, 2011***

---

Before applying to sit for the CPA Exam, candidates must have graduated with a bachelor's or master's degree and completed at least 24 semester credits in accounting subjects. These subjects include accounting and auditing, business law, finance, or tax subjects acceptable to the SBOA. Candidates have 18 months to pass all four parts, beginning when the first section is passed. Individuals who pass one or more parts of the CPA Exam prior to Jan. 1, 2012, can be licensed under the 120-hour education requirement and two years of public accounting experience if they successfully pass all four parts of the exam within the 18-month eligibility window.

### **New Requirements – Effective Jan. 1, 2012**

#### ***new education requirements - effective Jan. 1, 2012***

---

On Jan. 1, 2012, candidates will need to have graduated with a bachelor's or master's degree and completed at least 150 credit hours, with 36 semester-credits in accounting subjects to become certified. These subjects include accounting and auditing, business law, finance, and tax subjects acceptable to the Pennsylvania State Board of Accountancy (SBOA). Accounting-related credits can be accomplished through undergraduate, graduate, or a combination of both levels of study.



## ***new experience requirements - effective Jan. 1, 2012***

---

On Jan. 1, 2012, in addition to passing the CPA Exam, CPA candidates need to satisfy work experience requirements to become licensed. Candidates will have to complete one year (1,600 hours) of experience, including 400 hours of attest activity, to qualify for the CPA certificate. CPA candidates must complete the experience requirement within five years (60 months) of the date of application.

Work experience must be in the following areas:

- Public accounting
- As an internal auditor if the internal audit function reports to an independent board or similar body
- Or as an auditor with a unit of federal, state, or local government.

All positions must be supervised by an individual who is currently licensed to practice public accounting as a CPA in Pennsylvania or another state.

## ***new requirements to sit for the exam effective Jan. 1, 2012***

---

Candidates may sit for the CPA Exam after they have graduated and completed 120 hours of education, including 24 semester-credit hours in accounting subjects approved by SBOA. Candidates, however, will be required to obtain 150 credit hours of education, including 36 semester-credit hours in accounting subjects before a license is granted.

## ***congratulations successful CPA candidates***

---

Once you pass the Uniform CPA Exam and meet the education and experience requirements, you may apply to the SBOA for a CPA certificate and license.

The new 150-hour requirement will not apply to any individual who has successfully completed one or more parts of the CPA Exam prior to Jan. 1, 2012. Successful candidates who received their license prior to Jan. 1, 2012, having completed 120 credit hours, will still be recognized as CPAs and will not need to acquire additional credit hours of education for certification.



## Chapter 2 :: Costs

Plan ahead and apply early to take the CPA Exam. Below is information on costs and the application process.

### Exam Costs and Fee Structure

---

#### CPA Exam Fees in Pennsylvania

Initial Application Fee	\$95.00
Audit & Attestation	\$226.28
Financial Accounting & Reporting	\$214.35
Regulation	\$190.50
Business Environment & Concepts	\$178.58

*Exam fees as of Aug. 2008.*

*Check [www.nasba.org](http://www.nasba.org) for the most up to date costs and guidelines.*

*All fees are nonrefundable and subject to change.*

### Application Fee

---

An application fee of \$95 is required, regardless of the number of sections for which the application is made. This fee is not refundable. Applicants can apply for one or more sections of the examination at a time.

**Note: It is recommended that you DO NOT apply for an exam section unless you are ready to take it within six months.**

All fees must be paid at the time of application and must be in U.S. dollars. Certified checks or money orders must be drawn on a U.S. bank and made payable to CPA Examination Services.

A \$35 fee will be charged each time a check is returned by the bank.

All re-exam candidates are required to pay both an application fee and an examination fee.

**View additional details on the application process in Chapter 3.**



**chapter 3**  Taking the Exam

## Chapter 3 :: Taking the Exam

Follow these step-by-step instructions to ensure you don't miss anything in the application process.

### *How to Apply*

---

Applications can be obtained by going to [www.nasba.org](http://www.nasba.org) or by calling CPA Examination Services at (800) 272-3926.

First-time candidates must complete and submit the application forms, along with any required documentation, to:

**CPA Examination Services**  
**P.O. Box 440555**  
**Nashville, TN 37244**

CPA Examination Services will contact you once the application has been reviewed. **Allow eight weeks** from the date your application is postmarked for processing.

**Note: All applications must be complete and accurate. Failure to submit appropriate documentation, forms, and fees will delay processing and will result in denial of your application.**

### *Schedule a Test Appointment*

---

After you apply to take the CPA Exam and are deemed eligible, you will receive a Notice to Schedule (NTS) for each exam section you have been approved to take. Once you receive an NTS, schedule your test appointment as soon as possible. Each NTS is valid for a finite period of time (six months from the date of the NTS), so it is recommended you take your exams as soon as you are prepared. You don't want to lose a testing opportunity by running out of time.

Convenient ways to schedule:

- Online: [www.prometric.com/cpa](http://www.prometric.com/cpa) (receive an instant e-mail confirmation)
- Phone: (800) 580-9648

**Additional information about the CPA Exam application process can be found at [www.nasba.org](http://www.nasba.org).**



## Looking for a testing site in your area?

---

Below is a list of Prometric testing centers and their locations in Pennsylvania.

### Allentown

2211 Mack Blvd.  
Allentown, PA 18103

### Clarks Summit

1148 Northern Blvd.  
Abington Shopping Center  
Clarks Summit, PA 18411-2222

### Conshohocken

100 W. Elm Street, Suite 300  
Conshohocken, PA 19428

### Erie

Summit Towne Center  
7200 Peach St., Suite 440  
Erie, PA 16506

### Harrisburg

1100 N. Mountain Road  
Harrisburg, PA 17112  
AND  
1800 Lingestown Road, Suite 309  
Harrisburg, PA 17110

### Lancaster

1864 Fruitville Pike, Kmart Plaza  
Lancaster, PA 17601

### Monroeville

4055 Monroeville Blvd.  
Building 1, Suite 425  
Monroeville, PA 15146

### Philadelphia

601 Walnut Street  
Curtis Center, Suite 150 West  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

### Pittsburgh (North Hills)

Pittsburgh Research Pk.  
5700 Corp Dr., Suite 400  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

### York

Kingston Square, 2544 Eastern Blvd.  
York, PA 17402

Examinations must be scheduled at least six days in advance. You select the test center location, time, and date of your exams. Tests are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. **The earlier candidates schedule appointments, the better their chances are of obtaining the location, date, and time of their choice.** Test appointments cannot be scheduled less than six days in advance. Walk-in testing is **not** allowed.

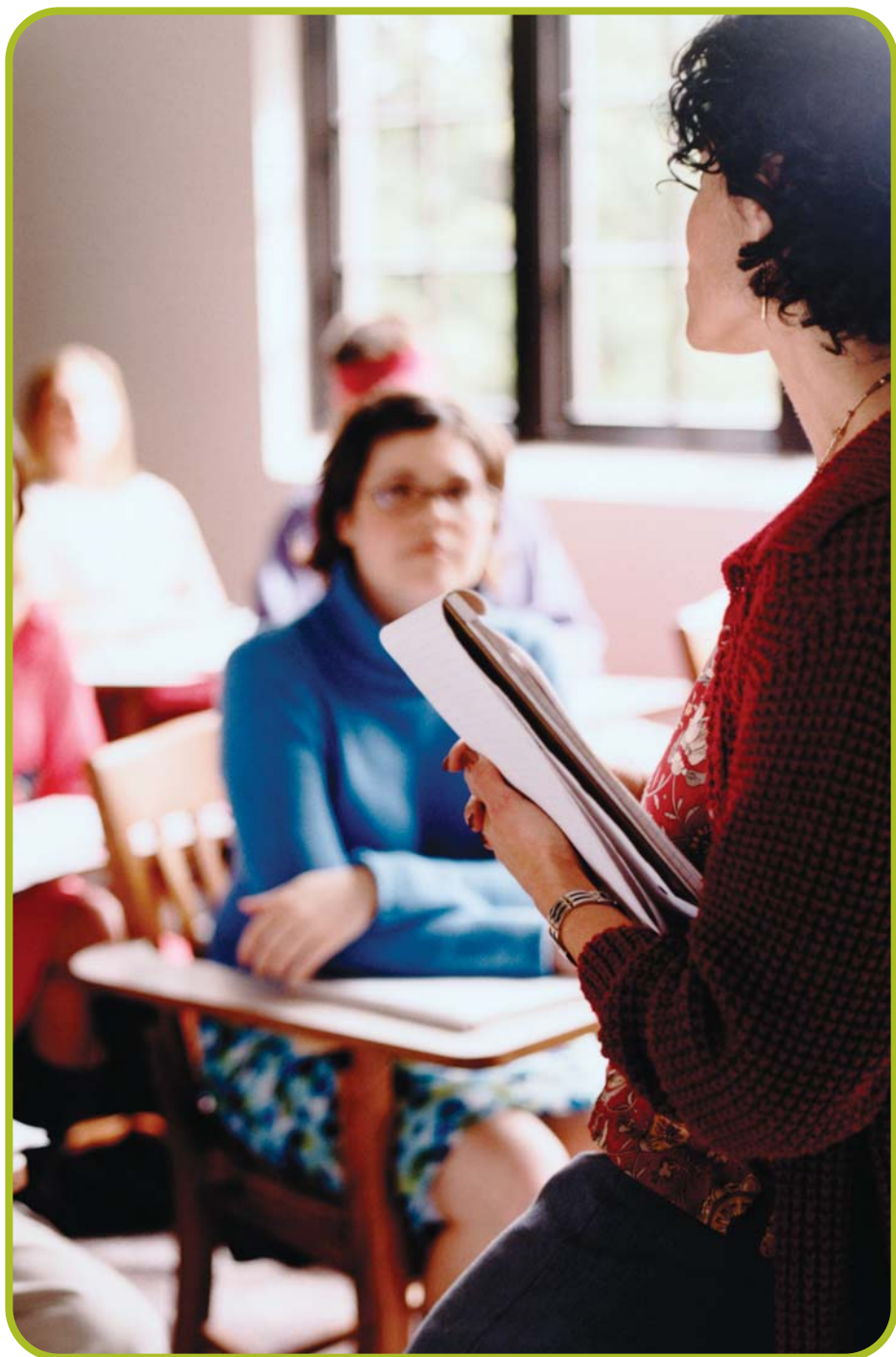
## Testing dates

---

The CPA Exam is available five days a week. Each year contains four testing windows. Testing windows are:

January – February    April – May    July – August    October – November





**chapter 4**  Preparation

## Chapter 4 :: Preparation

Practice makes perfect! Use the following preparation tools before taking the exam.

### ***Practice and Resources***

---

Visit [www.cpa-exam.org](http://www.cpa-exam.org), created by the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) and supported by the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) and individual state boards. Designed to inform examinees and the general public about the Uniform CPA Exam, the Web site offers step-by-step instructions on applying for the exam and what to expect when taking it. The Web site also offers tutorials, sample exams, and general test tips. Content is updated frequently, so visit this site often to get the most accurate information.

PICPA also updates CPA Exam information on a regular basis at [www.cpazone.org/exam](http://www.cpazone.org/exam).

PICPA has tools and materials to help CPA candidates succeed. Track your progress with a CPA Exam spreadsheet or visit PICPA headquarters in Philadelphia to take CPA Exam simulations or practice tests. Visit [www.picpa.org/exam](http://www.picpa.org/exam) for details.

### ***Test Prep***

---

PICPA members receive special discounts and offers from these CPA Exam review providers:

**Becker CPA Review**

**ExamMatrix CPA Exam Review**

**Philadelphia CPA Review**

**Wiley CPA e-Prep**

For more details, visit [www.cpazone.org/exam](http://www.cpazone.org/exam).

***Not a PICPA member? Join today at [www.picpa.org/join](http://www.picpa.org/join) and start reaping the benefits of membership.***



## ***Test Content and Areas of Study***

---

CPA Exam sections cover a number of subjects that candidates are expected to understand prior to the test. Below is an overview of the subject matter each section contains.

### **Auditing and Attestation**

The Auditing and Attestation section covers auditing procedures, generally accepted auditing standards (GAAS) in the United States, and other standards related to attest engagements. It also tests the skills needed to apply that knowledge in auditing and other attestation engagements.

### **Financial Accounting and Reporting**

The Financial Accounting and Reporting section tests knowledge of generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) in the United States for business enterprises, not-for-profit organizations, and governmental entities. This section includes financial accounting concepts and standards, and their application.

### **Regulation**

The Regulation section covers knowledge of federal taxation, ethics, professional and legal responsibilities, and business law, and tests the skills needed to apply that knowledge.

#### *Federal Taxation*

This portion focuses on principles and procedures for federal income, estate, and gift taxation, as well as their application in practice.

#### *Ethics, Professional and Legal Responsibilities, and Business Law*

This portion covers knowledge of professional and legal responsibilities, and the legal implications of business transactions, particularly as they relate to accounting and auditing. This section deals with federal and widely adopted uniform state laws. If there is no federal or uniform state law on a specific topic, the questions are intended to test knowledge of the law in the majority of jurisdictions. Professional ethics questions are based on the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct.

### **Business Environment and Concepts**

The Business Environment and Concepts section tests knowledge of general business concepts that candidates need to know to understand underlying reasons for, and accounting implications of, transactions. This section also explores the skills needed to apply that knowledge in performing financial statement audit and attestation engagements. Content includes knowledge of business structure; economic concepts essential to obtaining an understanding of an entity's operations, business, and industry financial management; information technology; and planning and measurement.



## ***Test Tips***

---

### **Before the Exam**

- Schedule your test session early – as soon as you receive your Notice to Schedule (NTS).
- Make sure your name on the NTS is exactly the same as your ID documents.
- Learn how the exam software functions by reviewing the tutorial.
- Review sample tests, as the software functions are unique and will NOT be the same on your home or work computer.
- Pay special attention to directions for transferring text in response to research questions.

### **At the Exam**

- Be sure to bring your NTS, two forms of ID, and arrive at least 30 minutes early.
- Do not spend too much time on the introductory screens.
- Report any equipment problems to test center staff without delay.

### **After the Exam**

- Keep your confirmation of attendance form. It provides valuable contact information.

***Be prepared! review the tutorial and sample tests at [www.cpa-exam.org](http://www.cpa-exam.org).***

***chapter 5***  CPA Exam Fast Facts

## Chapter 5 :: CPA Exam Fast Facts

Refer to the following fast facts for all your CPA Exam needs.

### Exam details at your fingertips

---

#### **Can I take the exam outside of Pennsylvania?**

Yes, but there are additional charges for taking the exam outside of your jurisdiction.

#### **When can I take the exam?**

Testing is available the first two months of every quarter: January & February; April & May; July & August; October & November. It is **NOT available** in March, June, September, or December.

#### **What happens if I graduate, get busy with work, and do not pass at least one part of the CPA Exam before Dec. 31, 2011?**

Individuals who do not pass at least one part of the CPA Exam before Dec. 31, 2011 must meet the new education and experience requirements to become certified. It is very important to study and take the CPA exam soon after graduation.

#### **What education requirements do I need to apply for the exam and to become a licensed CPA in Pennsylvania?**

*Prior to Jan. 1, 2012* – Candidates must have graduated with a bachelor's or master's degree and completed at least 24 semester-credits in accounting subjects. These subjects include accounting and auditing, business law, finance, or tax subjects acceptable to the Pennsylvania State Board of Accountancy (SBOA). Candidates who opt to complete 150 semester-credits must meet the 24 semester-credits in accounting subjects noted above, plus an additional 12 semester-credits in accounting, auditing, and tax subjects acceptable to the SBOA.

*Effective Jan. 1, 2012* – All candidates seeking the CPA designation will have to complete 150 hours of college education, including 36 hours in accounting, auditing, business law, finance, or tax subjects.

#### **To meet the 150-hour requirement, can the credits be in undergraduate study?**

Yes, obtaining the additional credits can be accomplished through undergraduate, graduate, or a combination of both levels of study.

#### **When can I apply to sit for the exam?**

You can apply and sit for the exam once you have graduated and completed 120 hours of education from an accredited college or university.

#### **How long do I have to pass all four parts?**

You have 18 months to pass all four parts once you pass the first section.

#### **What is a passing score?**

A passing score is 75. The score does NOT represent percent correct.

### **Who distributes the exam scores?**

The Pennsylvania State Board of Accountancy distributes the scores.

### **What is the work experience requirement before receiving a CPA license?**

*Prior to Jan. 1, 2012* – Candidates have two options. If they have a bachelor's degree, they need two years (3,200 hours) of public accounting experience including 800 hours at attest activity. If they have a master's degree, they need one year (1,600 hours) of public accounting experience including 400 hours at attest activity.

*Effective Jan. 1, 2012* – All candidates will be required to have one year (1,600 hours) of public accounting experience, including 400 hours at attest activity.

### **How long do I have to complete my work experience requirement?**

*Prior to Jan. 1, 2012* – Individuals taking the CPA Exam for the first time before Dec. 31, 2011, must complete their work experience within 10 years (120 months) preceding the application date for the CPA certificate.

*Effective Jan. 1, 2012* – All CPA candidates must have completed their one year work experience requirement within five years (60 months) preceding the application date for the CPA certificate.

### **How can a foreign transcript or degree be evaluated?**

All educational credentials earned outside the United States must be evaluated by one of the following professional credentials evaluation organizations to show U.S. equivalency:

Educational Credential Evaluators Inc. (414) 289-3412, [www.ece.org](http://www.ece.org)

Foreign Academic Credentials Service Inc. (618) 656-5291, [www.facsusa.com](http://www.facsusa.com)

Josef Silny & Associates Inc. (305) 273-1616, [www.jsilny.com](http://www.jsilny.com)

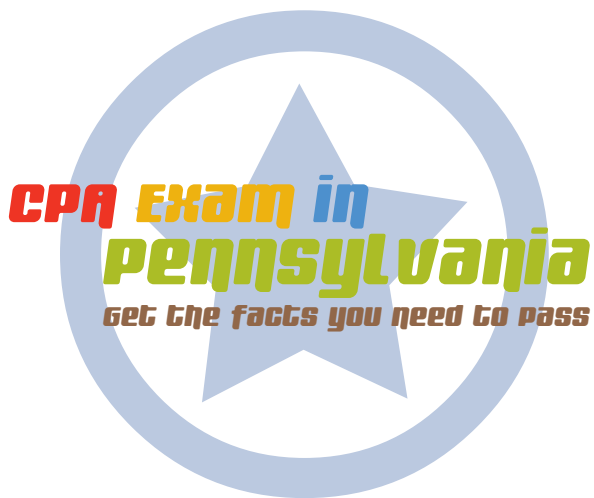
## **HOW CAN PICPA HELP?**

---

- Join PICPA! There is a level of membership during each stage of your career. Whether you are a student or a professional making a career change, PICPA can help you establish your business network. Join today at [www.picpa.org/join](http://www.picpa.org/join).
- Request a PICPA member to speak to a class or accounting club on a variety of topics: accounting career choices, taking the CPA Exam, life after college, life/work balance, etc. The topic is completely up to you and the speaker. To request a speaker, contact the Careers in Accounting team.

**Contact PICPA's Careers in Accounting team at (215) 496-9272 or [schools@picpa.org](mailto:schools@picpa.org) for any additional questions.**





Statements of fact do not imply an opinion on the part of PICPA officers or members.  
Information printed as of September 2008.

Copyright © 2008 PICPA. All Rights Reserved.

## ***who we are. . .***

Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA) is a professional association of more than 19,000 CPAs working together to improve the accounting profession and better serve the public interest. Founded in 1897, PICPA is the second-oldest CPA organization in the United States. Membership includes practitioners in public accounting, industry, government, and education. Headquartered in Philadelphia, with a government relations office in Harrisburg and a western regional office in Pittsburgh, PICPA provides support for the organization's broad range of activities.

The mission of PICPA is to further the well-being of its members, while upholding the public interest by:

- Enhancing quality services founded on professional competence, integrity, and objectivity
- Serving as an advocate for, and promoting the public image of, its members
- Articulating positions on professional and public issues when the expertise of CPAs is relevant



## ***contact us:***

### **PICPA**

1650 Arch Street, 17th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
(888) 272-2001  
e-mail: [schools@picpa.org](mailto:schools@picpa.org)