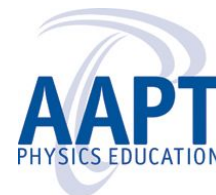


# What's Happening with OPTYCs?

## Resilience and Community

Kris Lui (OPTYCs - American Association of Physics Teachers)

2026 Spring Meeting for Chesapeake, Southeastern Pennsylvania, and New Jersey AAPT Sections



**OPTYCs**

# The Organization for Physics at TYCs

- NSF grant (#2212807): July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2026
- \$3 million to create and sustain a national community
  - To create and sustain a national community of instructors for the first two years of post-secondary physics and astronomy
  - Administered under American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT)
- Provides faculty professional development & support
- Welcomes everyone – many free and virtual events

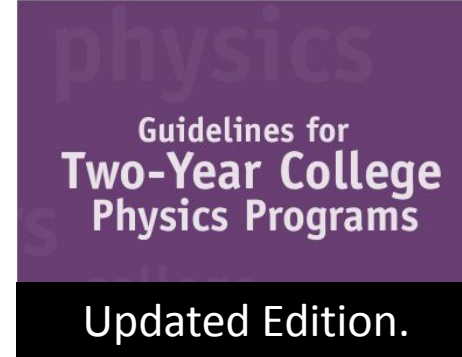




Tandem Meetings.



In-person and virtual workshops.



Creating Environments that Reach Every Student.



Mentoring and Networking Program.



New Faculty Development Series.



National Comprehensive Survey of TYC Physics/Astronomy.



Leadership Institute.



PER presentations and discussions.

# NSF Grants Cancelled

- NSF grant (#2212807): July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2026
- \$3 million to create and sustain a national community

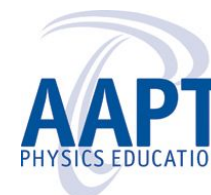
~~May 9, 2025~~

**\$1.5 M remaining**



Field trip to the court house for the preliminary injunction hearing. Washington, DC. Aug 2025.

- Co-PIs and Program Coordinators agreed to continue work as volunteers
- AAPT joined a coalition lawsuit against NSF (with Democracy Forward)



# What We've Accomplished Since Cancellation

- Organized 11 virtual workshops
- Hosted 9 virtual presentations on research-based assessments
- Ran an in-person TYC Tandem Meeting (aligned with AAPT National Summer Meeting 2025, hosted by Howard CC)
- AAPT uses reserve funds to support Kris on a part-time basis



# How We're Keeping Going

- Received AIP Rapid Response Bridge Funds (\$70,000)
  - Cohort programs already underway (in-person components proceeded)
  - Symbolic honoraria for Program Coordinators
- Awarded AIP Venture Grant (\$50,000)
  - TYC Mid-Career Reset Program (pilot, 14-month program)
- Initiated OPTYCs 2.0: Grassroots volunteer effort to craft next activities
  - Two federal grant proposals to be submitted summer 2026



# Numbers: July 2022 - Today

**293** Unique Institutions

**422** Unique Participants

**132,450** Students Potentially Impacted

**75** Conference Presentations

**10** Publications

**15** Collaborations

**42** Virtual Workshops

**30** PER Events

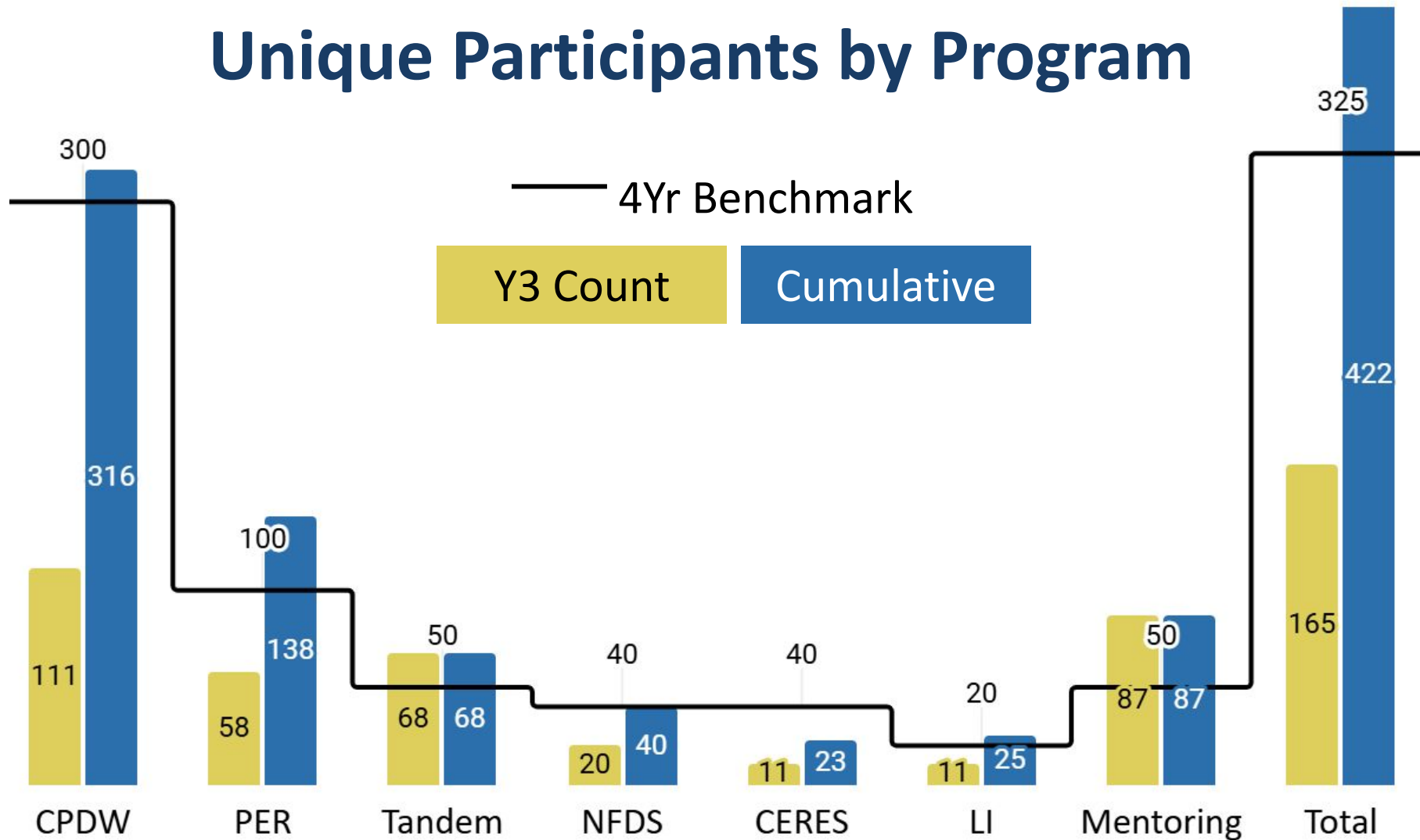
**57** Newsletter Issues



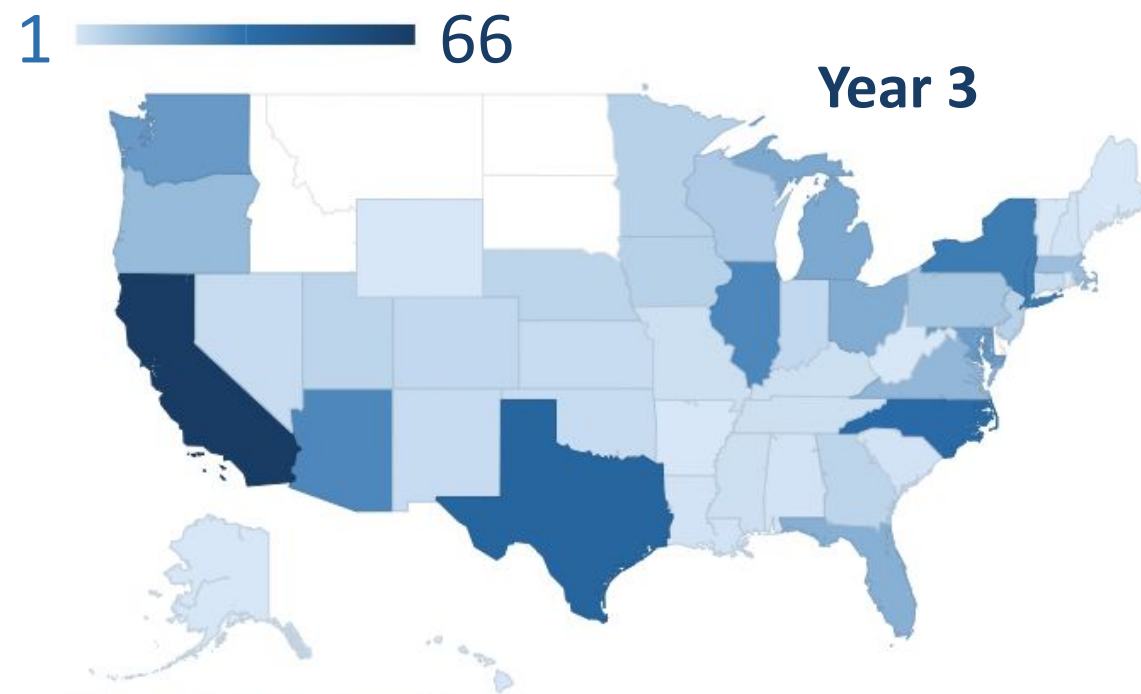
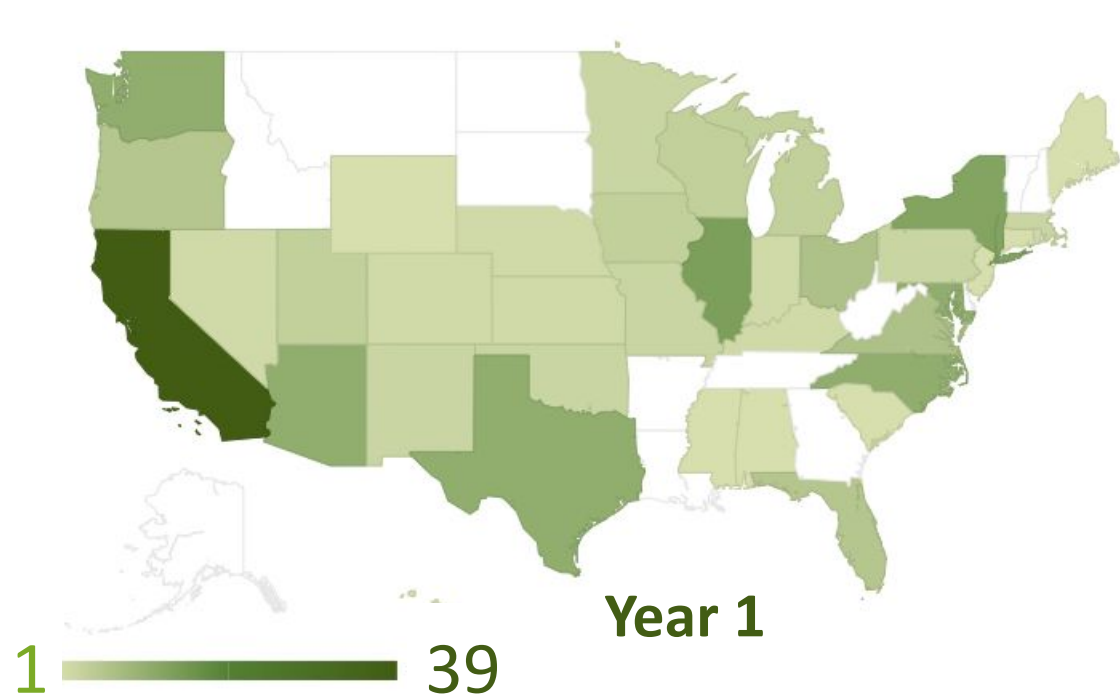
New Faculty Development Series.  
Boston, MA. Jul 2024.

# Meeting our Benchmarks at Cancellation

## Unique Participants by Program

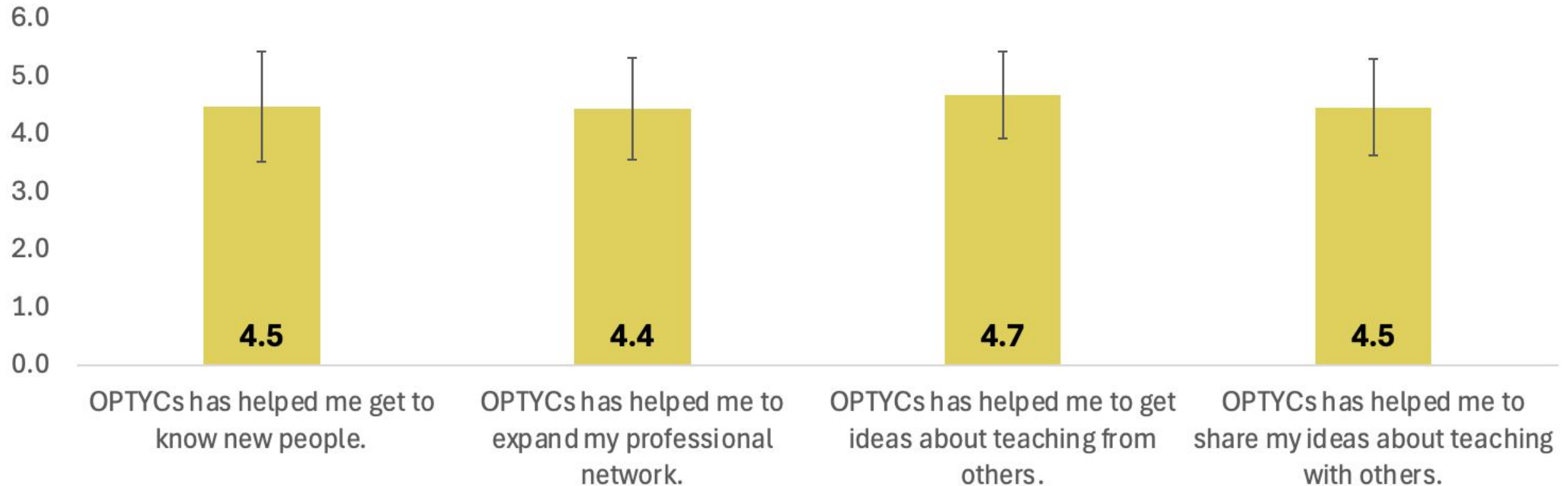


# Growing Connections



Participants by State

# Tangible benefits (especially community and learning)

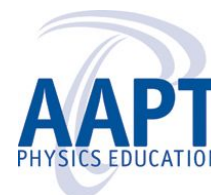


# Qualitative (from Y3 evaluation)

*“The **access to high-quality instructional materials** for both physics and astronomy has been **truly invaluable**. I no longer **feel professionally isolated**; instead, I feel **connected** to a vibrant, national community of physics and astronomy educators. The exchange of ideas, teaching strategies, and resources has significantly **enhanced my instruction** and **reinvigorated my approach to the classroom.**”*

*“As the single full time faculty in physics and/or astronomy at my institution, **building a network of support has been necessary to keep me in the profession**. Without the people I've interacted with through the OPTYCs program I **would likely have left higher education** for a career in private industry.”*

*“I have **learned how to better teach** those in my classrooms regarding their needs and interests. I have **learned to become more responsive as a teacher**, and better prepared to **create community in my own classroom**. Ultimately, I have seen **better retention of students** because of my changes implemented from the learning opportunities afforded to me via OPTYCs.”*



# The OPTYCs Team

## Program Coordinators

Abigail Daane (CERES)

Angela McClure (NFDS)

Anthony Escudro (PER, Survey)

**Brittney VornDick (CPDW)**

Brooke Haag (NFDS, LI)

**Bryan Stanley (PER)**

David Marasco (Mentoring)

Joe Heafner (CPDW, Tandem)

Karim Diff (PER, Survey)

Krista Wood (NFDS, LI)

Matt Cass (Mentoring)

Tom O’Kuma (CPDW, Tandem)

## Advisory Board

Eric Baer

Geraldine Cochran

Anne Cox

Alexis Knaub

Todd Leif

## Co-Directors

Dwain Desbien

Rachel Ivie

Kris Lui

Sherry Savrda

## Evaluators

Miranda Chen Musgrove  
(Goshen Consulting - RMC)

## Former Team Members

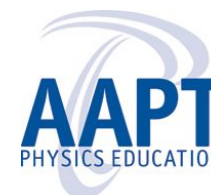
Glenda Denicolo

Lyle Barbato

Renee Lathrop

Robert Hilborn

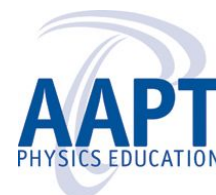
Stephanie Chasteen



We envision  
a future in which  
TYC physics  
faculty and students  
**THRIVE.**

TYC faculty are embraced within and empowered by an inclusive national physics community.

TYC students experience excellent evidence-based physics instruction which prepares them for their future endeavours.



# Learn More and Connect

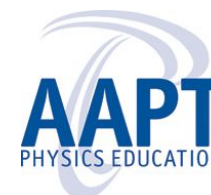
Email [OPTYCs@aapt.org](mailto:OPTYCs@aapt.org)

Website <https://OPTYCs.aapt.org/>

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/@optycs5337>

Newsletter <https://optycs.aapt.org/spotlight/>

Kris Lui | [klui@aapt.org](mailto:klui@aapt.org)



Thank you!