



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
333 MARKET STREET  
HARRISBURG, PA 17126-0333

DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR ELEMENTARY  
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

717-787-2127  
FAX: 717-214-2786

February 1, 2021  
*Sent Via Email*

Dr. Joseph Pasquerilla  
Superintendent  
Ambridge Area School District  
901 Duss Avenue  
Ambridge, PA 15003-2474

Dear Superintendent Pasquerilla,

The Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program was created pursuant to Act 85 of 2012 (72 P.S. § 1701-G.1, *et seq*) and amended by Act 86 of 2016 (24 P.S. § 2001-B, *et seq*). This program enables eligible students, residing within the boundaries of low-achieving schools, to apply for a scholarship to attend a participating public or nonpublic school.

Pursuant to Section 2010-B of the School Code, 24 P.S. §20-2010-B, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (“PDE”) is required to publish a list of “low achieving schools”. PDE is also required to provide notice to school districts with low achieving schools. Under the authority of Act 13 of 2020, the required assessments that determine whether a school is low achieving were cancelled due to COVID-19. Despite the cancellation of the 2020 assessments, PDE must comply with publication and notification requirements for low achieving schools by Feb. 1, 2021. As a result, the list of low achieving schools for 2021 is based on the 2019 assessments; the most recent year that assessment data is available.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) hereby officially notifies you that the Ambridge Area School District has been identified as having at least one school designated as a low-achieving school. The following is the school within the district designated as low achieving:

- Highland Elementary School

Pursuant to Act 86 of 2016, the Department of Education produced a list of public elementary and secondary schools within the Commonwealth that are in the lowest 15 percent of their designation for the previous full academic year.

Public elementary and secondary schools (excluding brick-and-mortar and cyber charter schools, and area vocational-technical schools) within the commonwealth that ranked in the lowest 15 percent of its designation for the 2018-19 school year is based on the combined Mathematics/Algebra I and Reading/Literature scores from the annual assessments (PASA, PSSA, and/or Keystone) administered in 2019.

Students who reside in an attendance zone of a school that was on a previous list of low performing schools but is not on the 2020-21 list may apply to a Scholarship Organization to continue receiving a scholarship.

Pursuant to 24 P.S. § 2010-B(C), the district must post on its publicly accessible internet website information about this program within 15 days of receipt of this letter. PDE has compiled and attached the following required pieces of information for the district to place on its website:

1. An overview of the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program which includes:
  - a. A description of the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program
  - b. Instructions to apply for an Opportunity Scholarship
  - c. Parental responsibilities regarding enrolling their child in a participating public or nonpublic school
2. A list of schools in the district that have been designated as low-achieving schools.

Additionally, within 15 days of receipt of this letter, the district must also notify the parents of each student who is currently attending or residing within the attendance boundary of a low-achieving school, of that school's designation. The district must also notify parents of kindergarten students registered or registering in a low-achieving school of the school's designation. This notice shall be given by sending the form PDE has created, which is also provided as an attachment.

Sincerely,



Matthew S. Stem  
Deputy Secretary

Enclosures