



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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HARRISBURG, PA 17126-0333

DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR ELEMENTARY
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

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June 7, 2017

Craig Butler
Superintendent
Hazleton Area School District
1515 West 23rd Street
Hazle Township, PA 18202

Dear Superintendent Butler,

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.

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

1. Hazleton Elementary / Middle School
2. Heights Terrance Elementary / Middle School
3. Maple Manor Elementary / Middle School
4. West Hazleton Elementary / Middle 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.

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 2017-18 list may apply to a Scholarship Organization to continue receiving a scholarship. **The district does not have to notify the families residing in the attendance zone or take any action concerning these students.** The following school falls into this category:

1. Freeland Elementary / Middle School
2. Hazleton Are High School
3. McAdoo-Kelayres Elementary School / Middle School

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 2015-16 school year based on the combined Mathematics/Algebra I and Reading/Literature scores from the annual assessments (PASA, PSSA, and/or Keystone) administered in 2016.

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