

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

On Aug. 20, 2013, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) received waivers from ten requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001. However, ESEA/NCLB still requires that parents or guardians who have children attending a Title I school be notified of the school's academic achievement as well as the school's designation under Pennsylvania's ESEA Flexibility Waiver. This letter is intended to provide additional information concerning the options available to your child under Pennsylvania's ESEA Flexibility Waiver and to help you understand what the waiver will mean for you and your child.

Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, PDE will no longer use Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) to determine a school's designation. Instead, in accordance with the ESEA Flexibility Waiver, PDE will use four Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) to designate the Title I school as Reward – High Achievement, Reward – High Progress, Priority, or Focus schools. The four AMOs include: measuring test participation rate; graduation/attendance rate; closing the achievement gap for all students; and closing the achievement gap for the historically underperforming students. In addition, all public schools in the state will receive a School Performance Profile score based on 100 points. This score will be considered the school's academic performance score, and while not the criteria for determination of Reward, Priority or Focus status, it details student performance through scoring of multiple measures that define achievement. The School Performance Profile also includes supports to permit schools to access materials and resources to improve in defined areas related to achievement.

Despite the progress made by our students, **Aliquippa Junior-Senior High School** has been designated as a Focus School for the **2017-2018** school year. This designation was based on test data from the 2012-13 school year and our school will keep this designation for three years.

Focus Schools are 10 percent of the lowest Title I schools based on the highest achievement gap for the Historically Low Performing students' AMO. The aggregate achievement gap is determined by the combined Mathematics/Reading PSSA scores and/or the Algebra 1/Literature Keystone Exam scores. They can also be a Title I high school with a graduation rate less than 60 percent; or have a test participation rate below 95 percent and are not identified as a Priority School.

As a Focus School, we will work collaboratively with parents/guardians, our community and our school district office to develop a school turnaround plan which will implement interventions to respond to the specific needs of improving the performance of our low-performing student subgroups. The Aliquippa Junior-Senior High School will implement interventions associated with the following principles: strengthen the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instruction program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with state academic content standards; use data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including providing time for collaboration on the use of data; establish a school environment that

improves school safety and discipline and addresses other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional and health needs; and provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.

An important part of the success plan for **Aliquippa Junior-Senior High School** is parent participation and support in developing activities to improve student achievement. We hope that, as a parent/guardian, you will become involved in our school improvement initiatives as we continue to monitor student achievement and set high expectations. If you are interested in participating in developing our school improvement initiatives, contact us.

Thank you for all that you do to support your child's education.

Sincerely,

Mr. Alvin Gipson  
Principal  
Grades 10-12

Mrs. Beth Smith  
Principal  
Grades 7-9