

PRIORITY SCHOOLS
ESEA FLEXIBILITY WAIVER PARENT NOTIFICATION –
PRIORITY SCHOOL DESIGNATION

August 10, 2015

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, The Academy Charter School has been designated as a Priority School for the 2015-16 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.

Priority Schools are 5 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 Priority 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. Due to our priority school status we have started a 'School Wide Progress Monitoring' Program. All regular and special education students will be given baseline test using

the Easy-CBM or EdInsight tests to determine a baseline functioning level. Each student will be probed on their functioning grade level every 2 weeks using Easy CBM and Compass Learning. At the end of the quarter if a student successfully completed 80% of the probes they will move to the next functioning grade level. Progress Monitoring reports will be mailed home with report cards at the end of every quarter. Also, a reading and math coach will be hired to work with groups of students who show the need for extra academic help.

An important part of the success plan for The Academy Charter 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 **Amy Abraham, Principal** at **412-885-5200** or **Abrahama@theacademysystem.com**.

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

Sincerely,

Amy Abraham
Principal