

September 22, 2024

Dear Pottsville Area School District students and families:

We are excited for the 2024-2025 school year as we continue to reach for excellence in everything we do with respect to academics, extra-curricular activities, community, and safety. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has approved our Comprehensive Plan with a mission to “**Discover Possibilities, Uncover Potential, and Develop Purpose**” as a team consisting of our extraordinary educators, students, and families. The Pottsville Area School District (PASD) and School Board are dedicated to nurture the coordinated endeavors we have designed with intent. Our enhanced school culture and overall safety improvements reflect the positive progression we have achieved.

The PASD is strategically focused on seeking out and identifying funding sources to replace the expiring Federal ESSER funds to maintain and grow our enriching environment. We are grateful that our efforts have come to fruition via the Federal BSCA grant, PCCD school safety funds, PDE’s Developing Future Educators grant, PDE’s Ready to Learn grant, PA Department of Agriculture’s Farm to School grant, PDE’s Environmental Repairs Program grant, and more. The District has been able to expand supports and activities to students over the past three (3) years through federal and local funds as well as local partnerships:

**TIDE** School (Guidance) Counselors - Increased from three (3) to seven (7) to provide individual counseling, classroom lessons and/or group counseling. Relationship building and responsible decision-making skills are taught and reinforced to address the real or perceived imbalance of power that leads to bullying situations. One of our goals is for students to recognize the multiple roles they play in order to effectively prevent and respond to bullying.

- Mr. Pettit – John S Clarke Elementary Center
- Mrs. Yarnitsky – John S Clarke Elementary Center
- Miss Parker – DHHL Middle School
- Mrs. (Angelo) Schultz – DHHL Middle School
- Mr. Roeder – PAHS (students’ last names A to G)
- Mrs. Stasulli – PAHS (students’ last names H to O)
- Mrs. Dean – PAHS (students’ last names P to Z)

**TIDE** Increased partnerships with Community and School Based Behavioral Health (CSBBH) and JusticeWorks, so our students have access to a continuum of services at no cost to families or the District. These collaborations supplement programming delivered by Social Workers Mrs. Gunoskey at JSC and Mrs. O’Toole at PAHS and DHHL Certified Counselor Mrs. Brant. We appreciate the additional layer of communication to prevent truancy through the work of Mr. Raudenbush and Mrs. Kuhns.

**TIDE** Graduation Coach Mr. Brennan will continue to focus on supporting at-risk students and our partnership with CareerLink. Graduation rate has been significantly positively impacted by the commitment of Mr. Brennan and all of our educators. We are proud to share that the Pottsville Area High School graduation rate has increased from 89.6% to 91.5% on-time graduation, which is well above the state average of 87.55% for 2023, the most recent data available verified by the PDE.

| School Year | 4-year Cohort Graduation Rate |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 2022-2023   | 91.50%                        |
| 2021-2022   | 89.60%                        |
| 2020-2021   | 87.90%                        |
| 2019-2020   | 89.70%                        |
| 2018-2019   | 84.20%                        |
| 2017-2018   | 87.50%                        |
| 2016-2017   | 88.30%                        |
| 2015-2016   | 87.40%                        |

**TIDE** We know on-time graduation success begins with students engaging in innovative learning in JSC Elementary Center and DHHL Middle School to **discover possibilities**. We are pleased that the District has been able to maintain the additional positions of Library Media Specialist and STEM with Miss Moore and Mr. Narita respectively to improve Kindergarten Readiness, increase family engagement events, and provide a foundation for transitioning to the STEM course with Mr. Hughes in DHHL Middle School. We are eager to see how Ms. Zerbe’s DHHL students continue to engage in the Storymaker program in conjunction with Terry Thoren, CEO of Wonder Media and former CEO of Klasky Csupo producer of Nickelodeon shows.

**TIDE** Clarissa Geary from SARCC (Sexual Assault Resource and Counseling Center) will give presentations about “Personal Body Safety” for all students in the John S. Clarke Elementary Center.






Discover Possibilities, Uncover Potential, and Develop Purpose

We are an equal rights and opportunity school district

# POTTSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

1501 West Laurel Boulevard; Pottsville, PA 17901-1419

Phone: 570-621-2900 · Fax: 570-621-2025 · Website: [www.pottsville.k12.pa.us](http://www.pottsville.k12.pa.us)

-  After-school tutoring, dual enrollment college credits, and virtual learning opportunities will be maintained through the Federal BSCA grant, PA Ready to Learn funds, and local funding.
-  ROLL TIDE! **#ctidepride** is cultivated for all students through Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). All three (3) of our schools have been recognized multiple times by the PDE for the supported implementation with fidelity. Extra-curricular activities have expanded including eSports, Bocce Ball, additional Jr. High Sports, and more. We encourage all students to be involved to **uncover their potential**.
-  We are grateful for our collaboration with the Pottsville Bureau of Police and Port Carbon Borough Police. Without their support, we would not have been able to implement Bus Patrol cameras to improve safety for students and transportation staff. Our administrators and School Police Officers communicate with families about circumstances of truancy, residency, and school safety.

In accordance with Act 44 School Safety and Security regulations, our response to a violent critical incident includes the ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training program, which empowers students and staff with option-based responses and life-long safety skills. Pursuant to the requirements of Section 1517 of the Public School Code of 1949, we will be conducting a safety drill **Wednesday, October 2, 2024** at all of our schools. Students will have age-appropriate discussions with their teachers prior to and after the exercise. In the case of inclement weather, the drill will be the following school day. If you have any questions regarding school safety, ALICE training concepts, or our safety drill, please contact the Safety Coordinator Dr. Gerace ([jgerace@pottsville.k12.pa.us](mailto:jgerace@pottsville.k12.pa.us)), the principal of the school your student attends, and/or visit [www.alicetraining.com](http://www.alicetraining.com).

The “Safe2Say Something” (S2SS - [www.safe2saypa.org](http://www.safe2saypa.org)) anonymous reporting system is available to report warning signs and signals of individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others. Students and community members may be aware of challenges their peers are facing, so we must motivate them to help each other with the assistance of trained and caring adults. The S2SS program is provided through Sandy Hook Promise, a nationwide non-profit organization. We are grateful for PAHS’s Aevium Club, DHHL Middle School’s Ambassadors, and numerous initiatives involving students, families, faculty, staff, local law enforcement, health professionals, and local/national community organizations. **We urge students and family members to call 9-1-1 or submit a S2SS tip to report language or a social media post you feel is threatening.** S2SS has trained investigators to determine the origin and credibility of statements as a team with law enforcement. Additionally, if you or someone you know needs support, please call/text 988 to connect with the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

We appreciate the community’s engagement in the Pottsville Area School District as we strive to empower our students to **develop purpose**. Please continue to provide feedback through surveys and meetings as you have in the past regarding topics including Federal Programs (Title I), Dress Code, and Comprehensive Planning. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Sarah E. Yoder, Ed.D.  
Superintendent



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