



NORTHGATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear Northgate Families,

2/10/2025

Over the past few years, our students have experienced many successes at all grade levels. However, this letter is specifically focused on our Middle/High School (grades 7-12).

In recent years the Northgate administration has worked alongside teachers to write curriculum and adopt resources aligned with research. Our partnership with Harvard's School of Education has provided valuable training on instructional strategies that push student thinking. The Northgate School District has been recognized for its College in High School Program which allows all students to get a head start on earning credits for college and its effort to place students in internships across our region.

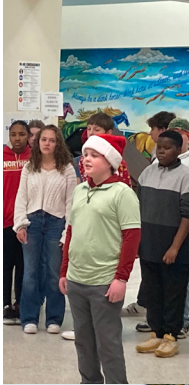
Despite these successes, our students did not perform as well as we would have expected on the 8th-grade state standardized tests. This cohort of students had performed at or above the state average in grades 3 through 7. Last year, we saw a precipitous decline in their performance. Their score appeared as an anomaly that caused us to question if there was some sort of irregularity in the test. Our students were well prepared based on what was observed in the classrooms and the practice tests that preceded the actual test. We are having discussions in the district to understand why this situation occurred, and we are working with our students to help them understand the importance of these tests and that we want them to have pride in their academic abilities.

While we know our students are highly capable, there are implications for this level of performance. Northgate Middle/High School is on the list of the bottom 15% for performance on the combined Math and Reading tests on the 2023-2024 PSSA and/or Keystone exams. Because of this, students attending the middle/high school have the opportunity to participate in the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTCP) during the 2025-2026 school year. If you are interested in learning more about this program, information can be found on the back. Please keep in mind that this is only available for the 2025-26 school year.

We want to emphasize that we believe our students are capable of achieving at high levels. We see them do this every day both in and outside the classroom. We also want them to take pride in their work, and demonstrate to our community what they are capable of. We ask that our families communicate to their children the importance of these tests and the pride they can take in a job well done.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Dr. Caroline Johns
Superintendent of Schools
412-732-3300, ext. 2110



OSTCP 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 another public or nonpublic school. A low achieving school is defined as a public elementary or secondary school ranking in the bottom 15% of their designation as elementary or secondary school based on the combined math and reading scores on the previous school year PSSA.

Under the OSTCP program, Northgate Middle/High School must offer students the choice to transfer to another school district or nonpublic school. If you wish to take advantage of this opportunity for your child to attend another school, you must go to the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) website: <https://dced.pa.gov/programs/opportunity-scholarship-tax-credit-program-ostc/>

You can review the list of scholarship organizations for the school districts and nonpublic schools that are participating in this program. DCED has information regarding the application process. Scholarships are contingent upon available funding.

Additional information is available at the PA Department of Education website: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/schools/school-services/opportunity-scholarship-tax-credit-program.html>.