



POTTSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOWARD S. FERNSLER ACADEMIC CENTER

1501 West Laurel Boulevard

Pottsville, PA 17901-1419


Phone: 570-621-2900 · Fax: 570-621-2025


www.pottsville.k12.pa.us


September 15, 2023

Dear Pottsville Area School District students and families,

Excellence is in our sights based on our continued advancements in academics, extra-curricular activities, and safety. We are committed to sustaining this comprehensive, coordinated effort to improve our school culture and overall safety. Our approach for the 2023-2024 school year enhances the steps we have taken to ensure students have access to academic programming, individual and group counseling, career education, crisis intervention, bullying prevention, mediation for students in conflict, and more.

 The addition of Library Media Specialist Miss Moore at JSC will provide students with access to a variety of resources. Miss Moore will work with community partners to improve transition for preschool-aged children and increase family engagement events with the support of Federal funding. Federal funds will also continue to be used for Mr. Narita's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) class for JSC students before they transition to Mr. Hughes's STEM course in DHHL Middle School. We are excited that funding is also available for Mrs. Heffner (DHHL Physical Education) and Mrs. Libby (PAHS Music) to be full time this year.

 We are thankful for being selected for the Dual Enrollment grant from the PA Department of Education (PDE) for \$75,000 to enable students to get a jump on college credits at PAHS through Penn State Schuylkill and Kutztown University!

 The District has been able to sustain the increase of School (Guidance) Counselors in all three schools through federal and local funds. The following counselors provide individual counseling, classroom lessons and/or group counseling:

Mr. Pettit – John S Clarke Elementary Center


Mr. Gradwell – PAHS (students' last names A to G)


Miss Parker – DHHL Middle School


Mrs. Stasulli – PAHS (students' last names H to O)


Mrs. Schultz – DHHL Middle School

Mrs. Conville – PAHS (students' last names P to Z)

 We appreciate the partnership with Community and School Based Behavioral Health (CSBBH), so our students have access to the continuum of services from Kindergarten to 12th grade at no cost to families or the District. This collaboration will supplement the programming delivered by our Social Workers Mrs. Gunoskey at JSC and Mrs. Coyle at PAHS, our federally funded Certified Counselor Mrs. Brant at DHHL, and a third party provider for counseling. For more information, please contact your student's school office.

 Graduation Coach Mr. Brennan will continue to foster connections with at-risk students with funding through ESSER. His focus is on improving the on-time graduation rate for all students, reducing achievement gaps, and increasing our partnership with CareerLink for students to work during the school day.

 Tutoring and virtual learning opportunities will be maintained through ESSER funding. We appreciate the dedication of our educators for participating in virtual learning professional development.

 ROLL TIDE! **#ctidepride** is cultivated for all students through Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). All three (3) of our schools have been recognized by the PDE for the supports implemented with fidelity.



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 We have increased the number of School Police Officers and employ them for truancy, residency, and school safety purposes. We are grateful for our partnership with the Pottsville Bureau of Police who collaborate seamlessly with our administrators and officers.

 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.

Relationship building and responsible decision-making skills are taught and reinforced to resolve peer conflicts. Students receive instruction in Social Emotional Learning skills to address the real or perceived imbalance of power that leads to bullying situations. Our goal is to engage students to effectively prevent and respond to bullying.

In accordance with Act 44 School Safety and Security regulations, our efforts to plan and prepare a response to a violent critical incident in our schools include the ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training program. The ALICE program empowers students and staff with option-based responses and life-long safety skills. Since the beginning of the 2019 school year, we have been training our students with these protocols to improve our ability to protect students and promote safety within our school community. Age-appropriate discussions with students regarding safety protocols are ongoing and will continue throughout the school year.

As part of our continued focus on emergency preparedness, and pursuant to the requirements of the Public School Code of 1949 Section 1517, we will be conducting a safety drill **Wednesday, September 20, 2023** at all of our schools during the school day. Students will have 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, please contact the principal of the school your student attends or Curriculum Director Dr. Gerace who is our Safety and Security Coordinator.

The “Safe2Say Something” (S2SS - www.safe2saypa.org) anonymous reporting system is available to report warning signs and signals, especially within social media, of individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others. Students often are aware of challenges their peers are facing, so we must empower them to help each other with the assistance of trained and caring adults. The S2SS program is being provided through Sandy Hook Promise, a nationwide non-profit organization.

We appreciate the community’s engagement in our school district; please continue to provide feedback through surveys and meetings regarding topics including Federal Programs (Title I) 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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