

SMETHPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Home of the HUBBERS



**Smethport Area
School District**

Administration Office
414 South Mechanic St.
Smethport PA 16749
(814)887-5543 ~ phone
(814)887-5544 ~ fax

David E. London
Superintendent

Susan M. Jordan
Business Manager

Brice N. Benson
High School Principal

Kristin Zona
Elementary Principal

Julia E. Anderson
Director of
Special Education

Kevin C. Kolivoski
Technology Coordinator

February 4, 2021

RE: Notice of Opportunity Scholarships Please Read: Important Information Affecting Your Child

Dear Parent(s) and Guardian(s),

The purpose of this letter is to make you aware of choices that are available to you based on Smethport Jr./Sr. High School's testing results from the 2018/2019 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and/or Keystone Exams. The PSSA and Keystones are annual exams given to Pennsylvania students at various grade levels to measure their academic progress. Unfortunately, our combined reading and math results have placed Smethport Jr./Sr. High School in the bottom 15% of secondary schools in the State of Pennsylvania and our students qualify for The Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program.

The Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (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 a participating 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 and Keystone Exam. Under the OSTCP, Smethport Jr./Sr. High School must offer students the choice to transfer to another school district or nonpublic school. Despite the cancellation of the 2020 assessments, PDE must comply with the OSTCP guidelines. As a result, Smethport is still on the list for 2021 based on the 2019 assessments.

At Smethport Schools, we are committed to improving our achievement scores. Our PSSA and Keystone test scores are not at acceptable levels. We have instituted changes at both schools and programs to increase student achievement. Beginning with the 19/20 school year, the Jr./Sr. High School increased instructional time for 7th and 8th grade English Language Arts and Math classes, changed to a block model schedule and increased our capacity to utilize technology. We need your support for our programs to improve all aspects of our schools. Student achievement at all grade levels is a concerted effort by all students, teachers, staff, parents and community. A strong elementary program provides the foundation for a successful high school program. A successful high school learning experience sets the stage for becoming career and college ready. We hope that you will continue to educate your child at Smethport Jr./Sr. High School.

However, if you feel your child will be better served in another school, you may request a transfer to another school district or nonpublic school via the OSTCP. To utilize the OSTCP, you must go to the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) website www.newpa.com/ostc to 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 on our school district website www.smethportschools.com and the PA Department of Education website <http://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Opportunity%20Scholarship%20Tax%20Credit%20Program/Pages/default.aspx#tab-1>

Sincerely,

Mr. David E. London, Superintendent

Sincerely,

Mr. Brice N. Benson, Principal