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### ESEA FLEXIBILITY WAIVER PARENT NOTIFICATION – FOCUS SCHOOL DESIGNATION 2015-2016

August 31, 2015

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

On Aug. 20, 2013, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) received waivers from 10 requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001. The state's ultimate goal is to ensure that all students graduate college and are career-ready through the professional practice of effective teachers and leaders. ESEA/NCLB 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.

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 transitioned from using Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) to determine a school's designation, to using four Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) 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 received a School Performance Profile (SPP) score based on 100 points. This score is 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, Clairton Middle/High School continues to be designated as a Focus School under Pennsylvania's ESEA Flexibility Waiver for the 2015-2016 school year. This designation was based on 2012-13 test data and our school will keep this designation until 2017.

Focus Schools are Title I schools that are among the lowest 10 percent of Title I schools in the state based on highest achievement gap for the Historically Low Performing students' AMO. The aggregate achievement gap is determined by the combined Mathematics/ELA PSSA scores and/or the Algebra I/Literature Keystone Exam scores. They can also be a Title I high school with a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years; or have a test participation rate below 95%.

The Clairton City School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, handicap, or limited English proficiency in its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by the PA Human Relations Act, Title IX, and Section 504. For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures, contact Debra A Maurizio, Title IX Coordinator, and Section 504 Coordinator at the Administration Building, 502 Mitchell Avenue, Clairton, Pa 15025 (412) 233-7090 ext. 2300. The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission website is [www.phrc.state.pa.us](http://www.phrc.state.pa.us).

Although our indicators of academic achievement in mathematics, English Language Arts, and science were below the state average in 2012-2013, Clairton Middle/High School has shown improvement on the 2013-2014 School Performance Profile (SPP). The Building Level Academic Score increased from 58.2 in 2012-2013 to 62.6 in 2013-2014. Test participation rate was 98% for all assessments, which is above the requirement of 95%. In addition, the graduation rate rose almost 4% to 70.97 in 2013-2014. When compared with similar demographics in the Pittsburgh area, Clairton Middle/High School had a comparable or higher Building Level Academic Score than many surrounding schools. Our preliminary data for 2014-2015 has shown substantial growth with the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students taking the Keystone Exams in Algebra I, Literature, and Biology. The official data for 2015-2016 will not be released by the state until sometime later in September.

As a Focus School, we will continue to work collaboratively with parents/guardians, our community, and our school district office as a school turnaround plan has been developed which will implement interventions to respond to the specific needs of improving the performance of our low-performing student subgroups. The school has added a Keystone Workshop course to provide support to students in Algebra I, Literature, and Biology. All teachers are also available to provide intervention and tutoring after school every Tuesday and Wednesday throughout the year from 2:50 to 3:30 p.m. Our Advisory Committees continue to specifically address individual academic student concerns, and each time the groups meet, students will have access to grades from Classroll. Students will be encouraged to take college aptitude exams, such as the PSAT, ASVAB, and SAT. The Guidance Office also offers follow-up sessions to better prepare students for post-secondary education, and additional AP and dual enrollment courses continue to be added.

An important part of the success plan for Clairton Middle/High 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 either of us using the information below

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

Sincerely,



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