



Tamaqua Area High School  
500 Penn Street  
Tamaqua, PA 18252  
Phone: (570) 668-1901  
Fax: (570) 668-2970

Tamaqua Area Middle School  
502 Penn Street  
Tamaqua, PA 18252  
Phone: (570) 668-1210  
Fax: (570) 668-5027

Tamaqua Elementary School  
1 Boyle Avenue  
Tamaqua, PA 18252  
Phone: (570) 668-3306  
Fax: (570) 668-3235

Rush Elementary School  
50 Meadow Avenue  
Tamaqua, PA 18252  
Phone: (570) 668-6932  
Fax: (570) 668-6958

West Penn Elementary School  
185 School Drive  
New Ringgold, PA 17960  
Phone: (570) 386-5051  
Fax: (570) 386-3226

Dear Tamaqua Elementary Families,

Under the accountability provisions of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, all schools and school districts within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are evaluated on the following measures: student proficiency levels in reading and math, student participation rate, graduation rate (for high schools and school districts, only) or attendance rate (for elementary and junior high schools).

The 2012 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) results show that all schools within the Tamaqua Area School District were successful in making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in attendance, graduation and participation rates. However, some targets were not met in student proficiency levels in reading and math at Tamaqua Elementary, thus placing the school in the School Improvement (first year) cycle as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Schools and Districts need to meet AYP goals/targets for Academic Performance and Test Participation in the grade levels used for calculations. Results for subgroups are used only when there are 40 or more students in the group (although a school with fewer than 40 students is still accountable at the overall level). Thus, while NCLB defines 41 possible AYP goals/targets to meet, most schools and LEAs in Pennsylvania do not have enough students to make all of these indicators applicable. In Tamaqua Area School District's Elementary Schools, Tamaqua Elementary is assessed on a total of 17 targets. By comparison, West Penn Elementary School is assessed on 9 targets.

Tamaqua Elementary met 14 of 17 targets that are measured. In order to improve performance, Tamaqua Elementary is using a series of tools, resources, supports and programs to assist our students in the educational environment to positively impact student achievement.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education's threshold target for the number students advanced and proficient in **math** for 2011-12 is 78% of the testable student population. The Pennsylvania Department of Education's threshold target for the number students advanced and proficient in **reading** for 2011-12 is 81% of the testable student population. During this school year Pennsylvania schools averaged 74% proficiency in Math and 71% proficiency in Reading. Tamaqua Area School

District averaged 76% proficiency in Math and 74% proficiency in Reading. Tamaqua Elementary averaged 71% proficiency in Math and 68% proficiency in Reading.

The PSSA results for Tamaqua Elementary indicate the following groups of students did not meet the state's academic achievement targets in math:

- Students with IEPs (36.1% proficiency)
- Economically Disadvantaged (63.5% proficiency)

The PSSA results for Tamaqua Elementary indicate the following groups of students did not meet the state's academic achievement targets in reading:

- Students with IEPs (36.6% proficiency)

As Tamaqua Elementary did not meet all targets in 2011-12, the school has been placed in the Commonwealth's school improvement system. As a Title I school identified for school improvement, Tamaqua Elementary needs to offer parents/guardians of children attending our school the option to transfer to another school within the District that is not identified for school improvement. Should you decide to exercise the school choice option transportation will be provided by the school district for as long as Tamaqua Elementary remains in Title I School Improvement. If a requested transfer is approved, your child will be permitted to attend the choice school until he or she completes the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, however the district will not pay transportation costs once the school exits school improvement. You should also be aware that the Pennsylvania Department of Education recently filed a request with the U.S. Department of Education for flexibility from certain requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. If approved this waiver could substantially change our school improvement status and the school choice option.

If you would like more information about the option to transfer please contact me at (570) 668-3306.

Tamaqua Elementary is committed to continuing to grow student performance. As a result of the 2011-12 PSSA, Tamaqua has identified the following areas as key strategies for instructional growth.

### *Math Strategies*

- Implementation of Common Core Aligned Math Curriculum
- Daily instruction in conjunction with State Academic Standards
- Quarterly assessments monitoring student academic growth
- Teacher utilization of PSSA Assessment Anchors
- Differentiated instruction of math strategies to strengthen skill development
- Additional support provided by instructional strategies, independent materials and after-school tutorial programs

- Teacher Professional Development focused on facilitating student achievement

### *Reading Strategies*

- Tests to chart student growth
- Daily instruction in conjunction with State Academic Standards
- Quarterly assessments monitoring student academic growth
- Teacher utilization of PSSA Assessment Anchors
- Differentiated instruction of reading strategies to strengthen skill development
- Teacher Professional Development focused on facilitating student achievement

Parent support is essential to the success of Tamaqua Elementary. Communicating with your child's teachers, making sure your child attends school regularly, helping your child with homework, monitoring your child's television time, volunteering at the school, and participating in school decision-making are important. The district-wide parent involvement policy will be updated in the fall of 2014. If you are interested in providing input for this policy, please call Assistant Superintendent, Raymond Kinder at (570) 668-2570. In addition, Tamaqua Elementary will have its annual meeting to revise our school parent involvement policy and parent compact and to review parent rights under Title I. This meeting is currently scheduled for to take place during the fall of 2013.

The many successes at Tamaqua cannot be measured in one test. We appreciate your continued support. We must admit, however, that if all of our students are not doing as well as expected, we are not as good as we can be. The Superintendent's message that all students will achieve due to unwavering standards that include a safe environment, challenging academics and the ability to dream is our unqualified commitment to you and our students. Please continue to work with both Tamaqua Elementary School and the Tamaqua Area School District to make sure that we achieve success for each and every student.

Sincerely,

Steven K. Behr, Principal  
Tamaqua Elementary Schools