

Guaranteed College Admission Gaining Momentum

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—BY WARREN HOWELER—



Jason Bottiglieri

School districts across Bradford and Sullivan Counties are signing up to participate in a new initiative that is being spearheaded by the Commonwealth University of PA.

That program provides for guaranteed college admission for local students to any of the three colleges that make up the Commonwealth University— Bloomsburg, Lock Haven and Mansfield—and provides the opportunity for those students to obtain \$28,000 in scholarships as well.

The Wyalusing Area School District entered into a five-year agreement with the Commonwealth University following the board's approval of that contract at its Oct. 10 meeting.

"The Commonwealth University Guaranteed Admission Agreement will provide an opportunity for students to further their education while maintaining a local connection," said Wyalusing School Superintendent Dr. Jason Bottiglieri. "Students will be able to earn tuition scholarship money for earning a high GPA while in high school, which is a motivating factor that supports our expectations for students which include maintaining good moral character, consistent attendance and academic proficiency during the final year of their high school career."

Wyalusing is one of six Bradford County school districts to have signed on to this new program.

The Athens, Canton, Sayre, Towanda and Troy School Districts have all approved agreements with the Commonwealth

University of PA.

The Sullivan County School District is also participating in this initiative.

Under the terms of the program, high school students who apply for admission to Commonwealth University—and graduate from their school—are guaranteed admission to any of the university's three colleges.

The students, though, have to apply to Commonwealth University by Dec. 15 of their senior year and satisfy all of the application requirements to the majors being offered at the colleges.

As part of this initiative, Commonwealth University will award four tiers of academic merit scholarships to local graduates based on their grade point average.

Those scholarships are:

–Tier One: 95 percent or above cumulative grade point average. This scholarship awards \$7,000 per year or \$28,000 total.

–Tier Two: 90-94 percent cumulative grade point average. This scholarship awards \$6,000 per year or \$24,000 total.

–Tier Three: 85-89 percent cumulative grade point average. This scholarship awards \$4,000 per year or \$16,000 total.

–Tier Four: 80-84 percent cumulative grade point average. This scholarship awards \$3,000 per year or \$12,000 total.

Additionally, Commonwealth University will guarantee on-campus housing for the student at either of the three campuses for up to four years of full-time student enrollment.

The purpose of the program, according to the agreement between the university and school districts, is five-fold:

–To establish a guaranteed admissions agreement to recognize and reward the academic preparation of all graduates in their pursuit of higher education.

–To enable graduates to build upon their education and training by earning a baccalaureate degree in a seamless educational partnership.

–To enable Commonwealth University to attract a more diverse population of students who have already demonstrated academic success.

–To enable graduates to obtain a quality education at a low cost and, in doing so, provide the commonwealth with additional qualified graduates.

–To ensure recognition of the continuity of academic progress, consideration for the transferability of credits between secondary and post-secondary institutions, and to reward strong academic performance during the students' high school career.

The first group of eligible high school students to participate in this program are members of the various classes of 2023 who will enroll at Commonwealth University for the fall 2023 academic semester.