

Good Afternoon, this is Steve Mares, principal of Athens Drive Magnet High School with a special announcement regarding our Bell Schedule for the 2018 – 2019 school year. A copy of these announcement will be posted on our school website, emailed and texted to our families, and e-mailed to the Athens Drive PTSA email group.

As our staff examined and reflected on our instructional practices, particularly with regards to our SMART Lunch program, throughout the school year and at the end of last year, we felt like our SMART Lunch offering was not supporting our students and the teaching and learning at Athens Drive as it had been envisioned when it was rolled out many years ago. To better support our students, provide time for teachers to re-teach or reinforce learning, and to allow time during the day for our students to make-up work or receive smaller-group instruction, we felt we needed to make changes to SMART Lunch and the way we support teaching and learning.

So, with emphasis on providing daily time for our students to have targeted support for their classes in a more structured setting than SMART Lunch, we have devised a new Athens Advantage Time that we are incorporating into our schedule. Each day of the week, a different class period will have extended time added onto their period to provide that support to our students. On Monday, our First Period class will have Athens Advantage Time added to their Period; on Tuesday, Second Period; on Wednesday, Third Period; and on Thursday, Fourth Period. On Friday, we will have our Drive Time period each week. During this time, students who have below an 80 percent grade in class and who have missing assignments, will be required to stay in that Period. The students who remain in the Athens Advantage Time will have the opportunity to make-up work, receive more individualized instruction, and have opportunities to show mastery of the subject. Those students who have an 80 percent or above and have all their assignments turned in, will be allowed to leave the Athens Advantage Time and either go to Library, Computer Lab, Cafeteria, Auditorium, or Gym. These students will not be allowed to leave campus, but can use this time to work on homework, work in groups to complete projects, study for their classes, or catch-up with friends. We hope this is an incentive to our students to stay on top of their studies, and achieve at their highest potential at all times, in all subjects. We want to set our students up for success, and we hope our Athens Advantage Time will better help our students receive the support they need to increase their achievement.

Due to the addition of this time for our students, and due to an expected increase in the number of students we will have at Athens Drive this year, we are thus changing how we operate SMART Lunch and our Lunch schedules. On Monday, Tuesday, and Friday, we will be having two lunch periods. Our “A” Lunch will be for students who have an English, Math, Social Studies, Special Education, or Performing Arts class during Third Period. Those students will have First Period, Second Period, “A” Lunch, Third Period, and Fourth Period. Our “B” Lunch will be for students whose Third Period class is Science, CTE, Visual Arts, Foreign Language, ESL, Physical Education/Healthful Living, or is in a Modular Unit. Those students will have First Period, Second Period, Third Period, “B” Lunch, and Fourth Period. On Wednesday and Thursday, we will have a Common Lunch Period for all students after Second Period. We are doing this for several reasons: we want to still offer a Tutorial by Department during each of the Common Lunch blocks; we want to have time during our instructional day for students to meet and be involved in clubs; and we also wanted to allow all students to have time to have lunch together who may otherwise be split apart because of the “A” and “B” Lunch schedule.

A copy of our new Bell Schedule is now posted on our website (<https://bit.ly/2PpAOls>) and will be posted throughout the school. Please know that we will be working with our students so that they understand the structure, expectations, and schedule they follow. I have no doubts about our students’ abilities to master their studies and this new schedule. Please know that our efforts are focused on student success and student achievement.

I will send out my usual weekly message this Friday afternoon, August 24th. Thank you for your attention to this information and know that I appreciate your support of our efforts to find the best ways to support teaching and learning and help each of our students reach his/her ultimate potential. Please continue to check the Athens Drive website (www.wcpss.net/athensdrivehs) for general information and to help you stay informed. Please have a safe, enjoyable rest of the week. Go JAGS and please take care.