

Good Afternoon, this is Steve Mares, principal of Athens Drive Magnet High School with announcements for the upcoming week. A copy of these announcements will be posted on our school website, emailed and texted to our school families, and e-mailed to the Athens Drive PTSA email group.

Please remember that next Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup> is the final day of classes for this calendar year. Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup> is also an Early Release Day and students will be dismissed at 11:35 a.m. School will be closed beginning on Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> through Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>. School will begin again after the Holidays on Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>. Students need to be in class, on-time, and ready to learn by 7:25 a.m. on Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

I am very appreciative that our PTSA Hospitality Committee is planning a Holiday Cookie and Treat Extravaganza on Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, to show their support for the Athens Drive staff. If you would like to contribute to this Extravaganza, the PTSA would welcome donations of favorite family recipes for holiday cookies, fudge, candied nuts, or even monetary donations (made out to the PTSA). Please drop off and/or send in items and be sure to label them "Hospitality" to the Main Office by Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, or Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, by 8:00 a.m. If you have any questions, please contact Shanna Ratashak at [kratashak@nc.rr.com](mailto:kratashak@nc.rr.com). Thank you for your support of our PTSA and our staff! Please know it means a lot.

The Spring Musical has been announced! The Athens Drive Theatre Department will be producing *In The Heights* with music and lyrics by *Hamilton's* Lin-Manuel Miranda. The Theatre Department will be hosting a Dance Workshop on Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup> from 2:45 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. in the Auditorium with our professional choreographer, Chasta Hamilton, owner of Stage Door Dance. Attendees should bring dress code appropriate work out clothing to wear during the workshop. While it is not mandatory to attend the workshop, it is put on for the benefit of all students, regardless of previous dance experience. For more information, please see Ms. Hayes in Trailer 6 or email her at [ahayes3@wcpss.net](mailto:ahayes3@wcpss.net).

Athens Drive is hosting a Charity Dodgeball Tournament on Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Upper Gym. I want to thank our students for making a difference and having some fun!

I am fired up that our Marching Band (150 students strong!) will be traveling to the Outback Bowl in Tampa, Florida over the Holiday break! They will be representing Athens Drive Magnet High School and performing for the official Outback Bowl Parade and the Halftime field show! I am proud of their hard work and look forward to hearing great things about their performance, experience, and how they represented The Drive!

The Fall Semester Final Exam schedule is posted on our website. Please understand that Teacher-Made Exams and Review Day will begin on Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>. Beginning Friday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, we will begin administering End-Of-Course (EOCs) Exams. Beginning Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, we will begin administering NCFEs and CTE Post Assessments. Please remember that EOCs, NCFEs, and CTE Post Assessments are State-mandated Exams and all students must take these Exams. There are no Senior Exam Exemptions for those Exams. Final Exams count 20% of a student's final grade. Please also remember that if a student does not have a Final Exam scheduled for that day, he/she does not need to be on campus.

We are working on several additions to the Spring Semester Master Schedule. Due to the increase in the number of students enrolled at Athens Drive Magnet High School, we are adding several new staff members at the Semester and creating new classes. In order to balance class sizes and fill our new classes, Counselors are currently working on changing some of our student schedules. Please be aware that some student's schedule may change slightly due to the additions of new class sections. Because we are making changes, we will add a Schedule Change Request Period for students to request a schedule change. A request for schedule change(s) will be available for students that meet the following criteria:

1. Enrolled in a course you have already completed and received credit.
2. Enrolled in a course for which you have not met the prerequisite.
3. Do not have a full schedule of 4 classes.
4. Want to move up/drop down a level in a core class (Must have signed Release form if dropping Honors/AP course).

## 5. Course needed for promotion and/or Graduation

Request for Schedule Change forms will be available on Thursday, January 4, 2018 in the Student Services office. All forms must be completed and returned to the Student Services office by 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>. This is a firm deadline and no forms will be accepted after this time. I am excited to be able to add new staff, create new classes, and reduce class sizes for several of our core instructional classes.

Once Final Exams begin, Student Services will not be able to sign driver's eligibility forms until all grades are final for the First Semester. Driver's eligibility forms will not be signed from Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, February 1<sup>st</sup> to ensure that all grades are stored/finalized so that we can verify that students have met the educational requirement for DMV. We will resume signing DMV forms on Friday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Even though we will be out of school over the Holidays, many of our teams will still be competing in tournaments. We are hosting the WRAL Wrestling Tournament and a Junior Varsity Basketball tournament over the Holiday break. Please check the Athens Drive Athletics website ([www.wakecountyathletics.com/athensdrivehs](http://www.wakecountyathletics.com/athensdrivehs)) for game dates and times. Thank you for supporting our incredible student athletes!

Those are all of the announcements for this week. Please continue to check the Athens Drive website ([www.wcpss.net/athensdrivehs](http://www.wcpss.net/athensdrivehs)) for general information to help you stay informed. Because next week is a short week, this will be my final telephone message for 2017. I would just like to take this opportunity to wish everybody much peace and love over our Holiday break. Those are things that I believe are most needed in our world right now—peace and love. I believe this is a wonderful time of the year to slow down, relax, cherish the time with our loved ones, and count our many blessings. Our children are truly the greatest blessings of all, and I thank you for sharing yours with us. It is our honor and pleasure to serve them and try to make a positive difference in their lives! I look forward to a New Year of renewed enthusiasm and commitment to our core values and moving each student to his/her ultimate potential! I wish each of you a very peaceful and joyous Holiday season, and a New Year filled with much promise and hope! If you are traveling over the Holidays, please be safe. Go JAGS and please take care!