

Good afternoon, this is Steve Mares, principal of Athens Drive Magnet High School, with a special announcement for Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>. A copy of this special message will be posted on our school website (<https://www.wcpss.net/athensdrivehs>), emailed and texted to our school families, and linked to the PTSA Athens Alert newsletter (<https://athensdriveptsa.com>).

## **NEW OR UPDATED ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**DRIVE-THROUGH AT THE DRIVE POSTPONED AGAIN—NOW SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY, JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup>:** It is with a heavy heart that I once again need to postpone our Drive-Through at The Drive event that was scheduled to be held this evening. Based on the events in Raleigh the last few nights, and to remain in compliance with the curfew that has been established tonight by the Mayor of the City of Raleigh, we need to postpone this event. My heart hurts each time that I have had to postpone this event. We are committed to making this work, and look forward to celebrating with our Seniors next Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, at the same time, 6:30 p.m. until 10:00 p.m.

**HONOR STOLES, HONOR CORDS, CAP AND GOWN, AND YEARBOOK DISTRIBUTION—TOMORROW, TUESDAY, JUNE 2<sup>ND</sup>:** Please remember that tomorrow, Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m., we will distribute Honor Stoles, Honor Cords, and Caps and Gowns for those students who did not get them on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. Students will also have the opportunity to pick-up their Yearbook at this time as well. Please know the following about this event:

- This event is for Seniors AND for ANY STUDENT who purchased a Yearbook.
- Students/families must remain in the car. Nobody in any of the cars who drive-thru our distribution event can leave the car. Thank you for your understanding and adherence to this policy.
- Please remember to maintain social distancing throughout the event, so no high-fives, hugs, etc. out the window for other students and staff that may be there. Thank you.
- Please remember that the student/family must turn onto Jaguar Park Drive, follow Jaguar Park Drive until they take a Left Turn into the last entrance to the Stadium Parking Lot, follow the Parking Lot road in front of the Stadium, enter the Upper Senior Parking Lot where our Distribution stations will be located, and then Exit by taking a Right Turn out of the Senior Parking Lot onto Jaguar Park Drive. We will have a few staff there assisting, but this is the route for Honor Stoles, Honor Cords, Cap and Gown, and Yearbook pick-up.

I look forward to honoring the incredible academic achievements of our students with the distribution of these Honor recognitions and celebrating the 2020 – 2021 school year with the awesome Yearbook that our students created!

**SELECTING A NUMERIC GRADE FOR A STUDENT'S FINAL GRADE FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER—FOR FRESHMEN, SOPHOMORES, AND JUNIORS ONLY:** Please remember that by this coming Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, if a student/family wants to select a Numeric Grade for the Semester, the student/family MUST complete the [2020 Spring Semester Grade Selection Form](#). If a student only wants the PC-19, the student/family does NOT have to do anything, as that is the default grade for every course if a student is passing. Please remember that Seniors do NOT need to concern themselves with this, as they will receive either a PC-19 or WC-19. Seniors, please see information below from my previous messages regarding Senior Grading. For our Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Grade students, here is the timeline and information on how this will happen:

- On Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, Teachers finalized every student's grade in PowerSchool. Please be sure you review the student's grades after this time in PowerSchool to see what Numeric Grade would be posted for the

Spring Semester 2020 to the Transcript. Once you have reviewed your student's grades, if you decide you want the Numeric Grade(s) to post to the Transcript, complete the 2020 Spring Semester Grade Selection Form before 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup> for each class the student wants a Numeric Grade.

- Please remember that if you do NOT want a Numeric Grade to post, you do NOT need to do anything. The Default Grade is either a PC-19 or WC-19.
- Please know that a student must complete a 2020 Spring Semester Grade Selection Form for EACH class that the student wants a Numeric Grade for. Thus, if a student wants a Numeric Grade for all 4 of his/her classes, then the student needs to complete 4 2020 Spring Semester Grade Selection Forms.
- Please know that when a student/family submits a 2020 Spring Semester Grade Selection Form, that informs us that both the student and parent/guardian agree that the grade for the student will be a Numeric Grade and NOT a PC-19 or WC-19.
- If the student/family already knows right now that they want to keep their Numeric Grade, a student/family can submit the 2020 Spring Semester Grade Selection Form. You do NOT need to wait until Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup> to submit this Form. Please feel free to immediately begin completing the Form if you know that you want to keep the Numeric Grade.
- Please know that once the decision is made to accept the Numeric Grade, the decision is final and will not be changed at a later date.
- If you have any questions regarding your student's grade, please feel free to reach out to your student's Teacher, Counselor, or Administrator.

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) MAKE-UP EXAMS TAKE PLACE THIS WEEK:** For those students who were unable to save or submit their AP Exam, or if a student could not take an AP Exam when it was administered, AP Make-Up Exams will be administered this week, from today, Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup> through Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup>. Please visit the [AP CollegeBoard Tips for Makeup Exams](#) site to get information to support your AP Make-Up Exam administration. We wish our students well on these Exams!

**TIME FOR STUDENTS TO TURN IN ITEMS TO SCHOOL AND TO PICK UP ITEMS FROM SCHOOL ON THURSDAY, JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup> FROM 9:00 A.M. UNTIL 3:00 P.M.:** Please know that on Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., we will have an event where students can come to Athens Drive Magnet High School and turn in items that they have that belong to Athens Drive Magnet Drive High School. These items include Chromebooks and Hotspots (**from Seniors ONLY!** All other students will be able to keep their Chromebook and Hotspot), Calculators, Textbooks, Novels, Books Checked Out From Individual Teachers, Uniforms, Athletic Equipment, Arts Equipment (e.g., costumes, uniforms, instruments, mouth pieces, sheet music, scripts, etc.), Items from Club Activities (e.g., chess boards, craft materials, etc.), Candy Money from our Fundraiser, etc. In addition, this will be the last opportunity for students to come to Athens Drive and pick up any personal items that they believe are still in our school. We will begin communicating exactly what this event will look like and the specifics of how to return/pick-up items as the date gets closer. If you have items to return to us or believe your student has items still in our school, please put this event on your calendar. Thank you for your help with this!

**NO FINAL EXAMS:** Please remember that there are NO Final Exams for any course this Semester.

**FINAL DAY OF REMOTE TEACHING AND LEARNING:** Please remember that the final day for Remote Teaching and Learning will be Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>. On Thursday and Friday, June 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, staff will be involved in our on-campus Diploma distribution events. Thank you for your support of our efforts to continue to provide opportunities for student learning since the closure of school on March 16<sup>th</sup>.

**CLOSING THOUGHTS AND TAKE CARE:** Please know that I am writing to you as a caring father, principal, and member of the Athens Drive Nation. I don't pretend to know how to explain what is happening in our city and country, nor do I want to pretend that I have answers. I just felt the need as our principal to say something.

As some of you know, I came to Athens Drive almost four years ago. There were a myriad of reasons why I wanted to become a Jaguar, but two of the overriding factors in my decision were to be a member of the incredible diversity of the students, staff, and school families that make up our school family, and to help heal the wounds from the untimely passing of Dr. Hedrick. We have students, staff, and families from all walks of life, all levels of achievement, and all skill levels and needs with a wide variety of challenges and strengths. We are proudly all colors and beliefs who encompass so many talents, gifts, hopes, and dreams. I also hoped to help heal our school family from the unexpected and tragic loss of the principal that was serving our school family at the time. These were some of the reasons I felt called to serve at Athens Drive.

Here we are now, and I am deeply saddened that I cannot be with our students, staff, and school families in person to help heal our school family with regards to the hurt, pain, anger, frustration, and unexplainable logic of the events that transpired in Minneapolis. There is no other way to say this: This was a murder. I can't explain it. It was wrong. It was illegal. It was against everything that I try to stand for. My heart is heavy for George Floyd's family and the horrific impact this senseless act of violence has had on countless individuals, the African American community, and our own city and country.

As a human being and American, I am angry, saddened, frustrated, hurt, and devastated at this senseless loss of life. As a white male, I am additionally embarrassed and sorry. As heavy as my heart is, I have always lived in hope that together we can continue to make our school, community, city, state, country, and world a better place. I realize that there are different worlds that we all live in and different experiences that we all have based on our gender, race, family dynamics, country of origin, sexual orientation, etc. I feel the pain and hurt that this act of violence has caused so many. However, I realize that I cannot truly know the deep impact of this event as some of our students, staff, and school families are experiencing.

One of the many reasons I love serving at The Drive is to have the opportunity for our school family to address these issues and offer a chance to share thoughts, ideas, frustrations, and solutions. We are a family, and while we have our issues like every family, we also care passionately about each other and work to make each day a great day of teaching and learning. That is not just a catch phrase for us. It is what drives us—to serve in a way that lifts our teachers and staff up to teach to their highest capacity and to serve our students in a way to provide the best learning opportunities so that they can reach the dreams they have for life after The Drive. We are a great place for teaching, learning, listening, hearing, and action with regards to events like these. We have consistently “been there” for each other and will continue to do so.

Please know that I am not saying I know how to address all these issues, as I don't have the answers. I have a lot of questions. How am I going to use my voice to stop practices that negatively impact our students, school, and community? How am I going to use my position of power to make a positive difference and change practices and policies that unequally and unjustly impact students of color, gender, etc. How do I ensure that we have a school that is without prejudice, injustice, fear, and despair? How do I recruit and retain high-quality teachers who are representative of the diversity of our school?

I promise you that I will work on solving these, and many other issues, with our entire school family to serve all our students in a way that lifts them up. I promise that I will work to be a positive example of love, care, compassion, empathy, and integrity to support and model for our students as they develop their own personal

convictions and beliefs as they prepare to move into society as adults. I promise that I will work to brighten the flame that each student brings and not reduce or extinguish their hopes and their dreams.

Racism is born in fear, ignorance, and intolerance. Please know that we work hard to create a school that is welcoming, caring, and inclusive. Do I live up to this standard every day? No. It pains me to write these words, as I care passionately about our staff, students, their families, and our school. I know that I need to work harder and better at identifying those areas that I can improve to support not only the academic achievement of our students, but their social and emotional learning as well. I know that I need to work to ensure that I am leading equitable practices to lift ALL students up and to ensure all our students feel safe to learn and grow at The Drive.

I am sad that we do not have the opportunity for our students to gather together in school to talk, to be able to listen to each other, and to feel safe. This is hard work. This is sensitive work. This is challenging work. But this is the work we need to do. I am open to listening to our students, staff, and families and examining my own actions and leadership to see how I can lead effectively in making positive changes to help impact our school family.

So, where do we go from here? Please know that we will be having conversations with our entire school family to continue to build our school to meet and exceed the needs of our students, staff, and family members. Even though you have not seen our Graduation Ceremony yet, I did want to share one statement that I make in addressing the Class of 2020. “We cannot ignore that the world has many challenges, but I trust in the future because I trust in you.” I do believe in our students and I do believe in their, and our, future. Please know that the Athens Drive Nation stands ready to continue to build a school family dedicated to equality and excellence to lift all our students to reach their ultimate potential. Please continue to be safe and take care of yourselves, your loved ones, and each other.

## **REMINDER ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM PREVIOUS SPECIAL MESSAGES THAT I HAVE NOT UPDATED:**

**SENIOR AWARDS ASSEMBLY VIRTUAL CEREMONY:** Today we celebrate our Seniors! We have finalized our Senior Awards Assembly virtual Ceremony! While we could not hold our “live” Senior Awards Assembly this year, we hope that this virtual Ceremony will put a smile on your faces (and even a few tears in your eyes!) and acknowledge the excellence of our Class of 2020! Please click on this [Senior Awards Assembly](#) link and enjoy our tribute to the accomplishments of the Class of 2020! This is a very special Class and I am certainly proud of their accomplishments both inside and outside of the classroom! Well done, Seniors!

**STEMPOSIUM:** I am so proud of the students in our STEM Energy and Sustainability Academy at Athens Drive Magnet High School! The STEM Academy is full of dedicated students who have continued to put hard work into their education. Our STEM students have completed their themed class projects and we would normally celebrate these projects at our annual STEMPosium. However, since that is not possible this year, our students are sharing them electronically in accordance with social distancing regulations. Project designs and student responses can all be found at this year's virtual STEMPosium event! Please visit this [STEMPosium](#) link to see the efforts our students have contributed to these projects and enjoy the amazing student work!

**VIRTUAL GRADUATION INFORMATION:** Please remember that our virtual Graduation Ceremony will be broadcast at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>. This will include aspects of the traditional Graduation program including student and principal speeches, the turning of tassels, and the calling of each Senior’s name. Closer to

the Graduation broadcast date, we will share avenues to access the ceremony via the school website. It will also be available after that time if that is more convenient for families and will be available for families to save the video.

**DRIVE-THROUGH DIPLOMA CEREMONY:** In addition to our virtual Graduation on June 10<sup>th</sup>, Athens Drive Magnet High School will also recognize the Class of 2020 with a Drive-Through Diploma distribution event on Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup> (Last Names beginning with A through L) and on Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup> (Last Names beginning with M through Z), from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Please understand that during these drive-through events, students will get out of their car, have their name called, walk across an outdoor stage, get a photo taken with me handing them their Diploma (socially distancing, of course) and then get back into their cars. Please mark your calendar for these dates! Family members will be more than welcomed to drive more than one car to watch this event and capture it with pictures from the car. We will have staff taking pictures to share as well. More details will be communicated as we get closer to this event.

**MY THINKING ABOUT WHETHER TO KEEP THE NUMERIC GRADE OR TAKE THE PASS (PC-19):** In deciding whether a student takes a Numeric Grade or the Pass (PC-19), I thought I would share my own thoughts with you. This is coming from me as both a Principal and a Dad, as I am giving this advice to my own Freshman. Take this for what it is worth...! My thinking, in general, is if the student has a Grade that is an "A" (90 – 100), take the Numeric Grade. If the student has a Grade that is a "B" (80 – 89), take the Numeric Grade. These are rather no-brainer decisions. The tougher decisions come when we are talking about a "C" (70 – 79) or a "D" (60 – 69) Grade. My thinking is that if the student is thinking about going to a College/University upon Graduating, then the student needs to take the Numeric Grade if they are receiving a "C" or higher. My reasoning is that I worry that College Admission Counselors in a year, two years, or three years are going to think that the PC-19 grade must have been a bad grade if the student did not take the Numeric Grade. Thus, if a student doesn't take the Numeric Grade and earned a 79 in a class, I worry that a College Admissions Counselor may think that the PC-19 Grade represents a much lower grade and it negatively impacts a student's application to get admitted to a College/University. So, I think being transparent is the better option. Especially if the "C" Grade is for an Honors course, I would take the Numeric Grade. And, mathematically speaking, if a student is worried about the impact of a "C" Grade on their Grade Point Average (GPA), a "C" grade does not negatively impact a GPA very much when you consider the student earns 32 credits in High School. I just truly feel that being open about the Grade is a better decision. I also think if a student receives a "D," the best option is probably a PC-19 instead of the Numeric Grade. Again, this is just my thinking and how I am advising my own son and others who ask me. I hope this helps or at least allows you to think about this decision in different ways. If you have specific issues, concerns, etc., please do not hesitate to reach out to your student's teacher, counselor, or Administrator to help you think through this decision.

**PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETICS IN THE 2020 – 2021 SCHOOL YEAR:** We are working with our feeder Middle Schools to get information out to our rising Freshmen who are interested in participating in Athletics in the 2020 – 2021 school year. We also want to be sure that if we have any students currently at Athens Drive that are interested in participating in Athletics next year also get this information. If your student is interested in participating in Athletics during the 2020 - 2021 school year, please click on this link [Athens Drive Athletics Interest Form](#) and respond to all the questions. In June, the Head Coach of each of the sports we offer at Athens Drive will send sport specific information to anyone that fills out the form indicating they would like additional information. Please remember that all student athletes must have an up-to-date physical prior to participating in any off-season workouts or tryouts. Please know that this link [Sign Up for the Athletic Department Email Group](#) will take you to the Athens Drive Athletics website. At the top of the website you can register for our Athletic Department email group where you will receive information about schedules, sports passes for next year, and all other athletic department updates. If you have any questions feel free to email Travis Seese ([tseese@wcpss.net](mailto:tseese@wcpss.net)), our Athletic Director, at any time.



**UPDATE ON ATHLETIC PHYSICAL INFORMATION:** We have been receiving information from the North Carolina High School Athletic Association regarding eligibility for student athletes for the 2020 – 2021 school year. We have been informed that all student athletes who had a valid Pre-Participation Examination (PPE) form dated anytime from April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 through May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 (used for the 2019 – 2020 school year) will be granted a temporary one-year extension through the end of the 2020 – 2021 school year. I hope this table helps you understand the new interpretations for participating in Athletics for the 2020 – 2021 Athletic Seasons:

Date of Current Physical	Requirement for 2020 – 2021 School Year
Prior to 04/01/2019	Need valid, up-to-date physical prior to participating.
On or after 04/01/2019 through 05/01/2020	Granted a temporary extension to participate through the end of the 2020 – 2021 academic school year.
On or after 05/02/20	Will participate based on the current policy of being “valid for 395 days.”

If allowed this summer, a student athlete can participate in 2020 Summer Workouts with a physical dated on-or-after April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Please also remember that a rising Ninth Grade student athlete is also subject to all the above. In addition, please know that the family history portion of the PPE Form is required annually and must be renewed prior to athletic participation during the 2020 - 2021 school year. There is no waiver to this requirement. Also, the Gfeller-Waller Form (concussion) is required and must be reviewed and signed prior to athletic participation during the 2020 - 2021 school year. And, finally, the Athens Drive Athletic Packet needs to be completed and submitted in to be able to participate in athletics during the 2020 - 2021 school year. Thank you for your understanding of the changing aspects of requirements for our student athletes.

**MARCHING BAND INFORMATION:** The Athens Drive Magnet High School Marching Band would like to invite you to be a part of our 2020 – 2021 season. Registration is open now through June 19<sup>th</sup>. Please remember, Marching Band is an after-school activity. We welcome all students to participate regardless of their academic schedule or their prior music experience! If you are interested in being a member of the band or color guard, you can find more information and the registration form at <http://www.athensdriveband.com/>. If you want to see what it is all about (highlights from this year), please visit the following sites: [Marching Band](#), [Color Guard](#), and [Percussion](#). For more information, please contact the Athens Drive Magnet High School Band Boosters at [president@athensdriveband.com](mailto:president@athensdriveband.com). Thank you for sharing your talents in these incredible ways!

**PROPOSED 2020 – 2021 SCHOOL CALENDARS:** Please remember that the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) Board of Education met last Tuesday and discussed School Calendars for the 2020 – 2021 school year based on new legislation approved by the General Assembly in April. You can find information on our proposed [Traditional Calendar](#), [questions](#) that the Board has received since the release of the proposed Calendars, and you can visit the [on-line forum](#) to ask questions and/or provide feedback. Thank you for your attention to this very different Calendar for next year!

**GRADING INFORMATION:** Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) sent out new final Grading Guidelines for students in Grades Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Grades. While the information you received from WCPSS is comprehensive and explained in detail, I wanted to give a brief summary so that we all understand how we are moving forward with regards to Grading for students in Grades 9<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup>:

- **NO FINAL EXAMS:** All Final Exams, whether State, Federal, or Teacher-Made Final Exams have been canceled.
- **NO FOURTH QUARTER GRADE:** When our students receive their Report Cards, there will NOT be a Grade for Fourth Quarter. Any changes to a student's grade will be made to the student's Third Quarter average.
- **GRADES CANNOT DROP LOWER THAN THE STUDENT'S THIRD QUARTER AVERAGE:** When you check your student's Third Quarter Grade in PowerSchool today, that is the Grade they have. This grade will not drop. It can be raised, but it cannot be lowered.
- **THERE WILL NOT BE ANY "F" GRADES GIVEN THIS SEMESTER:** Any student who is not passing their course at the end of the school year will be Withdrawn from the course and given a "WC-19" Grade. The student will NOT receive a credit for the course. This grade will not impact the student's Grade Point Average (GPA) in anyway.
- **STUDENTS CAN CHOOSE WHETHER TO HAVE A NUMERIC GRADE OR A PASS ("PC-19") GRADE:** Once a student views his/her Final Grade for the Semester on Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, he/she will need to make a decision as to whether he/she wants the Numeric Average or a Pass Grade. If a student chooses a Numeric Grade, that grade will impact the student's GPA. If a student takes a Pass ("PC-19"), that grade will NOT impact the student's GPA. The student would earn their credit for the course in both scenarios. More information regarding how students/families will notify us of their decision will come out later.
- **STUDENTS WILL KNOW THEIR FINAL GRADE BY FRIDAY, MAY 29<sup>TH</sup>:** Teachers will be finalizing student grades by Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. A student will then know their Final Grade and be able to decide at that time whether the student wants to keep their Numeric Grade or take a Pass for the grade in the course.
- **STUDENTS WILL MAKE DECISIONS ON A COURSE-BY-COURSE BASIS:** Our students will decide about whether they want to keep their Numeric Grade or take a Pass for each course they have. For example, a student could decide to keep a Numeric Grade for two of the courses the student is taking and take a Pass for the other two courses.
- **THE DEFAULT GRADE FOR ALL STUDENTS WILL BE PASS:** Where our students have an opportunity to choose a Numeric Grade or a Pass Grade, the default Grade will be Pass. Thus, if a student wants to take a Pass, he/she will not need to do anything to notify us. If a student wants to keep their Numeric Grade, they will need to let us know that information. We will be sharing the process to inform us how a student wants to record his/her Grade as we get closer to Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>.
- **STUDENTS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE THEIR QUARTER THREE GRADE IF THEY WANT:** Beginning yesterday, Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, students will be able to earn grades and increase their Third Quarter Grade. Please understand that it will be rare that a student will be able to raise their grade more than to improve it one letter grade. Due to the amount of time that we have for Grading and the coursework that has previously been completed, a student should not expect to move their Final Grade to a grade that is more than one letter grade higher than where they currently stand.
- **YEARLONG COURSES (WE ONLY HAVE A FEW OF THESE COURSES):** For students who are taking a Year-Long Course, the course will be broken into two half-credits courses. A student would receive 0.5 credits for the Grade they received in the Fall Semester if they passed the course, and 0.5 credits for the Grade they received in the Spring Semester if they passed the course. For the Fall Semester Grade, a student can choose to improve this grade since it was not originally scheduled to be a "Final" Grade for the course. For the Spring Semester, a student can choose whether they want to keep a Numeric Grade for their Final Grade or take a Pass Grade. The two Semester Grades will add together to provide a student with a full credit for the course.
- **FALL 2019 SEMESTER COURSES:** Since we finished the Fall Semester in a "normal" manner and students have already received the grades for those four courses, students will keep the grades they earned

and that have already been posted for all First Semester courses in the Fall 2019 Semester. These Grading Guidelines refer to only the Spring Semester.

- **IN SUMMARY—THIRD QUARTER GRADE WILL BE THE FINAL GRADE:** Thus, the Grade a student has as of this morning for their Third Quarter Grade in PowerSchool will be their Final Grade for the course. A few reminders:
  - A student who wishes to work to improve that grade and in the next few weeks earns grades that improve that Numeric Grade, the higher Grade will be their Final Grade. Please remember that a student's grade will only be raised a few points most likely and will not provide an opportunity to jump multiple grades.
  - A student will NOT receive a Grade lower than the grade for the course that is shown in PowerSchool today.
  - A student can take a Pass ("PC-19") grade for the course and not report the Numeric Grade on their Transcript.
  - A student (with Parent sign-off) will decide after Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup> if they want to take the Numeric Grade or take a Pass Grade. The student will make this decision for EVERY class the student is taking.
  - The Default Grade will be a Pass ("PC-19"). Students will need to report to their Teacher whether they want to take the Numeric Grade. Students who want the Pass Grade will not need to do anything.
  - If a student takes the Numeric Grade, that grade will be posted to the student's Transcript and will impact the student's GPA.
  - If a student takes the Pass Grade, that Numeric Grade will NOT be posted to the student's Transcript. The student will receive a PC-19 Grade and that grade will not impact a student's GPA.
  - Students who are failing a course will receive a Withdraw ("WC-19") and that grade will not impact a student's GPA. The student will NOT earn a credit for the course.

I hope this information helps you understand the new Grading Guidelines that we will be operating under for the remainder of the school year. Please reach out to your student's Teacher if you have specific questions regarding your student's performance in their class.

**GRADING GUIDELINES FOR SENIORS:** Please remember that the Grading Guidelines for our Seniors have NOT changed. They remain the same. Here is a summary to remind you of these Guidelines:

- If the Senior was passing the course as of content delivered through March 13<sup>th</sup>, the student will receive a PASS ("PC-19") for the course.
- If the student was **NOT** passing the course and the course **IS** needed for graduation, we are working with the student to provide a path toward passing the course based on material presented up through March 13<sup>th</sup>.
- If the student was **NOT** passing the course and the course is **NOT** needed for graduation, the student has two options: (1) to improve their grade on course material presented up through March 13<sup>th</sup> in order to earn a "Pass," or (2) be withdrawn from the course with a grade of "WC19" (Withdraw COVID-19) appearing on the transcript (no awarding of credit; will not impact GPA or class rank). For Option 1, we are approaching it just like in the previous bullet--we are working with the student to provide a path toward passing the course based on material presented through March 13<sup>th</sup>. For Option 2, if a student wants to withdraw from the course that they were failing but did not need for Graduation requirements, they will have to communicate directly with me and I will need written notice from the student and their parent to withdraw them from the course. We will communicate how this will be handled as we approach Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>
- **SENIOR EXAMS:** Seniors have been universally exempted from all Final Exams. Seniors will not have any Final Exams.



- **SENIOR HONORS:** Senior Honors (cum laude, magna cum laude, and summa cum laude) will all be based on cumulative grades through the end of the Fall Semester of this year. Seniors will be receiving their appropriate stoles for Graduation based on their Senior Honors.
- **SENIOR GPA:** Nothing from the Spring Semester will either improve or hurt a Senior's Grade Point Average. Seniors will only receive a PC-19 (Pass COVID-19) or a WC-19 (Withdraw COVID-19) and neither will impact a student's Grade Point Average.

**BIGGER QUESTION—IS MY STUDENT DONE FOR THE YEAR IF HE/SHE IS PASSING THEIR COURSES:** This is the big question that we are receiving from many of our students and families. I am going to give you my thoughts on this question:

- I will let you know that I do believe there is value in continuing Remote Learning for our students (and please understand that I personally have a son who is a Freshman and a daughter who is a Senior who ask me the this same questions every day...so I know what you are dealing with!) no matter what grade they have. I believe that it is important for our students to continue to maintain a schedule that provides them with learning each day—if not just for learning sake, for “normalcy” during this pandemic. In addition, I do believe that even if a student does not care to improve his/her grade, that learning for learning sake is a positive trait to instill in our students. In addition, it will be important for students to know the material that is being presented for future learning that will build on these concepts and Standards. Next year our students will need to know this material and it will be good for them to have learned this material and engaged with the curriculum for rest of this Semester. Thus, I feel it is important for our students to continue to move forward with learning and engage in our Remote Learning program.
- I will say that we have seen a drop-off in Attendance in the past week. I know that the COVID-19 pandemic poses many challenges to teaching and learning, but if a student can engage in learning, I would encourage the student to engage in learning.
- Please remember that a student can improve his/her grade by earning grades in the next few weeks that improve the grade that is posted in PowerSchool and the higher grade will be the grade entered into PowerSchool and listed on the student's Transcript if the student chooses to take the Numeric Grade.
- However, technically, if a student has a “passing” grade in PowerSchool today (a grade of 60% or higher), then the student at the end of this Semester will have technically “passed” the course and earned the credit. The student will decide if he/wants the Numeric Grade or take a Pass for the course.

So, my short answer is yes, please continue to have your student engage in learning and fully participate in our Remote Learning program. We are still in “school” and students should engage in the learning.

**BUS RIDER INFORMATION FOR THE 2020 – 2021 SCHOOL YEAR:** Please know that Bus Rider registration opened today, Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>. Students who rode a bus to school this year will be notified via School Messenger tomorrow, May 12<sup>th</sup>, about the process. Please understand that while we still do not know for sure the impact COVID-19 may have on our schedule for the coming school year, WCPSS still needs to begin the process of planning bus routes to accommodate our students. The biggest piece of information to remember is that if your student is eligible for Transportation to Athens Drive Magnet High School and will be riding the bus to Athens again next year, you do not need to do anything. However, if you need to update your bus service needs for the 2020 -2021 school year, please go to [www.wcpss.net/busrider](http://www.wcpss.net/busrider) and let WCPSS know. Additionally, if your student is assigned to a bus but is not a bus rider, please submit the decline bus form at [www.wcpss.net/declinebus](http://www.wcpss.net/declinebus) so that WCPSS has the most up-to-date information to plan routes. Finally, as you think about riding the bus, please know that WCPSS will assure student safety by taking all measures recommended by public health officials with regards to Bus Transportation.

**INFORMATION ON COVID-19 FROM WCPSS:** A good website to stay up-to-date on information from WCPSS can be found at this [link](#). This page shares information and launches you to other sites for additional information regarding Remote Learning, Resources, etc.

**PROCESS FOR OBTAINING A DRIVER'S ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATE:** To meet the needs of our students and families, we will be implementing the following process to allow students to receive a Driver's Eligibility Certificate (DEC) while our school building is closed due to COVID-19. Please remember that DEC's are only valid for 30 days; therefore, students are only eligible to receive a DEC during this time if they have a **confirmed appointment with the NCDMV within 30 days of the date of the request**. You will start by sending an email request to Ms. Teresa Brown ([tbrown3@wcpss.net](mailto:tbrown3@wcpss.net)), Dean of Students, and include the email from NCDMV confirming the date/time of the appointment. You will receive an email confirming the date/time you can come to the high school to receive the DEC. Once your appointment is confirmed with us, the following steps will be taken:

- Step 1: Scan or take a photo of the following:
  - Student's birth certificate or passport
  - Completed Driver's Education Certificate (if it has not been emailed ahead of time)
  - Proof of address if the current address is different than the one listed on the Driver's Education Certificate or the address listed in PowerSchool. Address must be verified for the NC Real ID.
  - Email this information to Ms. Brown, our designated contact at the school. This will limit the amount of paper that has to be exchanged by staff and students. If you are unable to scan or take a photo of the document, then you will need to bring all these documents with you to the appointment.
- Step 2: Bring the following documents to the appointment:
  - Student's birth certificate or passport
  - Completed Driver's Education Certificate (if it has not been emailed ahead of time)
  - Proof of address if the current address is different than the one listed on the Driver's Education Certificate or the address listed in PowerSchool. Address must be verified for the NC Real ID.
- Step 3: Receiving the DEC:
  - Once you arrive for your appointment, a staff member will meet you at the front door of the school (entrance by the flagpole) to receive the DEC. It is important that we limit the amount of direct contact and maintain at least 6 feet of social distance. For this reason, please limit the number of family members (preferably just the student and a parent or guardian) who attend the appointment. Please arrive at the school promptly for your scheduled appointment to ensure that we can follow the social distancing guidelines that have been established.
  - Staff will check the student's grades for adequate progress. The student must have passed 70% of the courses taken in the prior semester to receive a DEC.
  - Once grades have been verified and all other documents are in place, the DEC can be issued to the student.

Thank you for your understanding and support of this new process to continue to provide DEC's to our students.

**HOW DO YOU GET TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT FOR YOUR STUDENT?** Wake County Public School System has set up a variety of ways to support our students during our Remote Learning:

- If our students are having technology issues, please have them contact the Remote Learning Help Desk at <http://studenttechhelp.wcpss.net> or call 919-694-8100 (Interpreters available).
- There are many helpful guides for families on the [Technology Support for Families](#) page on Remote Learning site.

- Many common technology questions from families are answered on the [Remote Learning Help Desk FAQ](#).

Please know that we are committed to supporting our students and families during this school closure and Remote Learning!

**PANDEMIC ELECTRONIC BENEFITS PROGRAM (P-EBT) FOR ELIGIBLE FAMILIES:** Please know that North Carolina has approved the distribution of additional resources to families receiving Free or Reduced-Price Lunch. The additional benefits will be through the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program to help families buy food during the COVID-19 school closure. Please visit this [website](#) for additional information on this program.

**APPLYING FOR FEDERAL FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL MEALS:** I do understand that many of our families are struggling during this COVID-19 pandemic and many families' economic and employment situations have changed during this pandemic. Please know that families can apply at any time for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, which may then also qualify a family for other State and/or Federal benefit programs. Please visit this [website](#) for additional information on applying for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch.

**FOOD DISTRIBUTION:** I want to remind our school family that we continue to provide our Food Distribution services to our school families and local community Monday through Friday, from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Please know that an updated list of all Food Distribution sites can be found at this [link](#). Please continue to share this information with anybody in our community, whether they are students of ours or not, who need this resource during these challenging times. Thank you for your help in taking care of our school families and our community!