

Good afternoon, this is Steve Mares, principal of Athens Drive Magnet High School, with a special announcement for Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. A copy of these announcements 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>).

As I have stated in my prior messages, we continue to face ever-changing information as the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), and Athens Drive Magnet High School responds to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Please know that the information that I am providing is the latest information that I have to share, and as I get additional, updated decisions, I will share that information with you all. Thank you for your understanding and patience as we work to support students and families during this pandemic.

The first topic I want to cover, and the latest change in the last few hours, is the wait for the announcement from Wake County Government Officials regarding a formal decision about a shelter-in-place order. Once I get final information regarding the implications of this order, please know that I will share that with you and how that impacts our remote learning, operational details, food distribution site, etc. Thank you, in a huge way, for your flexibility to roll with this ever-changing response to the COVID-19 pandemic!

As I have shared with my staff, I would ask us to all remember these things:

1. I know that there is a lot of stress regarding remote learning and moving to providing new, core instruction remotely. Please don't worry, we will get there together! I am sure that there are going to be problems, there will be bumps in the road, there will be issues, and we will deal with them as they come! Please know that we will continue to revise, rebuild, retool, etc. in order to continue to improve our service delivery of instruction to all our students. Please do not stress about this!
2. Please know that remote learning will be different for our students and our teachers! This will not be like a regular class or day. Our students and staff will not have the same relationship piece as much as when we are together in our school and classrooms. Please understand that instruction will not be in nice, Four Periods, 90-minute blocks of time. That is okay, and we will have to be sure we are prepared to move forward as we make this transition!
3. Please know that we still have many questions that need to be answered from all different levels (e.g., Federal, State, Local, WCPSS, School, etc.) of leadership. I have heard the questions about how will grading be conducted, what are the school expectations for instruction, what are the expectations for communication between teachers and students/families, what are the implications for school calendars, what are the potential changes to the end of the Quarter/Semester, etc. Please know that we are working through these questions and will have answers coming in the near future. For now, let's focus on those things that we can do and begin to build those connections to support remote learning and connections between students and teachers.
4. Finally, please know that we have incredible teachers and we have amazing students! Our staff is working hard to make this transition and I appreciate the hard work of our students to get on board and make this transition! We have got this, and we are going to be alright!

**LETTER FROM WCPSS THAT WENT HOME TO ALL WCPSS PARENTS LAST NIGHT:** Please find this information [here](#) if you didn't receive this. This provides good information about where we are and where we will be going. I don't want to repeat all this information, so please be sure to read the letter and other announcements from WCPSS as we move forward towards remote learning of new instruction. The main information is that we will be transitioning to teaching new instruction beginning on Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. Beginning at the end of next week, you may see our teachers begin transitioning to new materials with possible assignments and other curriculum materials.

**STUDENT TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET ACCESS INFORMATION:** It is imperative that we get information from our students about their access to Technology and to the Internet. Thus, I have asked all Drive Time (Homeroom) Teachers to email their Drive Time students and complete and submit a Google Form that will help us collect data on each student's access to technology and the Internet. Please be sure you let your students know that they need them to complete this Google Form by Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, at 12:00 noon. We will use the information we receive, and the information we do not receive, to help us plan our next steps in supporting those students who have Technology and Internet access challenges. Please be sure your students are looking out for this email either today or tomorrow and thank you for taking care of this by Friday at noon!

**NO SCHOOL UNTIL AT LEAST MAY 18<sup>TH</sup>:** In case you have not heard, Governor Cooper has closed all North Carolina schools through at least Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>.

**OPENING OF SCHOOL NEXT WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup> FOR FAMILIES WHO WANT TO PICK-UP STUDENT MEDICATION:** This could change with regards to the shelter-in-place order, but I did want you to know that WCPSS is planning to allow us to open the building next week for families of students who have medication located here at school and want to pick it up. Please know that we will continue to safely store that medication at school, not a problem. However, if you would like to pick up your student's medication(s), we will have medication administration staff members available to follow the required process for pick up on Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Please understand that this time, date, and entire event could change, but this is what is planned at this time. Please understand that in order to comply with health regulations, we must be two staff members present along with the parent when medications are counted and transferred to the control of the parent/guardian.

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) INFORMATION:** Please know that the College Board is providing students who are taking AP courses with resources to help them prepare for their AP Exams. You can find information from College Board regarding all AP Exams at this [site](#). This is a great resource for students to prepare for their AP Exams.

**EXAMS:** As you may have heard, the State did put in a waiver to suspend all Federal testing requirements for our State Accountability model. Please know that while there has not been a final decision from the State regarding Final Exams, it appears that we are moving in a direction where will not be taking Final Exams this Semester. I will certainly keep everyone posted on this topic as we move forward.

**MAY SAT ADMINISTRATION:** The College Board has informed us that in response to the rapidly evolving situation around the COVID-19, and with guidance from public health organizations, they are canceling the May 2<sup>nd</sup> SAT administration. Thus, no SAT administration at Athens Drive Magnet High School on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS WHILE ATTENDING SCHOOL REMOTELY:** As we move forward with remote learning, I think this is an important time to learn valuable lessons regarding appropriate behaviors in this new world of remote learning. As we all begin using Google Meet, etc., I believe that it is important to remember where we are (are there inappropriate pictures, images, etc. in the picture), are we dressed in an appropriate manner, etc. if we are participating in a virtual class/meeting. It is imperative that all of us keep leading and modeling those professional attributes and character traits that we want our students to develop. This is also a great time to teach students about those important technology skills--appropriate dress for remote learning; appropriate hashtags, email names, Twitter names; Snapchat names, etc. that sometimes aren't specifically taught. This might be a fantastic time to really impress the reasons why those things are so important—including safety

reasons by not giving too much personal information! Thank you for your help with these lessons as we move into this remote learning environment.

**FOOD DISTRIBUTION:** While I haven't received any formal, official directive from Wake County Government Officials or WCPSS, I would imagine that our Food Distribution efforts would be able to continue during a shelter-in-place order. Thus, please remember that Athens Drive Magnet High School is a Food Distribution site for WCPSS. Families can come to the school Monday through Friday, from 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., to get curb-side pick-up of lunches and breakfasts. Please know that an updated list of all food distribution sites can be found at this [link](#). Please 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 community!

**CLOSING THOUGHTS AND TAKE CARE:** Who would have thought that less than ten days ago remote learning, social distancing, social isolation, shelter-in-place would all be vocabulary that would frequently come out of our mouths and in our writing....truly unbelievable!! Please know that I care about all of you and the health of our students, our families, and all our loved ones. I realize the challenges and sacrifices you all are making to support your families, continue to support their learning, and implement all of the recommendations and orders that are coming at us to help us be safe and "flatten the curve." The work that our staff is doing to make connections with students and to prepare for new learning is inspiring to me as well. Please know that we are in this together, we will make mistakes, we will hit bumps, we will learn how to do things better, and we will achieve great new learning at the same time! I am not perfect, and I make mistakes all the time, and I believe that it will be fine to make mistakes as we implement this new reality. I believe that all of us, students, staff, families, etc. will see the humanity in each other as we learn and grow through this transition in learning and through this pandemic. Please know that I continue to be thankful to serve with such an amazing school family!! Please continue to take care of yourselves, each other, and be as safe as possible. Go JAGS!