

Good evening, this is Steve Mares, principal of Athens Drive Magnet High School, with a special announcement for Tuesday, May 12th. 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://athensdrivepts.com>).

NEW OR UPDATED ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 9th through 11th:

- **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ANY "F" GRADES GIVEN THIS SEMESTER:** Any student who is not passing their course at the end of the school year will be Withdrawn from the course and given a "WC-19" Grade.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 29th, 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 29TH:** Teachers will be finalizing student grades by Friday, May 29th. 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 29th.
- **STUDENTS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE THEIR QUARTER THREE GRADE IF THEY WANT:** Beginning yesterday, Monday, May 11th, 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 29th 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 13th, 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 13th.

- 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 13th 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 13th. 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 29th
- **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.

CLOSING THOUGHTS AND TAKE CARE: Thank you for your continued support of our efforts with regards to Remote Teaching and Learning! Please continue to be safe and take care of yourselves, your loved ones, and each other. **GO JAGS!**

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

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) EXAMS HAVE STARTED: Please remember that AP Exams have started today, Monday, May 11th, and will run through Friday, May 22nd. AP Exams will be taken at home and students can visit the [College Board website](https://collegeboard.org) for details. Please remember that students can request a Make-Up Exam through this link: https://education.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1B9R7XJa9dXaQBy. Also, this link is a troubleshooting guide that students can look at as well to assist them on AP Exam day: <https://apcoronavirusupdates.collegeboard.org/students/taking-ap-exams/troubleshooting>. I wish our students well on their AP Exams!

SENIOR CAP, GOWN, AND SENIOR YARD SIGN DISTRIBUTION DATE LAST FRIDAY: What a FANTASTIC time to honor our Seniors and celebrate them receiving their Cap, Gown, and Yard Sign! It was so wonderful to see so many of our Seniors and have our staff recognize them in a special way as they picked up their items! Thank you to our Seniors for coming out on Friday and I hope they felt the love!!

GRADUATION: Please know that we are working with WCPSS to explore options for how we can celebrate our Seniors. Based on State guidance and feedback from principals, parents, and students, WCPSS has decided to cancel all 2019 – 2020 traditional, in-person Graduation ceremonies scheduled for June. “Virtual” Graduation videos are one of several considerations regarding how to honor the accomplishments of our Seniors during the traditional June timeframe. Additional school-based, in-person, options are still a possibility, depending on evolving public health guidelines in the coming weeks. We are committed to recognizing our Seniors during the same period in June when we would have hosted Graduations and are working to preserve as many aspects of our traditional Graduation ceremony as possible. We look forward to getting you more details within the next week.

SENIORS—PLEASE KEEP WEDNESDAY, MAY 20TH OPEN AS WE ARE PLANNING A SPECIAL EVENT: To continue to find ways to honor and celebrate our Seniors, we are planning an event on May 20th (for the Class of 2020) at 2020 Military Time (which is 8:20 p.m. Standard Time). More information will be forthcoming, but I wanted to be sure that our Seniors keep this date and evening open.

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION FORM: We would like to recognize all the accomplishments of the Class of 2020. If your student is receiving any Scholarships (even if they are not accepting the Scholarship!), please complete the [Scholarship Information Form](#). We also gave each Senior a hard copy of this form at the Cap and Gown distribution event on Friday. Please indicate all Scholarships received on the Scholarship Information form and attach a copy of the Scholarship Award Letter/Notification that was provided by the University/College/Institution/Agency that is sponsoring the Scholarship. All Scholarship Information forms must be completed and submitted to Ms. Telfair (stelfair@wcpss.net) or Ms. Boothe (kboothe@wcpss.net) by Friday, May 15th. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Telfair or Ms. Boothe via email.

STUDENT PARKING REFUND INFORMATION DUE BY THIS FRIDAY, MAY 15TH: Due to the Governor’s Executive Order requiring our schools to close for the remainder of the school year, families will be given the option to request a refund for the unused portion of student Parking Permits. The refund amount will be \$60.00 to reimburse for 3 months of Remote Learning. Families will have the following options regarding this refund:

1. Allow the refund to carry over to the next school year (This does not guarantee a spot).
2. Receive a refund check.
3. Donate the \$60 refund to the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS).

Please email Ms. Madeline Guzman (mguzman@wcpss.net), our Bookkeeper, or send a letter through the mail to our school (Athens Drive Magnet High School Attention: Madeline Guzman 1420 Athens Drive Raleigh, NC 27606), with the following information:

- Student Name
- Parking Space Number
- Choice of refund (e.g., carryover to next year, receive a refund check, donate to WCPSS)
- Parent Name (who to make the check out to if you want a refund check)
- Address (to mail refund check if selected that option)

This information needs to come from the Parent's email account, and we need to receive this information by Friday, May 15th to process all refunds. Thank you for your timely response to this information.

ATHLETIC AWARDS WILL BE ANNOUNCED VIA TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM: As part of our continuing efforts to recognize the excellence in our students, our Athletic Awards will be announced via Twitter and Instagram this year. Please know that both our Athletic Twitter and Instagram accounts are @athensjags. We are going to release our Athletic Department Award winners throughout the day on Wednesday, May 20th. In addition, starting this week, we are going to announce all the student athletes who have signed College Letter of Intent this year, releasing a few each day. So, starting this Wednesday and lasting until the end of May, we will be announcing something with regards to our Athletics almost daily. We would love to have as many family members following these accounts so that you all can honor our outstanding student athletes!

YEARBOOK, HONOR STOLES, HONOR CORDS DISTRIBUTION EVENT: Once we have a date that we will receive our Yearbooks, we will be scheduling a Yearbook, Honor Stoles, and Honor Cords distribution. Please know that this date will most likely fall during the last week of May or the first week of June. As soon as we have finalized a date and time for this event, we will communicate to our school family.

COLLECTING TEXTBOOKS, LIBRARY BOOKS, ETC. AND ALLOWING STUDENTS TO RETRIEVE ITEMS THEY HAVE AT SCHOOL: Please know that WCPSS is working on processes for schools to follow to allow students to return textbooks, library books, etc. that belong to the school. In addition, WCPSS will also be giving us processes to follow to allow students one more opportunity for coming to school and collecting any items that are still here at school that belong to them. I will keep you posted as to when we will schedule this event.

SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR THE 2020 – 2021 SCHOOL YEAR: Please remember that the State Legislature decided last week that all Traditional Calendar schools will begin the 2020 – 2021 school year on Monday, August 17th, 2020. As you make plans for the summer and in August, please remember this new school start date. Please also know that for the 2020 – 2021 school year, school will end on June 11th, 2021.

BUS RIDER INFORMATION FOR THE 2020 – 2021 SCHOOL YEAR: Please know that Bus Rider registration opened today, Monday, May 11th. Students who rode a bus to school this year will be notified via School Messenger tomorrow, May 12th, 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 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 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.

SENIOR INTENT FORM—ALL SENIORS MUST COMPLETE THIS FORM! All Seniors are required to complete a Senior Intent form before Graduation. The deadline has passed, and we have not received a form for each Senior. Please complete the [Senior Intent Form](#) and submit it as soon as possible. Please be sure to complete the form accurately and correctly. Please know that part of this form will be utilized to ensure that each Seniors' name is printed correctly on their Diploma. We are asking Seniors to verify their full legal name (name that appears on their Birth Certificate). This information will be verified against the Birth Certificate in each Seniors' cumulative record. The name that appears on the student's Birth Certificate will be the name that will be printed on the Diploma. If you have any questions, please feel free to email Ms. Brown (tbrown3@wcpss.net), our Dean of Students.

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), 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.

INTERVENTION TEAM READY TO ASSIST STUDENTS: Please remember that our Intervention Team is holding Office Hours on Friday to assist our students who may need additional help. Any student can access these Office Hours to get assistance with course work, logging into wakeid, navigating Remote Learning, etc. To log-in to these Office Hours, students need to go to: <https://meet/google.com/> and from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.: Nickname: udrive1jlowry and from 1:00 p.m. until 2:00 p.m.: Nickname: udrive2stephenson. Again, this is every Friday to provide any assistance our students may need.

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!