

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.

Thank you so much to the parents who came to our Meet the Teacher Night last night! It was great to see so many family members be a part of this important evening to build relationships, connect with teachers, and continue to be more engaged in our school family. Thank you for all the support you provide as we work together to help our students reach their highest potential!

I have spoken with several staff members and students who are interested in finding ways for us to support all of those impacted by Hurricane Florence. I know that we have staff members, students, and families who were directly or indirectly impacted by the storm. However, what has happened down east and south of us is truly a disaster, and I know we all want to help in any way we can. To accomplish this, we felt like we would have more impact and meaning for our support if we (staff, students, families, etc.) could "adopt" a High School from North Carolina to aid as they recover from the aftermath of Hurricane Florence. We have reached out to a High School in Duplin County, and they would love to partner with us to provide support for their school family. The High School is James Kenan High School. In speaking with the principal, some of the comments he shared were the following: "We are healthy and safe, but everything else is really a mess." "Never seen anything like this before." "Devastating is all I can say." "Your intentions would be greatly appreciated by our staff and students, and trust me when I say very much needed." So, we have a great opportunity to help others in a direct manner. Hopefully this is something that we can continue throughout the year(s), build relationships together, help them recover, and let them experience our care and support. James Kenan High School will again be out of school all next week, so we are just now formulating plans to work together. Please be on the lookout in the coming days/weeks for information regarding support that we can provide. Thank you for your generosity in helping reach out to the families from James Kenan High School during these challenging times.

Please know that we will be starting our Athens Advantage Time Schedule on Monday, September 24th. This week, I shared a video message with all students, and teachers also spoke to students about our new schedule and processes and procedures. One of the biggest changes for students this year is that we are going to be continuing to operate with an "A" Lunch and "B" Lunch schedule for the remainder of the school year. I know many of our students are disappointed about not being able to have a Common Lunch, but as I told them, I make decisions based first on the safety and security of all our students, and then on what is best for teaching and learning. In the time that I have been principal at Athens Drive, it has become clear that we just don't have the infrastructure to support having all 2,100 of our students at lunch at the same time. We had limited space for students to eat during our SMART Lunch, and with the implementation of our "A" Lunch and "B" Lunch periods, that has not been a problem. In addition, with regards to SMART Lunch, we were also finding that it wasn't supporting our students as was originally planned. Because teachers had students coming for Tutorials from various classes, students were not getting the individualized instruction for that course. Often during SMART Lunch, it was more of handing out make-up work and taking care of administrative/grading tasks than truly spending time to support individual student needs. Thus, we created our Athens Advantage Period. Please remember that during this time, a student must stay in that Period if they have below an 80% or are missing assignments. If a student has an 80% or above, they can opt to stay in the class as well. However, those students also may leave and use this time to socialize, work in a study group, do research, work on homework, etc. This will happen each day, Monday through Thursday, so if a student is worried about not being able to socialize with friends who have a different lunch, this presents an opportunity for them to connect. In addition, we will also schedule Clubs through this time and allow students the opportunity to meet during the day to become engaged in Clubs and activities. We believe that it is important for students to receive academic support, if needed, during the day, and have the opportunity to engage in extra-curricular activities during the day. Our hope is that this new schedule will allow for the safe, orderly operation of our school and allow for these opportunities for our students. Please visit our website (<https://www.wcpss.net/Page/15901>) to see the new schedule and the Student Guidelines for our Athens Advantage Time.

Please remember that next Friday, September 28th is now a full school day, not an Early Release Day. This day is now part of the Hurricane Florence Make-Up Days for the days we missed last week. Please know that to make-up days for the two days we missed last week, we will also have a full day of school on Friday, October

19th instead of having an Early Release Day. In addition, Wednesday, October 31st is no longer a Teacher Workday, but will not be a Make-Up Day and full day of school for students. Please remember that we will **NOT** have to Make-Up School for Monday, September 17th, and we will **NOT** be having school on Saturday, October 13th, or Wednesday, November 21st, as originally announced. Thank you for your understanding as Wake County Public Schools worked through changes due to Hurricane Florence.

It is hard to believe that we are already four weeks into the First Quarter of the school year. Thank you for your efforts as we work together to support the academic growth of our students. Please be on the lookout for First Quarter Interim Reports that will be coming home next week. Please remember that PowerSchool is a great way to continue to monitor your student's academic achievement throughout the year. Please also remember that the First Quarter ends on Wednesday, October 31st, and Report Cards will be sent home on Friday, November 9th.

There will be a PTSA Meeting on Tuesday evening, September 25th, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Library. All families are welcome to attend.

All students and parents are invited to our Fall Parent Session that will be held on Thursday, September 27th, from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m., in our Auditorium. The purpose of this session is to provide parents and students with information and the tools necessary for the transition through high school and beyond. We will have representatives from UNC-Chapel Hill, NC State, NC A&T, Elon, ECU, UNC-Wilmington, UNC-Greensboro, Wake Technical Community College, and others in attendance to answer your questions about post-secondary educational opportunities. In addition, representatives from all branches of the military will be in attendance to answer questions regarding service to our country. We will have break-out sessions that include: How to apply for Financial Aid, Scholarships, and Grants; College Admission Requirements; How to get Internship and Apprenticeship Opportunities; and Financial Literacy. This informative evening is open not only to our Seniors and their families, but all families interested in learning about the transition to college and life after Graduating from Athens Drive—it is not too early to begin planning!

Our JAG Club is hosting a Fundraising event on Wednesday, September 26th, at Panera Bread Company, located at 2234 Walnut Street, Cary, from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Please be sure to bring a flyer or show an electronic version to the cashier when you place your order, and Panera will donate a portion of the proceeds to the JAG Club. If ordering online for pick-up or delivery, enter "PRFUND" as promo code. For more information, please visit the JAG Club website (www.athensdrivejagclub.org). Thank you for your support of the JAGS!

I want to offer my congratulations to the students cast in this year's Fall Play! A record number of students auditioned, and the level of professionalism and preparedness was unprecedented; all who auditioned were excellent examples of what it means to be a JAG! Everyone, please mark your calendars for *Football Romeo*, which will be held in the Auditorium on November 15th and 16th, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Tickets will cost \$7.00 and will be sold at the door. I am excited to see the hard work of our students at the production!

I am proud of the efforts of our Student Government and LEO Club to sponsor our Food Drive! Our students have donated 420 pounds of food to date for the Athens Drive Backpack Buddies program and the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. Our Food Drive continues through Monday, September 24th, so there is still time to continue to bring in those donations. I am proud of our students for organizing this service opportunity to make a positive difference at our school and in our community!

Our Counselors have started meeting with our Seniors for their Senior Conferences. A schedule of conferences is available in front of the Student Services Office. We encourage all Seniors to attend their scheduled appointments because they will be receiving important information about Graduation and preparing to reach Post-Secondary goals.

There is a new date for the Wake County College Fair—Sunday, October 7th, from 2:00 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. at the McKimmon Center at N.C. State. Over 100 colleges will attend to discuss college admission with local high school Juniors and Seniors. There will also be information sessions on topics such as Financial Aid and Preparing for College. Admission and parking are free.

Please know that we continue to have representatives from universities meeting with our students during the school day. University representatives are located in the area outside of the Attendance office during both lunch periods. This is a great opportunity for our students to learn about the various programs that are available, admission requirements, and financial aid. For more information on the colleges that are visiting, you can contact Ms. Carrillo in Student Services (919-233-4050 ext. 24893) or visit the Student Services website (<http://adhs-student-services.weebly.com>).

Please check the Athens Drive Athletics website (<http://www.wakecountyathletics.com/athensdrivehs>) to stay aware of all changes to our Athletic schedule. Thank you for your understanding as we work to reschedule many athletic events. I continue to be proud of the sportsmanship and leadership displayed by our student athletes.

Those are all the announcements for this week. Please continue to check the Athens Drive website (www.wcpss.net/athensdrivehs) for general information and to help you stay informed. As always, I thank you for your incredible support of our school, and I hope each of you enjoys a wonderful weekend. Go JAGS and please take care.