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Jason B. Atkinson, Ed.D.  
**Superintendent**

**Board of Education**

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September 16, 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Legislation (G.S. §115C-83.15) passed during the 2013 long session of the North Carolina General Assembly provides parents with an additional measure of school performance in the form of School Performance Grades. Beginning with the 2013–14 school year, the annual North Carolina School Report Cards display a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F for each school in the state.

The School Performance Grades are based 80 percent on the school's achievement score (student proficiency) and 20 percent on students' academic growth. At Tar Heel School, the achievement score for the 2023-2024 school year is based on how well the students performed on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading and Math End-of-Grade Assessments, and the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science End-of-Grade Assessments.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that Tar Heel School has been designated as a low performing school by the North Carolina State Board of Education. As defined in G.S. 115C-105.37: "The State Board of Education shall identify low-performing schools on an annual basis. Low-performing schools are those that earn an overall school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of "met expected growth" or "not met expected growth" as defined by G.S. 115C-83.15."

Tar Heel School received a School Performance Grade of "D" and a growth designation of "met expected growth" for the 2023-2024 school year. Although we are committed to improving this score, it is important to remember that just as no one single score or grade tells the whole story of a student, neither does it tell you everything about the performance of a school or the opportunities that the school provides.

A low performing school is required to develop an improvement plan that specifically addresses how the school will improve both the school performance grade and school growth score. The plan will also include how central office administrators and I will work with, and monitor the progress of Tar Heel School. The school is already engaged in the work of refining its plan to present to the Board of Education for approval at the October meeting, scheduled for 6 p.m. on Monday, October 14, 2024. The final plan will be available for review on the school's website.

One of our top priorities for 2024-2025 is to improve our School Performance Grade. There are a number of key programs and initiatives that the school has in place to help improve student performance:

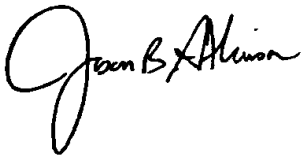
- *Implementation of student data chats grades 3-8, in-school tutoring, school-wide reading challenges, and Leader in Me school improvement strategies*
- *In-house reading coach to provide support, integrate best practices, analyze data, and assist with teaching strategies*

- *Regularly use formative and summative assessments to measure student progress, analyze data, and to identify students strengths and challenges*
- *Align instructional practices with the Dimensions of Learning framework*
- *Celebrate small wins, and continue the momentum of making 85% growth during the 2023-24 school year*

We encourage you to actively engage in your student's academic journey and invite you to collaborate with their teacher(s) to help ensure they stay on track for success. Working together as a team, we can improve not only how well our students are performing individually, but how the school is performing as a whole. There is nothing more important to us than ensuring students are ready for the next step in their academic careers. We appreciate your partnership and support to make it a successful school year.

If you have any questions regarding the School Performance Grade or the school's plans for improvement, please don't hesitate to contact Mrs. Vanessa Ruffin, principal at Tar Heel School by calling (910) 862-2475, or by email, [vlruffin@bladen.k12.nc.us](mailto:vlruffin@bladen.k12.nc.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason B. Atkinson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

Jason B. Atkinson, Ed.D.  
Superintendent