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

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September 16, 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In 2013, the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation (G.S. §115C-83.15) that introduced School Performance Grades to provide families with additional insights into school performance. Since the 2013–14 school year, North Carolina School Report Cards have assigned letter grades (A, B, C, D, or F) to every school in the state.

Unfortunately, the state of North Carolina has determined that 80% of a school’s performance grade is based on how students perform on a single test (End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) tests), while only 20% of the grade reflects the academic growth made by students throughout the year. Along with other school districts in North Carolina, we believe this formula is skewed and does not accurately reflect the work and progress of our schools. Our staff and students work hard daily, and our growth measures for each school are indicative of this.

According to G.S. 115C-105.37, a low-performing school is defined as one that earns a grade of D or F and either meets or does not meet academic growth expectations. We are writing to inform you that the following schools have been identified as low-performing:

School	Performance Grade	Growth Status	Percentage of Growth Made
Bladen Lakes Primary	D	Met Expected Growth	81.7%
Bladenboro Middle	D	Did Not Meet Growth	59.4%
Dublin Primary	D	Met Expected Growth	75.9%
East Arcadia Primary	D	Met Expected Growth	83.4%
Elizabethtown Middle	F	Did Not Meet Growth	67.8%
Elizabethtown Primary	D	Met Expected Growth	80.3%
Tar Heel School	D	Met Expected Growth	84.7%

Due to the number of low-performing schools, Bladen County Schools has been designated as a low-performing district by the North Carolina State Board of Education. While we are committed to improving these scores, it's important to remember that one grade or score does not capture the full picture of a school’s performance or the learning opportunities we provide. For the 2024–2025 school year, we are focused on improving School Performance Grades across the district. To support this effort, we are implementing the following strategies:

- **District Strategic Plan Core:** The District Improvement Plan will be built upon the primary indicators and strategies of the District Strategic Plan.
- **Support and Monitoring:** A District Improvement Team will continuously support and monitor progress, especially at low-performing schools.

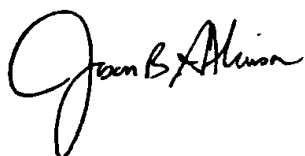
- District Administrator Support Coaches: Each low-performing school will be assigned a coach to provide direct support.
- High-Dosage Tutoring: Schools will implement intensive tutoring and additional academic supports during and after school hours.
- Focused Professional Development: Teachers will receive targeted training on high-impact instructional strategies.
- Small Group Instruction and Intervention: Teachers will be trained in effective small group instruction and evidence-based interventions.
- Curriculum Specialists: Specialists will concentrate their efforts on supporting low-performing schools.
- Quarterly Data Meetings: Schools will hold quarterly meetings to review student progress based on instructional data.
- Resource Alignment: We will ensure district and school resources are aligned with the specific needs of low-performing schools.
- District Admin Coach Engagement: Coaches will attend monthly meetings at each assigned school and provide weekly support.
- Prioritization of Resources: Low-performing schools will receive prioritized support and resources.

As a low-performing district, we are required to develop an improvement plan to address how we will improve the school performance grade at these schools. Central office administrators and I will work closely with the schools to monitor progress. The preliminary plan will be presented at tonight's Board of Education meeting, and the final version will be posted on our district website at <http://www.bladen.k12.nc.us>.

We encourage you to stay engaged with your student's academic progress and work closely with their teacher(s) to ensure they remain on track. By working together, we can improve both student performance and the overall success of our schools. The success of our students is our highest priority.

If you have any questions about School Performance Grades or our improvement plans, please contact Director of Accountability and Federal Programs, Brendan McCarthy, at (910) 862-4136 or via email at [btmccarthy@bladen.k12.nc.us](mailto:btmccarthy@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, looping initial "J".

Jason B. Atkinson, Ed.D.  
Superintendent