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Jason B. Atkinson, Ed.D.
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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 Elizabethtown Middle, the achievement score for the 2023-2024 school year is based on how well the students performed on the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Reading and Math End-of-Grade Assessments, and the 5th and 8th Grade Science End-of-Grade Assessments.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that Elizabethtown Middle 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."

Elizabethtown Middle received a School Performance Grade of "F" and a growth designation of "not meeting 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 Elizabethtown Middle 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 that the school has in place to help improve student performance including:

- Professional development will be provided based on teachers' needs as evident in both consistent administrative walk-throughs and data reviews
- Professional development on and implementation of Leader in Me, a character education curriculum
- Staff will analyze student performance data during grade level and vertical PLCs to identify student challenges and strengths, and drive instructional planning and design

- Tiered instruction will allow teachers to deliver individualized instruction designed to meet the needs of each student
- District and local behavioral expectations are posted, taught, reviewed, and enforced to provide a safe and effective learning environment for all students
- Provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate, demonstrate, and share best practices and instructional strategies in small and large group settings

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 Mr. Bobby Godwin, principal at Elizabethtown Middle, by calling (910) 862-4071, or by email, bdgodwin@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