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September 16, 2025

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	78.3%
Bladenboro Primary	D	Met Expected Growth	80.7%
Bladenboro Middle	D	Met Expected Growth	77.0%
Dublin Primary	D	Met Expected Growth	72.1%
East Arcadia Primary	F	Met Expected Growth	81.2%
East Bladen High	D	Did Not Meet Growth	57.3%
Elizabethtown Primary	D	Met Expected Growth	75.3%
Tar Heel School	D	Did Not Meet Growth	59%

Bladen County Schools has been designated as a low-performing district by the North Carolina State Board of Education due to the number of low-performing schools. While we are committed to addressing these challenges, it is important to remember that a single score does not fully represent the rich learning opportunities, leadership development, and growth taking place in our schools.

For the 2025–2026 school year, we are focused on improving student achievement and school performance across the district, guided by our theme *Learners to Leaders* and our Wildly Important Goals (WIGs). To support this effort, we are implementing the following strategies:

- **Instructional Coaches/Interventionists:** Each school now has a coach who supports teachers with high-impact instruction and ensures Tier II and Tier III interventions are provided for students in need.
- **School & District WIGs:** Every school has developed its own WIGs, aligned with districtwide WIGs in academics and culture, to drive measurable improvement.
- **Support and Monitoring:** The District Improvement Team will provide ongoing monitoring and support, particularly at schools identified as low-performing.
- **District Administrator Support Coaches:** Each low-performing school will be assigned a district coach who provides on-site support and attends monthly school meetings.
- **Research-Based Interventions:** Schools will continue implementing interventions and academic support during and beyond the school day.
- **Leader in Me Integration:** Daily Leader in Me practices will be implemented across all schools to build leadership capacity in students and improve school culture.
- **Focused Professional Development:** Teachers will engage in targeted training on small group instruction, evidence-based interventions, and leadership practices that support student success.
- **Quarterly Data Meetings:** Schools will conduct data meetings every quarter to track progress toward WIGs, using student leadership notebooks and digital dashboards.
- **Resource Alignment:** District and school resources will be strategically aligned to meet the needs of students and support continuous improvement.

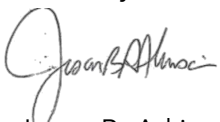
Through these efforts, we are committed not only to raising scores but also to building a culture where every student develops the skills, habits, and confidence to move from *learner to leader*.

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 was presented at the Board of Education meeting held on September 15, 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.

Sincerely,



Jason B. Atkinson, Ed.D.
Superintendent