



November 3, 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am writing this letter to notify you that Durant Road Middle School has been duly designated as both a North Carolina Low-Performing school and a federally identified Targeted Support & Improvement Additional Targeted Support (TSI-AT) 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." Legislation (G.S. §115C-83.15) passed during the 2013 long North Carolina General Assembly session 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.

School Performance Grades are based 80 percent on our school's achievement score (student proficiency) and 20 percent on students' academic growth. At Durant Road Middle School, our achievement score for the 2022-2023 school year is based on how well our students performed on Grades 6-8 Mathematics, Grades 6-8 English Language Arts/Reading, Grade 8 Science, NC Math 1, and English Learner Progress. Durant Road Middle School received a School Performance Grade of "D" and a growth designation of "Not Met Expected Growth" for the 2022–2023 school year.

In addition, per the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Section 1111(d)(2), schools receive the federal identification of TSI-AT in North Carolina by having one or more of the following subgroups receive a subgroup performance grade score at or below the lowest 5% of schools across the state during the 2021- 2022 academic year; and being identified as a consistently underperforming subgroup in 2019-2020. Subgroup performance scores are provided for the following subgroups of students: (1) Students with Disabilities, (2) Economically Disadvantaged, (3) Black, (4) White, (5) Hispanic, (6) Asian-Pacific Islander, (7) Multi-racial, and (8) English Learners.

As a dually designated TSI-AT and NC low-performing school, Durant Road Middle School is required to develop a comprehensive improvement plan that specifically addresses how the school will improve student achievement. The plan will also include strategies that our district or charter will employ to support Durant Road Middle School's improvement efforts. The comprehensive improvement plan will address the following areas:

- Classroom Management
- Standards-aligned Instruction
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Instructional Leadership
- Recruitment & Retention of Effective Teachers
- Support for Grade-to-Grade Transitions
- Implementation of a Tiered Instructional System
- Data-Driven Decision Making
- Student Support Services
- Family and Community Engagement

We have set the following goals for Durant Road Middle School of the school this year:

- By June 2024, Durant Road Middle School will improve overall proficiency by 8% and meet or exceed academic growth.
- By June 2024, Durant Road Middle School will retain a high-performing staff and increase teacher capacity to deliver targeted standards-aligned instruction in an inclusive classroom environment that promotes social-emotional growth as measured by PLC minutes, walkthrough data, NCEES Evaluations, student data, intentional learning walks, and stakeholder feedback.
- Along with strengthening core instruction, Durant Road Middle School has prioritized the implementation of an effective Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) plan. At Durant Road Middle School, Dolphins are Dedicated, Respectful, Mindful, Safe.

Here are some strategies that Durant Road Middle School will be implementing to improve student outcomes:

- Enhance the tiered instructional system to provide evidence-based instruction aligned with individual student needs across all tiers.
- Utilize universal screening and progress monitoring assessments to track student progress.
- Promote formative assessment-driven instruction and the use of research-based interventions and instructional practices.
- Implement regular professional development and training for teachers to improve data utilization and identify students needing additional support.
- Offer family engagement opportunities that promote the academic success of students.

Also, parent engagement is at the heart of our school improvement efforts. Here are some ways we can work together:

- Plan to attend our Student Led Conferences Event on Wednesday, November 8, 2023. Parents/students can sign up to participate through the code below (please note, it is case-sensitive). <https://bit.ly/DRMSstudentledconferences>
- Ensure that both you and your child know the academic expectations set for your child this school year. A list of learning objectives in student-friendly language is available from your student's teacher(s).
- Call your child's counselor at (919) 870-4098 if you have questions or concerns about your student or to set up an appointment to meet with a school staff member who will be working with your child.
- Make sure that your child is prepared and attends school each day.
- Monitor your child's homework.
- Monitor the progress your child is making and attend meetings with your child's teacher(s).
- Keep track of our website and social media sites:
- Durant Road Middle School Website (<https://www.wcpss.net/durantroadms>)
- Durant Road Middle School Twitter (@DRMSdolphins)
- Volunteer.
- Join the Durant Road Middle School PTA

Additionally, listed below are a few resources available to help:

- Graduation requirements: www.ncpublicschools.org/gradrequirements/
- K-12 standards in academic subjects: www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/
- State student achievement test results: www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/
- N.C. School Report Cards: <https://ncreportcards.ondemand.sas.com/src>

We are committed to improving student performance. It is important to remember that just as no single score or grade tells the whole story of a student, neither does it tell you everything about a school's performance or the opportunities that our school provides. The intent of receiving these designations is to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. We're excited about this school year and are working to make it a success for your child. Already, we have:

- Worked with our staff and school community on a vision of "Keys to Success" that puts student academic achievement and instructional practices in the forefront.
- Been recognized as Raleigh's Best Middle School through the News and Observer for the Second Year in a Row!
- Offering our Student-Led Conference Event on Wednesday, November 8, 2023.
- Had two students place in the North Carolina Honors Chorus.
- Worked in partnership with the District on the creation of an updated lab space for our Agricultural Science Program. This new space should be open by the Spring of 2024.

If you have questions about the content of this letter, please contact your student's Assistant Principal

* 6th and 7th Grade: Jeff Kleiber (jkleiber@wcpss.net)

* 8th Grade: Melanie Sanchez (masanchez@wcpss.net)

Sincerely,

Kristen J. Faircloth

Principal