



4622 N. Roxboro St.
Durham NC 27712

10/27/23

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 our school's achievement score (student proficiency) and 20 percent on students' academic growth. At Northern High School, our achievement score for the 2022-2023 school year is based on how well our students performed on Biology (20.9%), NC Math 1 (17.0%), NC Math 3 (31.4%), English II (34.1%), English Learner Progress (2.6%), ACT/ACT WorkKeys (25.6%/31.6%), Math Course Rigor (93.2%) and the 4-year Cohort Graduation Rate (83.4%).

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that Northern High 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."

Northern High School received a School Performance Grade of D and a growth designation of Did Not Meet for the 2022–2023 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 our school provides. Many of you know of our Culinary Arts program that has won numerous awards throughout the region. Did you know of our Fire Academy that has already placed about a dozen graduates in local fire houses? Or that in partnership with Durham Tech, last summer, Northern had 11 of the programs 20 graduates that now serve as 9-1-1 operators for the county? Northern's Automotive program is so successful that odds are if your car was serviced in the county it was a Northern graduate that worked on it? Add in our students regularly attend and graduate from every college and university you could think of. Our Arts and Athletic programs continue receive numerous recognitions for our students for their performances outside of the classroom as well.

As a low performing school, we are 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 the superintendent and other central office administrators in the district will work with us and monitor the progress of our school. The final plan will be available for review on our school website here, <https://www.dpsnc.net/Page/6867>.

One of our top priorities for 2023–2024 is to improve our School Performance Grade. There are a number of key programs we have in place to help improve student performance. These include:

- Schoolwide focus on the ACES writing technique that creates a standard manner by which all students will Answer the question, Cite textual evidence, Elaborate, and Sum up. This creates a whole school experience that shares the workload for both EOC and Non-EOC courses.



- Attendance Incentives – students cannot learn if they are not in school and in class participating.
- Evening Academy – The traditional school day is sometimes problematic for students who are working, parents or who have fallen behind in credits earned. EA allows kids to work online after traditional school hours to graduate on time.
- ACT online and in person sessions.
- Intervention period during the school day. We have created a school schedule that will allow students who have not yet demonstrated mastery of content to get additional support for their teacher, during the school day in order to ensure instructional gains.
- Incentive plans for students who successfully pass EOC exams.

We hope you will closely follow your student's academic progress and work with his or her teacher(s) to help ensure they stay on track academically. Working together as a team, we can improve not only how well our students are performing individually, but how our school is performing as a whole. There is nothing more important to administrators and teachers at Northern High School than ensuring students are ready for the next step in their academic careers. I look forward to working with you to make sure your student is on track for success.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding our School Performance Grade and how we plan to improve, please don't hesitate to contact Dan Gilfort, Principal at danny_gilfort@dpsnc.net or via telephone at 919-560-3956 x56157. The preliminary plan will be presented to the Board of Education on October 26, 2023. The final plan will be approved by the Board of Education on November 16, 2023. Please submit any input or suggestions in writing to the principal by Friday, November 10, 2023.

Sincerely,

Dan Gilfort

Dan Gilfort