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Wahl-Coates Elementary School

“Sailing Towards High Achievement”

**2200 East Fifth Street**

**Greenville, NC 27858**

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December 6, 2017

During the 2014-15 school year, the United States Department of Education (USED) invited North Carolina’s State educational agency (SEA) to request continuing flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies, and schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This spring, the North Carolina Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request was approved by USED.

This opportunity will provide educators and State and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. Additionally, states are required to identify three specific categories of schools (Priority, Focus, and Reward) under methodologies approved within the Flexibility Request.

I am writing to let you know that the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) has identified Wahl-Coates School of the Arts as a Focus School. Focus Schools are identified as a result of the achievement level of “in-school gaps between the highest achieving and lowest achieving subgroups” in terms of proficiency (reading/math) over a number of years or, schools with subgroup proficiency scores less than 50% over a number of years.

Focus Schools must select interventions providing the following considerations:

* Aligned to the school needs assessment
* Supported through school processes (e.g., increased learning time)
* Effective instructional methods or practices appropriate for identified subgroups
* High quality job-embedded professional development
* Use of data
* School safety and discipline
* Family and community engagement

We continue to strive for improvements in student achievement. The vision for Wahl-Coates School of the Arts is to integrate the arts to engage students of every ability, ethnicity and linguistic background to enhance their learning across the curriculum.

We have set the following goals for Wahl-Coates School of the Arts this year:

* Increase the number of students proficient on Reading EOG’s and READ 3-D by 10%
* Increase the number of students proficient on Math EOG’s and K-2 Assessments by 10%
* Reduce the number of absences by 5%
* Reduce the number of out of school suspensions by 50%

Our students need to experience higher achievement levels, and it will require hard work on the part of staff, students and families. Here are some strategies Wahl-Coates School of the Arts will be implementing:

* Continue implementation of Reading Specialists in grades K-2
* Continue implementation of Accelerated Reader
* Implement Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Program
* Implement School STEP Coach and Student Mentor\
* Institute STEP ROOM as an alternative to out of school suspension

Parent involvement is at the heart of our school improvement efforts. Here are some ways you can help:

* Make sure that both you and your student are aware of academic expectations set for your student this school year. A list of learning objectives in student-friendly language is available from your student’s teacher(s).
* Call Ingrid van Leeuwen at 252-752-2514 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 student.
* Make sure that your student is prepared and attends school each day.
* Monitor your student’s homework.
* Monitor and limit the amount of time your student spends watching television and playing video games.
* Monitor the progress your student is making and attend meetings with your student’s teacher(s).
* Volunteer.
* Join theParent Booster Club. For more information, please contact Tabitha Maye at the school at 252-752-2514.

Sounds like a lot, doesn’t it? Preparing our students so that they can succeed against 21st century demands isn’t easy. But it is essential. Here are some resources available to help:

* Graduation requirements: www.ncpublicschools.org/gradrequirements/
* K-12 standards in academic subjects: www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/
* State student achievement test results: www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/
* N.C.School Report Cards: [www.ncreportcards.org/](http://www.ncreportcards.org/)
* School website link: [www.pitt.k12.nc.us/Domain/238](http://www.pitt.k12.nc.us/Domain/238) (Wahl-Coates School of the Arts homepage)

We’re excited about this school year and are working to make it a success for your student. Already, we have:

* Reading Specialists in Grades K-2
* Guided Reading
* Guided Math
* Principal’s Math Club (Starting back up in February 2018)
* Accelerated Reader program to increase reading proficiency
* An after-school Arts accelerated program (Contact Ms. Dawn Wilson for more information)

If you have questions about the content of this letter, please contact Marty E. Baker, Principal of Wahl-Coates School of the Arts at 252-752-2514 or at bakerma@pitt.k12.nc.us

Sincerely,

Marty E. Baker

Principal