



October 28, 2008

Dear Freshman, Sophomore, and Junior Parents:

Students who entered the ninth grade for the first time during the 2006-2007 school year, the 2007-2008 school year, or the 2008-2009 school year on the Career Preparation, College Technical Preparation, or College/University Preparation Course of Study have to score a Level III or higher on the North Carolina End-of-Course tests in Algebra I, Biology, English I, Civics & Economics, and U.S. History to graduate from high school. A student enrolled in one of these courses who does not make a Level III or higher on its End-of-Course test during the regular exam administration will be given up to two retest opportunities to satisfy the new graduation requirement, provided he/she passes the course with the first exam's grade factored into the overall course grade. Please note that, by state policy, the exam grade for courses associated with End-of-Course tests counts as 25% of the overall course grade. A student's failure to score a Level III or higher after two retests, for students eligible to take a retest, will result in the individual having to take the course again during a subsequent semester.

Another new graduation requirement for students who entered the ninth grade for the first time during the 2006-2007 school year, the 2007-2008 school year, or the 2008-2009 school year is the completion of a performance-based project, referred to as "The Graduation Project." Service-based or work-based learning experiences sometimes are associated with this type of project. Students will learn and practice the essential project skills during their freshman, sophomore, and junior years. However, the bulk of the project's emphasis will appear during your child's junior and senior years. Furthermore, it is important to note that our staff members participate in several staff development activities on an annual basis to prepare all teachers on our campus for their roles in your child's project.

Please know that our staff has been busy behind the scenes to ensure student success with regard to these new requirements. In fact, our exam schedule for each semester designates time for the regular administration of exams as well as the retest opportunities needed for any students under these graduation standards who fail to make a Level III or higher on the required End-of-Course tests. Furthermore, during the summer of 2006, a "Graduation Project Committee" was established and has worked to implement a school-wide plan focused on student success with regard to the completion of the project. Mary Propes leads this committee in her role as the school's "Graduation Project" coordinator. More information will be forthcoming during the upcoming months and school years with regard to these issues; nonetheless, I wanted to make sure all parents of the affected students are aware of these new graduation requirements.

Respectfully,

Stephen Gainey  
Principal