



**ALSTON RIDGE ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL**

**Information Booklet**

**Prepared by the Alston Ridge Elementary  
Parent Teacher Association**

Updated 08/20

## **A Welcome in Pandemic Times**

Hello Gator Families and welcome to the 2020-21 school year! The PTA created this resource in 2019 to help everyone at ARE stay connected and informed. This is even more important in this time where we will not all physically be together. Some information in this packet applies in its usual form, some will be modified to virtual environments, and other information is not applicable this year. The information that follows is the best guess at this moment in time (August of 2020) of how we will be able to best function as a school, but many items may be changing, modified or may be cancelled or reinstated! Items or comments in **green** are things that will not happen (we think) in this school year; however, we kept this information in the document so new families can see the full picture of what happens in a “normal” school year.

For the Fall of 2020-2021, about 70% of the families have chosen to receive instruction through the Virtual Academy, and some students have chosen to be virtual for the year. Some families will be In School ABC plan, following the changing recommendations for safety. Unlike typical years where our school is divided into 4 tracks, this year everyone will be on one schedule for the entire year. Every student registered to ARE will still be assigned to a classroom, be it virtual or in-person and we will all be excited to work together to create community through communications, programming, and caring for one another to the best of our abilities.

We hope this information is helpful for new Gator families. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We are here for you!

*Your Alston Ridge Elementary Parent Teacher Association (ARES PTA)*

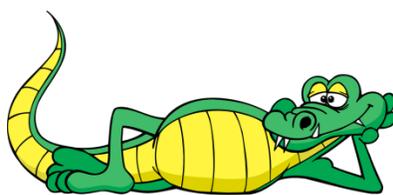
*\* Items in green do not apply for the 2020-21 school year.*

## Getting Started at ARE Checklist

**You are new, now what should you do? This document is full of information that we hope will be helpful in orienting you to the school. We encourage you to read it in its entirety. However, here are a few next steps you can take right away to help get plugged in to our community.**

- Sign up to receive emails from the PTA. This is the best way to make sure you are aware of school events. (<http://eepurl.com/dxXl49>)
- Join the PTA! Becoming a PTA member supports programs and events that make our school the very best it can be. (<https://alstonridgeelementary.memberhub.store/shopping/categories/1694>)
- Register to volunteer at ARE. This can only be done on the computer in the front office of the school. Make sure to submit this application at least 2 weeks in advance of the event you are volunteering for. Best to do in the beginning of the year.
- Buy spirit wear for your student to wear on fridays and on field trips [www.alstonridgepta.com/gator-shop](http://www.alstonridgepta.com/gator-shop)
- Put money in your child's school account. Even if you plan to send lunch every day, it is a good idea to put \$10 in his/her account "just in case". If the money is not used, you can get it back. ([www.MySchoolBucks.com](http://www.MySchoolBucks.com) you will need your student's school ID #)
- Approve communications from your room parent (ask your teacher...)
- Places to get information related to county wide issues
  - Bus Transportation (<https://www.wcpss.net/Page/41>)
  - ARE Student-Parent Handbook ([www.wcpss.net/domain/10412](http://www.wcpss.net/domain/10412))
- Download the Here Comes the Bus app to your phone if your student will ride the bus. This app allows you to track the exact location of your child's bus, which is helpful for getting to/from the bus stop on time! You will need your student's ID number and the district code (67500) to sign up. ([www.wcpss.net/Page/35380](http://www.wcpss.net/Page/35380))
- "Like" the PTA on Facebook and Twitter – [www.facebook.com/AlstonRidgePTA/](http://www.facebook.com/AlstonRidgePTA/) - @AlstonRidgePTA
- Link your Harris Teeter and Publix cards to ARE and use AmazonSmile to support your PTA. Details available at: <https://alstonridgepta.com/fundraising/>

*\* Items in green do not apply for the 2020-21 school year.*



## Table of Contents

<b>Welcome</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Principal's Welcome</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>About Alston Ridge Elementary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Alston Ridge Elementary Parent Teacher Association</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Staying Informed</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Glossary of Terms at Alston Ridge Elementary</b>	<b>7</b>

## **Welcome to Alston Ridge Elementary School!**

We are so glad you're here! We are so excited for your family to be part of our "school family"! It is an exciting time when starting at a new school, and we hope to provide information on how you can best participate in your child's education. We can all agree that having a team of parents, teachers, and administrators working together creates the best outcomes for learning at our awesome school!

The purpose of this welcome packet is to provide families with the resources needed to successfully navigate and flourish at Alston Ridge Elementary (ARE). It was created by the Alston Ridge Elementary School Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to address needs we have seen over time. Additional resources can be found on the ARE school and Wake county websites and in other places as noted in the following pages.

### **Welcome from the ARE PTA**

Hello and welcome from the ARE Parent Teacher Association (PTA)! We look forward to working with you throughout the year to help our children have exciting opportunities for learning and community. Being a part of the PTA is one of the best ways to stay informed about what your child is doing in school and to volunteer in a meaningful way for your family! You will find more information about what the PTA is and how it helps the school in this packet.

#### **2020-2021 ARE PTA Board Members**

**President:** Erica Watson, [president@alstonridgepta.com](mailto:president@alstonridgepta.com)

**Treasurer:** Nick Yates, [treasurer@alstonridgepta.com](mailto:treasurer@alstonridgepta.com)

**Secretary:** Ryan Rodriguez, [secretary@alstonridgepta.com](mailto:secretary@alstonridgepta.com)

**Vice President of Programming:** Jennifer Eggiman, [programming@alstonridgepta.com](mailto:programming@alstonridgepta.com)

**Vice President of Ways and Means:** Amy Holcomb, [waysandmeans@alstonridgepta.com](mailto:waysandmeans@alstonridgepta.com)

**Vice President of Communications:** Rachel Jordan, [communications@alstonridgepta.com](mailto:communications@alstonridgepta.com)

## Welcome from the Principal

Welcome to Alston Ridge Elementary School! Our faculty, administration, and ARE Parent Teacher Association (PTA) are thrilled to have your family as new members of our school community.

At Alston Ridge we believe that we are growing the citizens of tomorrow: uniquely capable of wonder, persistent in designing solutions to worthy problems, kind and empathetic, with an outstanding learning foundation for future exploration. We are immensely grateful for your trust and hope that you will always see Alston Ridge as the first and best choice for educating your children.

As your family begins, our community is ready for you—ready for you to grow with us, celebrate with us, achieve with us, and share with us. As neighbors, classmates, colleagues, friends, and family, you will find a home here at Alston Ridge.

Please accept the invitation to be involved. To continue our tradition of excellence, we will need your support. It is never too early to be a guest expert, a chaperone, a classroom reader, a volunteer, a Board member, a test proctor. Family engagement at school and at home improves student achievement and school success. I am excited to see how you will contribute as we grow together!

Welcome, welcome, welcome!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Niko Schutte', with a stylized, cursive script.

Niko Schutte, Principal

## About Alston Ridge Elementary

### **Who Attends Alston Ridge Elementary?**

Alston Ridge Elementary (ARE) has a diverse population of families from many backgrounds. Some families have been in the area since ARE was built in 2010, and some families have moved from around the country and around the world. There are over 30 languages spoken by our students. Our cultural backgrounds bring a rich opportunity to learn by interacting with families and students with so many experiences, and we are proud of the diversity in our community!

### **What does it mean for Alston Ridge Elementary School to be a “Year Round Multi-Track School?”**

ARE educates students from Kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade as a year round school with 4 tracks. ARE also houses a preschool program through the Wake County Office of Early Learning. ([www.wcpss.net/domain/106](http://www.wcpss.net/domain/106))

Year-round multi-track schools were created for two reasons. One is as an efficient way to provide room for the continued population growth in our county. The other is that educational research is clear that year round programs are much better for elementary learning in particular. That means that at ARE at any time, 75% of the students (3 of the tracks) are in the school, and 25% (1 track) are on a break, called “tracked out”. Every track is year round and is “tracked in” for about 9 weeks and “tracked out” for about 3 weeks. All students in all tracks change grade levels in the beginning of July. To see detailed information and dates for each track, see the year round calendar on the Wake County Public School website (<https://www.wcpss.net/calendars>).

A year-round multi-track school is unique. Multiple tracks help make a large school feel smaller. You will get to know the students and families in your track better than the rest of the school because you will share teachers and physically be in the school at the same time. You will also notice that many school-wide events such as Science Fair, Field Day, etc, need to be held twice so all students have a chance to participate.

There are some events or activities that only occur once or are year round, which means that students may not be in school for all of them. Examples are Band, which runs year round and may have a concert during your track out, and cultural arts presentations, which happens 4 times,

but your student will only see three. Keep a close watch on the ARE and PTA calendars so you don't miss anything! Other forms of communication and sources of information are listed below.

### **What is a public school?**

ARE is a public school in Wake County. Students are assigned to a local public school based on their home address. This is called your "base" school. There is no tuition or application process. However, all students must enroll to become students. Additional information can be found on the Wake County website (<https://www.wcpss.net/Page/33753>)

Being a public school means that our state and local taxes pay for a certain baseline of items at the school such as facilities and teacher salaries. However, there are many additional school needs that benefit our students which are not covered by funding from the county. Some examples are additional technology (classroom projectors, ipads, etc), color ink, seeds for growing plants, books for our school library, classroom supplies, teacher training, playground equipment, and cultural arts performances. The PTA raises money to pay for extra expenses above and beyond what is covered by Wake County. The PTA raises money through a variety of ways including: seeking community sponsorships from local businesses, selling PTA memberships, sponsoring a Fun Run, running a book fair, and scheduling Spirit Events. But your time is one of the most important resources that benefits our school. Volunteering in the school helps the PTA to run all of these extra programs which provide the students with further opportunities for learning.

## **What is the ARE PTA?**

The Alston Ridge Elementary Parent Teacher Student Association (ARE PTA) is a local chapter of the National PTA, NC PTA, and Wake PTA. It is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, made up of families, students, teachers, staff, and administrators who work together for the success of all children.

The mission of the ARE PTA is to build a community at Alston Ridge between teachers, parents, and students by:

- Supporting our teachers
- Engaging the community
- Empowering families, and
- Creating opportunities to enhance students' learning experience.

When you join the ARE PTA, your membership dues primarily support ARE and a small percentage goes to the state and national PTA organizations where it is used to advocate for child education laws and policies.

## **Overview of PTA Programs**

The PTA is responsible for many favorite programs at ARE, and we are always working to evaluate and improve the experiences for our children. More information is available on the PTA website ([www.alstonridgepta.com](http://www.alstonridgepta.com)) and following this section in the glossary. Some of the programs run by the ARE PTA are:

Career Fair, Cultural Arts Presentations, 5th Grade Celebration, School Gardens, Gator Fest, Gator Shop (spirit wear and gear), Red Ribbon Week, Reflections, Science Fair, Spirit Nights, Staff Appreciation, Classroom supply stipends, Yearbook, Student Yoga, and more!

We also help organize parent volunteers for school wide events like Field Day, Gallant Gators, School Beautification, End Of Grade monitoring, etc.

*\* Items in green do not apply for the 2020-21 school year.*

## How Do I Stay Informed?

### **Here are the main general ways to find information:**

- ARE School website – The school website contains Alston Ridge specific information including the contact information for all teachers, school calendar, and links to each teacher’s classroom webpage. [www.wcpss.net/alstonridgees](http://www.wcpss.net/alstonridgees)
- ARE PTA website – The PTA website contains information about PTA and school activities and events, an online store to buy spiritwear, and links to sign-up for communications, volunteer opportunities and more. [www.alstonridgepta.com](http://www.alstonridgepta.com)
- Teacher/classroom website – list on [www.wcpss.net/domain/8296](http://www.wcpss.net/domain/8296)
- Alston Ridge PTA Facebook and Twitter pages

### **You should receive communications from:**

- Teacher -- Each teacher has their own methods of communication. *However, all students have a green folder that is used to send information back/forth from school and home.*
- Room Parent – a parent volunteer from your student’s classroom to liaison with parents, teacher, and PTA
- PTA – Enter your contact information at <http://eepurl.com/dxXI49> to be added to the PTA mailing list. Information about school events and activities will be sent general info or special info from [info@alstonridgepta.com](mailto:info@alstonridgepta.com) or one of the board member emails on the first page.
- Principal – Mr. Schutte sends periodic updates and announcements from [nschutte@wcpss.net](mailto:nschutte@wcpss.net)
- Wake County – Wake County occasionally notifies parents about county-related information such as weather-related school closures and transportation updates by email, text, and phone messages (<http://bit.ly/sm-infocenter>)

*\* Items in green do not apply for the 2020-21 school year.*

## What is That? Glossary of Terms for Alston Ridge Elementary

**A=ARE or Teacher program, P=PTA program, C=Community program, \$=fee based**

**After Care** – A,C, \$ - Childcare that is available after school hours from 4:15 pm - 6:00 pm. More information can be found at <http://alstonridgebeforeandafter.weebly.com>

**Alli the Alligator** – P - Our beloved school mascot!

**Band** – C,\$ - 3-5 graders, run at the school, practicing 2 days after school with several concerts throughout the year [alstonridgeband.com](http://alstonridgeband.com)

**Before Care** – A, \$ - Childcare that is available before school hours from 7:00 am - 8:45 am. More information can be found at <http://alstonridgebeforeandafter.weebly.com>

**Beautification Day** – P - A day when parents and students come out and help clean-up and beautify the school grounds. Usually on a Saturday morning and includes things like pulling weeds, spreading mulch, and trash pickup. 2-3 times per year.

**Book Fair** – P - an opportunity to purchase books for home use and to add to classroom libraries – often in the fall

**Box Tops** – P - items like cereal boxes and brownie mix may have a label that shows they are participating in box tops, scanning your receipt with the app donates money to ARE

**Career Day** – P, A - presentations by parents and community members to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders for exposure about their careers – often in February

**Carpool** – A - Students who are dropped off at school and/or picked up at school by car. (ie, they do not ride the bus or walk). Register at the front desk.

**Chorus** – A, \$ - 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, run by the music teacher, meets before school 1-2x/week, 2 concerts per year

**Cultural arts** – P - 4-5 times per year a presentation by an outside group to provide unique exposure to music groups, dance groups, writing, poetry, art, math or science – usually on a Friday morning in the gym

**Curriculum Night** (also called Open House) – A - a chance for parents to meet their child's teacher and hear about the overall plan for the year for the class – early in the year, perhaps August

*\* Items in green do not apply for the 2020-21 school year.*

**Field Day – A** – a half-day event during school where several grades participate in a series of fun active games on the big field – usually in May

**First in Fitness – A** – a test is taken during physical education classes in grades 3-5 and the top performers practice once a week for a few months prior to a competition trip usually in March

**Fun Run/Fall Fundraiser – P,C** - a school wide event to help raise money for the year’s extra programming, often a certain amount is donated per lap the students run – this is usually coordinated by an outside group such as Boosterthon or APEX Leadership

**Gallant Gators – A,P** - A reading program where parents read to their child’s class once a month. The book is related to one of the 8 “gallant gator” character traits and is selected by the guidance counselors.

**Gallant Gator Award – A** - A Character Development Program run by the guidance counselors and administrators. Peers and teachers nominate students who exhibit one of the “gallant gator” character traits (Respect, Responsibility, Good Judgment, Kindness, Integrity, Courage, Self-Discipline, and Perseverance). Students are recognized during the morning announcements and receive an award certificate.

**Gator Fest – P** - a carnival-type school-wide celebration, usually in the spring

**Green Team – A** – 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade, before school once a week to help with recycling

**Here Comes the Bus App – C** - An app that you can download to your smartphone which tracks your student’s bus and gives you up-to-date information about its locations. (this is helpful for getting your child to/from the bus stop on time!) You will need your student’s ID number and the district code (67500) to sign up. ([www.wcpss.net/Page/35380](http://www.wcpss.net/Page/35380))

**Kidzart – C,\$** - once a week after school art program

[https://www.wcpss.net/cms/lib/NC01911451/Centricity/Domain/7682/Alston%20Ridge%20Elementary\\_Digital%20Flyer.pdf](https://www.wcpss.net/cms/lib/NC01911451/Centricity/Domain/7682/Alston%20Ridge%20Elementary_Digital%20Flyer.pdf) and [KidzArtCary.com](http://KidzArtCary.com)

**Library helpers – A** – once a week before school – the day will be assigned – to help reshelve books and organize in the library

**Literacy (ELA) Night – A** - an evening where parents can come to the school to learn more about the specific English work for their child’s grade and understand how reading is assessed. Parents will be given ideas and resources for how they can support their child’s growing literacy at home.

*\* Items in green do not apply for the 2020-21 school year.*

**Math Night** – A - an evening where parents can come to the school to learn more about the specific math work for their child’s grade and understand what math benchmarks are used. Parents will be given ideas and resources for how they can support their child’s developing math skills

**Red Ribbon Week** – P,A - A national program that schools can participate in that focuses on making healthy choices, anti-drugs, and anti-bullying. During Red Ribbon Week, students and teachers often have themed-dress up days - often in October

**Reflections** – P – school wide art/writing/media contest

**Room Parent** – P – a class parent who helps to facilitate communication between the parents, the teacher, and the PTA – able to answer questions and help out the class as needed

**Safety Patrol** – A – 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> graders – helping with carpool and bus loading and unloading before and after school – rotates through a week at a time

**Scholastic Book Order** – A - order forms are sent home periodically with the opportunity to purchase new books to take home, and the orders allow the teachers to select some books for the classroom as well

**Science Fair** – P - an opportunity for students to conduct and report on an experiment presented for judging and the public with other fun science activities – usually in January

**Science Olympiad** – A - 5<sup>th</sup> graders – working with the science teacher to compete in a science-based team competition

**Specials** – A - each day your child’s class will have one section of the day where they go to an activity outside of reading and math – it rotates each day between physical education, art, media (library), technology, music, science, character education – usually your teacher will post the schedule for the week

**Spirit day** – A, P - every Friday, students are encouraged to wear “spiritwear” (something with the ARE Alligator on it or the colors blue or green) – the class with the most students wearing spiritwear gets to have the spirit stick for the next week

**Spirit events** – P - often an evening event, usually about once a month, where a local business will donate part of its profits to the school for patrons who mention ARE – everyone is encouraged to go! This is a great way to meet and mingle with other ARE families.

*\* Items in green do not apply for the 2020-21 school year.*

**Spiritwear** – P - items for sale with the ARE logo and Alligator – pencils, wristbands, hairbands, tshirts, sweatshirts, etc – these items are sold at most school events by the PTA, and can also be ordered online at <https://alstonridgeelementary.memberhub.store/shopping/categories/12605>

**Student Council** – A – 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade, meets before school once a month, a group of students who are more interested in being involved in ARE activities and participate in multiple events

**Staff appreciation week** – P - a week where a theme is chosen and families can show their appreciation for teachers and staff, **done twice to cover all tracks**, usually in May

**Teacher work day** – A - there is no school on these days so teachers can participate in development activities

**Track in** – A - your child is in school, 3 tracks are in at the same time

**Track out** – A - your child is on break, 1 track is on break at a time

**Track Out Camp** – C,\$ - Camps that are offered for a fee by local businesses during track outs.

**TGA Tennis and Golf** – C,\$ - after school sports programs run by TGA at the school - [playtga.com/wakecounty/](http://playtga.com/wakecounty/)

**Wellness Programs** - P - various wellness activities, needs registration, such as yoga, tae kwon do, running club, etc.

**Yearbook** – P, \$ - a book of pictures of all the students from the fall picture day – a memento to remember their time at ARE

*\* Items in green do not apply for the 2020-21 school year.*