

Ashe County Schools

# WEEKLY UPDATE



*Congratulations to our 202  
ACHS and 33 AEC graduates!  
Go chase your dreams!*

THROUGH  
**20**  
**JUNE**

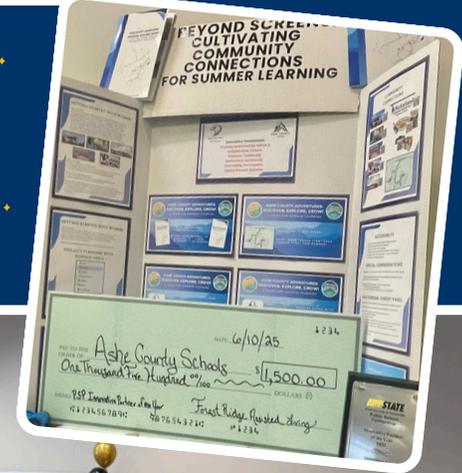
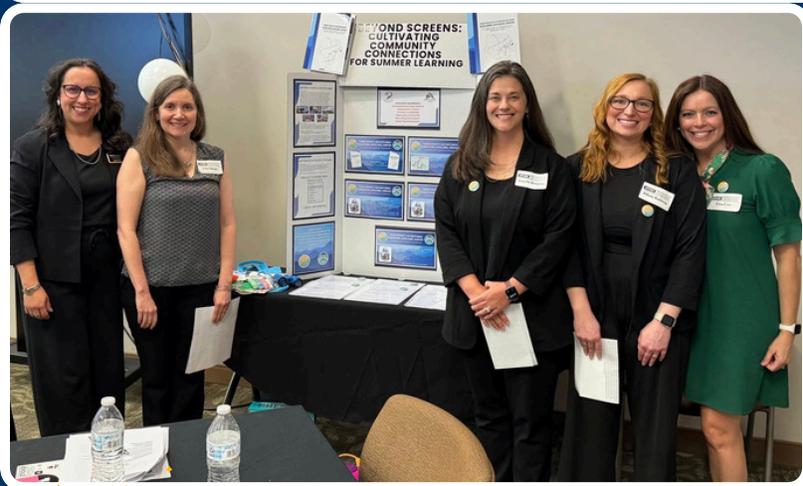
## Important Upcoming Dates

- ✓ June 16 - Aug. 1 Summer Hours  
Offices Closed Fridays
- ✓ June 30 - 9:00 a.m. BOE Meeting
- ✓ July 4 - District Offices Closed for Holiday

★★ **HAPPY** ★★  
*Independence*  
★★ **DAY** ★★



# ACS Wins Innovative Partner Award



Ashe County Schools has been named the Appalachian State University College of Education Innovative Partner of the Year! We are so proud of our teacher leaders who created extended learning experiences for students!

Congratulations to the team from Mountain View Elementary, who shared their innovative summer learning adventure *“More Green Time, Less Screen Time - Cultivating Community Connections for Summer Learning.”* Dr. Eisa Cox, Superintendent, and Casey Smith, Elementary Curriculum Coordinator, supported the team.

## Colvard a Finalist

Congrats to **Megan Colvard**, ACHS Nursing Teacher, named a FINALIST for the 2026 NC CTE Teacher of the Year Award! She'll be honored this summer and represent Ashe County in December. Best of luck to Mrs. Colvard. We're proud of her passion, excellence, and the lasting impact she makes on our students every day!

[Read More >>](#)



# Teachers Earn National Board Certification



Congratulations to **Lindsey Hagel** (WWES Literacy Specialist), **Jill Baldwin** (MVES Literacy Specialist), and **Luke Eggers** (Project Lead the Way at ACMS) for achieving National Board Certification! In May, these exceptional educators were recognized for their hard work, dedication and excellence at the National Board Celebration hosted by the [Appalachian State University Alumni Association](#).

One of the most prestigious accomplishments in the teaching profession, National Board Certification reflects a teacher's unwavering dedication to excellence and their ongoing commitment to enhancing student learning and success. We're incredibly proud of these exceptional educators and thankful for the difference they make each day in our schools. Ashe County Schools is honored to have 27 active National Board Certified teachers on our team!



*Janey Nunn*

L-R: Dr. Betsy Rosenbalm, Director of Partnerships & Engagement at **Appalachian State University**; Julie Wilson Little, Math Specialist at Ashe County Schools and NC New Teacher Support Program Instructional Coach at [Reich College of Education at Appalachian State University](#); Lindsey Hagel; Karen Walker, NC New Teacher Support Instructional Coach; Jill Baldwin; and Luke Eggers.

## EOP Winners!



**Jacki Miller**, ACMS Finance Secretary/Payroll Specialist, and **Elaine May**, Central Support Services Accounting Specialist, were chosen by their colleagues as Educational Office Professionals (EOPs) of the Year: Elaine for her exceptional leadership as this year's EOP President, and Jackie for her years of service and contributions, which leave a lasting impact as she begins a well-earned retirement. In June, these ladies were surprised with balloons and plaques in honor of their outstanding work and dedication. Great job, and congrats!

# Empowering Innovation in the Classroom



Ashe County Schools proudly honored 29 educators at the June Board of Education meeting as recipients of 2025 Endowment Fund grants. Fourteen creative projects were selected for funding to enhance student learning across the district. Congratulations to all the winners!

“These grants represent the passion, creativity, and dedication of our teachers,” said Dr. Eisa Cox, ACS Superintendent. “We are so proud of their commitment to enriching our students’ educational experiences and grateful to the Endowment Board and our supporters for making it possible.”

Learn more and see the full list of winning projects:

[CLICK HERE](#)



First year  
grants were  
awarded

2003

Classroom  
projects  
funded

110+

Total  
awarded  
over years

\$151,000+

# Skills in Session: SBEs at Work

School-Based Enterprises (SBEs) are launching—and growing—in all our separate setting classrooms! These student-run businesses help build vital life skills like communication, money management, and teamwork. SBEs are powerful tools for students with disabilities to build skills in communication, social interaction, money management, following directions, sequencing, job roles, independence, and more—all while boosting confidence and teamwork. More SBEs are set to launch this fall, so stay tuned for updates and success stories.

*Snacks, anyone? Shoutout to the ACMS Coffee Cart, run by the amazing entrepreneurs in Cori Richardson's class!*



## School Bus Driver Training

### Upcoming Class Dates:

June 2-5, 2025	September 8-11, 2025
July 7-10, 2025	September 22-24, 2025
July 21-24, 2025	October 6-9, 2025
August 4-7, 2025	October 20-23, 2025
August 18-21, 2025	November 3-5, 2025

Classes consist of three virtual days 7:45-5:00 and an in person test on the fourth day

## Drive into a New Opportunity

Get rolling on a rewarding career transporting the future of Ashe County!

To register, email Wendy Baker: [wendy.baker@ashe.k12.nc.us](mailto:wendy.baker@ashe.k12.nc.us)  
Questions? Call 336-846-9103.

# Hard Work Pays Off



Our second cohort of educators have earned their LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) certification! More than 100 Ashe County Schools educators are now certified in this prestigious professional learning credential—a testament to our teachers’ passion for literacy and belief in every child’s potential.

## Congratulations on reaching this milestone:

### BRES

Courtney Binder, Amanda Black, Alisha Broce, Makenah Wilson



### MVES

Hannah Barker, Jennifer Blevins, Angie Douglas, Alexis Hinson, Kristen Krider, Elisha Roten



### WWES

Marley Eller, Marsha Shepherd, and Sherry Shepherd



**Jessica Yates** (second from left) and **Kristy Aldridge** (fourth from left), school counselors at ACMS and Ashe Early College, presented at the Group Counselor Network Showcase in Morganton, sharing valuable strategies for boosting student success. Thanks to support from GEAR UP Appalachian, all of our 7th–12th grade counselors have taken part in and/or completed ASCA National Model training.

From increasing achievement and improving attendance to guiding students toward life beyond high school, we’re proud of how our counselors are not only growing their own programs, but also giving back by sharing what they’ve learned with others across the region.

# Bower to Lead Transportation

Ashe County Schools is pleased to name **Charles Brandon Bower** as the district's new Director of Transportation, effective June 9. His selection was approved by the Ashe County Board of Education at their June meeting.

With 12 years of experience in education, Bower began his career teaching middle school math in Wilkes County before joining Ashe County Schools. He taught sixth-grade math and science at Mountain View Elementary for five years, served as a summer ACS Career Accelerator Program Administrator, and has most recently been Ashe County Middle School Assistant Principal during the 2024–2025 school year.



Bower earned both his Bachelor of Science in Middle Grades Education and his Master of School Administration in Educational Leadership from Appalachian State University. His commitment to education was recognized early on through the prestigious North Carolina Teaching Fellows Scholarship (2009–2013) and the Pamela Schram Scholarship (2012–2013).

Reflecting on his new and different role, Bower said, “I’m honored to serve our students and families in this capacity. Safe and efficient transportation is critical to student success, and I look forward to working alongside our dedicated transportation team to support the needs of our schools and community.”

Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox added, “Mr. Bower brings both leadership experience and a commitment to our students to this new role. His understanding of our district, the roads, our people, and our community makes him well-positioned to ensure safe, reliable, and student-centered transportation services across the county.”

Bower resides in Lansing with his wife, Amber, and their daughters, Hollyn and Ansley. When not at work, he enjoys fishing, hiking and camping.

We wish Mr. Bower well in his new leadership role.



# BEST Wishes

# Next Phases ...

We extend our heartfelt thanks to this year's retirees for their years of dedication, compassion, and impact. Their wisdom, patience, and encouragement have shaped the lives of students and colleagues alike, and their legacy will continue to inspire. Thank you for everything—you will all be missed!

*Not all retirees are pictured*

BRES	MVES	WWES	ACMS	ACHS
Penny Barnes Cindy Pugh	Barbara Heufel	Kevin Miller Suzanne Randolph Patty Richardson	Gina Calhoun Teresa Hughes Jacki Miller	Ethel Hunter Rita Southern Debbie Sturgill

## CENTRAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Johnny Speaks



**THANK YOU**

Mrs. Lisa Ashley is transitioning to a new role in Alleghany County after 13 years of dedicated service to Ashe County Schools—six of those years in the transportation department and the last two-and-a-half years as Transportation Director. “We extend our thanks to Mrs. Ashley for her commitment to student safety and operational excellence,” said ACS Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox. “Her leadership—particularly through the challenges brought by Hurricane Helene and this year’s severe winter weather—has been deeply appreciated.”



# Around the Corner

It's summer, but we're already prepping for Back 2 School Blast. This isn't your average back-to-school event—it's a community festival packed with fun, freebies, games, crafts, and more! Come connect with the incredible businesses, churches, and organizations that make Ashe County special.



**AUG. 9**  
LET'S HAVE A  
**BLAST!**

## When:

Saturday, August 9, 2025

🕒 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

## Where:

📍 Ashe County Sheriff's Office  
Parking Lot  
(140 Government Circle, Jefferson)

## Vendor info & registration:

👉 [CLICK HERE](#)

Donate online for school supplies: [CLICK HERE](#) 👉

Already bought supplies?  
Call 336-246-7175 to donate!

Let's make this the BEST Back 2 School Blast yet.  
We can't wait to see you there!

## Perfect Score!

Congrats to the WWES cafeteria crew for scoring a 100% sanitation rating this month! This kind of excellence takes serious dedication, teamwork and care.



L-R: Tabitha (Cafeteria Manager),  
Donna, Kim, Alexis and Nita



Our **FREE Summer Meal Program** for Ashe County kids & teens (18 and under) runs through **Aug. 8!**

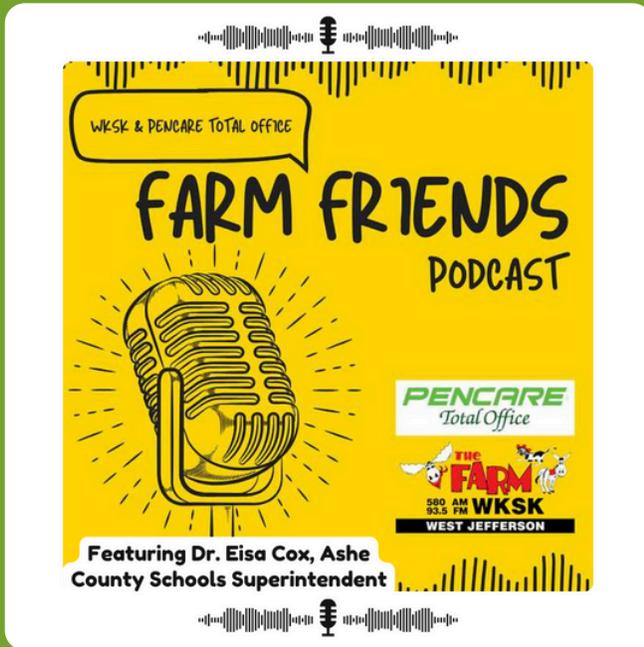
Find more details

[HERE.](#)

# Behind the Mic: School Talk with Dr. Cox



Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox recently joined the Farm Friends Podcast on [580 WSKS](#) to chat about all things Ashe County Schools! From celebrating student success to previewing exciting projects ahead, Dr. Cox shared valuable insights—and answered some questions you might've had yourself.



Catch the full  
episode here:  
[Listen Now](#)

Bonus: A follow-up episode is already in the works—stay tuned!

## Little Learners, Big Year

Our Pre-K kids *crushed it* during this fun year of learning—and their end-of-year celebration was the cherry on top! Just look at those proud smiles and Letterland vests!

**We've got open spots at all sites, and we're still accepting applications!**

 If your child turns 4 on or before August 31, 2025, they may be eligible for this amazing FREE program.

 Questions or need an app? Call us at 336-846-3221.

 Or visit: [asheschools.org/elc](https://asheschools.org/elc)





## Best of the Best



On June 3, we celebrated some of our brightest stars at the 2nd Annual Superintendent's Best of the Best Dinner, held at Timber Rivers in Lansing. The top five graduates from Ashe Early College and the top 15 grads from ACHS were recognized for their outstanding achievements—in academics, athletics, music, volunteer work, and more. With GPAs ranging from 4.446 to 4.776 and scholarship offers in the hundreds of thousands, these students were celebrated by family, school leaders, Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox, and members of the Board of Education. **We are proud of ALL our graduates and can't wait to see what they'll accomplish next.**

# Well done!

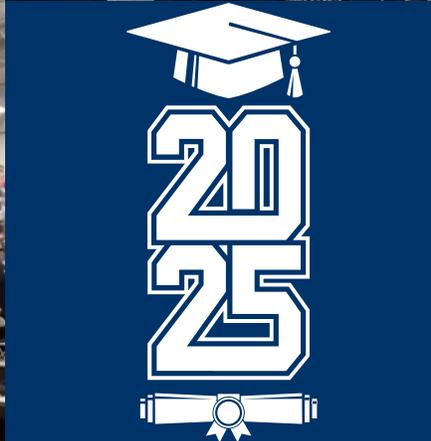


Benjamin C.  
Isabella F.  
Karlee H.\*  
Major K.  
Ashley P.\*  
Katy R.  
William S.\*  
Rayanna W.\*

Benjamin D.  
Isaac F.  
Abigail H.\*  
Maleah L.  
Carson P.  
Alexis R.  
Emory T.

(\* Denotes AEC student)

# CONGRATS



**235** AEC and ACHS students stepping into a bright future

**\$4M** in scholarships offered to our outstanding Class of 2025

**Project Graduation**, now in its 33<sup>rd</sup> year, provided a safe, substance-free space for grads to celebrate on graduation night—with music, games, food, and major prizes. Thanks to our amazing community for supporting this unforgettable tradition. Since it began in 1992, over 9,000 graduates have partied the night away safely.

**CONGRATS**

ACHS graduate Paige Roten, received the \$12,000 Norman Cheek Scholarship! Donna Bare, daughter of the late Mr. Cheek, proudly presented the annual scholarship, awarded to a student pursuing their education at App State.



SEE MORE PICS, VIDEOS AND AWESOME GRAD ACHIEVEMENTS ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE