

Press Release
April 11, 2024

New Leadership for Three Ashe County Schools

Ashe County Schools is pleased to announce that the Board of Education has approved the hire of the following individuals.

These hires follow the retirement of Mountain View Elementary Principal David Blackburn and Assistant Principal Jason Krider, and the untimely passing of Westwood Elementary Principal Jennifer Holden. Each of these long-time administrators was much loved and served Ashe County students and families well for many years.



The Board of Education approved the hire of Mr. Scott Grubb to be the new Principal of Westwood Elementary School. Mr. Grubb's 26 years of experience as an educator include time with Ashe, Alleghany, and Avery counties teaching physical education and history, as well as coaching men's basketball. He has served as Assistant Principal of WWES since August 2019 and served as the Interim Principal of WWES last fall during the illness of Jennifer Holden.

Mr. Grubb holds a Bachelor of Health and Physical Education from UNC Chapel Hill, as well as a Master of Athletic Administration and a leadership certificate in School Administration from Appalachian State University. He obtained his School Administrative/Principal licensure through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). Grubb is the husband of Jodi Grubb and father to Sydney Kate Short and Hallie Grubb.



The Board also approved the hire of Mr. Jerry Graybeal to be the new Principal of Mountain View Elementary School. Mr. Graybeal has 35 years of experience in education, including 11 years as a teacher and 24 years as an administrator. Originally from Ashe County, Graybeal moved back after living in Florida for many years. While there, he served as a teacher, principal, and secondary education director. For the past three years, he has served as an assistant principal of Ashe County High School.

Mr. Graybeal's education includes an Associate of Science in Business Administration from Forsyth Technical Community College, a Bachelor of Science in Education from Appalachian State University, and a Master of School Administration from Nova Southeastern University. He and his wife, Lisa, reside in West Jefferson. Ashe County Schools has also appointed retired principal, Mr. Phil Howell, as the Interim Principal of Mountain View Elementary through the end of the school year. Mr. Howell has many years of experience as a school leader and formerly served the students and families of MVES.



In addition to Principal Mr. Graybeal, the Board of Education approved the hire of Mrs. Cynthia Harless to be the new Assistant Principal of MVES. Mrs. Harless has served Ashe County Schools for 13 years, most recently as a Principal Fellow, and also as an Exceptional Children’s (EC) teacher. Harless earned a Bachelor of Science and a Master of School Administration from Appalachian State University. She lives in Lansing with her husband, Dillon, and their daughters, Maggie and Malorie. Mrs. Harless is currently finishing her year as a North Carolina Principal Fellow and is completing her internship at Mountain View Elementary.



In June, Ashe County High School will welcome Mr. Travis Richardson as the new Assistant Principal. Mr. Richardson has 24 years of education experience with Ashe County Schools and has taught at both Ashe County Middle School and Blue Ridge Elementary, where he served for two years as Assistant Principal. He is currently serving as a middle school science teacher and high school tennis coach. A graduate of Appalachian State University, Mr. Richardson holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and a Master of School Administration. He and his

wife, Dawn, live in Lansing with their twin daughters, Bailey and Carlee.



Mrs. Amanda Halsey has been approved to be the new Assistant Principal of Westwood Elementary. Mrs. Halsey joined Ashe County Schools eight years ago and has served as an EC teacher and Pre-K teacher. She earned a Bachelor of Science and Master of Education from Western Carolina University, and she also holds a Master of School Administration from Gardner-Webb University. She and her husband, Cory, live in Crumpler with their son, Colt.

Ashe County Schools Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox said, "As we welcome our new school leaders, we embrace a future filled with student-centered leadership. Their passion for education and commitment to fostering positive learning environments will undoubtedly inspire our students and teachers to reach new heights of achievement."

Please join the Board of Education and Ashe County Schools in welcoming these outstanding individuals to their new positions.

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