

Ashe County Schools

WEEKLY UPDATE



AEC seniors showed off their style and school spirit for College Colors Day!

THROUGH
18
SEPT

Important Upcoming Dates

- ✓ **Sept. 18** - WWES STEM/Math/Science Night & Book Fair, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
- ✓ **Sept. 25** - EC Community of Support Night @ Blue Ridge Elementary, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
- ✓ **Oct. 2** - BRES and MVES Fall Festivals, 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.
- ✓ **Oct. 3** - ACHS Homecoming Game 
- ✓ **Oct. 6** - BOE Meeting

**October is Principals
Appreciation Month**



RISING ABOVE the Storm



“

“Our future is one of excellence, innovation, and limitless possibility. We are not simply measuring progress—we are cultivating resilience, inspiring leadership, and preparing every student to thrive. More than scores, more than grades, we are a community of learners, builders, and dreamers. Our students will make a positive impact on our community for years to come.”

- Dr. Eisa Cox, Superintendent

”

In a year marked by extraordinary challenges, Ashe County Schools has once again proven that our community's commitment to education is stronger than any storm. Despite losing 47 in-person instructional days—including 31 full closures, 16 remote learning days, 12 two-hour delays, five one-hour delays, and one three-hour early release—students not only persevered but **excelled, outperforming the state in nearly every measure.**

READ MORE



Anxious Generation Event Recap

On Aug. 26, Ashe County Schools hosted a community conversation on the elements that are impacting our youth. Guest speakers, along with Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox, spoke to a captive crowd on topics like screen time, social media, the dangers of vaping, and more.



SEE VIDEO



Click for presenter notes:

[Dr. Scott St. Clair, Pediatrician](#)

[Jennifer Greene, Director AppHealthCare](#)

[Jared Schaefer, FBI Special Agent](#)

Well-deserved Wins

Seven incredible ACS educators have been awarded 2025–2026 Academic Innovation Mini (AIM) Grants through the GEAR UP Appalachian Partnership! These grants were earned at the exciting ExP=O Pitch Competition, where educators presented powerful, creative ideas to enhance student learning. Over \$50,000 in mini-grants were awarded this year—and Ashe County educators took home a **\$25,000** piece of the pie!

Tonya Denny & Kathy Evans (ACHS)

“Connecting Languages, Families, and Futures Lending Library”

\$10,000 District Impact Grant

Brittany Perry & Autumn

Chamberlain (ACS Social Workers)

“Leaders in Bloom: Cultivating Change by Nourishing the Roots”

\$10,000 District Impact Grant

Nikki Eason, Travis Eason & Daisy Finley (ACHS)

“The Outdoor Exchange Classroom”

\$5,000 Whole School Impact Grant



(L-R): Dr. Eisa Cox, ACS Superintendent is pictured with ACHS Media Coordinator, Tonya Denny; and ACS Social Workers Autumn Chamberlain and Brittany Perry.

FULL STORY →

NCCAT CTE Teacher of the Year Finalist



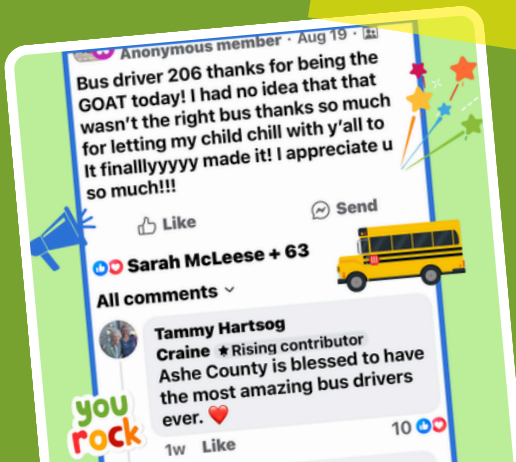
Congratulations to Mrs. Megan Colvard, Ashe County High Nursing Teacher, named a finalist for the 2026 NCCAT CTE Teacher of the Year!

FULL STORY →

(Pictured L-R): Dr. Eisa Cox, ACS Superintendent; Gin Hodge, NCCAT Chief Academic Officer; Dr. Nancy Cross, NCDPI Office of CTE Assistant Director; Mrs. Megan Colvard, ACHS Nursing Teacher and NCCAT CTE Teacher of the Year Finalist; Karen Boyles, NCDPI NW CTE Regional Coordinator; and Earl Pennington, ACS CTE/Accountability Director.



SHOUT OUTS



Thirteen years in a row! Our Central Office Finance team has earned the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting—the highest honor in governmental accounting.
READ MORE HERE.



Our new mechanic, Joe Cox, participated in the NCDPI 30-Day Inspection Class and completed the certification test. This training guarantees that our team is fully certified and up-to-date with state inspection standards. (L-R): Mechanics Nathan Mash and Mike Murphy; Fuel Truck Driver/Bus Driver Teddy Absher; Mechanic Joe Cox; and Director of Transportation Brandon Bower.



GREAT JOB!



WELCOME

2025–26 Student Advisors, Board of Education:

Claire H. – ACHS Student Council President

Felice Z. – ACHS Student Body President

Addison D. – AEC Representative (not pictured)

This is the second year students have had the opportunity to serve in this important role. Although students are not voting members, they share their perspectives and provide valuable feedback to the BOE, as appropriate.



From a brand-new deck at MVES to a refreshed playground at WWES, our ACS maintenance crew—alongside school custodial teams—are hard at work creating safe, welcoming spaces for students, staff, and families.

“Best of the Year” Dinner

On Sept. 16, some of Ashe County Schools’ finest were celebrated at Timber Rivers. ACS administrators, Board of Education members, and family members gathered to honor these educators and staff members selected by their peers this spring as our “Best of the Years” — a true reflection of their dedication, talent, and impact on our students.

This year’s honorees:

Dustin Farmer – Principal of the Year, ACHS

Mason Wagoner – Rookie of the Year, BRES

Tania Rollins – Teacher of the Year, ACMS

Summer Davis – Supervisory/Support Staff Employee of the Year, ACMS

Jennifer Hart – Classified Employee of the Year, ACMS

Charles Johnson – Exceptional Children Educator of Excellence, BRES



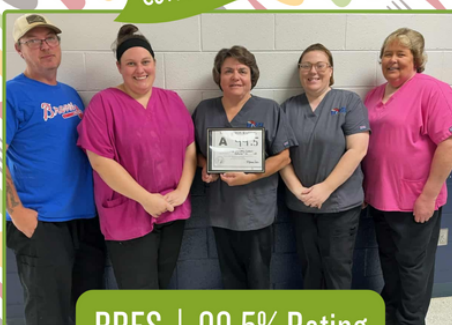
Congratulations



Megan Colvard (at left), Nursing Teacher at ACHS, was named CTE Teacher of the Year and a finalist for North Carolina’s 2025–2026 CTE Teacher of the Year (winner announced in December—good luck, Mrs. Colvard!). See link to full story on page 3.

Stefan Kunz (not pictured), AEC History & English Teacher, was recognized as GEAR UP Ashe County Innovator of the Year and was nominated for the 2025 regional GEAR UP Innovator of the Year Award.

Food
Service
Superstars



BRES | 99.5% Rating

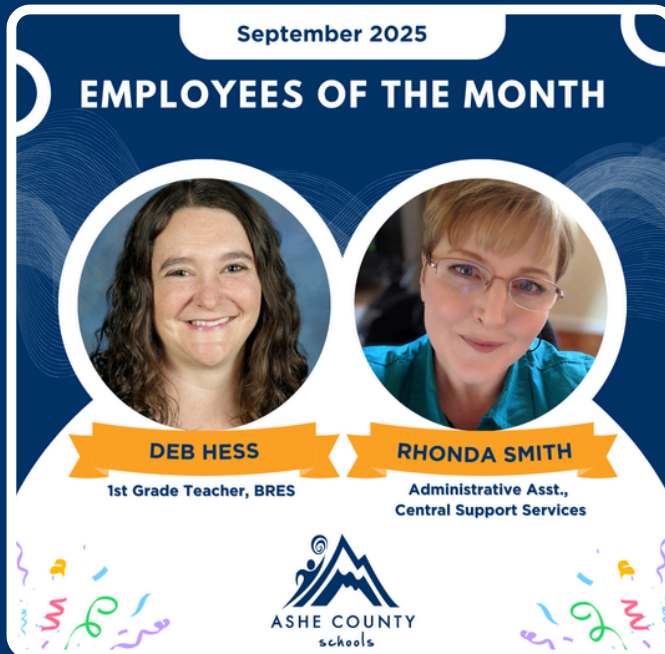


ACMS | 99.0% Rating

Congratulations to our cafeteria teams at Blue Ridge Elementary School and Ashe County Middle School for earning impressively high sanitation ratings! THANK YOU for clean kitchens, tasty meals, and plenty of smiles every day as you keep our students happy, healthy, and ready to learn.

Employees of the Month

Join us in congratulating our September Employees of the Month: Deb Hess, 1st Grade Teacher at Blue Ridge Elementary School and Rhonda Smith, Administrative Assistant at Central Support Services. Thank you to these ladies for their dedication and impact across Ashe County Schools!



Employees, be watching for the **Nomination Form** to open again on Oct. 1st! Nominate any employee you believe is worthy of this honor and share why you think they deserve the recognition. Winners will be announced via email to all schools, and they will also be celebrated on our Ashe County Schools social media and in our digital newsletter.

Her colleagues shared that Deb is:

“continuing to be positive, open minded, caring, and student centered while facing new challenges”
“always willing to go the extra mile with ALL of her kids”
“handling difficult situations with dignity and grace”

Rhonda’s colleagues said she:

“does so many things behind the scenes and never misses a beat”
“is the perfect face of Ashe County Schools who treats everyone with respect, even when they are angry and rude to her”
“is always willing to take on anything asked of her, even when there does not seem to be enough time in the day”

THANK
YOU
♥



New Roles



Ashe County Schools welcomes **Tonya Sizemore** as our Afterschool Program Coordinator. She has served as the Afterschool Site Coordinator at Mountain View Elementary for the past year, and we wish her well in her new position.

We also extend congratulations to **Molly Porter**, our previous Afterschool Program Coordinator, on her new role as Guidance and Testing Administrative Assistant at ACHS.



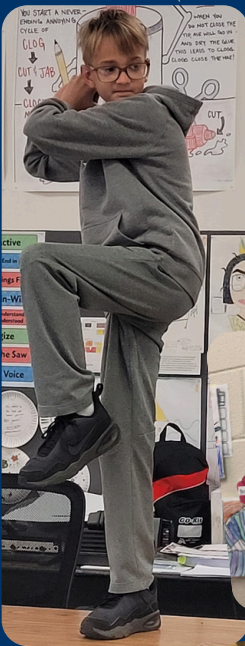


Celebrating Arts in Education

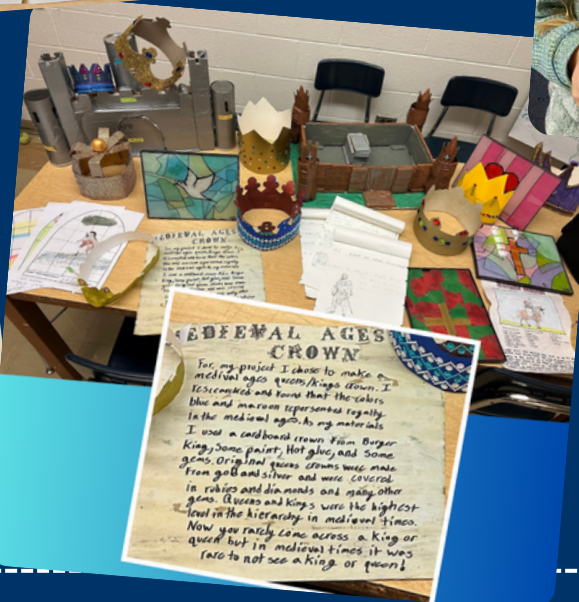
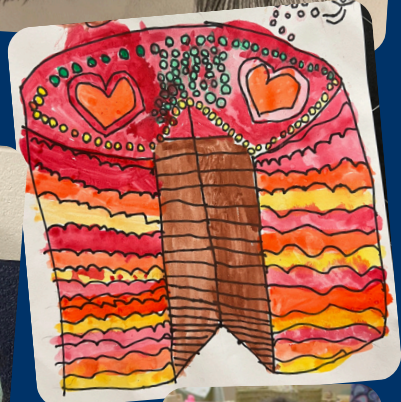


The arts spark creativity, build empathy, and help students grow into curious, confident learners. Ashe County Schools believes in the power of art and music to make a lasting impact — and that wouldn't be possible without our amazing teachers. Thank you to ALL our art educators for encouraging expression, imagination and lifelong learning every day. You make a difference!

Enjoy these wonderful examples of student art ...



See more art on our socials



School Highlights

