

Ashe County Schools

WEEKLY UPDATE



*BRES 4th graders explore
Grandfather Mountain*

THROUGH
10
OCT

Important Upcoming Dates

- ✓ **Oct. 11** - AEC Homecoming Dance
- ✓ **Oct. 16** - **EARLY DISMISSAL DAY**
- ✓ **Oct. 16** - WWES Fall Festival & Haunted Trail,
6-9 PM
- ✓ **Oct. 17** - **SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR STUDENTS;**
Professional Development Day for Staff
- ✓ **Oct. 31** - Read & Treat, Backstreet, West Jefferson
3-5 PM



October is Principal Appreciation Month

See Ashe County Public Schools Facebook page and
schools' social media pages for shoutouts





Dr. Eisa Cox: Finalist for 2026 State Superintendent of the Year

*We proudly celebrate a remarkable achievement by our very own Superintendent, **Dr. Eisa Cox**, named one of eight outstanding district leaders selected as Regional Superintendents of the Year in North Carolina!*

This prestigious honor placed Dr. Cox in the running for the 2026 A. Craig Phillips North Carolina Superintendent of the Year Award, presented by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund.

Presented by the North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA) and the North Carolina School Superintendents' Association (NCSSA), this award recognizes exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication to K–12 public education. It is named in memory of the late A. Craig Phillips, who served as North Carolina's State Superintendent from 1969–1989.

The winner, Dr. Rodney Peterson of Person County Schools, was announced during a special ceremony held on October 9 at the Grandover Resort in Greensboro.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Cox on her well-earned recognition. Her passion and leadership continue to move Ashe County Schools forward and make a lasting impact on our entire community.

“It is an honor to be recognized as a finalist for this prestigious award. I am deeply grateful to serve alongside the exceptional educators and staff of Ashe County Schools who dedicate themselves each day to supporting our students and strengthening our community.

- Dr. Eisa Cox, Superintendent

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Double the Dedication & Honor

Congratulations to **Terry Richardson**, Director of Exceptional Children and NC Pre-K Programs, who was selected as EC Director of the Year by the 1st Annual Speddy Awards.

The Speddy Awards, hosted by Global Special Education Associates (GSEA) and the North Carolina Council of Administrators of Special Education (NC-CASE), honor educators who provide outstanding services to students in exceptional children's programs during the 2024–25 school year.



Richardson's nomination and win highlights her leadership and dedication to supporting students and families across Ashe County. Thank you, Mrs. Richardson, for your commitment that continues to make a lasting difference in the lives of students.



Another congratulations goes to Ashe Middle School EC Teacher **Cori Richardson**, named the 2025-26 Exceptional Children Educator of Excellence for her outstanding work with School-Based Enterprise activities and her commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment. Ms. Richardson's dedication has also earned her a spot in the state competition this November. Thank you, Mrs. Richardson, for your passion and hard work that inspires and supports our students in countless ways.

Westwood Shines Statewide

Congratulations to Westwood Elementary! The school has earned the distinguished honor of being named one of only 10 schools in North Carolina to meet the eligibility requirements for the National ESEA Distinguished Schools Award – Category 3: Excellence in Serving Special Populations of Students (SWD).

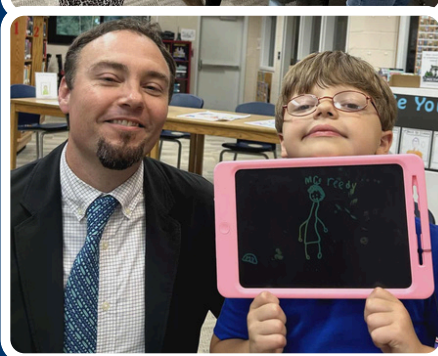
This recognition highlights the dedication of Westwood's educators, staff and families in supporting student success and ensuring that all learners, especially those with disabilities, have the opportunity to thrive.



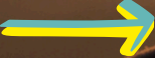
[READ MORE >>](#)

EC Night Highlights Student Talent

September 25 was an incredible evening at Blue Ridge Elementary! Our annual EC Community of Support Parent Night celebrated the creativity and hard work of students across our district. Families enjoyed a Gallery Walk featuring projects from BRES, MVES and WWES students—along with impressive work from ACMS and ACHS students. So much talent under one roof—we couldn't be prouder of our students!



Hope & Heroes

One year after Hurricane Helene swept through our community, Blue Ridge Elementary created a special video to reflect on not only the loss we endured, but also the unshakable resilience, unity, compassion—and heroes—that carried us through. Click the screen to view. 



Resilience in the Face of Funding Challenges

This summer, thousands of U.S. school districts woke up to find nearly \$7 billion in federal funding frozen—including \$1.1 million for Ashe County, NC. Wondered how this has impacted ACS staff, programs, and students?

In this [in-depth article from *The Guardian*](#) and Hechinger Report, our Superintendent, Dr. Eisa Cox, and Director of Federal Programs Julie Taylor, shed light on what's truly at stake—and how the pause threatened programs, staff positions, and student services that families rely on every day.

Through these challenges, Ashe County Schools continues supporting students and programs with resilience and careful planning.



October Employees of the Month

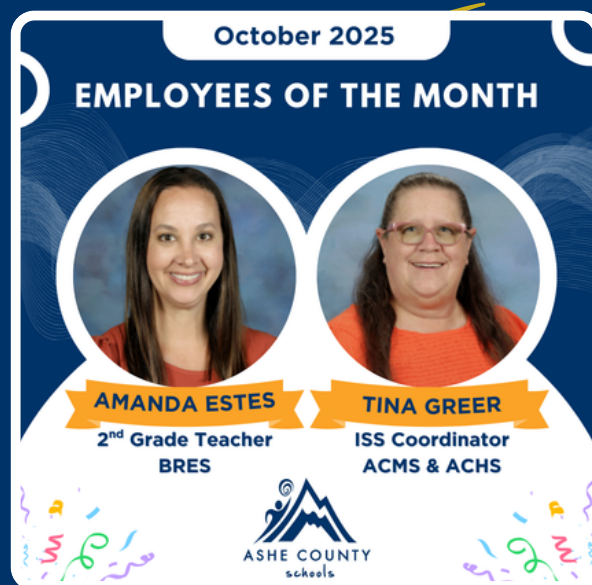
Join us in celebrating **Amanda Estes**, 2nd Grade Teacher at Blue Ridge Elementary School, and **Tina Greer**, ISS Coordinator at Ashe County Middle School and Ashe County High School!

These two incredible educators were voted by their peers as this month's cream of the crop, and it's easy to see why. Just look at the kind words shared by their colleagues:

” Amanda

“She puts in a lot of work outside of her classroom and on her own time. She heads up the Fall Festival and helps to keep the HEAT team all organized. She goes above and beyond to make everything special. All of this while maintaining a positive attitude and gives you a smile.”

“Amanda is one of the hardest working teachers at BRES. She is an amazing 2nd grade teacher and strives to be the best she can be every day! She is also the Chair of our Hospitality and Events team and puts in so much extra time after school finding ways to make all the teachers feel special and planning our huge events like Fall Festival! She does all of these things with such a loving heart! We are blessed to have her at BRES!”



” Tina

“Tina is ALWAYS a helping hand. She walks the halls with a smile and positive comment every day for each child and adult. She jumps in anywhere she is needed.”

“The middle school relies on Tina to keep the flow of the instructional day, relieve teachers' stress with POWER Assists, connect with students who need that extra attention. Mrs. Greer is the super glue that connects everything and everyone to stay connected. We are blessed to have her!”

Employees, be watching for the **Nomination Form** to open again in November! Nominate any employee you believe is worthy of this honor and share why you think they deserve it.

Driving Forward Together!

Ashe County Schools has two brand-new activity buses in our fleet, including one equipped with wheelchair accessibility! These additions will allow us to continue to serve our students and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in school activities, events and trips.



On hand for the delivery were Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox, Transportation Director Brandon Bower, and our faithful transportation mechanics and staff.

Serving Up Excellence



MVES | 99.0% Rating



ACHS | 100% Rating



WWES | 100% Rating

Congratulations to these cafeteria teams for earning outstanding sanitation ratings—a result of their daily dedication to cleanliness, proper food handling, and high health standards. Thank you for running top-notch kitchens!

Top Trays!

FUELING OUR KIDS



Each week, our cafeteria professionals across the district choose and submit a photo of a lunch tray. One winner—voted by their peers—is recognized on our social media channels. We appreciate all our cafeteria professionals—they're the heart of our lunchrooms! Congratulations to these top trays so far!

NC Crunch Month

In October, our schools are celebrating #NCCrunch as part of NC Farm to School Month! Students are enjoying crisp apples, and 1st graders are even exploring Johnny Appleseed in a Wit and Wisdom unit. It's also a time to honor the many hands—from farmers to educators—who make it all possible.

See more
on our socials!



Thank
you

Highlights & Happenings



October is **National Principal Appreciation Month**, and we're saying THANKS to our amazing leaders in some special ways! Check out more on our [Facebook page](#)!

A harvest of fun & learning...

From festive fun and school spirit to surprise guests and unforgettable field trips, our students are turning over a new leaf every day while learning, exploring and growing!





This photo: Ashe Post & Times



See more on our socials

