

Ashe County High School AP Scores Exceed State and National Performance; District Celebrates Five-Year Growth of 25.6%

Ashe County Schools is proud to announce that Ashe County High School students outperformed both the state and the nation on the 2025 Advanced Placement (AP) examinations taken in May. This year, 75.6% of all AP exams taken at Ashe County High School earned a score of 3, 4, or 5, surpassing the North Carolina average of 72.1% and the national average of 70.1%.

AP scores of 3, 4, or 5 demonstrate a student's mastery of college-level content and qualify a student for college credit or advanced standing at many colleges and universities. For Ashe County High School students, this means greater access to college credit while still in high school, meaningful tuition savings, and increased readiness for postsecondary success.

Ashe County High School Principal Dustin Farmer praised both the performance and the progress his students have shown:

"We are incredibly proud of our students for embracing the challenge of AP courses and demonstrating such impressive results. These scores reflect years of hard work, dedicated teachers, and a school culture that believes every student can succeed in advanced coursework. Our students continue to prove that when expectations are high and support is strong, they rise to the occasion." Dustin Farmer, Principal, Ashe County High School

This year's results reflect a remarkable 25.6% increase in qualifying AP scores over the last five years, highlighting the district's sustained commitment to expanding access to rigorous coursework and ensuring high levels of achievement for all students.

Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox praised the district's progress and focus on excellence for all students. "These results demonstrate what happens when students are encouraged to take on rigorous challenges and are supported every step of the way by outstanding teachers. Our five-year growth reflects our belief that all students can succeed at high levels when given opportunity, access, and excellent instructional leadership." Dr. Eisa Cox, Superintendent

North Carolina's AP Growth Reaches New Heights

The strong performance in Ashe County mirrors statewide gains reported by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). For the fourth consecutive year, North Carolina students increased both participation and performance on AP exams, again outpacing national growth.

According to NCDPI, more than 90,000 students took over 171,000 AP exams during the 2024–25 school year, representing a 7.3% increase in test takers and a 9.8% increase in tests taken. Of all tests taken, 72.1% earned a qualifying score, marking an all-time high of 123,394 qualifying scores statewide.

These gains include increases across every region, all racial and ethnic groups, and all genders, demonstrating broad statewide momentum.

State Superintendent Maurice “Mo” Green celebrated the results, noting: *“Being able to increase scores while increasing access – two metrics that sometimes do not rise together – is huge. With their support and a lot of hard work on the part of students, North Carolina is on its way to being a national leader in AP courses.”*

State Support Strengthens Opportunities for Ashe County Students

North Carolina’s AP access efforts have been supported by the NC AP Partnership, a collaboration between NCDPI and the College Board that provides professional development, district support, and funding for AP, IB, and Cambridge exam fees.

In 2024–25, the state invested more than \$17.6 million to ensure that students across North Carolina, including those in Ashe County, have equitable access to advanced coursework opportunities.

Ashe County Schools remains committed to expanding advanced coursework and ensuring that every student is prepared for college, career, and lifelong success. In addition to Advanced Placement opportunities, students can earn college credit and industry-recognized credentials through the district’s strong partnership with Wilkes Community College. The district also offers a robust Career and Technical Education program across 16 pathways, including animal science, horticulture, electrical, welding, carpentry, automotive, biomedical technology, computer science, engineering, business, education, and early childhood development.

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