

Ashe County Schools Honors February Employees of the Month

Ashe County Schools proudly recognizes these outstanding individuals as our February Employees of the Month: **Ms. Katie Rodriguez**, Social Studies Teacher at Ashe County Middle School; **Mr. Dean Rupard**, Maintenance Technician at Central Support Services; and all of our **Custodial Staff** across the district.

Chosen by their colleagues, Katie and Dean exemplify dedication, professionalism, and a deep commitment to supporting students, staff, and the Ashe County Schools community. Their daily efforts help create positive learning environments and ensure our schools remain welcoming, safe, and successful places for everyone.

Their peers' remarks capture the lasting impact they make in their daily work:

Katie Rodriguez — Social Studies Teacher, ACMS

“Katie consistently demonstrates the highest level of professionalism in her work. She is thoughtful, reliable, and holds herself to a standard that positively influences both students and colleagues. In addition to her professionalism, Katie is exceptionally kind and patient with children. She builds strong relationships with students and creates a classroom environment where they feel supported, valued, and excited to learn.”

“Katie is also an outstanding educator who designs engaging, hands-on learning experiences that make content meaningful and accessible for students. Her lessons reflect careful planning, creativity, and a deep understanding of how children learn best.”

“Beyond her work in the classroom, Katie has taken on a leadership role among the social studies teachers. She led the team with clarity and purpose by guiding pacing for the semester and ensuring alignment to the North Carolina standards. As part of this work, she developed an excellent pacing guide that provided clear direction and detailed guidance on content to be taught. This resource has been incredibly helpful and has supported consistency and confidence across the team.”

“Katie’s dedication, leadership, and care for students make her truly deserving of this recognition. She is a tremendous asset to our school community, and I strongly recommend her for Employee of the Month.”

Dean Rupard — Maintenance Technician, CSS

“Dean is a standout employee. He cares for our schools and the spaces we have for the youth in our community. He is a leader just from his actions and can be called on when in need.”

“He will do his best to find solutions that are best for the district and how we serve students in this community. He is a valued employee.”

“Dean is a dependable, go-to team member who consistently steps up whenever and wherever he is needed. He is always willing to take on any task—large or small—and approaches every assignment with a positive attitude and a strong work ethic. Dean takes great pride in his work and is dedicated to ensuring our schools and workspaces remain safe, functional, and well-maintained. His willingness to help others, his flexibility, and his commitment to doing the job right make him an

invaluable asset to our team. He continually goes above and beyond to support our staff, students, and daily operations.”

Ashe County Schools — Custodial Staff

Our schools couldn't have had nicer things to say about the amazing work our custodial staff does each day to keep our buildings safe, clean, and accessible. From early mornings to late evenings and in all types of weather, our custodians play an essential role in ensuring that students and staff can focus on teaching and learning in a safe and welcoming environment. We thank our custodians for being there for us in the rain, sleet, snow, and ice.

“They clear our parking lots, keep the heat and water running, and make sure we are safe when entering the building. They do the unseen and underappreciated task. They are our winter heroes.”

“Our custodians have outstanding dedication and work ethic, working tirelessly each day to ensure that our school building and grounds are clean, safe, and welcoming for both students and staff.”

“Our custodians are the foundational layer of a functioning workplace. Without them, the environment degrades rapidly, halting productivity. They have worked tirelessly to remove snow and ice the past few weeks on top of their regular jobs... They arrive before the sun comes up and stay long after everyone leaves to make sure everything is taken care for the next day. They perform essential and sometimes unpleasant tasks with dignity and without complaint. Our custodial team greets us with a smile and a spotless environment every morning. Their positive attitude and attention to detail set the standard for professionalism in our building. Recognizing them reinforces that every role here is vital.”

We sincerely thank **Ms. Rodriguez, Mr. Rupard, and all of our ACS custodians** for their dedication, hard work, and commitment to excellence. Their contributions make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students and staff each day, and Ashe County Schools is proud to recognize and celebrate their service to our school community.

