

NEWSLETTER UPDATE



MVES first graders practice subtraction with new strategies.

FEBRUARY 2026

asheschools.org

PROUD MOMENTS: GROWTH IN ACTION

All three ACS elementary schools earned NC Academic Growth Certificates for meeting or exceeding expected academic progress, recognizing meaningful gains in student learning. Blue Ridge Elementary, Mountain View Elementary, and Westwood Elementary principals accepted the honors. Ashe Early College also received a Certificate of Achievement for high performance and exceeding growth targets, reflecting a strong, shared commitment to student success across Ashe County Schools.



READING FUN ROLLING IN

The Busload of Books is rolling into Mountain View Elementary on April 2, 2026! MVES is one of only 12 schools nationwide selected for this exciting visit from author Matthew Swanson and illustrator Robbi Behr. Students and teachers will enjoy a special author visit and a schoolwide book giveaway, bringing creativity, excitement, and a shared love of reading to the entire school community. [Learn more HERE](#), and help us spread the word about this exciting day!

CONGRATS TO
OUR ACS
BEST OF ASHE
2025 WINNERS



These winners were honored at a celebratory luncheon at Jefferson Landing in January:

- **Best School** - MVES
- **Best Teacher** - Angie Miller (WWES)
- **Best Principal** - Dustin Farmer (ACHS)

Thank you to our staff and community for making Ashe County a great place for learning!

FEBRUARY SPOTLIGHT

This month, we're honoring some of the dedicated teams who keep our schools running, safe, and inspired. See more appreciation for these groups on [our Facebook page](#).

The Heart of our Schools

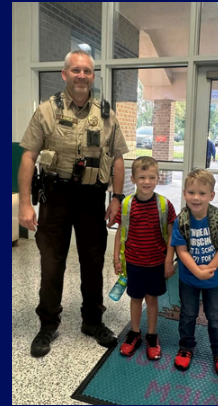
Our ten school counselors foster inclusive spaces where every student feels valued. Through lessons and personalized support, they build academic success and life skills. We are so grateful for their dedication to our students' growth and well-being.

CTE Celebrates 100 Years

Under the leadership of our CTE educators, hardworking students are building real-world skills for high-demand, rewarding careers. From skilled trades to technical pathways, CTE opens doors and prepares our learners for bright, successful futures. Thank you to all of our dedicated CTE teachers who go above and beyond every day to equip students with the knowledge, confidence, and hands-on experience they need to thrive.



Protecting our Own



We are incredibly thankful for our School Resource Officers. Their presence ensures a secure learning environment, while their mentorship helps build lasting, positive relationships with our students and staff. Their impact reaches beyond the badge.

DRIVING EXCELLENCE

Our dedicated bus drivers and transportation team go the extra mile to keep students safe each day. ACS buses travel more than **half a million miles** annually, while mechanics and staff keep vehicles running smoothly. THANK YOU for making safety, reliability, and care your top priorities! [See more here.](#)



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“Every day, rain or shine, early mornings and long routes, our drivers safely transport students to and from school and activities. They are often the first smiling face students see in the morning and the last caring adult they see before heading home. Their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to safety play a vital role in the success of our schools. We encourage staff and students to help us show appreciation throughout the month, whether that's a simple thank you, a note or card, a kind word, or a small gesture of gratitude. Those moments truly mean a lot to our drivers.”

- Brandon Bower, Director of Transportation

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STRONG STUDENT SUPPORT

On Feb. 13, several ASC staff members joined community partners for Youth Mental Health First Aid training, strengthening the support system surrounding our students. Sponsored by Vaya Health, AppHealthCare, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the training provided practical tools to recognize warning signs, respond confidently, and connect youth with help.

By investing in collaboration and knowledge, we continue building safe, supportive environments where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.



GUIDING & INSPIRING FUTURE EDUCATORS

App State recently recognized Dr. Susan Mochen, Cynthia Harless, and Brittany Alff for inspiring ACES students through real-world insight and meaningful conversation.

APPSTATE
REICH COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Appalachian Community
of Education Scholars

The Appalachian Community of Education Scholars (ACES) program would like to extend a warm **THANK YOU** to these Ashe County educators for taking time to help further develop our ACES student's knowledge of education!



Dr. Susan Mochen
Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources



Cynthia Harless
Assistant Principal at MVES



Brittany Alff
WWES Teacher of the Year

FEBRUARY EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to these outstanding February Employees of the Month: **Ms. Katie Rodriguez** (Social Studies Teacher, ACMS); **Mr. Dean Rupard** (Maintenance Technician, CSS); and our **entire Custodial Staff**. Selected by their colleagues, these dedicated professionals go above and beyond for our students and community. Thank you to each one for everything you do to make ACS a wonderful place to learn and grow!

[Read more, including their peers' accolades, here.](#)



MIDDLE SCHOOL MOMENTUM

Exciting progress continues at the future Ashe County Middle School. Structural steel installation is well underway as crews complete key connections and prepare for upcoming concrete work. Major infrastructure elements are being installed, exterior wall mockups are in progress, and site work continues to support the next phases of construction.

We are grateful for the dedicated teams bringing this new learning space to life and look forward to sharing more updates as the project moves ahead.



[See More Photos](#)



SHARING SUCCESS TOGETHER

Great conversations, strong connections, and plenty to celebrate at the Ashe Early College Community Breakfast on Feb. 17. Students and educators shared successes, future goals, and appreciation for the community partners whose support helps make meaningful opportunities possible for our students.



A GREAT CAREER STARTS HERE

Ashe County Schools is looking for passionate, dedicated individuals to join our team in a variety of positions. If you're ready to make a difference for students and be part of a supportive school community.

[Explore current openings HERE.](#) Or, scan the QR code at right.

Teachers (all licensure areas)
Bus Drivers
Substitute teachers
Cafeteria Subs

Support staff
Custodians
School Administrators



ANCHORED LEADERSHIP

During the School Superintendents Association's 2026 National Conference on Education in Nashville in mid-February, our Superintendent, Dr. Eisa Cox — alongside Dr. Rob Jackson of Buncombe County Schools and Ms. Kathy Amos of Yancey County Schools — led a powerful session: *Educators as Crisis Leaders: How Public Education Anchors Communities in Uncertain Times*. As panelists, they reflected on how Hurricane Helene forced school districts to expand their role far beyond education and into full-scale crisis leadership.

The three district leaders recounted how western North Carolina schools worked through extensive facility damage, loss of communication systems, and the displacement of families in the wake of the storm. The session provided valuable insights into the evolving responsibilities of district leadership and demonstrated how our districts are essential to the stability and recovery of the communities they serve.

We are thankful to Dr. Cox and her colleagues for representing our districts so well in sharing these vital leadership lessons with educators from across the country!



RAISING THE PAW FOR MR. FARMER



Our very own Mr. Dustin Farmer has been named one of only nine finalists for the Wells Fargo North Carolina Principal of the Year!

This prestigious nod recognizes Mr. Farmer's incredible leadership and his unwavering commitment to our students and staff. We are beyond proud to have his hard work spotlighted on the state stage.

The winner will be announced on May 15. Please join us in cheering him on and wishing him the best of luck!

Meet all the regional finalists [here.](#)



IMPORTANT DATES

March 1-7 – School Social Worker Appreciation Week

March 2 – Board of Education Meeting

March 3 – Battle of the Books | 9 AM | The Old Courthouse

March 6 – School Maintenance Worker Appreciation Day

March 12 – BRES Community Visit Day

– WWES Family Night & Book Fair | 6-8 PM

NC PRE-K SCREENING STARTING

Families of future Pre-K students, Ashe County NC Pre-K will hold DIAL Screenings **March 16-19, 2026**, for children who will be 4 years old on or before August 31, 2026.

Screening is required for placement in NC Pre-K classrooms at several county locations, including Ashe Early Learning Center, Blue Ridge Elementary, and more.

Call 336-846-3221 today or email jerri.vogler@ashe.k12.nc.us to schedule an appointment and receive an application packet.

Early learning starts here—don't miss this important step for your child!



CLICK FOR INFO

SEE APPLICATION

READY, SET, KINDERGARTEN

Ashe County Schools is excited to announce 2026 Kindergarten Screening dates! This important step helps us get to know your child and ensures a smooth, successful start to the 2026-2027 school year. Children must be 5 years old on or before August 31, 2026, to enroll in kindergarten.

Screening dates:

- Mountain View Elementary — March 31
- Blue Ridge Elementary — April 1
- Westwood Elementary — April 2

Beginning March 2, parents must call their child's district-assigned school to register, receive required paperwork, and schedule a screening time. We look forward to welcoming our newest learners!



MORE INFO HERE

UPDATED 2025-2026 SCHOOL CALENDAR

MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	2	3	4	5	6	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

APRIL						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

MAY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Ashe County Schools has updated the CURRENT 2025–2026 school calendar to reflect the instructional days missed due to inclement weather. Graduation is currently still set for June 5, 2026.

Please note that additional weather days could require further adjustments.

View the most current calendar here, and stay tuned to our social media and website for updates.



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SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS



