

Ashe County Schools Once Again Ranks Among the Top School Districts in North Carolina

Ashe County Schools is once again among North Carolina's top-performing public-school districts. Official 2025–2026 accountability results rank the district among the state's top 10 of 115 public school districts and second in the Northwest region. Overall proficiency across End-of-Grade and End-of-Course assessments reached 66.5%.

Ashe County students exceeded the statewide proficiency rate of 59.2% by 7.3 percentage points. Overall proficiency increased 4.7 percentage points from the previous year and has risen 11.4 points since 2020–2021, demonstrating sustained academic progress. The district is also the only fully participating Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) district in the statewide top 10. CEP is a federal school-meal program through which every Ashe County Schools student receives breakfast and lunch at no cost. This distinction demonstrates that strong academic outcomes and a commitment to serving every student can advance together.

“These results are worth celebrating: the hard work of our students and the people – teachers, administrators, staff, and families who believe in them every day. More students are meeting academic standards, our high school reached a historic milestone, graduation remains above 90 percent, and nearly every graduate left us with something meaningful beyond a diploma. That is real progress.” Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox said.

Success Across Grade Levels and Subjects

The results show strength throughout the district. Every major tested grade-band aggregate exceeded the state average. Grades 3–8 all-tests proficiency increased from 63.7% to 65.9%, while mathematics rose from 65.6% to 69.5%. Grades 3–8 mathematics ranked sixth statewide and first in the Northwest region.

- Grade 3 mathematics reached 70.8%, 4.7 points above the state.
- Grade 4 all-tests proficiency reached 60.7%, above the state, and Grade 4 reading ranked second in the region.
- Grade 5 science reached 72.2%, 4.5 points above the state.
- Grade 6 mathematics ranked second statewide and first regionally; Grade 7 mathematics ranked fifth statewide and first regionally; and Grade 8 mathematics ranked fourth statewide and second regionally.

High School Achievement Accelerates

Combined results for Ashe County High School and Ashe Early College show grades 9–12 all-tests proficiency reached 68.6%, an increase of 13.0 points from the previous year and 9.0 points above the state. Biology increased 27.0 points to 70.1%, Math I increased 12.4 points to 61.9%, English II rose to 67.1%, and Math III increased 8.4 points to 74.2%.

Ashe County High School increased its School Performance Score from 63 to 70 and earned a B, the first B in the district-provided historical series and, according to district leadership, the first in school history. Ashe Early College earned an A with a score of 90 and met academic growth. Blue

Ridge and Mountain View exceeded growth, while Westwood met growth. Four of the district's six schools met or exceeded academic growth.

Graduates Leave With More Options

The four-year graduation rate was 91.0%, exceeding the state rate of 88.8% and marking the second consecutive year above 90%. Ashe County Schools achieved its strategic graduation goal one year early and sustained it for a second year.

Among the Class of 2026, 203 of 209 graduates, or 97%, completed at least one Diploma Plus achievement. Graduates earned 2,836 college credit hours; 158 earned industry credentials; 107 earned career-readiness certificates; and 40 completed career and technical education internships. Across eligible students, 253, or 55%, were enrolled in fall college classes.

"But our responsibility is not to be satisfied with a strong year. We know reading must improve, we know every school must demonstrate strong growth, and we will keep doing the work until every student has the opportunities and outcomes they deserve." Cox said.

Building on the Results

The district's next priorities are to strengthen foundational literacy, improve growth at the middle and high schools, respond earlier through EVAAS and common evidence, and sustain college-, career-, and life-ready pathways. The district will also continue studying practices associated with its strongest results so that effective approaches can reach more students and classrooms.

These achievements came during an unusually demanding period that included 87 disrupted learning days over two years because of closures, virtual instruction, delayed openings, and early releases associated with severe weather. That context underscores the resilience of students and staff without lowering expectations for continued improvement.

About Ashe County Schools

Ashe County Schools serves students and families across Ashe County, North Carolina. Through full participation in the Community Eligibility Provision, every student receives breakfast and lunch at no cost. The district works with families, educators, and community partners to ensure every student is known, challenged, and prepared.

[**See Highlights on the Following Pages ...**](#)

2025-2026 Student Achievement: Resilient Results

Board summary | EOG/EOC proficiency and graduation outcomes

#10

STATEWIDE

among 115 NC districts

#2

NORTHWEST REGION

overall EOG/EOC

66.5%

ALL TESTS

+7.3 pts above NC

91%

GRADUATION RATE

+2.2 pts above NC

SUCCESS ACROSS GRADES & SUBJECTS

Every major tested grade-band aggregate exceeded the state.

ELEMENTARY HIGHLIGHTS

GRADE 3 MATH

70.8% | +4.7 pts

#25 state | #5 region

GRADE 4 ALL TESTS

60.7% | +1.4 pts

Reading: #28 state | #2 region

GRADE 5 SCIENCE

72.2% | +4.5 pts

#29 state | #4 region

SECONDARY HIGHLIGHTS

GRADE 6 MATH

77.6% | +18.7 pts

#2 state | #1 region

GRADE 7 MATH

76.2% | +20.1 pts

#5 state | #1 region

GRADE 8 MATH

70.8% | +18.0 pts

#4 state | #2 region

HIGH SCHOOL

68.6% | +9.0 pts

Biology #8 | Math I #10 state

Percentage-point differences compare Ashe County proficiency with North Carolina.

SUSTAINED PROGRESS

+11.4 pts

overall proficiency since 2020-2021

55.1% → 66.5%

ONE-YEAR MOMENTUM

+4.7 pts

overall vs. 2024-2025

Biology	+27.0
Grades 9-12 all tests	+13.1
Math I	+12.4
Math III	+8.4
Grade 3 all tests	+6.8
Change in percentage points	

ACHIEVEMENT IN CONTEXT

87 disrupted learning days in two years

Includes closures, virtual days, delays and early releases due to inclement weather. Context statements are district-provided.

- Only full-CEP district in the statewide top 10



ASHE COUNTY SCHOOLS OUTPACES THE STATE

STRONG FOUNDATIONS. *limitless futures.*

★ 2026 DISTRICT ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

34 OF 38 MEASURES ABOVE THE STATE

★ MATH LEADERSHIP ★

GRADE 8
MATH EOG

+27.1

GRADE 7
MATH

+20.1

MATH I

+19.8

GRADE 6
MATH

+18.7

GRADE 8
MATH

+18.0

POINTS ABOVE STATE

ALL TESTS:

+7.3

POINTS
ABOVE STATE

GRADES 3-8 MATH:

+9.9

POINTS
ABOVE STATE

GRADES 9-12
ALL TESTS:

+9.0

POINTS
ABOVE STATE

★ MORE DISTRICT SUCCESSES ★



GRADE 8
MATH I:

100%

PROFICIENT



BIOLOGY:

+11.6

ABOVE STATE



91%

GRADUATION RATE



ACT/
WORKKEYS:

+5.5

ABOVE STATE



★ CELEBRATING OUR STUDENTS & EDUCATORS ★



Source: Ashe County Comparison State Proficiency Rates 2026



GROWTH ACROSS ASHE COUNTY SCHOOLS

STRONG FOUNDATIONS. *limitless futures.*

★ 2024-25 TO 2025-26 DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS ★

★ YEAR-OVER-YEAR INCREASES ★

					
BIOLOGY	GRADES 9-12 ALL TESTS	MATH I	MATH III	OVERALL PROFICIENCY	ENGLISH II
+27.0	+13.0	+12.4	+8.4	+4.7	+3.1
POINTS	POINTS	POINTS	POINTS	POINTS	POINTS

2024-25 TO 2025-26 PROFICIENCY GAINS

★ COHORT BRIGHT SPOTS ★

STUDENTS ADVANCING ONE GRADE

				
GRADE 5 TO GRADE 6 – MATH	GRADE 5 TO GRADE 6 – READING	GRADE 3 TO GRADE 4 – READING	GRADE 6 TO GRADE 7 – MATH	GRADE 4 TO GRADE 5 – MATH
+18.5	+11.8	+10.5	+5.9	+3.6
POINTS	POINTS	POINTS	POINTS	POINTS

★ CELEBRATING CONTINUED PROGRESS ★

Sources: Preliminary 2025 and 2026 Ashe County district proficiency, EOC, and cohort data



ASHE COUNTY SCHOOLS BRIGHT SPOTS

STRONG FOUNDATIONS. *limitless futures.*

★ 2026 DISTRICT ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

34 OF 38 MEASURES ABOVE STATE

ALL TESTS
+7.3
POINTS
ABOVE STATE

91%
DISTRICT
GRADUATION RATE



★ SUBJECT AREA BRIGHT SPOTS ★



READING
GRADE 7:
+8.9
POINTS
ABOVE STATE



SCIENCE
GRADE 8:
+7.1
POINTS
ABOVE STATE



BIOLOGY
+11.6
POINTS
ABOVE STATE



ENGLISH II
+2.8
POINTS
ABOVE STATE



MATH I
+19.8
POINTS
ABOVE STATE



ACT/
WORKKEYS
+5.5
POINTS
ABOVE STATE

★ GRADE 8 MATH I: 100% PROFICIENT ★

★ CELEBRATING GROWTH ★
ACROSS EVERY CLASSROOM

Sources: 2026 Ashe County district, cohort, and state comparison data