

AEC Earns Global Ready School Designation; Principal Lindsey Williams Selected for National Rural Principal Fellowship

Congratulations to Ashe County Early College High School, Principal Lindsey Williams, and the entire AEC staff and student body on two exciting recognitions!

Ashe County Early College will be recognized at the **November State Board of Education meeting** for earning the **Global Ready School (GRS) – Prepared** designation from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

The Global Ready School designation recognizes schools for their efforts to build global awareness and competence while creating meaningful opportunities for students to engage with the world around them. Schools earn the designation by demonstrating progress across key areas such as career and community connections, global partnerships and classroom projects, world language opportunities, school and district support for global education, and pathways for educators to develop global education expertise.



This recognition reflects the commitment of AEC educators and students to preparing students not only for success in the classroom, but also for a world that is increasingly connected and global in scope.



AEC Principal Lindsey Williams is also being recognized for her leadership at the national level. Williams has been selected to represent North Carolina in the **National Rural Education Association's (NREA) 2026–2027 National Rural Principal Fellowship.**

The year-long fellowship brings together rural principals for professional learning, collaboration and leadership development focused on the unique opportunities and challenges facing rural schools. Fellows will explore rural school leadership, advocacy and policy, and emerging technologies while applying what they learn in their own school settings and sharing effective practices with other rural educators. The fellowship includes two in-person sessions connected to the National Forum to Advance Rural Education (NFARE) and three virtual sessions throughout the year.

Williams will kick off her fellowship experience in San Antonio at NFARE this October, participate in virtual learning sessions throughout the 2026–2027 school year, and return to NFARE in 2027 to share her learning and experiences.

“These recognitions reflect the incredible work of our students and staff at AEC,” said Williams. “I’m excited to continue building opportunities that connect our students to their community and the world, while also bringing new ideas back to our school through the Rural Principal Fellowship.”

Ashe County Schools Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox said, “We are incredibly proud of Mrs. Williams and the entire AEC team. These recognitions speak to the intentional work happening at Ashe County Early College to ensure students are prepared not only for what comes next academically and professionally, but also to thrive in an increasingly connected world. Lindsey is an exceptional leader who continually seeks new opportunities for students, staff, and her own professional growth, and I know her participation in the National Rural Principal Fellowship will strengthen both AEC and our district.”

We are proud of Principal Lindsey Williams, the dedicated staff at Ashe County Early College, and our outstanding AEC students for these well-deserved recognitions. Their commitment to providing meaningful, future-focused learning experiences and strong opportunities for students to grow as global citizens reflects the very best of Ashe County Schools. Congratulations to the entire AEC community on these outstanding accomplishments!

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