# Ashe County Schools Honors Polly Jones upon Retirement from Board of Education



Ashe County Schools honored longtime Board of Education member Polly Jones during a special reception held November 2, 2026, celebrating her years of dedicated service to public education and the Ashe County community. Fellow Board of Education members, school administrators, community members, and family joined in wishing Mrs. Jones well as she concludes her tenure on the Board.

The school system extends its heartfelt gratitude for her commitment to students, educators, and the future of Ashe County Schools.




Throughout her career, Mrs. Jones built a remarkable legacy of service, spending 28 years teaching in public schools and 30 years serving as an adjunct instructor for Wilkes Community College. After retiring from the classroom in June 2010, she was elected to the Ashe County Schools Board of Education in November of that year, continuing her lifelong dedication to education in a new capacity.




Mrs. Jones earned a Bachelor of Science in English Language Arts and master's degrees in Secondary English Education and Academically or Intellectually Gifted Education. Her teaching career began with two years in Grayson County, Virginia, where she taught English, Journalism, and Drama. In 1984, she began teaching English at Beaver Creek High School before moving to Ashe County High School in 2000. There, she taught Honors 10th Grade English and 12th Grade Advanced Placement Literature and Composition until her retirement. Throughout her career, Mrs. Jones sponsored the National Beta Club for 25 years and supervised numerous student teachers from Appalachian State University, helping prepare the next generation of educators.

Her dedication to education earned Mrs. Jones numerous honors and distinctions. She was named Teacher of the Year at Beaver Creek High School in 1986 and 1989. In 1999, she achieved National Board Certification. At Ashe County High School in 2005, she was named Teacher of the Year and also received the distinction of Ashe County Teacher of the Year, the top annual honor for educators in the district. In 2007, she received both the North Carolina English Teacher of the Year and United States English Teacher of Excellence honors.

Mrs. Jones' contributions have been recognized well beyond the classroom. In 2024, she was inducted into the Daughters of the American Revolution. The following year, she received the National Women in American History Award. In 2026, she received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest civilian honor. During that recognition, Governor Josh Stein acknowledged her “lifelong dedication to education and public service.”

Her commitment to serving others also extended into community advocacy and environmental protection. As a founding member and the first secretary of the National Committee to Save the New River, Mrs. Jones spent a decade advocating for the river's protection. Her efforts included lobbying the American Electric Power Company, traveling to Hawk's Nest in West Virginia, speaking before the North Carolina Legislature, organizing the Festival on the New, and helping coordinate Ashe County Day in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C.

Reflecting on the most fulfilling aspects of her career as an educator and her service on the Board of Education, Mrs. Jones shared, “I truly enjoyed teaching my students and reading their essays. My teaching philosophy was always based on this Nelson Mandela quote: Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

> *“Polly Jones is one of those extraordinary individuals whose influence cannot be measured simply in years of service or the honors she has received. She has devoted her life to making a difference for others, first as a teacher who inspired generations of students and then as a Board member whose wisdom, compassion, and commitment to children helped shape the future of Ashe County Schools. Polly has never forgotten what matters most in education: the people we serve. She leads with both conviction and heart, and her love for this community is evident in everything she does. I am deeply grateful for her leadership, her friendship, and the example she has set for all of us. While her service on the Board is coming to an end, her legacy will continue in the lives of countless students, educators, and families for generations to come.”*
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> *— Dr. Eisa Cox, Superintendent, Ashe County Schools*

Ashe County Schools is grateful to Mrs. Jones for her many years of service, leadership, and advocacy on behalf of public education. Her impact reaches far beyond her years in the classroom and on the Board, reflected in the students she inspired, the educators she mentored, and the community she served. Her unwavering belief in the power of education embodies the district's vision of **“Strong Foundations. Limitless Futures.”**

As she begins this next chapter, Ashe County Schools extends its sincere appreciation and wishes her a happy, fulfilling, and well-deserved retirement.

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