

Updates from Ashe County Schools during the COVID-19 school closure.

Schools across the state are completing their sixth week of school closure. That does not mean that the work has stopped. Ashe County Schools, among the rest of the districts across North Carolina have been operating in overdrive to make sure that the needs of our students are still being met. There are three distinct areas we would like to highlight at this time:

1) Child Nutrition Program

Ashe County's Child Nutrition employees, teacher assistants, bus drivers, custodians, school counselors, office workers, teachers, administrators, and volunteers have worked together to successfully prepare and deliver meals to our students. To date, we have served 69,760 meals. We have an amazing staff!

Child Nutrition Director Martha Turner stated,

"I am so proud of and appreciative for the work that our Child Nutrition heroes are doing at this time. Their unwavering spirit and commitment to serve nourishing meals that provide a sense of stability and comfort to the children of this county has given us all a sense of hope in an unsettling time."

2) Transportation Department

This massive undertaking would not be possible without the hard work of our transportation staff. Nearly half of our county's school buses have been running each day to make deliveries to students at their homes. Without our bus drivers, many of our students would not get those meals each day. We are so thankful for our transportation staff!

Transportation Director Shea Coldiron stated,

"This difficult time in our country and more specifically our community, has really brought out the best in everyone involved. I see people working together and sacrificing for the greater good—and that is very inspiring to me."

3) Remote Learning

Our teachers and instructional staff members are finishing the third week of required remote learning for students. Prior to the required remote learning, all of our teachers, counselors, administrators, office workers, and instructional staff worked tirelessly to contact students in order to check on their well-being. They were also essential in

finding out which students needed online learning devices so that the county could begin required remote learning effectively and on-time. Our teachers have adapted to learning how to teach via an online platform. In addition, our students and many parents are adjusting to learning in a digital setting. We have a terrific school community!

Federal Programs/K-12 Curriculum Director Julie Taylor stated,

“Teachers deal with an enormous amount of stress on a daily basis, pandemic not even thrown into the equation. Daily, they inspire younger generations, pass on vital information, and serve as mentors and role models for students. When the pandemic seized the world, many teachers had to completely adjust how they taught students in the classroom. In a very brief amount of time, they had to acclimate themselves and those who look to them to adjust to online platforms. In addition, they had to account for students who may not have Internet access at home and rush to provide needed online learning devices and packets. I am very proud of all our teachers, administrators, and support staff for all of their efforts in making sure that our students continue to learn and have their needs met. Our teachers truly care about our students and we are blessed to have such strong parental support in Ashe County.”

When asked about how things are going for Ashe County Schools, Superintendent Phyllis Yates said,

“The number one priority is to address student needs. Whether that need was in the area of instruction, child nutrition, transportation, building maintenance, or in administration, our employees sprung into action and answered the call to address those needs. I couldn’t be more proud of how all of our employees have responded in these uncharted waters. The Ashe County School System is blessed to have such wonderful and dedicated employees.”