

Ashe County Schools

WEEKLY

UPDATE



Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox, Jeff Trexler of GeoSurfaces (left) and ACHS Coach Brian Hampton at the May 20 groundbreaking for the new track and turf project. (More on page 2.)

WEEK
ENDING
24
MAY

Important Upcoming Dates



- ✓ **May 30** - Last Day of School, Early Release
- ✓ **May 31** - 2pm AEC High School & 7pm ACHS Graduation, Project Graduation following at MVES
- ✓ **June 3** - LETRS PD Celebration
- ✓ **June 4-5** - Optional Teacher Workdays
- ✓ **June 5-6** - Principal, Assistant Principal and Director PD - "The Speed of Trust" Midway Baptist Church
- ✓ **June 10** - Summer Hours Begin
- ✓ **June 26** - 9:00 am BOE Budget Meeting

Groundbreaking Ceremony for ACHS New Track and Turf Field



Ashe County Schools held a groundbreaking ceremony on May 20 for the new ACHS Mondo track and Pivot turf field — marking the beginning of a transformative phase for the school, promising enhanced athletic opportunities and community engagement. The symbolic first dig at Husky Stadium paves the way for a state-of-the-art athletic facility. Those in attendance to celebrate this significant milestone included NC Representative Ray Pickett, Board of Education Members, Board of Commissioners, ACS officials, esteemed community members, and student-athletes.

A generous \$2.5-million-dollar grant provided by the NC General Assembly and the support of Senator Ralph Hise and Representative Ray Pickett helped make the project possible. The ACHS Booster Club is conducting a capital campaign, *Run with the Huskies*, to raise an additional \$150,000 to complete this project. If you would like to purchase a brick or become a sponsor, please contact ACHS athletic director, Brian Hampton, Brian.Hampton@ashe.k12.nc.us.



[Get more details HERE](#)

Comings and Goings

Dr. Susan Mochen joins CSS team



The Central Services Support team welcomes **Dr. Susan Mochen** as Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, following the departure of Director of Human Resources/Public Information Officer Roy Putman.

Dr. Mochen began her career in education over 25 years ago as a middle school teacher for exceptional children in Florida. She earned her master's in educational leadership and later her doctorate in instructional leadership.

Before joining Ashe County Schools at the start of the 2021-2022 academic year, Dr. Mochen accumulated invaluable experience across elementary, middle, and high school levels — knowledge she brought to her role of ACMS Principal. She recently graduated from NCPAPA's Distinguished Leadership in Practice program, which has given her tools and resources to mentor teachers and fellow administrators.

During her three years at ACMS, Dr. Mochen focused on helping students reach their fullest potential academically, socially and emotionally, as well as providing them with as many learning opportunities as possible. She also shared a growth mindset vision with the school's teachers and support staff. "It has been my honor to guide the amazing ACMS teachers as they lead children toward their personal best," she said.

Dr. Mochen's extensive experience and wide-ranging perspective will be invaluable as she transitions into her role of serving the entire ACS district.

"I am excited to work with the leadership team at CSS and support Dr. Cox as her Assistant Superintendent. I want to continue to support ACS's strategic plan and work with our schools to ensure the best hires and retain the best staff in North Carolina." - Dr. Susan Mochen

"Dr. Mochen has been an exemplary leader of Ashe County Middle School, exhibiting strong communication and problem-solving skills. I am confident that she will approach her new role with empathy and integrity and with a student-focused lens to continue our positive work environment and help our district to grow." - Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox

Comings and Goings

Sherrie Hines Named ACMS Principal



ACS congratulates **Sherrie Hines**, as she steps into the role of Ashe County Middle School Principal, effective June 3, 2024.

With more than 22 years of experience as an educator in North Carolina's public school system, Mrs. Hines began her career in Ashe County Schools, having taught 7th and 8th grade Math at Ashe County Middle School for more than a decade. Hines then served for nearly another decade as a Math and Science teacher — as well as Assistant Principal — for Alleghany County Schools. After another year as a Secondary Instructional Specialist for Surry County Schools, Hines returned to Ashe County Schools as Assistant Principal at ACMS, where she served for the last two years under the leadership of Dr. Susan Mochen. She was approved by the Ashe County Board of Education following its selection of Dr. Mochen to join ACS Central Support Services team as Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources.

A graduate of Appalachian State University, Hines holds a bachelor's degree in middle grades education, with a concentration in science and math. She also has a Masters of Art in Educational Media and Instructional Technology, along with a Graduate Certificate in School Administration. Hines is also nationally board certified in early adolescent math. Since 2008, she has been named Teacher of the Year on nine occasions, including Ashe County Middle School Teacher of the Year and the county-wide Teacher of the Year in 2010.

"I was blessed to begin my career 22 years ago at ACMS. Two years ago, I jumped at the opportunity to come back to ACMS and became Assistant Principal under Dr. Mochen. The staff, faculty, students, parents and community are simply amazing. I am looking forward to serving ACMS in a new way and watching our students grow!" - Principal Sherrie Hines

"I have watched Sherrie Hines grow over the past two years as she has served as an assistant principal at Ashe County Middle School. She is an outstanding leader with the energy, instructional focus, and compassion needed to be successful as the next principal." - Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox

Comings and Goings

Roy Putman Says Goodbye

The CSS team will be missing a familiar smile in the halls every day. Human Resources Director Roy Putman is moving on after five years with Ashe County Schools. He has served well and will be missed. As he enters a new phase of his career, we wish him all the best.

With a total of 16 years in education, Putman first served in the Alleghany County School system. Over the course of more than seven years there, he taught middle school math, high school math and history, coached football and basketball, and was Assistant Principal at Sparta School. He then served for five years as Principal of Millers Creek Christian School in Wilkes before joining Ashe County Schools as HR Director five years ago. Now, he's come full circle as he returns to Alleghany County Schools as Assistant Superintendent & HR Director. While he's excited about his new chapter, Putman's departure is bittersweet. He said this about his time here:

"Serving this school community has been one of the greatest honors of my life. I feel very blessed by God to have been allowed to work for Ashe County Schools. I am thankful for Phyllis Yates, Lesa Goodman, and the Board of Education for putting their confidence in me and hiring me, for Marcia Elledge and all of her help along the way — and more importantly — for her friendship, for Dr. Cox's leadership during our schools' toughest times historically, for the many teachers and staff I've had the pleasure of working with over these past five years, and for my friends/family here at Central Support Services. I will miss working with you all and I hope our paths will cross in the future. Additionally, I am excited for Dr. Susan Mochen as she steps into her new role as Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources! I look forward to working with her as a colleague in the HR community in the upcoming years. Please keep me in your prayers as I begin my new adventure in Alleghany as I will be praying for you. God bless!"

Putman's wife, Marie, and sons, Paulie and Landon, are excited for him, as is his church family. Putman is in his 9th year of Pastor of Restoration Church in West Jefferson. Godspeed, Roy, in your many roles as you continue investing your life in the lives of others.



With office buddy, Earl Pennington,
Director of Accountability/CTE



Playing it up as a
Teenage Mutant
Ninja Turtle



Shout outs

Congratulations to our “Best of 2024” Winners!

PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Lindsey Williams
Ashe Early College High



“Education is truly my passion and purpose in life. Watching my own children come through our schools while I’ve worked with students, teachers, staff, families, and the community over the years has shown me that there is absolutely no better place than Ashe County! I am humbled to receive this award and incredibly thankful for everyone who has helped me along my educational journey.”

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Jim Ashley
AEC Math Teacher

“It is truly an honor and blessing to work alongside the best principal, faculty and staff.”

SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR

Mandy Keziah
WWES Media Coordinator



“When I did my student teaching at Westwood 19 years ago, I begged Mr. McClure to hire me, because I knew there wouldn’t be another place like this one. On faith and a prayer, I turned down two jobs back home in hopes that Westwood would be my forever school, and it has been. To be recognized as the Support Staff of the Year is very humbling, because I know that everyone in this school system is deserving of recognition. Thank you.”

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Andy Cerillo
ACMS Math Teacher



“I am so proud to be part of such a dedicated and supportive team at ACMS. When I joined last year as a sub, after a long corporate career, I knew right away that I had found my second career. Earning this recognition and being able to represent Ashe County in the regional round is the honor of a lifetime.”

Eller in Running for Nation's Highest Teaching Award

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) are the highest honors bestowed by the United States government specifically for K–12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and/or computer science teaching. Ashe County Schools is pleased to announce that Courtney Eller, MVES Elementary STEM Innovator, is one of the top three applicants in the state for the Excellence in Science Presidential Award!



Awardees serve as models for their colleagues, inspiration to their communities, and leaders in the improvement of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education. Since 1983, more than 5,200 teachers have been recognized for their contributions to STEM education. Up to 108 teachers are recognized each year.

The applications of the 2024 North Carolina Finalists have been sent to the national selection committee, under the direction of the National Science Foundation. The committee will choose up to two awardees, typically selecting one awardee in mathematics and one in science.

"I am deeply honored and humbled to be a state finalist for the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). This award holds a special place in my heart, as it recognizes the significance of my students' curiosity and excitement for science and other STEM content areas. I have had the privilege of working with exceptional colleagues, former educators, family and friends who have inspired me to grow my craft and make STEM come alive for my students."

- Courtney Eller



"We are excited Courtney Eller is being recognized for her excellence as a STEM teacher on the State and National levels. She has a gift for creating engaging lessons that foster curiosity, inspire students to think critically, and build confidence and the ability to excel through design thinking. This is a prestigious award for which she is truly deserving."

- Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox

Best of the Best

First Annual Superintendent Dinner Honoring Academic Excellence



Graduating students from Ashe Early College High and ACHS, comprising the top 15 this year, embody a remarkable standard of academic excellence. Acknowledged for their exceptional grades, accolades, and aspirations for higher education, alongside the scholarships they've secured, these students were celebrated for their outstanding scholarly accomplishments. Joined by esteemed guests, they enjoyed a memorable dinner and ceremony at Timber Rivers in Lansing, where each scholar was presented with a personalized award.

The 15 students listed above were honored.

Celebrating our Teachers

ACS celebrated our 37 beginning teachers at a special dinner in May at Jefferson Landing.



(Below, L-R): Kathy Bower, ACMS teachers Samantha Woods and Andy Cerillo, and Joyce Kilby. Bower and Kilby are with the North Carolina Retired Teachers Association and presented each ACS beginning teacher with a gift in May.



Teacher Appreciation Week

Thanks to all who helped make Teacher Appreciation Week special for those who educate, encourage and cheer for our students' successes! Local businesses, school PTSOs, students and parents ensured that ACS teachers knew they were appreciated.



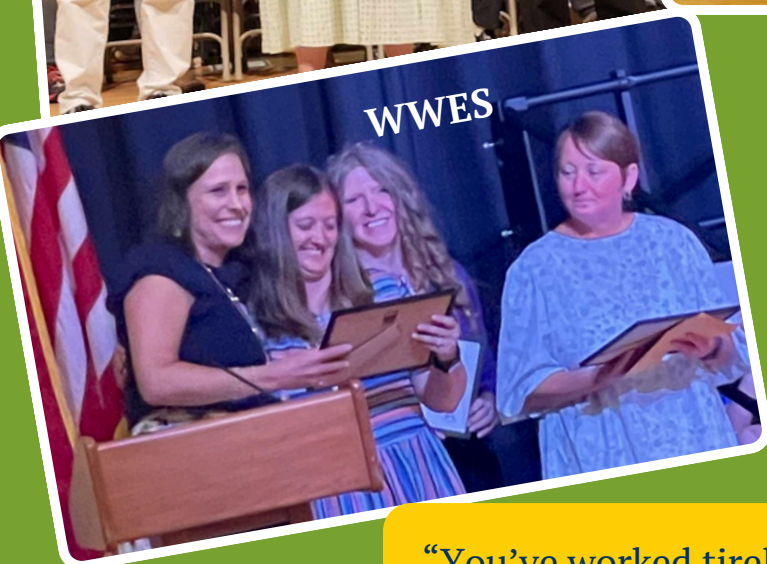
"But as I grew, my heroes changed so that now I can honestly say that anyone who does anything to help a child in this life is a hero to me."

- Fred Rogers

Celebrating LETRS Achievements

In North Carolina, there has been a big emphasis on literacy over the past few years. Legislation requires that Pre-K and elementary educators participate in the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling training program, also known as **LETRS**.

ACS Pre-K, elementary and EC middle and high school teachers have successfully completed the required coursework —two years of graduate level work, for 160 hours total — and received a special achievement award certificate with the NC LETRS Badge and the inscription, I am a Literacy Champion. Congratulations!



Pictured are just a few of the teachers who completed LETRS training.



"You've worked tirelessly to prepare and grow your students ... Take pride in all that you and your students have accomplished this year."

- Casey Smith, ACS K-5 Curriculum Coordinator

CONTINUING
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

Summer Opportunities for Teachers

The Office of Digital Teaching and Learning (DTL) announced its new iteration of NCBOLD for this summer. Take advantage of the two-day event and learn how to positively impact student learning through implementing the Digital Learning Competencies and Digital Learning Standards for students, learn more about the new SIS, attend Data Manager training, and dive into all of the cloud-based resources NCDPI has to offer. Join one of our locations for fresh ideas to immediately incorporate into your classroom and district practices!

[CLICK TO REGISTER](#)

Teachers, click [HERE](#) for the ACS Summer Development and Grade Level Planning Schedule



For Students ...

[LEARN MORE](#)

FREE SUMMER MEALS FOR ASHE COUNTY KIDS AND TEENS ARE HERE!

June 3 - Aug. 2, 2024
at selected schools
Breakfast: 7:30 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch: 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Free, healthy meals
for kids and teens
18 and younger!

Find your closest meal site:
• asheschools.org

- Text FOOD or COMIDA to 304-304
- Or visit online at SummerMeals4NCKids.org

Provided by:



Summer Meals Partners:



North Carolina Department of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

#SUMMERMEALS4NCKIDS

- 1 **Ashe County Schools** have multiple summer meal locations.
June 3 - Aug 2
Monday - Friday
Mountain View Elementary
June 10-27
Monday - Thursday
Westwood Elementary
Blue Ridge Elementary
- 2 No ID or registration needed!
- 3 Gather with us for food, fun and sun! This summer, meals will be served and eaten **on-site**. Drive-through and pick-up sites will not be available.

Learn more:
SummerMeals4NCKids.org

This institution is an
equal opportunity provider.



Ashe County Schools SUMMER DRIVER EDUCATION VIRTUAL CLASS

ONLY 50 SEATS
AVAILABLE!

June 10-14, 2024
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



First come, first served.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Register online beginning
May 29, 2024, at 5 p.m.

School Highlights - AELC

As part of their Impact Project, Alex Rollins' Ashe County High School homeroom students visited Ashe County Early Learning Center. The sophomores read to the Pre-K students, and it's evident the younger and older students enjoyed the experience!



School Highlights - BRES

Art/Technology (Artology) Lesson

5th graders used their knowledge of writing block code with Spheros from a previous lesson to create art.

Reviewing for EOGs fun? These students had a GLOWING time!



School Highlights - MVES



2nd Grade
Tye Dye Day!



First grade classes worked in teams to show the story setting and important details from the story, *Big Al*, by Andrew Clements.

School Highlights - WWES



Mrs. Carter's 1st graders are published authors! They celebrated with a book signing party with their families.



Students reviewed for math and reading EOGs at glow games stations!



School Highlights - ACMS

ARCHERY



COMPETITION

MAY 2024



8th grade science students had fun at the creek finding bioindicators to examine the quality of the water. Bioindicators include biological processes, species, or communities and are used to assess the quality of the environment and how it changes over time.

School Highlights - AEC & ACHS

From little learners to high school seniors, ACHS and AEC graduates partnered to take a stroll down memory lane to visit their former elementary schools. Walking the halls of their elementary school one last time brought the students full circle, as they carry memories that will forever shine.



School Highlights - AEC & ACHS



Ashe Campus of WCC hosted Workforce Connection Breakfasts in May. These networking events allow current high school juniors to learn more about careers in their region in small group settings with industry leaders. A huge thanks to the businesses who have partnered with WCC and ACS to make this event a success!



Congratulations to JROTC Award winners!



Alice L is a senior at Ashe County High School. At the end of the semester, she will have completed 12 credit hours and the Business Administration Certificate. Following graduation she plans to attend Appalachian State University.

**STUDENT
SPOTLIGHT
APRIL 2024**



Congrats to Levi W., who was selected for Berea College's Dr. Samuel Hurst Scholar Award! Hurst Scholars are exemplary juniors with a GPA of 3.4 or higher who are on track to be a first-generation college student.



School Highlights - AEC & ACHS



From helping to keep Ashe beautiful by cleaning local roads to helping out at Blue Ridge Elementary's field day, AEC students found time to invest in their community and their younger peers.



CELEBRATING
ACHS
Student Entrepreneurs

CAKES BY
KENZIE

Follow her on
Facebook!

Senior student
entrepreneur
McKenzie B. owns her
own online bakery.



CTE Spring 2024 Internship Presentations

Bailey R.	Brooklyn G.	Gabby C.
Zoe E.	Hannah M.	Andruw W.
Lucas S.	Levi L.	Zaelyn M.
McKenzie B.	Paige R.	



Annual Yearbook/Funday/Pizza
Party to Kickoff EOC's and Exams



The above ACHS students participated in CTE Internships during spring semester. These students were recognized as they gave their final presentations. Thank You to our community business partners who hosted our students: Twin Oaks Vet Clinic, Schuster Physical Therapy, ACHS Tab Program, Jefferson Landing, New River Soil & Water Conservation, The Saw Doctor, Northwest Emergency Vehicles, NC Forest Service, Westhaven, Dr. Joel Yates Dentistry, Ashe County Clerk of Superior Court.



Health Science II classes studied the annual unit on fire safety. Students learned a variety of information, had hands on experience with fire extinguishers and hoses and tried on fire gear! Special thanks to the West Jefferson Volunteer Fire Dept. members

All school staff are providing feedback to advise the new strategic plan

Strategic Plan Progress



To collectively inspire and prepare students to live their best lives

— Relationships

- By June 2024, the percent of current unexcused absences will be lower than the state for both students and staff
- By June 2024, there will be an increase in the number of students who say they have a caring, trusted adult at school
- By June 2025, ACS will have a decrease in dropout rates as measured by annual state data

— Growth Mindset

- By June 2022, ACS will have educated teachers, staff and administrators about current educational research in growth mindset, and will develop processes, procedures and conditions that define growth mindset in Ashe County.
- By June 2023, teachers, staff and administrators will implement student-centered experiences to foster growth mindset as measured by student work, walkthroughs, observations, and inventories.
- By June 2025, ACS will have created conditions for all schools to meet or exceed academic growth as defined by the North Carolina Report Card

— Personalization

- By June 2022, ACS will hold district, school and PLC data meetings to monitor the progress of the whole child.
- By June 2024, all students will have an individual plan for success (that focuses on the whole child) and continually evolves with student interests and experiences
- By June 2025, the graduation rate will be 90% or higher.

— Engagement

- By June 2022, ACS will develop a parent and community involvement plan that increases partnerships between schools, parents and the community
- By June 2022, teachers will have participated in professional development that focuses on student engagement and consistently implement engaging lesson strategies as evidence by observations and walkthroughs.
- By June 2023, there will be an increase in the percentage of students who are engaged in school as measured by student surveys.

Needs Assessment,
Survey to Parents,
Progress Review,
Data Review,
Reflection

- What goal for the current strategic plan do you believe our district should focus on most in the 2024-25 school year?
- What is one goal you believe our district needs to continue or add to our strategic plan for 2025 and beyond?
- What are you doing to positively impact student academic growth, student and staff attendance, graduation rate, dropout rate, all students having a plan, and student engagement?
- What strategies should we use at the classroom, school, and district level?