

Ashe County Schools

WEEKLY UPDATE



A 26-ft box truck arrived with supplies from Surry County Schools. This “Hounds for Huskies” donation was one of many we received after Helene.

THROUGH
15
NOV

Important Upcoming Dates



- ✓ Nov. 16 - West Jefferson Christmas Parade, 2 pm
- ✓ Nov. 23 - AEC Homecoming, Jefferson Landing
- ✓ Nov. 25-26 - ACMS Visits ACHS and AEC
- ✓ Nov. 27 - Annual Leave Day, Schools Closed
- ✓ Nov. 28-29 - Thanksgiving Holiday
Schools & Offices Closed 
- ✓ Dec. 5 - AEC Community Movie Night
- ✓ Dec. 9-11 - WWES “Frozen” Play, 6-7:30 pm
nightly
- ✓ Dec. 12 - WWES Literacy Night and Final
“Frozen” Performance, 5-8 pm





Hurricane Helene: Unprecedented Storm, Extraordinary Response

Our region had never experienced anything like Hurricane Helene. No one could have anticipated or fully prepared for the record flooding and destruction unleashed upon our picturesque mountain communities. In fact, many residents remarked that the damage was even more severe than what Hurricane Hugo left in 1989.

In the wake of the storm, Ashe County Schools quickly mobilized to support the community, providing essential services including emergency shelter, supply distribution, and hot meals. The school district's swift actions transformed school buildings into vital resources for residents seeking comfort and assistance. Ashe County's three elementary schools became hubs for supply delivery, while the high school served as an emergency shelter. Throughout the recovery, the district provided laundry services, showers, and communal meals, fostering a spirit of unity among neighbors as they worked together to rebuild.

To further assist families, the district offered free afterschool camps for K-8 students and children of first responders from October 14 to October 25. These camps provided crucial care during a challenging time, with regular after-school programs resuming on the first day back to school.

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Overcoming challenges

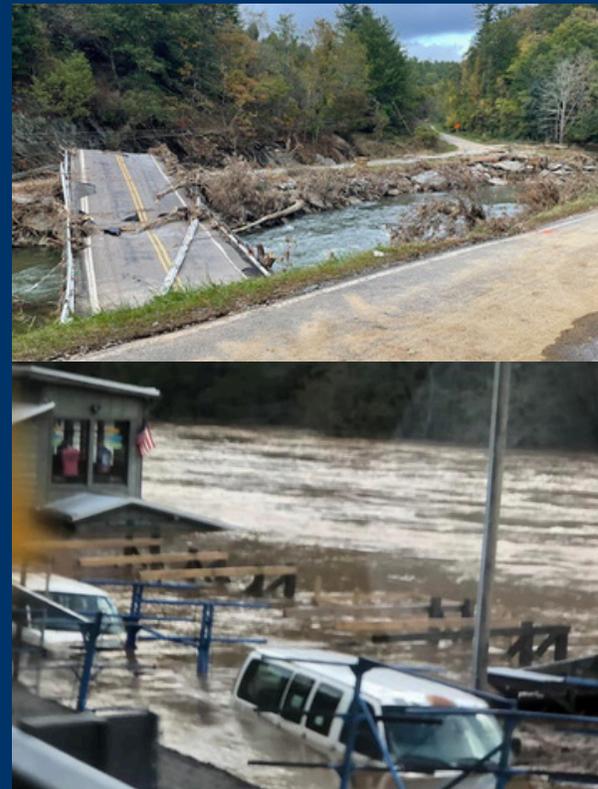
Despite facing significant obstacles, Ashe County Schools prioritized getting students back in the classroom. Remote learning wasn't feasible for many families without electricity or internet access, and severe damage to roads and bridges complicated the evaluation of safe bus routes.

"The safety of students and staff traveling across the county has been and will remain a top priority," said Dr. Eisa Cox, Superintendent.

The Transportation Department worked closely with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to develop new bus routes. Over 200 students required new stops, and 23 of the 31 bus routes were adjusted. The number of students needing a community stop decreased from over 200 to 88 due to the NCDOT's progress. For the first four days back, buses operated on a two-hour delay to ensure safety, and they ran on a one-hour delay the following week.

Extracurricular activities, including high school sports and band practices, resumed on October 14, allowing students to continue their fall season. Participation was made voluntary, recognizing the ongoing recovery for some families.

For mental health resources and food security information, community members are encouraged to contact local support services.



While the state forgave 20 instructional days lost due to the hurricane, adjustments to the 2024-25 school calendar were necessary. Upcoming changes include:

- January 2 - Annual Leave Day
- January 3 - Required Teacher Workday
- January 6 - First day back for students after Christmas break
- January 31 - Required Teacher Workday (may change due to weather)
- February 14 - Regular Student Day
- March 13-14 - Regular Student Days
- Spring Break Changes - April 23-25 will now be regular school days

FULL CALENDAR





#AsheStrong

The Strength of Community

After the storm, help poured in from near and far — including neighbors, first responders, churches, businesses, sister school districts, as well as local, state, and federal organizations. Truckloads of supplies arrived, sometimes daily. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of donors and volunteers, we’ve been able to continue providing food, clothing and support to Ashe County students, families, and residents. Words cannot fully express our gratitude, but we extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who answered the call with donations, time, money, and hard work!



In the news

WCNC reporter Austin Walker visited the BRES emergency distribution site.

In this segment, he spoke with Principal Mitchell Reedy and Amanda Estes, second-grade teacher.

Check out **this article from EdNC.org** that describes the impact of Hurricane Helene on our district and highlights the #AsheStrong spirit and our back-to-school barbecue.





Shout Outs



Congratulations to the Ashe County students listed below, who were among special guests at Education Day events at Appalachian's Football Stadium on Nov. 2. They cheered for the ASU Mountaineers and enjoyed the game, a tailgate event and in-game recognition on the jumbotron scoreboard!

- Connor K., WWES
- Clara B., MVES
- Sabe D., MVES
- Maggie S., ACMS (not pictured)

The students were awarded for being among this year's top summer readers in the Mountaineer Readers Program — a Public School Partnership (PSP) between Reich College of Education at Appalachian State University, the App State Athletics

Department, school-based library/media centers and public school elementary partners. Westwood Elementary was a TOP Elementary School in the region, with the highest total number of pages read. And shout outs to Media Coordinators Kelly Holleman (ACMS); Colleen Dixon (MVES) and Mandy Keziah (WWES) for having the top readers.



Johnson Named EC Teacher of the Year



Congratulations to **Charles Johnson**, BRES Exceptional Children's Teacher! He has been recognized by his peers as the Exceptional Children Educator of Excellence for the 2024-25 school year. THANK YOU for your unwavering care and dedication to our students! Johnson is pictured with Terry Richardson, Director of Exceptional Children's and Pre-K Programs, and Mitchell Reedy, BRES Principal.



Lewis Receives NCSTA Award

CONGRATULATIONS to **Brett Lewis**, ACMS 8th Grade Science & Social Studies Teacher. He won the Region 7 Middle School Science Teaching award, presented by the North Carolina Science Teachers Association (NCSTA). The honor recognizes outstanding science educators who demonstrate excellence in creative and innovative science teaching methods.



“Mr. Lewis builds strong, meaningful relationships with his students, creating a sense of trust and belonging. Through his personable approach, he sees each student as a whole child, often taking time to sit with them at lunch to chat about sports, students’ interests or current events. This connection not only inspires an interest for science but also encourages his students to appreciate the subject’s wonders in a supportive environment.”

- Julie Taylor, ACS Director of K-12 Curriculum & Federal Programs



ACHS Athletes Accept Sports Scholarships

SHOUT OUTS to these Ashe County High School students, who accepted scholarships to play college sports next year! We wish them all the best in their future sports careers as they continue to shine.



#AsheProud



Ally G., softball
Caldwell Community College

Hannah O., softball
Caldwell Community College

Drew C., baseball
Bluefield State University

Brodie B., baseball
Bluefield State University



PSP Mini-grant Winners

Congratulations to the following Ashe County Schools winners of 2024-2025 Public School Partnership (PSP) Mini-Grants! Twenty-nine winning grants were selected from 14 districts, funding a total of \$22,250+ (up to \$1,000 per grant). Funding was based on project alignment to the PSP goals of collaboration, sustainability and innovation. Thank you to Reich College of Education at Appalachian State University.



BRES, MVES, WWES, ACMS

Collaboration in the Classroom:
Building Knowledge, Student
Engagement, and Durable Skills
One Lesson at a Time

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

Casey Smith, K-5 Curriculum Coordinator

Katy Waddell, BRES
Instructional Coach/Literacy Specialist

Jill Baldwin, MVES Literacy Specialist

Angie Douglas, MVES Literacy Specialist

Lindsey Hagel, WWES Literacy Specialist

Summer Davis, ACMS Instructional Specialist

BRES
STEM NATION!

\$1000
AWARDED

Elaina Graham, 5th Grade Teacher

Allie Shoemake, 5th Grade Teacher

Courtney Binder, 6th Grade Teacher

Amanda Black, 6th Grade Teacher

Mollie Payne, 6th Grade Teacher

Alisha Broce, Media Coordinator

Mitchell Reedy, Principal

WWES

Meaningful Models in Math
and Science - Connecting the
Dots and Beating Hearts

Chelsea Taylor, 5th Grade Teacher

\$959.55
AWARDED

Children's Christmas Project

If you, your business, agency, nonprofit or church would like to help make this Christmas special for the children of Ashe County, please complete the donation form by Dec. 2.

You will be contacted and paired up with the perfect child to ensure they have a magical holiday.

[CLICK FOR FORM](#)

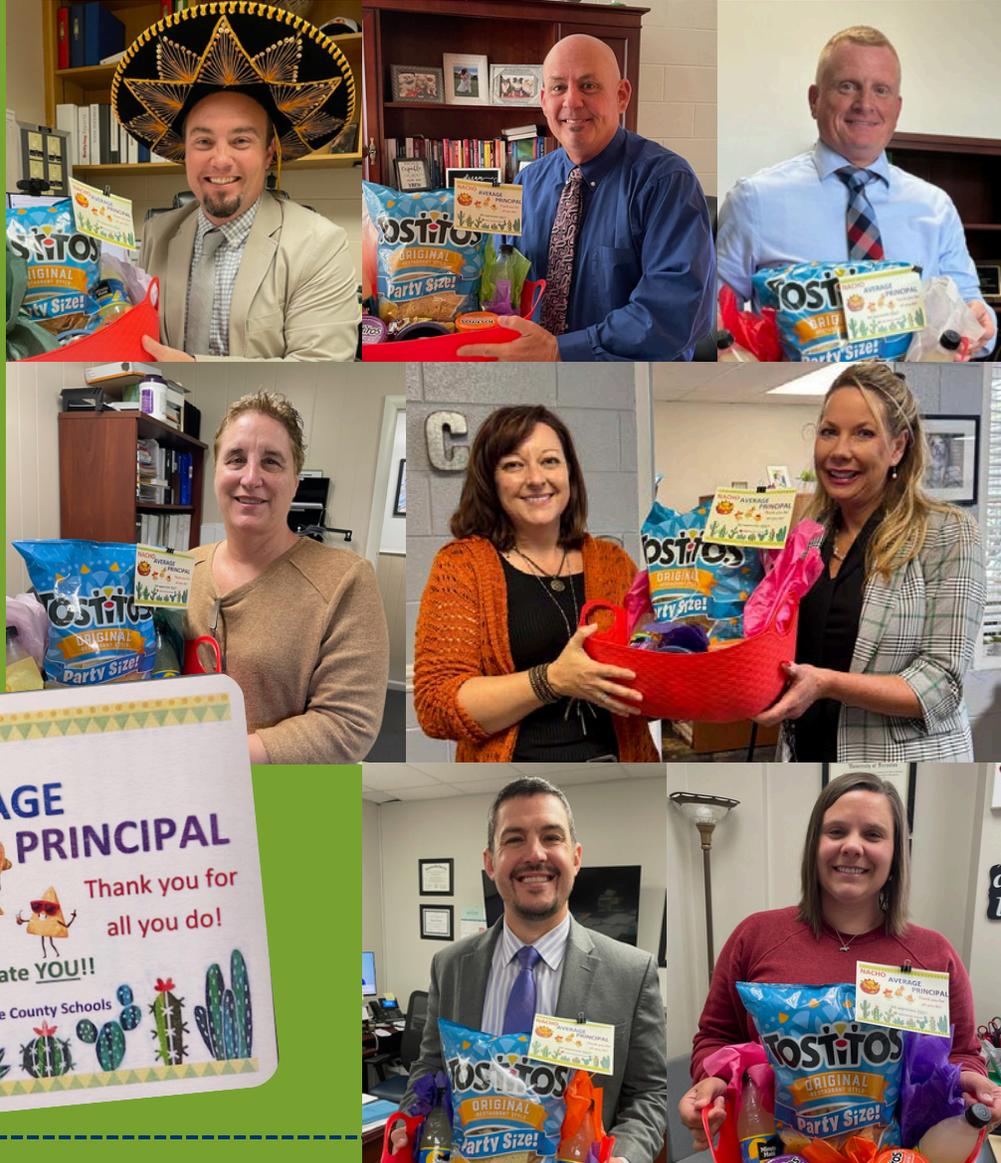
Sponsor an
Ashe County Family
for the Holidays

Ashe County Schools, Ashe County Children's Christmas Project, Ashe County Dept. of Social Services, Ashe County Government, and Partnership of Ashe are partnering together to ensure that children and families have a Happy Holiday Season. You can help!



“Nacho” Average Principals

October was National Principals Month, and each of our principals received a basket of goodies as a token of appreciation for all they do to support ACS teachers, students, families and our community. THANK YOU to these remarkable men and women, who are “Nacho Average Principals!”



Tasty Treats, Fresh Eats

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) is a USDA-funded annual grant program awarded to all three of our elementary schools and Pre-K! Our district is implementing this grant by providing free fresh fruits and/or vegetables to our students twice each week. The purpose of the program is to increase the variety and frequency of fruits and vegetables that children consume and to positively influence their lifelong healthy eating habits. Questions? Contact Tammy Woods: tammy.woods@ashe.k12.nc.us.



Resources for High Schoolers

Tutor.com is a great resource for 8th – 11th graders, with tutors available around the clock for just about any school subject, as well as bilingual support. Get homework help, assistance writing essays, tips for study skills and keeping organized and more.

Log in: www.tutor.com/appstate

Username: Your powerschool ID

Password: gearup

Note: You can change the password once you log in by clicking on the 'My Account' button.

Questions? Contact Karee Mackey, Ashe County GEAR UP Coordinator:
karee.mackey@ashe.k12.nc.us.



College Applications Made Easy

 **NC College Connect**
This is when your moment becomes your momentum.

Find full details and a list of participating institutions at NCCollegeConnect.org.

High school seniors, check out **#NCCollegeConnect**. It's North Carolina's new simplified application program that allows public high school seniors with a weighted 2.8 GPA or above to easily apply to participating UNC System universities and their local North Carolina community college.

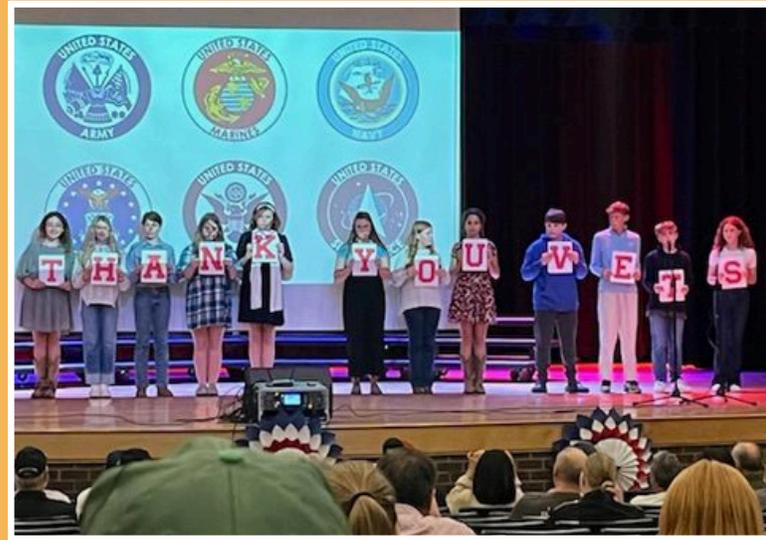
All that's required for eligible students is to complete a simplified application, maintain their GPA, and meet graduation and UNC System requirements. That's right – NO ESSAYS!



Honoring Community Veterans



Ashe County Schools proudly honored community veterans on Nov. 6, with a drive-thru parade at Westwood Elementary followed by refreshments and a special program at Ashe County High. Thank you to speaker, JROTC instructor and Lieutenant Colonel Wes Young (retired, U.S. Army), Dr. Eisa Cox, Dustin Farmer, Debbie Sturgill, and students and staff from BRES, MVES, WWES, ACMS, and ACHS — who planned and participated. MOST of all, THANK YOU, VETERANS, for your service to our country!



Students Encouraging Students



Hundreds of cards of encouragement arrived to welcome Ashe County students back to school after Hurricane Helene. Thank you to Burke County Schools and Catawba County Schools for this kind gesture.





School Highlights - Halloween



From Pre-K on up, students and teachers got into the spirit, with costumes, learning projects and festivities. "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (ACS Media Coordinators, Central Support Services staff and Superintendent Dr. Eisa Cox) gave out 500-plus books to kids who stopped by the Read & Treat booth in downtown West Jefferson.



61 Birthday Express

61

gifts delivered



Ashe County K-3rd graders who had a birthday from Sept. 26 through Oct. 25 received special birthday bags while they were out of school due to Hurricane Helene. This was thanks to the Birthday Express, a partnership of Ashe Early College and the Ashe County Women's tennis team.



The Lady Huskies tennis team served up some tough competition this season. The team advanced past the second round of the NCHSAA Women's Dual Team Playoffs, a first for ACHS ladies' tennis, and qualified for the top 8 in the state — another first! And congrats to Addison D. and Maleah L., who qualified for the 3A State Championship in doubles. The team is pictured with head coach Amy Dollar and assistant coach Jennifer Miller. #AsheProud



Way to go, ACMS 7th-grade conference Volleyball Tournament Champions (at top with coaches Cori Richardson, left, and Tiffany Grubb, right).

At bottom: Congratulations to the ACMS 8th-grade Girls Volleyball Team on an amazing season!