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North Carolina Public Schools Performance Grades for 2014-15

Article Submitted by Michael H. Freeman, Ed. S., Superintendent Anson County Schools: North Carolina's second annual school performance grades were presented to the State Board of Education today showing that 72.2 percent of traditional public schools earned grades of C or better. Anson County is proud to be the home to 3 of these schools.

As required by state legislation, schools earn a School Performance Grade (SPG). These grades are figured by using an 80/20 model. Eighty percent of the grade is determined by the percentage students who scored in the Grade Level Proficient range, i.e., Level 3, 4, or 5 with 20% percent being determined by student growth, i.e., a comparison of the previous test data to the current results. State Superintendent Atkinson expressed concerns that schools with high percentages of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were more likely to receive D or F school performance grades. "We know that students who come from these circumstances often make significant academic growth each year, but they often begin school behind their more economically advantaged peers and may have more obstacles to overcome."

When schools with a growth status are viewed by the grade levels they serve, Anson County had 71% of our elementary and middle schools meet or exceed growth. At the high school level 50% of the schools met growth.

Student grade-level proficiency or above in reading (grades 3-8) remained at 56.3 percent in 2014-15 and moved up to 52.2 percent in mathematics (grades 3-8) at the state level. Anson County saw a tremendous improvement overall for grades 3-8 Reading with an increase from 29.7% last year to 40.3% this year. Math also realized an overall increase from 25.5% to 34.3. These levels of growth are considered to be statistically significant. For the 2014-15 school year EOGs, our district saw 9 grade level/subject areas of improvement in students who scored both Grade Level Proficient and College and Career Ready.

At the high school level, Anson County made great strides in the Math I proficiency level moving from 6.6%, up 26.5 points to 33.1% proficient. English II also saw improvement from 29.0% to 33.5%.

High school level school performance grade calculations include additional indicators in addition to the End of Course tests. They are also graded based on the percentage of high school juniors who score a minimum 17 on the ACT College exam. We had 35.7% proficient in this area. On ACT WorkKeys, 23.7% of Senior Concentrators earned a Silver Certificate or higher and more than 95% met the Math Course Rigor requirement of students who successfully passed Math III. Our community should be pleased to know that our high school graduation rates continue to increase annually providing greater numbers of students an earned diploma preparing them for college or entrance to the workforce. All four of our high schools maintained or had improvements in their Graduation Cohort Rates. Two of the four had a greater than 95% graduation rate and a third school also out-performed the state's 85.4% with a graduation rate of 90%.

The School Performance Grade model may work well for schools with a high percentage of students at levels 3, 4, and 5 especially when these schools also have the option to not include growth or lack of in their formula when the growth percentage causes their grade lower. It is unfortunate that school systems like Anson County which are making progress are not allowed to earn a higher grade based more heavily on growth. Anson County Schools does a wonderful job serving the students of our community and will continue to analyze data to determine ways, whether instructionally, physically or emotionally, to better meet the needs of all students and to help those students realize their dreams for the future whether career or college oriented. "One letter grade cannot reflect all of the positive things happening in a school. It's important for parents to talk to a school's principal and teachers and to look at all of the school measures reflected in the North Carolina School Report Cards to determine how their child's school is doing in comparison to others in the district and across the state," State Superintendent Atkinson said.

ACS staff members are dedicated to the process of continuous school improvement utilizing innovation that will prepare our students to ensure success. It is very unfair to judge every child we serve based on a single school grade. As many parents know, a significant number of students earn grades that prepare them to be extremely successful after high school. Student academic success stories occur in all 11 schools in Anson County. Additionally, challenges for student academic growth can also be identified in all 11 schools. As indicated by Dr. Atkinson a single grade does not define the character of a school as it does not finalize the future for an individual student.

There are a number of materials available online to help explain the School Performance Grades including a Background Brief and responses to Frequently Asked Questions. These documents can be accessed on the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction website - www.ncpublicschools.org - under Highlights.

Driving Miss Daisy Opens at the Ansonia this Weekend

The hit play *Driving Miss Daisy* will open at the historic Ansonia Theatre in Wadesboro this Friday, September 11. It plays this weekend and next, through Sunday, September 20.

Director Tommy Wooten has assembled an amazing cast to bring this beloved classic to life. Libby Griggs Dandridge of Monroe will star as Daisy Werthan, Leon Gatewood of Morven will play Hoke Colburn and Mark Traywick of Marshville will portray Boolie Werthan. The action takes place between 1948-1973, and centers around the relationship of an elderly Jewish widow and her African American driver.

Showtimes are Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. Reservations can be made by calling the Anson County Arts Council at 704-694-4950 or at www.ansoniateatre.com.



Harvest Ministries Hosts Two Events in One Day

On Sunday, August 23 hundreds of people filled the sanctuary of Harvest Ministries Outreach Center for the annual Back to School with Bookbags event and Bearcat Sunday. Over 100 book bags packed with school supplies and more were distributed to every child in attendance. New tennis shoes were supplied by Sheriff Landric Reid and Patti Poulcott's Stride with Pride. And, Anson High School's new football coach Ralph Jackson and his varsity players greeted the crowd.

The adults in attendance were not left out. Bags of groceries were given out to every family, and money prizes were awarded. HMOC Pastor Steve Adams said, "Today is what Harvest is all about. Our motto is 'Whatever it takes,' and that means reaching people's spiritual, emotional and living needs."

Coach Jackson shared his excitement about being in Anson County. He said, "I am honored to be in Anson County and to begin developing my team into great football players, and to even better young men."

For more information on the outreaches and programs that HMOC provides visit www.harvestmin.com or call 704-695-2879.



Meth Lab Discovered at Anson Inn Wadesboro

Brandi Kittredge and Justin Dutch Germany busted

On Thursday, September 3 at approximately 6:15 a.m. the Wadesboro Police Department received information of suspicious drug activity in the parking lot of the Anson Inn on Highway 74 in Wadesboro. Upon arrival officers located Justin Dutch Germany and Brandi Kittredge in the rear of a vehicle, and after investigating found drug paraphernalia and several unidentified pills. Continuing their search, officers found a 1 pot meth lab in operation.

The officers then entered the suspects' room at the Anson Inn, discovering that the room was filled with heavy chemical fumes. They contacted the Wadesboro Fire Department, Anson County Emergency Management, the NC State Bureau of Investigation and the Anson County Health Department. At that point the Anson Inn was evaluated and shut down for approximately seven hours for the clean up.

Germany, 21, of 2180 Highway 109 North in Wadesboro, was charged with Felony Manufacturing Methamphetamine; and Felony Possession of Schedule II Methamphetamine. Other charges are pending.

Kittredge, 35, of 355 Ashe Street in Polkton, was charged with Felony Maintaining a Vehicle for Controlled Substance; Felony Manufacturing Methamphetamine; and Felony Possession of Schedule II Methamphetamine.

Both suspects were placed in Anson County Jail under a \$75,000 secured bond pending other charges.



Justin Dutch Germany



Brandi Kittredge

Two Women on Benefit Walk from Gastonia to Wilmington

Two women are walking 220 miles from Gastonia to Wilmington in an effort to raise awareness and resources to fight human trafficking. Stacie Phillips and Patti Crawford are walking to raise proceeds that will go to benefit A Safe Place in Wilmington, Oasis of Hope in Troy, PA and On Eagles Wings Ministries in Charlotte. All of these homes serve victims and survivors of sex trafficking from across the country.

The women will be arriving in Wadesboro on Wednesday, September 9. Among their supporters in Wadesboro are Executive Inn, that has donated a room for the night, and La Fogata Restaurant, that has pledged a percentage of their proceeds for the day as well as dinner for the walkers that evening.

To learn more about the event or to donate to the cause please visit www.walkingforfreedom.org.

AARP Smart Driver Course Offered

The AARP Smart Driver Course teaches valuable defensive driving skills and provides a refresher of the rules of the road. Since 1979 the course has helped over 14 million drivers learn proven safety strategies and tips for how to adapt one's driving to compensate for physical and cognitive changes that may come with aging. Plus, you may qualify for an automobile insurance discount by completing the course (participants should check with their auto insurance agent for details).

Take the AARP Smart Driver course at Grace Senior Center on September 15, from 10 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. with lunch provided. The classroom course cost \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non members. Space is limited, so register now by calling Grace Senior Center at 704-694-6616.

A Day of Blessings at Harris Chapel AME Zion Saturday

On Saturday, September 12 churches and volunteers will pass out food, hygiene products, clothes and shoes to those in need of these items. This event, called A Day of Blessings, will take place at Harris Chapel AME Zion Church in Morven beginning at 10 a.m.

The event is organized by Faith Based Center of Hope, Vancine Sturdivant, Harris Chapel and Galilee AME Zion Church. Sturdivant stated, "While helping Anson County Commissioner Ross Streater at the Morven Food Bank I witnessed so many citizens in need, and not just for food. I organized a committee to address this need, and out of that A Day of Blessings was born."

If you are in need or know of someone, please attend the event. Area churches are urged to contact organizers if you know someone in your congregation who may need support. Deliveries will also be made to those who are unable to attend.

For more information on how to contribute or volunteer, please contact Vancine Sturdivant at 704-848-4412; Dr. Bernice Bennett at 704-694-6616; or Jennifer Tarlton at 704-694-3115. You may also contact Pastor Michael McLeod, Ross Streater or Theodore Carr.

Each month Faith Based Center of Hope passes our hygiene bags in Lilesville and Wadesboro, and with the support of Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, participates in their Soup Kitchen Ministry on Thursdays. Now Morven will be added.

Cedar Creek Church Back to School Giveaway Bash

On Saturday, September 12 Cedar Creek Missionary Baptist Church is sponsoring an event called Back to School Giveaway Bash. All area students and their families who need a little help with school supplies are invited to come and receive much needed items for free. There will be a free meal for attendees too! This event is being held to show those students that Godly love is still here, and there are people who care about them.

This event will be held in the parking lot of the former Suntrust Bank, at the corner of Washington Street and Highway 74 in Wadesboro.

If you would like to help by giving school supplies or making donations for the purchase of supplies for students, please contact Evangelist Debra Garris at 704-475-5713. Area churches and businesses are urged to join in this important endeavor.

Ag T-Shirts are Available

Celebrate agriculture! And show your pride in Anson County's agricultural heritage by wearing a t-shirt that says so. Celebrating Anson County Agriculture t-shirts have arrived at the Cooperative Extension Center and are now available.

Bright blue shirts with light gray print are \$8 for adult sizes. Safety green shirts with dark gray print are \$6 for youth sizes. Sizes are available up to adult 3XL. Funds from the sale of shirts will go back into the cost of them. The project is not one to raise money, simply to promote agriculture.

Shirts are available at the Extension Center at 501 McLaurin Street in Wadesboro. They can be purchased Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. until 12 noon and 1 until 5 p.m. while supplies last. Celebrate Anson County agriculture!

