



2017-2018

#### ABSTRACT

A brief description of Cherokee Central Schools' educational program and activities for school year 2017-2018 for compliance with Bureau of Indian Education grant requirements.

Cherokee Central Schools

86 Elk Crossing Lane, Cherokee, NC 28719

**Cherokee Central Schools**  
**Cherokee Elementary School**  
**Cherokee Middle School**  
**Cherokee High School**

**Annual Report 2017-2018**

CCS Vision

The Cherokee Central School System will be a community where each student will graduate from high school, will be globally competitive for work and post-secondary education, will possess an appreciation for and an eagerness to preserve the Cherokee Nation, and will be prepared for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

CCS Mission

The Cherokee Central School System is committed to:

- Empowering our students
- Preserving our nation
- Ensuring our future

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## Introduction

Cherokee Central Schools (CCS) is a tribally operated school system located on the Qualla Boundary, which is nestled next to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Although schools of some type (i.e. religious, boarding) have operated on the Reservation since 1804, CCS was formed in 1962 and initially operated by Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1990 Cherokee Central Schools became a tribal grant school under P. L. 100-297. CCS consists of three schools – 1 elementary school (K-5), 1 middle school (6-8), and 1 high school (9-12).

## Governance and Leadership

Cherokee Central Schools is governed by a six member elected school board, along with a representative from the tribal council. Each member serves a four-year term, and terms are staggered.

Central office personnel consists of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, ten coordinators/directors. The central office administrators facilitate programs in special education, testing, curriculum, staff development, Cherokee language and culture, human resources, finances, facilities, and information technology).

A principal leads each of the schools. Cherokee Elementary School has two assistant principals, with one specifically assigned to curriculum and instruction. Both Cherokee Middle School and Cherokee High School have an assistant principal. Principals at each school have formed and rely on a school leadership team.

## Campus

Cherokee Central Schools is housed on a state-of-the-art Green campus. Opened in August 2009, the campus houses all three schools, central office, facilities maintenance, Hope Center, IT, and alternative learning programs.

When opened in 2009, the campus was the largest green building project in the region, achieving Silver LEED certification. Ninety percent of the waste generated from the construction project has been recycled, and it is projected to use 35% less energy. The campus boast of daylighting in over 75% of its space, and CCS also harvests rainwater.

The campus includes computer labs, science labs, cultural centers (including the 350 seat Gathering Place), alternative learning centers, 1040 seat

Performing Arts Center (the Chief Joyce Dugan Cultural Arts Center), sports arenas, stadium, stickball field, and boys and girls fitness centers.

## Calendar

The school calendar provides 180 instructional days for students, and it includes teacher workdays, as well as time for professional development. Along with seven other school districts in the far western part of North Carolina, Cherokee Central Schools hosts CREW (Collaborative Regional Education Workshops), a one-day grass-roots conference for teachers, teacher assistants, principals, central office administrators, and superintendents.

Most courses in the elementary and middle school are taught as year-long courses. Most courses in the high school are taught on a block schedule, although a few are on a year-long schedule.

## Federal and Tribal Mandates

Cherokee Central Schools' school board policy requires that each school implement North Carolina's Standard Course of Study, which is currently an adapted Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics.

The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) requires that Cherokee Central Schools follow the North Carolina accountability workbook to meet federal ESSA requirements. Students in grades 3-8 are administered North Carolina's End of Grade (EOG) assessments in Reading and Math. They are also administered the science EOG in grades 5 and 8. High school students are administered three End of Course (EOC) assessments - Biology, English II, and Math I.

In addition, CCS provides families of new students with a Home Language Survey to determine which students may need to be screen for English language proficiency. In accordance with BIE guidelines, the district screens students with WIDA's W-APT Screener, and students identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) are administered WIDA's ACCESS assessment annually. This year is the first year that the BIE offered schools and districts the WIDA program. Formerly, CCS followed North Carolina guidelines for English Learners and purchased WIDA ACCESS materials directly from WIDA.

Successful completion of Cherokee Language and History is a local graduation requirement. Students must also complete a CPR course as a graduation requirement.

## Enrollment

According to the Native American Student Information System (NASIS) on the last day of school (06/01/2018), Cherokee Central Schools had 1,169 students enrolled. Of the 1,169 students enrolled in 2017-2018, 91.27% were American Indian students, mostly enrolled in the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian (EBCI).

**Table 1. May 2018 Ending Enrollment – All Students, All Schools.**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
<b>PK</b>	41	<b>4</b>	82	<b>9</b>	80
<b>K</b>	91	<b>5</b>	90	<b>10</b>	73
<b>1</b>	103	<b>6</b>	97	<b>11</b>	81
<b>2</b>	100	<b>7</b>	99	<b>12</b>	80
<b>3</b>	78	<b>8</b>	74	<b>Total</b>	1169

## Academic Programs and Services

### Hope Center

The Hope Center includes a Baby Face program, Infant toddler program, a Preschool program, and a PreK program. The Hope Center director oversees the PreK program, which consists of three classroom. Each year the Hope Center has a waiting list for its PK program, and CCS hopes to add an additional classroom when space is available. The Hope Center provided several activities for children and their families including autumn and winter events, Week of the Young Child celebrations, Loving Literacy training, a Children's Fair, Spring Fling, field trips to an aquarium, as well as an end-of-year celebration. The Hope Center provided spring screenings for children including developmental, speech/language, hearing, and vision screenings. In addition, transition services were provided for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP).

**Table 2. Hope Center Enrollment, 2017-2018**

<b>Baby Face Program</b>	<b>Infant Toddler Program</b>	<b>Preschool Program</b>	<b>PreK Program</b>
33	10	43	41

## Exceptional Student Services

### Special Education

Cherokee Central Schools' special education department provides students with disabilities with instruction, support and services as determined by an Individualized Education Plan. The department follows the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Three hundred two (302) students were served by the Special Education department in 2017-2018. Disability categories of the children served included traumatic brain injury, autism, multiple disabilities, emotional disturbance, intellectually disabled, specific learning disabled, hearing impairment, orthopedic impairment, speech impairment, visual impairment, developmental delay, and other health impairment.

**Table 3. Ending Enrollment in Special Education.**

<b>Preschool</b>	<b>K-5</b>	<b>6-8</b>	<b>9-12</b>
40	136	57	69

Cherokee Central Schools provides individualized services to students with disabilities ranging from consultation to inclusion to pull out services. For the most part, students with disabilities are provided instruction with the non-disabled peers.

The district also provides related services in the areas of occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language services, and psychological and counseling services. In 2017-2018, Cherokee Central Schools provided related services to 149 students.

The Special Education department also provides an alternative learning program, Pathseekers, for students in middle and high school who have severe

emotional and behavioral needs. The program consists of one teacher, a paraprofessional, and a social worker.

In addition, Cherokee Central Schools has two autism classroom, staffed by a teacher and two paraprofessionals. The autism units implements the TEEACH method.

The department provides extended year services during the summer months.

Family nights were held for parents and families of students with Autism. Occupational Course of Study (OCS) students participated in the Annual OCS Gathering with students from four other regional schools. Many of the students with disabilities competed in Special Olympics in April 2018.

The Special Education department provides a special education teacher and teaching assistant for each grade level, K-12. The department also consists of two psychologists, a transition specialist, several related services team members, and an administrative assistant, in addition to the director.

#### Talented and Gifted (TaG) Program

The TaG program included thirty-five (35) students in 2017-2018. The program serves students in grades 4-12 and is staffed with two teachers and a paraprofessional. Activities for students included field trips to a university and county/local libraries and colleges/universities tours. Students also participated in robotics, research, and community service projects. TaG students completed various research projects (e.g., North Carolina, National Parks), and CMS TaG students completed "The Constitution and You" project which they shared with TaG students from Choctaw Central Schools.

#### English Learners (EL)

Students identified as English Learners (EL) based on the WIDA W-APT have a LEP plan developed for them. Modifications and accommodations are provided when appropriate. Teachers utilize ELL strategies for the students. Tutoring and intervention services are also provided. Students are re-assessed each year with the WIDA ACCESS assessment. Students may exit the ELL program based on their WIDA scores as determined by the BIE. Six (6) students were identified as English Learners at Cherokee Elementary School in 2017-2018. Cherokee Middle School had four (4) students identified as an English Learner.



### [Cherokee Cultural Department](#)

The Cultural Department provides Cherokee Language instruction for each grade level at Cherokee Elementary and Cherokee Middle schools. Immersion courses are also available. At the high school level, Cherokee I and II are taught. In addition, the Cultural department provides paraprofessionals for grade 3 classrooms.

Several Cherokee Language instructors were presenters at the CREW conference in October 2017. The Director and some teachers also presented at the BIE's Regional Summer Institute at the CCS site.

The Traditional Singers participated in Western Carolina's Cherokee Tour.

The department held a two week Cultural Summer School for students, culminating in the Night of the Arts art show, drawing a large crowd of parents and community members. Additionally, the department organized the Honor the Elders event as it does each year.

The Cultural Department also offered professional development to teachers. The Cultural Department offered staff the opportunity to participate in a white oak basket making workshop and a pucker toe moccasin workshop.

### [Sacred Path](#)

The mission of Sacred Path is to build a classroom and school-wide community and to empower students by providing leadership opportunities and conflict resolution skills while teaching the values and traditions of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Sacred Path :

- Empowers our students
- Provides leadership opportunities
- Builds community
- Retains the dignity of our students
- Turns negatives into positives
- Is Cherokee inspired
- Helps establish the identity of our students
- Makes teaching more effective
- Provides the foundation for learning to take place
- Is a platform for relevant concerns of our students (conflict resolution)
- Satisfies North Carolina Course of Study requirement for character educations

Students at each school participate in age-appropriate Sacred Path activities. At the elementary school, class meetings are structured after tribal government, incorporating the roles of chief, vice chief, and recorder.

Sacred Path is for students and for staff members. With school board support, faculty and staff are able to participate in Sacred Path activities on four early release days throughout the year. This year community bus tours were organized for the staff.

### Curriculum

Teachers in all grade levels follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (SCS). Currently, for English Language Arts and mathematics, the SCS is the Common Core State Standards. All core areas have locally developed curriculum guides based on North Carolina's SCS. Cherokee language, culture, and history are integrated in all content areas. Twenty-first century skills are taught and modeled by the faculty. Teachers use benchmark assessment data to adjust their instruction.

In addition to the core subjects of English Language Arts, mathematics, social studies, and science, Cherokee Central Schools offer several arts courses and programs. All schools offer visual arts and chorus programs. The middle and high school also offer students the opportunity to participate in band and piano courses. Students have the opportunity to participate in Theater Arts, and the students chose to perform Shrek as their spring production.

The Chamber Singer performed at Carnegie Hall in Spring 2018.

Students in each school are also involved in computer and technology courses.

Cherokee High School offers Career and Technical Education courses. Health Occupation, Business Education, and Auto Mechanics have been taught for many years. Newer CTE course offerings include Agriculture and Technology. Family and Consumer Sciences courses have been resurrected.

Physical Education and Healthy Living courses are taught at each of the three schools. A Health and P.E. course is a graduation requirement.

Students in the high school may opt to take online courses including college courses, Advanced Placement courses, and North Carolina Virtual Public School courses.

### Achieve 3000 Pilot

All three schools participated in the BIE Achieve 3000 pilot. Although admitted late to the program – implementation did not happen until early 2018 – CES had the largest Lexile gains (70 points) of all BIE schools, CMS exceeded their

expected Lexile grown by 11 points, and CHS students scored the highest of all BIE schools.

Teachers believe the Achieve 3000 program is a great resource, and it is a natural fit with the district's Blended Learning initiative.

#### Personalized Education Through Blended Learning and ESTEAM (Entrepreneurship, Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) Initiative

With the help of the tribe and with funding and support from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, Cherokee Central Schools began implementation of a Blended Learning and ESTEAM initiative. Working with the Qualla Education Collaborative (QEC) to plan and design the initiative, CCS gathered feedback from various stakeholders before implementing the initiative. Cohort 1 teachers began training in June 2017. Cohort 2 teachers completed training in February 2018, and Cohort 3 teacher training occurred in June 2018.

In addition to teacher PD around Personalized Education and Blended Learning, CCS administrators (directors, principals, assistant superintendent, and superintendent) participated in two days of training.

Through this initiative, CCS offered two ESTEAM Family and Community nights – one each semester. Student-led activities included coding activities with Spheros and First Lego League robots, egg basket drops with the Cherokee Fire Department, polymer balls, straw rockets, catapults, legend activities, slime challenge, and acid/base color change demos.

In addition, CCS launched an ESTEAM Summer Camp pilot in June 2018 for CES and CMS students. Students utilized activities from the National Inventor's Hall of Fame. Staff from Southwestern Community College performed meteorite activities with students, and CES student learned about traditional fishing weirs.

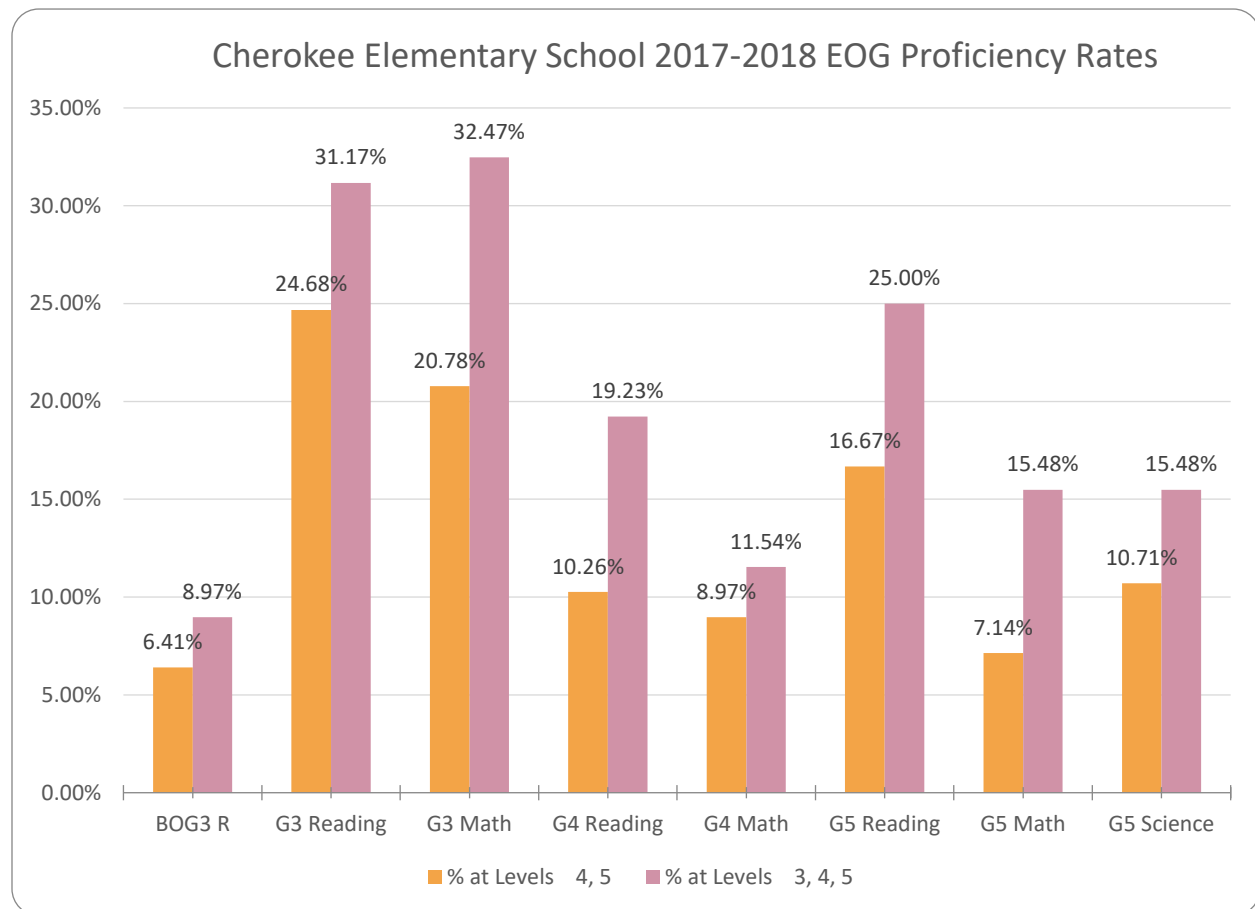
During ESTEAM Camp 2018, students participated in coding activities daily. Each group attended the virtual reality lab daily, too.

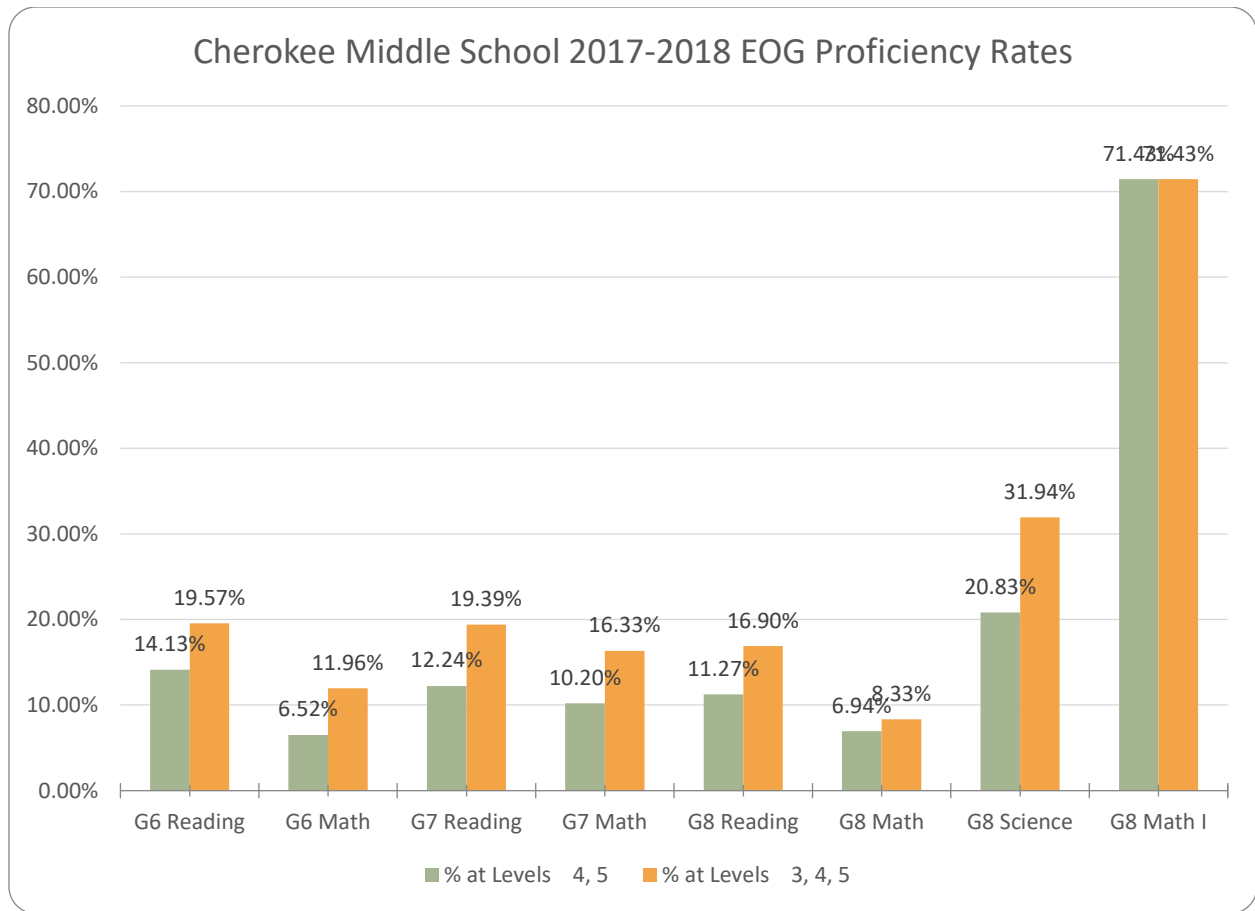
Makerspace planning is another outgrowth of the initiative. A team meet throughout the spring semester to analyze the feasibility of adding Makerspaces to each of the schools. The team also conducted site visits to several schools in the area who had Makerspaces and talked with school teams about implementation. The CCS team plans to pursue grant opportunities to fund Makerspaces in each of the schools.

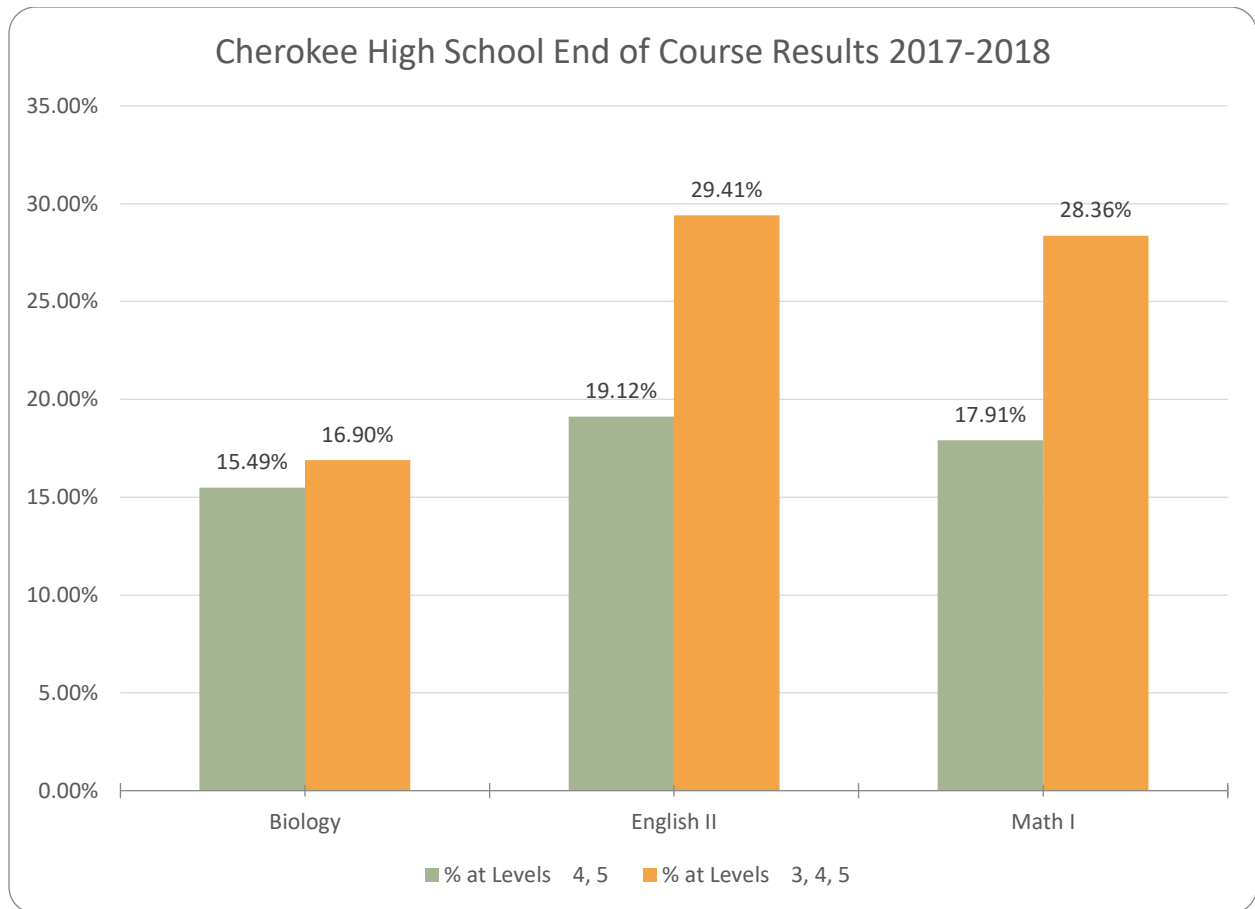
### Assessment and Accountability

Assessments include North Carolina's End-of-Grade (EOG), End-of-Course (EOC), NCEXTEND1, Career and Technical Education (CTE) post-assessments, and NC Final Exams (NCFE). The EOG, EOC, and NCEXTEND1 results are used for federal accountability purposes. Students completed approximately 1,666 assessments in 2017-2018.

Results from 2017-2018 End of Grade and End of Course state assessments can be found in the graphs below.







In addition to the state assessments, Cherokee Central Schools utilizes the NWEA MAP assessments to measure growth in reading and math, K-11, and in science in grades 5-8. Teachers use data from the MAP assessments to determine flexible grouping and differentiation. MAP data was also used to individualize instruction within the Achieve 3000 program.

Cherokee Elementary School also uses mCLASS: Reading 3D and Dibels Next to screen, assess, and progress monitor students' reading proficiency.

Cherokee Central School also administers the ACT Plus Writing assessment to all grade 11 students each spring.

### Professional Development

The school calendar provided staff development days and early release afternoons for professional development. Teachers were provided professional development in a variety of ways. Both in-house and outside consultants and trainers were utilized.

Principals often scheduled and facilitated professional development depending on the needs of their staff. For example, the elementary principal invited an elementary curriculum consultant from the Western Regional Education Service Alliance to provide a deep dive into the ELA Common Core standards, based on the results of the test data.

The school district is a member of the Western Region Education Service Alliance (WRESA) which provides low-cost/no-cost workshops for its member districts. Teachers and administrators attended workshops at WRESA, and the WRESA trainers also held onsite workshops.

A trainer from The Science House (NCSU) helped teachers in grades 3-5 with science curriculum through workshops, curriculum development, lesson planning, and model lessons.

Much of our professional development in 2017-2018 revolved around Blended Learning. CCS was fortunate to have partnered with Mooresville Graded School District (MGSD) to provide the initial training to cohort 1 teachers and instructional coaches. MGSD trainers and CCS instructional coaches delivered cohort 2 training jointly. Our instructional coaches led cohort 3 training with support from MGSD trainers. CCS is committed to building the capacity of its instructional coaches.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) were formed by grade blocks and departments at each of the three schools.

#### AdvancED Accreditation

While the three schools that make up Cherokee Central Schools have been accredited by SACS and later AdvancED for decades, in 2011-2012 the school system decided to strive for district accreditation, which they achieved. CCS successfully hosted another Quality Assurance Review team in school year 2016-2017 for reaccreditation.

#### Cherokee Elementary School (CES)

The 2017-2018 overall attendance rate (ADR) for CES is 92.26%.

In addition to core courses, arts courses, Cherokee language courses, and physical education courses, students at the elementary school also participate in a variety of extracurricular activities. Students enter projects in the annual Science Fair and the annual Arts Show. In addition, students can opt to participate in the Traditional singing group or Traditional dancing group.

Cherokee Elementary School students participated in a variety of end-of-year field trips including the aquarium, Dollywood, and Darnell Farms.

Students create the school yearbook and make it available for purchase near the end of the school year.

Students, parents, and faculty and staff attended the much-anticipated Harvest Festival in October. Games, activities, prizes, and food made for an enjoyable evening for everyone. The Harvest Festival draws large numbers of parents and family members, and it is an important fundraiser for teachers.

The school hosts four open houses throughout the year. Some focus on specific curricular areas, and other focus on specific events (e.g., book fair).

Students were able to join in a variety of after school clubs this year, including robotics. CES fielded a Science Olympiad team for the first time this year.

In addition, students were able to receive tutoring after school.

### Cherokee Middle School

The attendance rate (ADR) for Cherokee Middle School is 90.98%.

Cherokee Middle School offers Earth & Environmental Science and Math I, both high school courses, to students who are prepared for more challenging course work. Ninety-nine (99) students completed the school year with a high school credit.

Students, teachers, and administrators had a successful Eighth Grade trip. Students spent five days traveling to various sites in North Carolina and surrounding states. Many of the sites were culturally relevant to the Cherokee tribe.

An Integrated Classroom with a mental health focus was continued this school year. The classroom provides additional support for students who are struggling behaviorally.

In conjunction with the high school, middle school students performed *SHREK*. The production ran for several nights to packed houses, pulling spectators from the surrounding communities.

CMS students also held two piano recitals during the 2017-2018 school year.

CMS hosted and participated in the STAC (Student Technology Advisory Committee) conference.

Ten (10) students achieved perfect attendance.



## Cherokee High School (CHS)

The attendance rate (ADR) for Cherokee High School is 89.66%.

Students at the high school participated in many extracurricular activities and special events. Students have a variety of clubs from which to choose to participate, including Adventure Club, Red Cross, FFA, Extreme Science, Creative Writing, Photography, Drama, Running, Swimming Safety, Board Games, Corn Hole, Debate Club, HOSA, Football Strategies, Chess Guild, Travel, Reed Ecology, Hacky Sack, Reading, and Acapella.

Students also participated in STAC (Student Technology Advisory Committee) conferences and activities throughout the year. STAC is a regional event that brings students and student teams from various school districts together. Cherokee High School is the host site.

Students in grade 12 complete Graduation projects as a graduation requirement.

Students entered artwork they had created throughout the year in the annual Art Show. Artwork was displayed for several days in the Gallery, and an evening event was held for family and community members. Band concerts were held each semester, and high school students participated in the *SHREK* production, along with middle school students. The Chamber Singers performed in various venues, including at Carnegie Hall.

Students were honored for their academic achievement in May at the annual Academic Banquet. Athletes were honored for their achievements at the annual Athletic Banquet.

Cherokee High School graduated the largest number of students in 2017-2018, and its cohort graduation rate achieved a new high at 89.02%. The drop out rate is 4.32%, decreasing by over a point.

## Support Services

### School Nutrition Services

The School Nutrition Program provides breakfast and lunch for each student at Cherokee Central Schools, following the USDA guidelines, at no cost to the student or family.

Table. Approximate Participation of Students		
	Breakfast	Lunch
<b>Cherokee Elementary School</b>	63%	94%
<b>Cherokee Middle School</b>	33%	87%
<b>Cherokee High School</b>	35%	65%

Students at CHS are offered the Breakfast Grab-n-Go option. A BIC (Breakfast in the Classroom) program was implemented in the Kindergarten classroom.

The School Nutrition Director is a member of the SHAC (Student Health Advisory Committee), which is comprised of students, school staff, and representatives from various community and tribal programs.

The School Nutrition program provides breakfast and lunch to students attending Cultural Summer School and the ESTEAM Camp pilot program.

### Cultural Arts Center (CAC), Public Relations, and Development Programs

The CAC averaged 38 events at its venues. Events ranged from Graduation Project presentations to Superband to Prom.

The print studio averaged 116 requests for printing services from posters to business cards, to notepads.

The PR department sent 258 messages for a total of 178,621 phone calls during 2017-2018.

Development facilitated several grants including the Personalized Education Through Blended Learning and ESTEAM grant funded by the Cherokee Preservation Foundation.

### Technology Department

The technology team imaged or re-imaged desktops and laptops for all three schools and added the devices to the network. They provided troubleshooting assistance for tech work orders from staff, averaging 160 work tickets per month for the district..

The technicians worked on security cameras, camera servers, and software.

The IT department rolled out 95 new Promethean Boards to classrooms. To support the Blended Learning initiative, the department ordered, imaged, and deployed 793 student devices to CES, 426 student devices to CMS, and 314 student devices to CHS.

Additionally, the IT department services 220 staff computers and 115 desktop computers housed in five computer labs across the district.

The department hosted the STAC conferences on four different occasions. Additionally, the IT department provided support for CREW 2017 (Collaborative Regional Education Workshops) and for the FIRST Lego League tournament, hosted by Cherokee Central Schools in December 2017.

### Facilities

The facilities department maintains over 473,000 square feet of buildings and 14 acres of grounds. The facilities department works closely with the administration to plan future needs involving replacements and repairs. Facilities also oversees the 60,000 gallon of rain water storage in the underground cisterns in each courtyard and the 290 geothermal wells (450 feet deep) for heating and cooling.

Facilities staff averaged 259 completed work requests each month. These daily work orders are in addition to the preventative maintenance schedule. Monthly utilities services include Duke Power, Cherokee Water and Sewer, PSNC Energy, and Orkin Pest Control.

Facility Management provides a safe and comfortable environment for students and staff. The maintenance staff is knowledgeable and equipped to deal with unforeseen emergencies, such as equipment failure.