



The Path We Walk

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# Cherokee Central Schools

2023-2024 Annual Report



Physical Address:

*264 Ravensford Drive*

*Cherokee, NC 28719*

## Purpose

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This document provides a description of the educational programs and activities at Cherokee Central Schools for the school year 2023-2024. Cherokee Central Schools utilizes the annual report in various ways, including compliance (Bureau of Indian Education) and public relations.

## Cherokee Central Schools

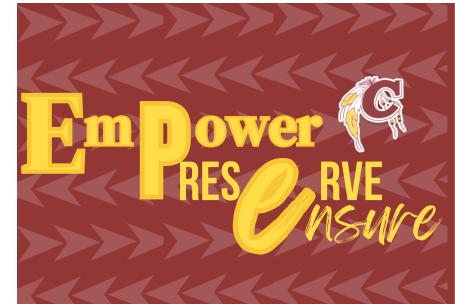
Cherokee Elementary School, Cherokee Middle School, Cherokee High School



*Drone Footage taken by CHS students in the STEM Drone Fundamentals Course*

## CCS Vision

Empower our students; preserve our nation; ensure our future.



## CCS Mission

Cherokee Central Schools, in partnership with its families and community, will develop lifelong learners by providing challenging educational experiences that empower students for cultural stewardship, civic responsibility, future readiness, and academic success in a safe and healthy learning environment.

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## School Website

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# Cherokee Central Schools School

## Board 2023-2024

Community	Position	Name
Yellowhill	Chairperson	Dr. Jennifer Thompson
Big Y	Co-Vice Chairperson	Tara Reed-Cooper
Birdtown	Co-Vice Chairperson	Melanie Lambert
Big Cove	Secretary	Kristina Hyatt
Painttown	Member	Micah Swimmer
Wolfetown	Member	Roberta Toineeta
	EBCI Tribal Council Representative	Michael Stamper



*Superintendent Consie Girty, Kristina Hyatt, Roberta Toineeta, Dr. Jennifer Thompson, Melanie Lambert, Tara Reed-Cooper, Micah Swimmer*

## Introduction

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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 Boundary since 1804, CCS was formed in 1962 and was initially operated by the 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 (PK-5), 1 middle school (6-8), and 1 high school (9-12).

## Governance and Leadership

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Cherokee Central Schools is governed by a six-member elected school board, along with a representative (or alternate) from the EBCI Tribal Council. Each member serves a four-year term, and terms are staggered.

Central office personnel consists of the superintendent, associate superintendent, and fourteen directors. The central office administrators facilitate programs in special education, talented and gifted, data and testing, curriculum and instruction, staff development, Cherokee language and culture, human resources, finances, facilities, custodial, child nutrition services, information technology, PK/preschool programs, Career and Technical Education, ESTEAM, security, and community affairs.

A principal leads each of the schools and is assisted by two assistant principals. Principals at each school have formed and rely on a school leadership team. Each school is responsible for working with stakeholders to create a School Improvement Plan to provide continuous improvement and leadership in creating a positive school culture.

## Campus

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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 (PK and Preschool programs), 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 boasts of daylighting in over 75% of its space, and CCS also harvests rainwater to flush some of the toilets.

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 arena, stadium, stickball field, and boys and girls fitness centers.

With the increase in enrollment in recent years and the addition of programs, CCS embarked on an Expansion plan. The tribe approved the funding and plans were made during the 2019-2020 school year. The expansion project allowed CCS to open three new buildings during 2021-2022. See Special Projects > Expansion.

## Calendar

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The school calendar originally provided for 180 instructional days for students, and it included teacher workdays. See Appendix > 2023-2024 Calendar.

## Federal, State, and Tribal Mandates

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

The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) implemented its Standards, Assessments, and Accountability System in 22-23, and CCS received a one-year waiver at that time from the BIE and DOE. The CCS school board voted to pursue a 5 year waiver on 16 August 2021, and a two year waiver was granted on 1 February 2022. The waiver allowed Cherokee Central Schools to continue to teach the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and administered their End of Grade and End of Course assessments.

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 four End of Course (EOC) assessments - Biology, English II, Math I, and Math III.

In addition, CCS provides families of new students with a Home Language Survey (HLS) to determine which students may need screening for English language proficiency. In accordance with BIE guidelines, the district screens students with WIDA's Screener, and students identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) are administered WIDA's ACCESS assessment annually.

As do other students in the state, CHS students must also complete a CPR skills assessment as a graduation requirement.

Successful completion of Cherokee Language is a local graduation requirement.

## Funding

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Cherokee Central Schools is primarily funded through the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). CCS receives ISEP (Indian Student Equalization Program) and Title (ESSA) funding through the BIE.

Education is a priority for the tribe and the tribal leadership provides funding for Cherokee Central Schools as part of its budget.

The district is also fortunate to have secured outside funding through grants to support initiatives and programs. The Cherokee Preservation Foundation has been hugely supportive of the Personalized Education initiative and other programs implemented by Cherokee Central Schools.

Additionally, the district was successful in applying for Native American Career and Technical Education Program (NACTEP) grant which allowed it to hire a CTE/STEAM Director and add new career pathways and programming to the curricula the previous year. Other minor grants that support students and teachers include the Data Literacy Grant partnership with National Library of Medicine (NLM) and the United Southern and Eastern Tribes (USET) as well as the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant that includes Birth to 5, Elementary, and Secondary grant money to support student literacy.

## Enrollment

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According to the Native American Student Information System (NASIS) on the last day of school (05/22/2024), Cherokee Central Schools had 1,403 students enrolled.

Please see Table 1 for the breakdown by grade of the students on the last day. There is a lot of influx and mobility that occurs throughout the year, with 1504 students enrolled at some point during the 23-24 school year. 1333 of those 1504 students were enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian (EBCI) to make 88.63% of the students for the entire school year.

Table I. May 22, 2024 Ending Enrollment - All Students, All Schools

Grade	Enrollment	Grade	Enrollment	Grade	Enrollment
PK	58	4	113	9	95
K	94	5	114	10	89
1	101	6	102	11	102
2	108	7	103	12	98
3	119	8	107	Total	1403

## Academic Programs and Services

### The HOPE Center and Pre-K:

The HOPE Center includes: a home-based FACE (Family and Child Education) program, infant-toddler services, preschool special education services, a center-based FACE classroom, three Pre-K classrooms, and a FACE Adult Education classroom.

The HOPE Center director oversees the Pre-K classrooms ( three classrooms of 4 year old students, and one FACE classroom with 3 and 4 year old students). The HOPE Center has a waiting list for the Pre-K program. The HOPE Center director also serves as the FACE Coordinator, and the Preschool Special Education Coordinator.

This year the HOPE Center/ FACE staff planned and held monthly FACE Family Circle Nights each month beginning in August. These meetings included a meal for families, guest speakers, cultural activities, and a time for family fellowship. Pre-K classroom staff also planned monthly family activities, which allowed parents to come into the classrooms during the school day and participate in an activity with their child. In December our Pre-K students did a community service project to benefit students at the Wyoming Indian School in Wind River, WY. Much needed winter items and school supplies were collected and sent to our friends in Wyoming.

The Pre-K and FACE classrooms also had field trips to the following locations: Darnell Farms, EBCI Tribal Fish Hatchery, and Ripley's Aquarium. We were also able to invite several guest speakers to each classroom throughout the school year to share knowledge of Cherokee language and culture with our youngest students. Our 48 Pre-K graduates also participated in a Graduate Walk in May with our CHS Seniors-many of our 2024 Seniors were Pre-K students during the 2010-2011 school year. Our youngest and oldest students shared a very special connection!



The HOPE Center also provided developmental screenings for children enrolled in childcare centers and homes across the Qualla Boundary. In addition to screening children, the therapists provided services in the community to students with IFSPs and IEPs, and also served students on campus at the HOPE Center for families who chose to bring students to CCS for services. HOPE Center staff and other providers also provided speech/language and developmental screenings, hearing screenings, vision screenings, and dental screenings for all students enrolled in Pre-K/FACE classrooms. The HOPE Center received 58 referrals from childcare centers, pediatricians, and parents during the 23/24 school year. After receiving the referrals, HOPE Center therapists started the process of meeting with parents, and then evaluating (with parental permission) children for possible educational needs. This included evaluations for speech/language deficits, developmental delays, fine motor/sensory concerns, and autism. For the 23/24 school year, 96 children ages 0-2.5 were screened. 21 children were enrolled in early intervention services during the 23/24 school year. Also, 169 students ages 2 ½ - 5 were screened. 31 of those students qualified for services.

In addition, transition services were provided for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP). Parents of children enrolled in the Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA) with IFSPs had transition meetings with HOPE Center staff six months before their child's 3rd birthday. Students with IEPs going into kindergarten for the 24/25 school year also had transition meetings held in April to facilitate the transition from preschool to kindergarten. These meetings were made up of teams that included: HOPE Center staff, Kindergarten staff, SPED staff, and parents. All students transitioning to Kindergarten were offered classroom tours for students and parents, facilitated by HOPE Center and CES staff. Each student moving on to kindergarten was also given a Transition Backpack from Region A Partnership for

Children. The backpacks contained books and materials for families to use in preparation for Kindergarten.

The Home-Based FACE Program completed Family Transition Plans for 8 families at the end of the school year, and all 8 of those three year old students will be attending the Center-Based FACE classroom at CES in the fall of 2024. Our FACE Program staff also continued to enroll children into the FACE Growing Readers Program, which sends free books to children ages 0-8. The total number of students from the CCS community has grown to 515 students over the past two school years.

Table II indicates the number of children in each Hope Center program:

Table II. Hope Center Enrollment, 2023-2024			
FACE Program	Infant Toddler Program	Preschool Program (SPED)	Pre-K Program
30 (home based)	21	51	58
15 (center based)			

## Exceptional Student Service

### Special Education

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

The Special Education department served 288 students in grades K-12, with 37 of them receiving services in speech, language only during 2023-2024. Disability categories of the children served are found in Table III.

Table III. Disability Categories, 2023-2024.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• traumatic brain injury</li> <li>• autism</li> <li>• multiple disabilities</li> <li>• emotional disabled</li> <li>• intellectually disabled</li> <li>• specific learning disabled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hearing impairment</li> <li>• speech impairment</li> <li>• visual impairment</li> <li>• developmental delay</li> <li>• other health impairment</li> </ul>
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Table IV. Ending Enrollment in Special Education, 2023-2024.

Preschool	K-5	6-8	9-12
	149	44	95

Cherokee Central Schools provide individualized services for students eligible for special education. Services include the continuum of services ranging from inclusion, to resource services, as well as services for those with more severe cognitive delays that require intensive services in a self contained classroom. The Department and IEP teams make every effort to ensure that students with different abilities have access and are provided instruction with their non-disabled peers and served in the least restrictive environment.

Services for special education students are dependent on the needs of each student. Some students require inclusion support in the general education classroom, for others, their services may be provided in the special education teacher's classroom during a portion of the day, while others need more intensive support and for longer periods of time. There are students who just need a safe space to calm down and are able to return to the general education classroom quickly. To support students who have severe emotional and behavioral needs, the Special Education department provides an alternative learning program, Pathseekers, for students in middle and high school who need intensive support. The program consists of two teachers, a paraprofessional, a skill builder and a social worker.

The district also provides related services in the areas of occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language services, orientation and mobility, visual services, deaf and hard of hearing services, audiology and psychological services in the way of evaluations, the interpretation of evaluation results and therapy for students. Related Service personnel work closely to provide integrated services to ensure our students can access the curriculum and succeed.

The Department works closely with the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped Children (TEACCH) to implement their methods as delivered and supported by the UNC School of Medicine at UNC Chapel

Hill and participate in training provided by the regional centers throughout North Carolina. Due to student needs, we are also working with a Board Certified Behavior Analyst to support our efforts. Staff attend workshops and conferences to stay updated and abreast of any changes to special education law and guidelines to remain compliant.

The department, based on a student's need for additional services, provides extended school year services during the summer to support student learning and reduce the educational loss.

Monthly, our Parent Liaison hosts Student with Unique Needs (S.U.N.) meetings designed to educate parents and family members on a number of topics related to special education, as well as help them connect to community resources. To support parents, we bring in community partners and local agencies to inform parents and families on how to access the services during the school year and once they graduate.

The Special Education department provides a special education teacher and teaching assistant for each grade level, K-12. The department also consists of one school psychologist, a transition specialist, an employment educator, a student success advocate, a parent liaison, several related services team members, and an administrative assistant, in addition to the director.

Each year, staff members receive Autism training, CPI training or are re-certified in non-violent crisis intervention to learn decision making skills, de-escalate techniques and are able to directly intervene in a crisis situation. We also provide this training to bus drivers, cafeteria staff, resource officers, and other staff who may need it.

Oftentimes, we bring in the Autism Society, Vocational Rehabilitation and Westbridge Vocational who provide our staff, parents, and students with a variety of services.

We continue to increase community partnerships that provide our students with opportunities to work off campus. During this time, the employment educator goes with the students to support them while they learn valuable job skills. Allowing them to work while in school, sometimes resulting in permanent positions once they graduate.

Inspired by a love of reading, an elementary special education teacher worked with her students to design and publish a book titled, *Our Cherokee Culture*, written in English and translated to Cherokee. The students were recognized for their hard work and will soon see their book pages on a community storybook walk for others to enjoy as they walk the trail.

Elementary and middle school special education students gained life skills by growing plants using hydroponics. They grew tomatoes, kale, lettuce and herbs. Students used language skills, gained social skills and were able to eat what they grew.

High school students incorporated their reading and math skills in the kitchen as they learned how to create a shopping list, a budget, purchase items and cook lunch for various groups. This not only helped them develop life skills, they performed tasks that allowed them to work toward meeting IEP goals in a practical, useful way.



#### Talented and Gifted (TaG ) Program

The TaG program currently serves 50 students, with two teachers and one paraprofessional. Students were served using both a push-in and pull-out approach. Students benefited from enrichment activities including a study about and visit to the museum of Alcatraz. There were trips taken to the Biltmore House and students participated in an Escape Room where they used their problem solving skills to find clues to get out. Students had an opportunity to create roller coasters, learned about aeronautics and built Sillbird the robot.

Students also traveled to various colleges and universities, including North Carolina State University, Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to learn more about requirements, offerings, support and enrichment opportunities within North Carolina.

Table V. Ending Enrollment in Talented and Gifted (TaG) Program,  
2022-2023

4-5	6-8	9-12
6	16	29



## English Learners (EL)

We have less than <1% of our students that qualify district wide for services with 3 being from CES, 3 from CMS, and 6 from CHS. Students showed improvement as having a full time EL Coordinator has been very helpful.

All new enrollees complete a Home Language Survey (HLS) that provides our schools with information on whether to screen for English proficiency. If so, the school then administers the WIDA Screener. Students who are identified for the program 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 criteria set by the BIE.

EL teams develop plans for students who are identified as English Learners in order to provide a path towards English proficiency. Modifications and accommodations are provided when appropriate. Classroom teachers utilize ELL strategies for the students. Tutoring and intervention services are also available. The district also provides digital resources (e.g., Achieve 3000, Edmentum) to assist EL students.

## Cherokee Cultural Department

The Cultural Department provides Cherokee Language instruction for each grade level at Cherokee Elementary and Cherokee Middle schools. Immersion classes are also available. At the high school level, Cherokee I and II are taught along with an Immersion class and a Cherokee History Class. In addition, the Cultural department provides paraprofessionals for third grade through its Title VI grant.

Cherokee Elementary and Cherokee Middle School students complete a Cherokee Language pretest at the beginning of the school year, a mid-term test, as well as a

post test at the end of the school year. In high school, a post test consisting of one-half written phonetics and one-half verbal is given. The successful goal is to have 80 percent of the students pass the test.

The Cultural department offered a two week, full day, in-person Cultural Summer Program during June 2024. The average enrollment for the two week program was 112 students and about 150 signed up. The classes offered were pottery making, drama, soapstone carving, native plants, sewing 18th century clothing, traditional food cooking, art, beadwork, designing gourds, corn shuck doll making, basketry, and the making of pucker toe moccasins. The camp theme was Uktena and Spearfinger and different community members came in daily to talk to the students.

An ongoing project for the Cultural department is the Shiyo app. Level I has been available for some time and work continues on Level II and Level III.

The Cultural Department also offered professional development to teachers. The Cultural Department offered staff the opportunity to participate in bus trips to the communities (required for new teachers). During the Cultural Day of Caring teachers engaged in activities with other teachers during the sacred path time.



### 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 education

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.

## Curriculum

### Core

Teachers in all grade levels follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (SCS). Currently, for English Language Arts and mathematics, the SCS is North Carolina an adapted version of 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. Blended Learning skills are taught and modeled by the faculty. Teachers use formative and interim assessment data to adjust their instruction.

### The Arts

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 with performances and recitals offered throughout the year.

Students have the opportunity to participate in musical theater. In a typical year, the students would choose a musical to perform for the public in the spring. The musical theater students presented *Jungle Book* and the *The Addams Family*, in May 2024 for the community.

### Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Cherokee High School offers Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses (whole or in part) in several career and technical pathways, including Health Sciences, Auto Mechanics, Agriculture, Technology, Broadcast Journalism, Graphic Design, Public Safety, Python Programming, Drone Technology, JROTC, Wood Shop and Family and Consumer Sciences.



The high school Health Sciences students participate in HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America) activities throughout the year. Frequently, they plan and assist with Blood Drives on campus and the community. In addition, HOSA attends state and national conferences, participating in the organization's competitions, and they also run for and serve in HOSA leadership offices.

Cherokee Middle School also offers a variety of Career and Technical Education courses.

Table VI. Middle School Career and Technical Education Courses, 2022-2023

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exploring Career Decisions</li><li>• Introduction to Agriculture</li><li>• Carpentry</li><li>• Broadcast Journalism</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Computers</li><li>• Exploring Personal Finance,</li><li>• Graphics Design 1</li><li>• Introduction to Healthcare</li><li>• Robotics</li></ul>
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### Physical Education (P.E.) and Health

Each school offers Physical Education and Healthy Living courses. One Health and P.E. course is a graduation requirement.

### Special Olympics

The district will continue as a Unified Champion School District by Special Olympics NC. Students have gained and improved skills that help them succeed, both in the classroom and outside. There are elements at each school; at the elementary school level, we have a Young Athletes' Program for students in grades K-2, where they participate in a skill development program with their non-disabled peers. Grades 3-5

and 6-8 participate in Special Olympic sports competitions with their non-disabled peers as teammates. CHS has a Unified Champion physical education class where students train with their non-disabled peers to learn skill development and compete together against other schools in the area.

#### Virtual Courses and Dual Enrollment

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

At the beginning of 2021-2022, Cherokee Central Schools realized that in rare situations a student might need a virtual option for education. CCS offered the Cherokee Central Virtual Academy (CCVA) for those students who were medically fragile or had other extenuating circumstances. This service was provided through Edmentum.

Most students transitioned back to the regular face-to-face program by the start of the second semester.

#### STEM-related Programs and Activities

## ESTEAM Camp

The CCS summer E-STEAM Camp ran for two weeks in June of 2024. The CES camp is designed for elementary students in grades kindergarten through fourth grade. The camp provides them with an exciting opportunity to engage in interactive and enriching activities. STEAM activities allowed children to learn, grow, and explore new modes of thinking and doing. STEAM camp helps boost academic performance and build confidence, creativity, and resiliency. The students participated in hands-on projects, creative expression, cultural activities, outdoor exploration, farming, and enjoyed multiple field trips.



Table VII. ESTEAM Camp, Number of Attendees, Summer 2024

CES	CMS
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## Mobile Unit

Cherokee Preservation Foundation also supported The Science House to do lessons at Cherokee Central Schools and model the use of science equipment and engaging lessons. Pre and post-evaluations were conducted and 2 opportunities in each school. The lessons were Water Purification, DNA Dilemma, Vaping, Heart Rate and Hydrology (2 days) and they all aligned with content standards.



*Jason Carter from The Science House conducting a session in a Biology classroom*

## STEM-E Conferences

For the second year the fall and spring STEM-E conferences were held virtually and were sponsored by WRESA (Western Regional Education Service Alliance) and funded by the Cherokee Preservation Foundation. WRESA provides conferences in the fall and spring. Conferences are offered for each grade span - elementary, middle, and high.

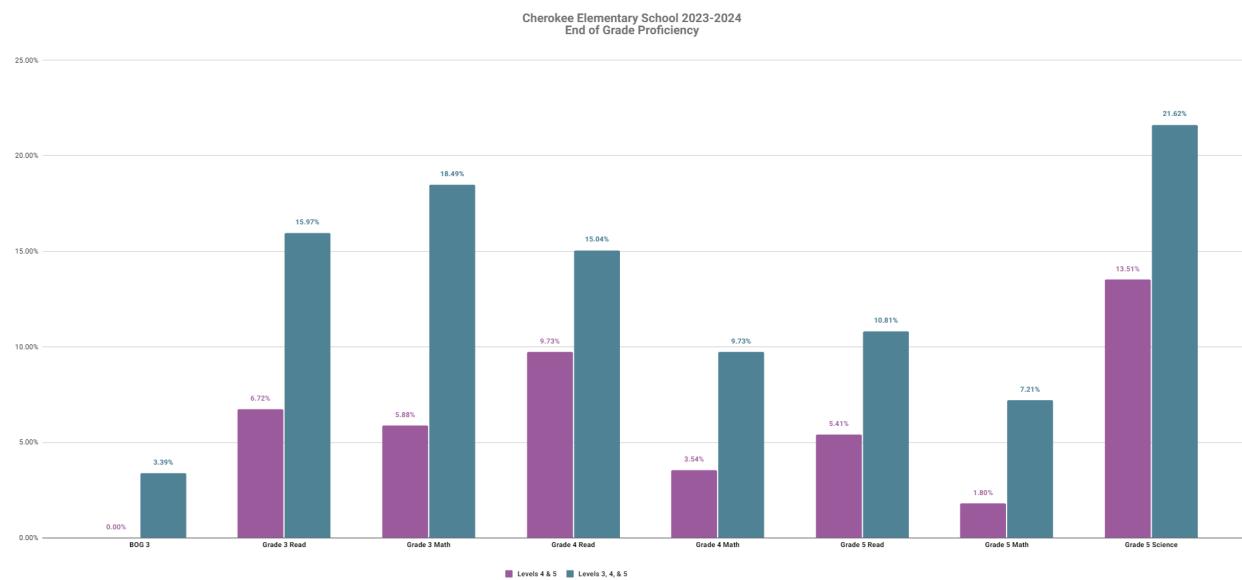
# Assessment and Accountability

Although the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) implemented its Standards, Assessment, Accountability System during 2019-2020, the Cherokee Central Schools school board requested a waiver from the BIE assessments. CCS has operated under the waiver every year so far and continued to do so for the 2023-2024 School year. CCS has continued to administer the state assessments.

## State Assessments

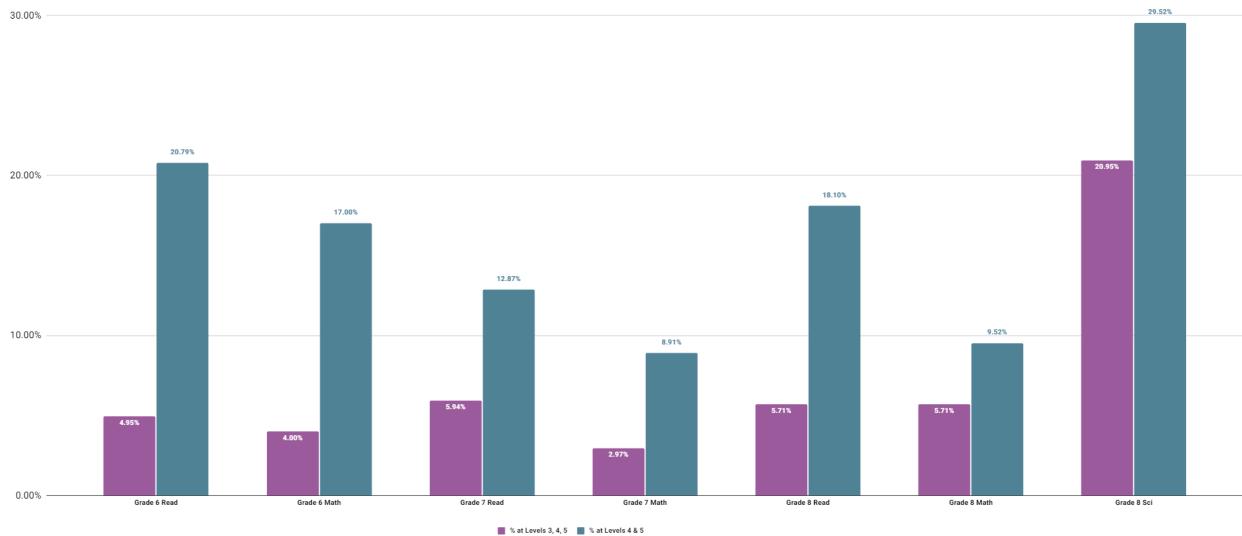
Assessments include North Carolina's End-of-Grade (EOG), End-of-Course (EOC), NCEXTEND1 (alternate assessment), and Career and Technical Education (CTE) post-assessments. The EOG, EOC, and NCEXTEND1 results are used for federal accountability purposes and are a part of the school's federal determination.

Results from state assessments used for federal (BIE/DOE) accountability are found in the following charts.



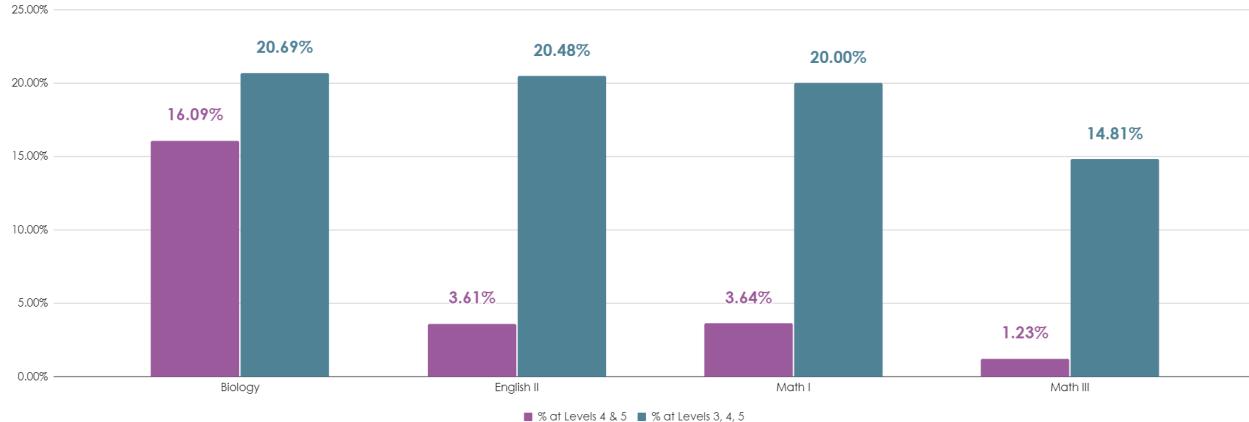
Cherokee Elementary School saw positive gains in Science in which they returned to pre-COVID levels and have seen some positive gains in the K-2 from mClass data that should provide a boost to reading scores in the years to come.

Cherokee Middle School 2022-2023  
End Of Grade Proficiency



Cherokee Middle School saw big gains in 6th grade for reading and math as the level of 3's increased quite a bit, which should help boost scores as students move through the middle grades.

Cherokee High School 2022-2023  
EOC Proficiency Rates



Cherokee High School saw Biology scores are about on par as pre-Covid levels and Math 1 scores saw big gains in the amount of students scoring at Level 3, which shows lots of students making growth gains.

Other Assessments

## ACT Plus Writing

Cherokee High School provides the ACT Plus Writing at no cost to grade 11 (primarily) and some grade 12 students through the ACT's District Testing Program. The number of students taking the ACT in 2023-2024 assessment increased from

last year to include 32 students with 28% of those testing meeting the College Reportable Benchmark.

## Achieve 3000

Students showed great engagement and Lexile growth in Achieve300 this year. The table below indicates the average Lexile growth and other data points in Achieve 3000.

2023-2024	CES	CMS	CHS
Average Lexile Growth	120 L	98 L	109L
# of completed lessons	22,346	16,237	11,040
Avg. Activities per student	67	51	30
Average Activity Score	56.6	70.2	76.3
% of students on track for College and Career Readiness		BOY- 10.2 EOY -15.7	BOY -21.5 EOY- 32.9

Table VIII. Achieve 3000 data points for 2023-2024

The Achieve 3000 monthly news article featured Cherokee Central Schools and their work with best practices regarding Achieve 3000, effective strategies, and PLC teams. Teachers looked at data, identified a strategy to address learning and continued the process.

## mCLASS

Cherokee Elementary School teachers complete mCLASS reading assessments for students in grades K-4 and for students with disabilities in grades 3-5.

On the Beginning of Year (BOY) assessment, 3% of the Kindergarten students assessed were on or above grade level. At the End of Year (EOY) assessment, 40% of students were on or above grade level.

In grade 1, 14% of students were at or above grade level on the BOY, and by the EOY the number had increased to 31% at or above grade level.

Grade 2 saw a 12% increase from BOY (32%) to EOY (44%) of students at or above grade level.

## Professional Development

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Professional Development (PD) is a critical component of the continuous improvement process. Cherokee Central Schools continues to adapt and grow to enhance the learning environment. Training topics varied depending upon the needs of each school and individual teachers. Schools focused on literacy, social and emotional learning, and blended learning strategies throughout the year. Some topics included curriculum pacing guide development, forms of assessment, literacy, mentoring, providing tiered instructional support, team building, data-driven instruction, managing stress, using digital resources, IEP training, and others. School leadership uses data gathered from classroom snapshots to determine professional development areas of need.

Data from the teacher working conditions survey indicated the need for training on culturally responsive instruction. Therefore, each school participates in learning sessions on culturally relevant teaching strategies. In addition to instructional strategies, sessions related to the Cherokee language and culture were also provided. An 8-week Cherokee language after-school course was offered and had 18 participants. Teachers in the course learned practical classroom phrases, engaging learning activities, and self introductions. On the course pretest, the average score was 30%, showing outstanding growth, the post-test average score was 80% or higher.

CCS continues to support teachers in participating in out-of-house professional development and advanced certifications. Using Title II funding, CCS was able to continue supporting these teachers with the National Board certification process.

## Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

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To assist the district with its implementation of MTSS, CCS utilized some of its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for an MTSS Coordinator position. This position was filled during the fall semester, and the coordinator began working on implementing the work throughout each of the schools. By using scaffolds for students to meet high expectations, each school has implemented a variety of interventions available to all students who require extra support. Academic Intervention Specialists have been hired to meet with small groups of students throughout the day to accelerate learning to help students meet grade level expectations.

CES implemented the Leveled Literacy Intervention Program for Grades K-5. This is a powerful, short-term intervention that provides daily, intensive, small-group instruction

conducted by the CES Academic Intervention Specialists, which supplements classroom literacy teaching, using high-interest leveled books and fast-paced, systematically designed lessons.

CMS and CHS have designated academic supports throughout the day using Academic Intervention Specialists using supportive measures to assist with grade level expectations in both ELA and Math.

Although the MTSS Program is in its early stages at CCS, our administration and staff have been eager to establish the groundwork for implementing MTSS to its fullest potential.

## Accreditation

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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 the school year 2016-2017 for reaccreditation.

During the 2021-2022 school year, CCS hosted another quality assurance review team from Cognia (formerly AdvancED) as part of its 5-year accreditation renewal cycle. The team completed self-assessments, surveys, and data analysis as preparation for the visit. The visit was a success, and all standards were assessed at the Impacting or Improving level. The district obtained a 330.81 Index of Education Quality (IEQ) score. Cherokee Central Schools is accredited by Cognia for the next five years, and the district will be up for re-accreditation in 2026-2027.

For the district's Executive Summary and the accreditation report, visit the [CCS website](#).

## Cherokee Elementary School (CES)

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Students returned to Cherokee Elementary School in August 2023 for in-person instruction. Upon returning to CES, students were able to eat breakfast in the cafeteria. Kindergartners remained in the classroom for breakfast due to lunch room capacity. Grade blocks had designated lunch times to make sure we met capacity and did not exceed the number given.

Cherokee Elementary School has one Assistant Principal and four teachers who are Nationally Board Certified. We currently have three other teachers who are working towards National Board Certification.

Cherokee Elementary School's core program includes reading, mathematics, science, social studies, health, physical education, art, Cherokee language, and music. In addition, the school continues to focus on social and emotional learning for students to address increased needs. We had the opportunity to have our 2nd graders learn about therapy dogs and the dogs came to visit.

LETRS Training: 17 of our teachers and 2 Assistant Principals completed the LETRs training. This training took 2 years to complete. It is focused on the Science of Reading. It is designed to provide educators with a deep knowledge of literacy and language.

This year, our school provided teachers the opportunity to observe other teachers. This allowed teachers to learn different teaching techniques and classroom management strategies from other teachers. Based on feedback, the teachers enjoyed this learning opportunity and built stronger connections with each other.

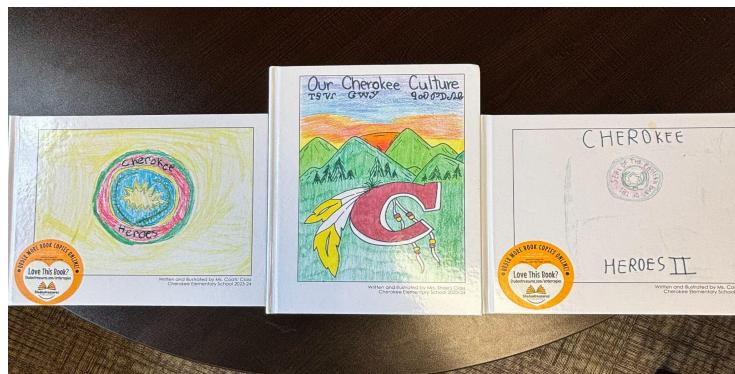
One of our goals this year was to build stronger relationships with staff so we held exciting activities throughout the year that incorporated Cherokee language and team building.

Teachers focus on continued implementation of personalized education through blended learning by incorporating appropriate technology and digital resources into their classrooms. Hands-on and inquiry-based activities are encouraged.



Cherokee Elementary School entered their third year of implementing the MTSS process. The four interventionists worked diligently to pull small groups daily and would also provide support to teachers during the year. The interventionists served a total of 160 Tier II students in grades 1st-5. These students worked with the interventionist in small groups for 30 minutes each day. The intervention groups were very successful. MOY to EOY data shows an increase in Lexile scores for these students.





The elementary school 5th grade block was able to create three books. Two books focused on “Cherokee Heroes”, which was created by Mrs. Coat’s ELA classes. The other book created was based on “Our Cherokee Culture”, which was a creation of Mrs. Deck’s class. Each book explored important people and events that are important to the Cherokee people.

Before returning to school, CCS hosted a back to school bash for all students Pre-K -12th grade. Students and their families were able to meet their teachers, explore their classrooms, and have an evening filled with activities, vendors, and fun.

In the fall, teachers held parent conferences where they could talk to the parents about their student’s progress. The elementary school held student-led conferences in January 2024. The conferences gave students the opportunity to showcase their work and take ownership of their data. We were also able to bring back Kindergarten registration night. It was held on May 07, 2024. New families and students came to visit kindergarten classrooms and met with the kindergarten teachers.

The elementary school hosted its Healthy Halloween event for students this year. This is an annual event that allows community organizations and businesses to support students and the school while celebrating Halloween in a healthier way than traditional trick or treating.



Chief Hicks visited CES during Read Across America Week. He read books to our students and the students had the opportunity to ask him questions.

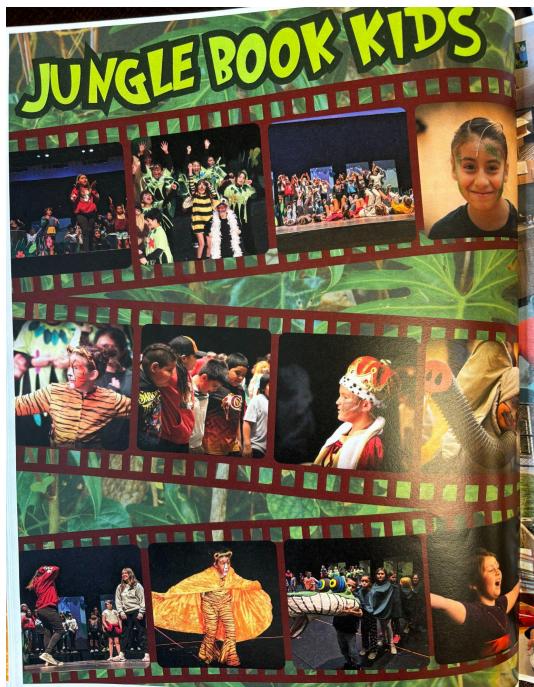
We also had Brian Lies, author and illustrator, visit with our students and teach them about the writing process and how thoughts become words and pictures.



Cherokee Elementary School continued its partnership with Cherokee Indian Hospital to offer an Integrated Classroom, which is staffed by CES

personnel and Hospital employees. The Integrated classroom is for students who need more support emotionally and behaviorally than what is traditionally offered within a regular classroom setting.

CES students were able to participate in spirit weeks throughout the year that were Anti-Bullying, Christmas, and Dr. Seuss themed. CES also hosted two Book Fairs; one in the fall and the other in the spring.



In March, CES hosted their second annual musical featuring the Disney classic: Jungle Book Kids. Close to 100 students participated in this year's production. We were so excited for our students and this opportunity they get to be a part of. CES offered two showings for staff and students and one showing for the community. We had a great turnout for all three showings.

In April, CES held EOG Prep Night. This event was focused on providing parents with information on End of Grade testing. We provided sample tests and shared resources for families. This was also a night for parents to sign up for the CCS parent portal. Parents were given a tutorial on how to sign up and experts were on hand to help create accounts and help

parents navigate the portal. After the informational session, we held a hot dog dinner for everyone who attended. It was a successful evening.



CES's Science Olympiad Club hosted their 1st Annual Stem Night in May 2023. This was a very successful event for our school. They had many different activities for the families to enjoy and participate in. The Science Olympiad Club members created all the materials needed for the activities and fliers for the event.

To end the year, CES was able to celebrate their student's successes by holding annual award ceremonies for each grade block and graduation for 5th grade.

Families were allowed to attend these events to help celebrate our student's successes. CES was also able to offer STEAM Camp for students in grades K-5th.

## Cherokee Middle School (CMS)

Core courses for Cherokee Middle School include reading, mathematics, science, social studies, health, physical education, and Cherokee Language, as well as several electives. Students are asked to take a different elective each 9 weeks in order to introduce them to new classes. Band, JROTC, and Performing Arts are year long classes. Cherokee Middle School is blessed with having some of the most talented students. Projects that they work on during the school year really do show off their talents.



8th grade social studies ship project.



7th and 8th grade fly tying elective.

During the year, Cherokee Middle School students responded well to teacher efforts to implement Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports in all three grades. Incentive trips are planned at the end of each 9 weeks

Cherokee Middle School's musical theater students performed *Braves on Broadway* for the community in December 2023 and *The Adams Family* in May to close out the school year.

Teachers at Cherokee Middle School, continue to infuse culture in their classrooms through the use of vocabulary, word walls, and each month there is a schoolwide cultural event that correlates with the cultural theme each month. Teachers are required to share any lesson plans that incorporate Cherokee culture into CMS Shared Drive. We are asking our staff to use as much Cherokee language in the classroom as possible.

All three grades averaged at least 1.5 or more years in growth for the school year in mathematics based on previous and current EOG quantile scores. 6th and 8th grade ELA saw over a year's growth in EOG Lexile scores. We saw major improvements in

Lexile scores each month as students utilized Achieve3000 and other reading resources.

Cherokee Middle School saw the benefits of having a Mental Health Team in place; consisting of the School Guidance Counselor, School Social Worker, and the addition of a K-12 Mental Health Behavior Support Specialist and Student Support Specialist. Students received the additional support of the team on campus, rather than having to seek the same support from outside organizations in times past. We also have in place an Alternative Classroom and Integrated Classroom. The Alternative Classroom is designed for students that need an alternative setting or have some discipline issues that need to be addressed. Integrated Classroom is for more therapeutic help with Cherokee Indian Hospital playing a major role in student development.

Cherokee Middle School started Co-Teaching this past year in all 3 grade levels for math and 6th grade ELA and felt it was a great success. We are continuing to do this during the 2024-2025 school year and hope to expand to all 3 grade levels for ELA the following year.

With the help of the CTE Department Director at Cherokee Central Schools, Cherokee Middle School was able to begin implementing several high school electives such as HOSA, JROTC, band, Agricultural, Drones, and Woodshop. These courses are designed to introduce students to new classes.

MTSS is continuing to give support to struggling students in math, reading and behavior issues. We have 2 teachers assigned to MTSS and they have been a tremendous help in working with our Tier 2 and Tier 3 kids. They have also helped identify students who may be in need of an IEP.

## CMS Athletics

The 2023-2024 CMS Athletics was another strong year. During the athletic season at Cherokee Middle School, we had several achievements. The Lady Braves took first in Volleyball, Cross Country, Basketball, and Track and Field. They took second in Softball barely losing to an undefeated team. The boys had a favorable season as well finishing second in Basketball and Wrestling. The Braves ended the year as Runner Up for the Smoky Mountain Conference Champions Cup, surrendering to Robbinsville. We are looking forward to the upcoming school year to reclaim the Champions Cup.





## Cherokee High School (CHS)

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Cherokee High School's Class of 2024 graduated 96 students. Earning a CHS diploma represents four years of concerted effort in: core classes—math, English, history, and science; culturally relevant courses—Cherokee I & II, Cherokee History, Cherokee Immersion, woodcarving, and Cherokee Arts & Crafts; career and technical education (CTE) courses—health science, JROTC, agriculture education, family and consumer sciences, drone technology, python coding, auto tech, and graphic design; physical education—health & PE, strength & conditioning, and adaptive PE; the arts—musical theater, dance, marching band, concert band, visual art, and ceramics; and dual enrollment courses through our partners—Appalachian State University, Southwestern Community College, and Western Carolina University.

CHS is also able to connect students with more advanced courses to help challenge them intellectually. In addition to offering honors sections of many of our core courses, we offer advanced courses, including AP, through North Carolina Virtual Public School, North Carolina School of Science and Math, Edgenuity, and Edmentum.

CHS provides support and training for students as they prepare to embark on their post-secondary dreams and plans. In addition to following the North Carolina career and college ready standards in each of our courses, students attend daily advisory with the purpose of working on goal-setting, literacy enrichment, social-emotional learning, and relationship & team building. CHS also helped host a Real Life Expo, established to expose juniors and seniors to adult economic situations through a simulation and community connections. In conjunction with our CTE department, CHS organized a CTE fair designed to expose students to and spark interest in careers within our Tribe and region. Our Counseling Department also arranged several career visits to Southwestern Community College and major area employers.

Not only does CHS support our students in the classroom and in post-secondary preparation activities, we also believe in providing social emotional care through our full-time mental health therapist, social worker, student support groups, and counseling

office. We have alternative classrooms where students can be placed if they can be better served in these environments and if they meet the requirements of these alternatives: creative learning center, which began as a drop-out prevention program; alternative classroom, which is an alternative to long-term suspension for behavioral reasons; and pathseekers, a program serving students with IEPs and behavior plans.

CHS believes that student travel is one of the best ways for students to learn, expand their critical thinking skills, develop confidence, increase their perspective, and solidify their multi-cultural understanding. Our American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) students traveled to Spokane, Washington for the National AISES Conference, the Spanish Club went to Switzerland and Italy, and the CHS Career and Technical Education Career, Academics, & Culture Club traveled to Oahu, Hawaii to learn about the similarities and differences of the academics, economics, and culture of Hawaii.



*June 2024: CHS students in Switzerland.*



*February 2024: CHS students in Hawaii*

The graduation rate for 2023-24 is 82%. Eleven graduates were in the Talented and Gifted program; thirty were in the National Honor Society; nine students graduated with honors, nine with high honors, and nine with highest honors; and twenty-three earned college credit while at CHS.





*Administration, staff, & award-winning students during graduation on May 24, 2024.*

## CHS Athletics

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CHS offers and supports a variety of sports, including volleyball, cheerleading, men's and women's soccer, football, wrestling, women's wrestling, men and women's basketball, cross country, indoor & outdoor track & field, men's and women's golf, baseball, and softball.

What an amazing year for our Braves and Lady Braves. Lady Braves golf team won their first ever conference championship and boasted the player and coach of the year awards. Lady Braves volleyball team won the conference and the conference tournament without dropping a single set during a conference match. They made it to the fourth round of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) 1A state playoffs, winning several awards, including conference coach of the year, setter of the year, and player of the year.

Winter sports brought additional successes. Both our varsity basketball teams traveled once again to Sequoyah High School in Tahlequah, Oklahoma to compete against other teams in the BIE system, and we hosted a Holidays on the Hardwood Christmas tournament with teams from as far away as Australia competing. Braves basketball teams had great seasons with the JV and Varsity teams winning both the conference and conference tournament, The varsity girls basketball team won a slew of accolades during the 23-24: conference championship, conference tournament, coach of the year, player of the year, and the NCHSAA 1A State Championship!



### *Lady Braves - 2024 State Champions.*

The spring was a busy season with the Lady Braves softball and soccer teams qualifying for playoff games. The softball team had several players earn all-conference, all-region, and all-state accolades.

We had five athletes to sign to participate in collegiate athletics, one of those in two sports.

The Women's Indoor Track team won the CHS Principal's Highest Team GPA award for the 2023-24 school year!

## Support Services

### **Community Affairs**

The Community Affairs Division covers a broad range of activities and responsibilities. Included in the department is the Chief Joyce Dugan Cultural Arts Center, Development, Public Relations, CCS Afterschool.

## Chief Joyce Dugan Cultural Arts Center (CJDCAC)

The Chief Joyce Dugan Cultural Arts Center serves as a dynamic hub where the community, arts enthusiasts, and stakeholders converge. Our center cultivates artistic endeavors and fosters meaningful connections and collaborations, enriching the educational experience for all involved.

### Highlights of the Year

#### 1. **Musicals:**

- Hosted two musicals, providing a platform for local talent and fostering a love for the performing arts within the community.

#### 2. **Musical Showcases:**

- Organized several musical showcases, highlighting the diverse musical talents and promoting cultural heritage through music.

#### 3. **Awards Programs:**

- Conducted awards programs to recognize and celebrate the achievements of students and community members in various fields.

#### 4. **Community Meetings and Town Events:**

- Served as a venue for important community meetings and town events, facilitating dialogue and community engagement.

#### 5. **Guest Speakers:**

- Hosted a series of guest speakers, providing educational and inspirational opportunities for attendees.

#### 6. **ASVAB Testing:**

- Facilitated ASVAB testing, supporting students in their career exploration and planning.

#### 7. **Incentive Rewards Programs:**

- Implemented incentive rewards programs to motivate and acknowledge the efforts of students and community members.

The Chief Joyce Dugan Cultural Arts Center continues to be a cornerstone of our community, promoting the arts and enriching lives through a wide array of programs and events.

## CAC Print Studio

This year, the CAC Print Studio has been instrumental in supporting our community's needs by fulfilling approximately 50 jobs. Our studio has been dedicated to providing high-quality print services, contributing to various aspects of educational and community activities. Below are examples of the diverse range of jobs completed:

#### 1. **Classroom Posters:**

- Created vibrant and educational posters to enhance the learning environment in classrooms.
- 2. Cultural Material:**
  - Produced culturally significant materials to promote and preserve our heritage.
- 3. Envelopes:**
  - Printed custom envelopes for various administrative purposes.
- 4. Flyers:**
  - Designed and printed flyers for events, announcements, and community outreach.
- 5. Homework Folder Content:**
  - Supplied printed materials for homework folders to support student organization and learning.
- 6. Athletic Awards:**
  - Provided printed awards for athletic achievements, recognizing the hard work and dedication of our students.
- 7. Athletic Specialty Awards:**
  - Created specialized awards for outstanding athletic performance and milestones.
- 8. Academic Awards for CHS and CMS:**
  - Produced academic awards for both Cherokee High School (CHS) and Cherokee Middle School (CMS), celebrating scholastic excellence.

## Grants

Development facilitated 15 grants including the Personalized Education through Blended Learning and ESTEAM – Phase II grant funded by the Cherokee Preservation Foundation. The department wrote or supported several grants submitted to the Harrah's Scholarship Fund. Additionally, the department coordinates and tracks the STEM-E and NASA grants. This year the department also provided support on a federal grant, NACTEP, which has a CTE/STEM focus.

CCS received DOI GEER, DOE CARES, DOE CRSSA, and ARPA funding this year. The Community Affairs department managed all of these grants which included purchasing and tracking inventory.

## Public Relations

The Community Affairs Public Relations team plays a crucial role in managing the official social media presence of Cherokee Central Schools (CCS). We oversee the CCS Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as the CCS Athletics Facebook Page and Instagram. Our efforts ensure effective communication and engagement with our community, students, and stakeholders.

## Social Media Management and Achievements

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- 1. CCS Official Facebook and Instagram Pages:**
    - **Followers Growth:**
      - Facebook: Increased followers by 35 over the past 28 days.
    - **Engagement:**
      - Facebook:
        - Post Reach: 25,242
        - Post Engagement: 10,611
        - New Page Likes: 12
        - New Page Followers: 35
        - Reactions: 1,674
        - Comments: 233
        - Shares: 368
        - Photo Views: 2,475
        - Link Clicks: 248
      - Instagram: Engagement details needed.
    - **Content Highlights:**
      - Regular updates on school events, academic achievements, cultural programs, and community initiatives.
      - Successful campaigns for special events like Back to School Bash, cultural festivals, and student spotlights.
  - 2. CCS Athletics Facebook and Instagram Pages:**
    - **Followers Growth:**
      - Facebook: Increased followers by 15 over the past 28 days.
    - **Engagement:**
      - Facebook:
        - Post Reach: 11,254
        - Post Engagement: 5,419
        - Reactions: 408
        - Comments: 38
        - Shares: 130
        - Photo Views: 1,527
        - Link Clicks: 0
      - Instagram: Engagement details needed.
    - **Content Highlights:**
      - Comprehensive coverage of athletic events, game highlights, athlete profiles, and award announcements.
      - Effective promotion of special athletic events and community sports activities.

## **Notable Campaigns and Initiatives**

- 1. Back to School Campaign:**
  - Engaged the community with information on the Back to School Bash, open house hours, and start dates.
  - Reached over 10,000 people across Facebook and Instagram.
- 2. Student Achievement Spotlights:**

- Highlighted student successes in academics, athletics, and cultural activities.
- Generated high engagement and positive feedback from the community.

### **3. Community Engagement Initiatives:**

- Promoted various community events, town meetings, and cultural programs.
- Strengthened the bond between CCS and the broader community.

### **4. Real-time Updates and Alerts:**

- Provided timely updates on weather-related closures, schedule changes, and important announcements.
- Ensured clear and effective communication during critical times.

Our social media efforts have significantly enhanced the visibility and reputation of Cherokee Central Schools, fostering a stronger connection with our community and showcasing the achievements and vibrancy of our students and staff.

#### **After School**

The Community Affairs department runs the campus wide after school program. This program runs 4 days a week during the school year (September through May). This includes a program in all three schools as well as our monthly Homework Dinners.

#### **Community Outreach**

The Community Affairs team works on maintaining strong relationships with our community stakeholders. This includes being active in many different community projects and collaborations. This year, with the help of one of the Jones Bowman Cohorts, we were able to partner with MANNA foodbank and provide our families with additional food support to fight food insecurities our students might be facing.

## **Security**

The security staff consists of thirteen security associates, eight full time and four part time when fully staffed. This includes a supervisor and director of security.

Training for security guards is ongoing, with a focus in de-escalation and CPR/first aid training this school year.

The district has numerous security measures in place on the campus, including perimeter fencing, automatic gate arms, internal/external network cameras, access control, vape detection sensor, and a shooter detection system.

The security camera network will expand to 250 security cameras with some housing four sensors per camera. The multi-sensor cameras assist in eliminating blindspots and in turn will increase multi channel capabilities. Video retention will be upgraded to ninety days per video channel.

Axis Body Worn cameras are in production and available for all Security associates. The retention for these cameras will be upgraded to sixty days. With the upgrade to our video management system, these cameras will be able to integrate with the new system. Providing an efficient method to track and investigate the video stored on the devices.

Opengate weapons detection was purchased to assist in the deterrence and discovery of mass casualty weapons that were brought into the buildings.

Several other key measures have been updated, like the Polaris GEMe4 full electric vehicles were purchased to aid in patrolling campus via a green alternative to gas fueled vehicles. Utilizing the GEMe4 saves around \$2,000 in gas fuel annually.

Rohn communication towers were added to two locations on campus. These were installed to improve radio communication throughout campus. Rohn towers boast the ability to mount additional network cameras to enhance monitoring capabilities for parking lots and outer perimeter areas of campus.

Halo VAPE sensors extended to areas not covered in previous years. These sensors have been upgraded to detect aggression and air quality issues. The most recent model will be able to count the number of occupants in a monitored area.

Say Something anonymous tip line is active for all students and staff in the middle and high schools. Say Something representatives are currently working on an MOA to include K-5 implementation. CCS received 215 tips this school year leading administration to assist students and staff.

### Say Something North Carolina - SHP Tip Volume Report

Created Date: 2023/07/23 to 2024/06/21

Day	In-House	PC Web Browser	Mobile Web Browser	Mobile App	Call Center	Totals
Sunday	0	2	3	1	0	6
Monday	0	22	3	3	0	28
Tuesday	0	24	7	5	0	36
Wednesday	0	39	14	3	0	56
Thursday	0	31	9	6	0	46
Friday	0	22	9	4	0	35
Saturday	0	0	3	5	0	8
Totals	0	140	48	27	0	215

The Rave Mobile Panic Button was used 183 times to report incidents, drills or information during the 2023-2024 school year, which assisted in providing immediate alerts to staff when it was necessary.

The Security department is responsible for maintaining working relationships with Tribal Emergency Management.

Utilizing Google Suite, the Security Department has fully digitized visitor and incident documentation.

#### Other Programs

## Inventory

One to One Plus Asset Management, had a total of 14,989 entries, active/inactive assets. Each school and department within CCS, use One to One Plus to track each asset from the moment the asset arrives on campus to the end of life and the removal of the asset from campus.

Each school and department has a dedicated staff member that is responsible for inputting data pertaining to their school or department. These individuals are key during audits and accountability.

As each asset is placed into One to One Plus, it will have a status of active, in use or inactive, which may mean the asset is marked for disposal, recycling or repurposing. The status distinction allows CCS to monitor the lifespan of an asset and then allows for CCS to properly remove the asset from the system and ultimately of CCS' premises. Furniture, kitchen appliances, sanitation machines, security cameras, mobile cabinetry and other items with monetary value over \$100 and have a number of years of use, are inputted into One to One Plus.

## Custodial

When fully staffed, the Custodial department boasts 21 full-time and 1 part-time staff members. The director assigns staff members to various schools, departments, and shifts, in order to clean and sanitize the campus buildings properly. Staff perform a deep clean each summer. The Custodial staff also give support and assistance to other departments as needed.

The custodial staff provided normal and deep cleaning for the district. In addition, the department provided staff with extra cleaning and sanitizing products and hand sanitizer. Custodial staff provided daily emergency cleaning of the classroom if a student becomes sick in the classroom. The Custodial staff also cleans after sporting events and after school events and also provide any support services that are needed at these events.

In an effort to enhance the efficiency of the department, autonomous floor cleaning machines have been tested throughout campus. One machine is currently in the purchasing process and implementation as soon as next school year.

## Facilities

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The facilities department maintains over 507,550 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 oversee 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 between 225-250 completed work requests each month which is the same as last year. These daily work orders are in addition to the preventative maintenance schedule. Monthly utility services include Duke Power, Cherokee Water and Sewer, PSNC Energy, Orkin Pest Control, Verizon, and Frontier.

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, and always ready to help wherever and whenever needed.

The department consists of a director, administrative assistant, carpenter, HVAC, electrician, plumber, and grounds crew.

## Finance

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The Finance department works with Cherokee Boys' Club (CBC), the fiscal agent for CCS, to execute and maintain budget alignment, accounts payable, and payroll processes appropriately.

The Finance Director meets with each principal and director, beginning mid-year to develop a budget for the next school year. Principals and directors must conduct needs assessments and set goals for their schools or departments prior to attending the budget meeting. During SY 2021-22, Google Drive was implemented to more efficiently streamline this process. Directors and principals were issued date and time deadlines to make any suggestions/input/adjustments to the new SY budget. That was met with rousing success from all involved as they were pleased with the effectiveness and expediency of the input process. The actual time involved in the review process was minimal due to those changes being made beforehand.

The director works with the CBC Finance Department to develop an overall budget for submission to the School Board and Tribe. Current Up-to-Date Budget Reports are provided to the CCS School Board on a monthly basis.

The CCS Finance Department is working with the CBC to incorporate the finance system MUNIS to develop a more efficient, effective and expedient means of relaying and responding to financial inquiries and requests.

## Human Resources

Cherokee Central Schools school year 2023 - 2024 employed 395 full time employees which is a decrease of 14 individuals from 409 last year.

Employee type	Number of positions/staff
Licensed Teachers	144
Teacher Assistants	61
Licensed Support Staff (counselors, social workers, media specialists, instructional facilitators, related services)	20
Licensed Administrators (principals, assistant principals, central office)	16
Instructors	24
Support Staff – non-licensed	130

Table VIII. Number of full-time positions by type at CCS.

The Human Resources department plays a crucial role in Cherokee Central School by managing its most valuable asset: Its employees. Its primary purpose is to oversee recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes to ensure CCS attracts and retains skilled talent.

All staff receive Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) training annually, as mandated by Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). This training aids in identifying situations in which our students may need additional assistance.

Background checks are also required of all employees, including volunteers, interns, and coaches. It is critical for the safety of all students that all employees are vetted extensively. These checks are performed in accordance with BIE federal standards and CCS policies.

Continuing education units (CEUs) are tracked for licensed staff to assist in the license renewal process. Assisting in this renewal process ensures all licenses remain up to date and helps retain our teachers.

The Human Resources staff is committed to creating an efficient, motivated, and satisfied workforce that contributes to Cherokee Central School's overall success.

## Technology Department

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The technology department of Cherokee Central Schools plays a pivotal role in supporting educational initiatives and ensuring the smooth operation of technical infrastructure across three schools.

The Technology team successfully imaged or re-imaged over 2000 desktops and laptops across all three schools. These devices were seamlessly integrated into the network to bolster our 1:1 Personalized Education initiative.

To meet the increasing demand for connectivity, the wireless network undergoes continuous upgrades. Thus, accommodating more users and ensuring a stable connection throughout the schools. By optimizing network infrastructure, we have enhanced the learning environment and facilitated seamless access to digital resources.

A structured device refresh cycle was implemented to ensure that both staff and students have access to the latest technology. This proactive approach supports evolving educational needs and ensures that technology remains a reliable tool for teaching and learning.

The IT department provided essential troubleshooting assistance for tech work orders from staff, managing an average of 100 work tickets per month across the district. Additionally, comprehensive support services were extended to 566 staff computers, ensuring operational efficiency and minimizing disruptions to educational activities.

The Technology department played a critical role in supporting each school during state assessments, including End of Grade, End of Course, and CTE Post assessments. This support ensured that technological resources were effectively deployed to facilitate smooth and reliable testing environments. Furthermore, the IT department provided assistance to students, teachers, and counselors involved in WIDA ACCESS testing, contributing to the successful administration of language proficiency assessments.

## School Nutrition Services

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

Table IX. Average Participation of Students

	Breakfast	Lunch
Cherokee Central Schools	750	1200

The students had a Hot and Healthy meal at lunch everyday. The students were very thankful for the meals. The students had new food items on the menu this year. There are more students who continue to use the dining halls.

## Appendix

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# 2023-2024 CCS CALENDAR

Date	Description
7/31/2023	Teachers and Staff Return – Teacher Work Day (TWD)
8/1-8/4/2023	TWD
8/7/2023	Students Return
8/24/2023	Cherokee Elders' Day - Holiday
9/1/2023	Early Release
9/4/2023	Labor Day - Holiday
9/18/2023	No school for students; VPLCs (8:00 – 11:00); Sacred Path (1:00- 3:00)
10/3/2023	Early Release - Parade
10/4/2023	Heritage Day - Holiday
10/5-10/6/2023	OTWDs
10/13/2023	End of Quarter 1 (44 days)
11/10/2023	Veterans' Day - Holiday
11/22/2023	Thanksgiving – Admin Leave
11/23/2023	Thanksgiving Day - Holiday
11/24/2023	Tsali Day - Holiday
12/20/2023	Early Release - End of Quarter 2 (44 days)
12/21-12/22/2023	School Vacation/Admin Leave
12/25/2023	Christmas - Holiday
12/26-12/29/2023	School Vacation/Admin Leave
1/1/2024	New Year's Day - Holiday
1/2/2024	Optional Teacher Work Day (OTWD)
1/3/2023	Students Return
1/15/2024	Martin Luther King, Jr. - Holiday
2/19/2024	Presidents' Day - Holiday
3/8/2024	End of Quarter 3 (46 days)
3/11/2024	No school for students; VPLCs (8:00 – 11:00); Sacred Path (1:00- 3:00)
3/29/2024	Good Friday - Holiday
4/8-4/12/2024	Spring Break
5/22/2024	Last Student Day - Early Release - End of Quarter 4 (46 days)
5/23-5/24/2024	OTWDs



**TLTR**

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