

Civics Class Could See Revival in North Carolina Schools

Civics education in North Carolina classrooms may be poised for a comeback as educators experiment with new ways to make lessons more relevant and engaging for students. Teachers across the state have found that when civics connects directly to students' lives, interest and understanding increase.

In Rowan County, Southeast Middle School teacher Eric Shock turned a proposed cellphone ban into a real-world civics lesson by encouraging students to contact lawmakers. While the legislation ultimately passed, Shock said the experience helped students understand how government works and how their voices fit into the process.

Other teachers have taken similar approaches. In Vance County, Clarke Elementary students met local leaders during a special resource day, while a former social studies teacher used music and personal writing exercises to help students relate to historical documents like the Declaration of Independence. Education researchers say these strategies work because students are more engaged when lessons reflect their own experiences.

This article is based on Carolina Public Press' Civics Unlearned series, which found that inconsistent and often deprioritized civic education has limited student engagement across the state. Experts say improving civics education will require stronger policy support, teacher training, and hands-on learning opportunities.

Other states offer possible models. Tennessee and Indiana have adopted project-based civics programs that require students to identify community issues, research solutions, and present ideas to public officials. Studies show students in these programs develop stronger civic knowledge and are more likely to stay informed and engaged as adults.

In North Carolina, some leaders are discussing similar approaches, including service-learning and community-based projects. However, proposed legislation has focused more on testing than on experiential learning, raising concerns among educators who say civics is best taught through participation rather than memorization.

Beyond the classroom, citizen academies, youth government programs, and bipartisan discussion groups are helping residents better understand how government works. Advocates say these efforts show that when people are given the tools to engage, they are more likely to participate thoughtfully and constructively in civic life.

Bluegrass at the Library (Yes, Really)

- On January eighth, when the sun settles low, The library proves it still knows how to go. From six-thirty to eight-thirty - two hours, no less, Bluegrass will echo (politely, we guess). - It's acoustic, of course - no amps will intrude, In the Little Theater, calm and subdued. Fiddles may fiddle, guitars may twang, And banjos will do that banjo thing - clang-clang-clang.

- Musicians are welcome, singers as well, Spectators too, who just like to tell Their friends they once heard live bluegrass tunes, Between shelves of books on a Thursday evening in June, (Well, January. But you get the vibe.)

- All ages are welcome, all skill levels too, From seasoned pros to folks with one chord or two. Kids twelve and under must bring an adult along, Just in case the mandolin gets too strong.

- So come join the fun, tap a foot, hum a tune, And prove libraries rock, just quietly, please, and in tune.

- If questions remain or you need clarification, Call 704-694-5177 for musical information.

Unusual Holidays To Celebrate This Week

- January 8 (Thursday) **Earth's Rotation Day** Celebrate the fact that the planet keeps spinning whether you finish your to-do list or not. If today feels like it flew by, now you know who to blame—Earth, not the clock.
- January 9 (Friday) **Word Nerd Day** A perfect day to use words like sesquipedalian in casual conversation and correct spelling errors silently in your head. Extra points if you read a dictionary entry for fun.
- January 9 (Friday) **Static Electricity Day** That little zap from the doorknob? It's not personal—it's science. Expect crackling sweaters, flyaway hair, and at least one surprise jolt that makes you suspicious of everything metal.
- January 10 (Saturday) **Cut Your Energy Costs Day** A reminder to turn off lights, unplug chargers, and finally admit you don't need the TV on for background noise. Your electric bill may not applaud, but it will quietly approve.
- January 11 (Sunday) **Learn Your Name in Morse Code Day** Dots and dashes never go out of style. Learn your name today so you're prepared in case tapping on pipes becomes the preferred method of communication again.
- January 12 (Monday) **Clean Off Your Desk Day** Time to discover papers you meant to file in 2019 and coffee cups you thought disappeared. Cleaning your desk counts as productivity—even if nothing else gets done.
- January 12 (Monday) **Marzipan Day** A sweet treat made of almonds and mystery. Some people love it, some people question it, but today it officially deserves its moment.
- January 13 (Tuesday) **Make Your Dreams Come True Day** Big dreams, small dreams, or just getting through the day without losing your keys—it all counts. Progress may be optional, but optimism is encouraged.
- January 14 (Wednesday) **Organize Your Home Day** A noble goal that usually starts strong and ends with everything shoved into one drawer. Still, even pretending to organize is a step in the right direction.

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Church

JANUARY 11

Pastor's Aide

Program At New Grove Missionary Baptist Church, 2:30pm with Pastor Paulette Cash.

FEBRUARY 7

Men's Breakfast

At New Grove Missionary Baptist Church, 10am. All males, any age are invited. It's a call to be saved, to be renewed in the Lord. Come fellowship & hear inspiring words.

FEBRUARY 8

Appreciation Service

For 1st Man Bro. Robin at New Grove Missionary Baptist Church, 2:30pm.

ONGOING

Saturday Services

Lighthouse Ministries holds services every Saturday at 11am. Located at 311 Birchwood Dr in Wadesboro. The Pastor is Terry Taylor & Assistant Pastor is Lawanda Rodgers.

For info call 704-465-1757.

Youth Night

At Vision of God Ministries in Morven each Sat, 5-7pm w/bible study, Christian movies, games, crafts refreshments & more

Mass Schedule

All welcome to services at Sacred Heart



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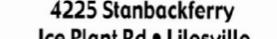
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Catholic Mission in Wadesboro. Masses every Sun-8:30am, Thur-6pm & Sat-9am

Weekly Praise & Worship Schedule

Sandy Plains Christian Fellowship Church, 1154 Cason Oldfield Rd. • Weekly service times: 9am Coffee & Conversation Fellowship; 9:45am Sunday School; 11am Morning Worship. Everyone is welcome.

Events

JANUARY 15

Free Food

Anson Mobile Food Market 10:00 a.m. on the Square in uptown Wadesboro, at the corner of Wade & Greene Streets.. Fresh veggies, fruit & bread if available. Blood pressure checks, along with healthy living topics & booths. Nothing required to receive food, just come! Volunteers will help you with the bags. Sponsored by Anson Extension Service.

JANUARY 20

Board of Commissioners Meet 6pm in the Board Room, Suite 209, in Government Center, 101 S Greene St in uptown Wadesboro. Meetings are available online at youtube.com, search for Anson Commissioners. To appear, sign up prior to meeting. Info 704-994-3201.

ONGOING EVENTS

Alcoholics Anonymous Regular meetings on Mondays & Thursdays at 6:30pm and Wednesdays at 12 noon. AA welcomes all who are seeking help, as well those wanting to help another person. The AA building is located at 2177 Country Club Rd. in Wadesboro, across from the Anson EMS building.



**NC Ski Industry Looks to Snow for Comeback
After Helene Damage Kept Tourists Away**

For North Carolina's mountain ski industry, the 2026 season is about more than fresh powder and cold temperatures. It is about proving that the mountains are back after Tropical Storm Helene dealt a significant blow just weeks before last year's ski season began.

Helene struck less than two months before slopes were scheduled to open, leaving widespread damage across Western North Carolina's ski areas. At Sugar Mountain in Avery County, the ski patrol building burned, parking lots buckled, falling trees knocked out the night-light system, the ski shop flooded, and small landslides scarred the mountain.

Ironically, the damage came during what turned out to be an excellent winter for snowfall. Sugar Mountain recorded 76 inches of snow last season. Still, recovery efforts overshadowed what could have been a banner year.

"That definitely made us work very, very hard to recover from Helene and the damage that she did to the ski area," said Kim Jochl, president of the North Carolina Ski Association and vice president at Sugar Mountain Ski Resort. "It speaks to the resiliency of the people who live here and the people who work here. They understand the value of working hard so that we can open when the snow flies and the temperatures drop."

Despite those efforts, many potential visitors believed the mountains were still largely out of commission, limiting the economic benefit of last season. Jochl and other industry leaders are hopeful that this winter will mark a true rebound. Early snowfall has fueled optimism, including a picturesque blanket of snow seen across the Boone area in early December.

"We need a win, and this is an opportunity for a win," said David Jackson, president of the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce. "People can see that this area of the state is healed and can continue to offer something that no other area in the state can."

Workforce challenges remain a concern for ski resorts and surrounding businesses. Seasonal winter employees often rely on summer tourism jobs, many of which were disrupted by Helene. As a result, some workers relocated or sought more stable employment elsewhere.

"It's been harder this year across the board, whether that's directly at the resorts or at the restaurants and hoteliers that support that tourism," Jackson said.

To meet staffing needs, Sugar Mountain increased its reliance on foreign labor, employing 60 international workers this season, up from 40 last year. Jochl said those workers have played a key role in helping ski areas fully recover.

"The ski areas, from a business perspective, have moved on," she said. "Everything's been fixed."

While the slopes may be ready, economic pressures could still affect visitor turnout. Persistent inflation and household budget concerns may cause some families to rethink winter travel plans. According to Visit North Carolina, travelers cite financial pressures and the availability of affordable deals as top factors influencing their decisions.

Despite those concerns, tourism officials note that North Carolina has historically fared better than many states during economic uncertainty, thanks to its location and range of affordable activities.

Jochl remains confident that snow is the ultimate deciding factor. "It seems like people find a way to ski no matter what challenges they face in their life," she said.

Questions about climate change and its impact on snowfall continue to surface, but Jochl said she has not observed a consistent downward trend during her 24 years of tracking snowfall at Sugar Mountain. However, long-term data does show a decline in average annual snowfall over the past decade, with fewer extreme snow years than in the early 2000s.

Even so, the current season is off to a promising start, with Sugar Mountain already recording 16 inches of snow as winter gets underway.

"Our message to ski visitors this year is, first of all: thank you for coming back," Jackson said. "You knew that we had it in us." By Jane Winik Sartwell, Carolina Public Press