

# THE EXPRESS

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Serving Anson County and the Municipalities of Ansonville, Lilesville, McFarlan, Morven, Peachland, Polkton and Wadesboro.

## Small School, Big Impact: Ansonville Elementary Rises to the Top in National Vocabulary Competition



### Statewide Burn Ban Issued as Wildfire Risk Rises Across North Carolina

**Officials urge residents to avoid all open burning until conditions improve**

With dry conditions and increasing wildfire danger across the state, the N.C. Forest Service issued a statewide ban on all open burning, effective 6 p.m. Saturday, March 28, and continuing until further notice. As of press time the ban was still in place.

The order cancels all previously issued burn permits and suspends the issuance of new permits as officials work to reduce the number of fire starts during a period of heightened risk.

“With drought severity across the state, forecast fire weather and the potential for limited rainfall, it is critical to reduce the number of new fire starts,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “Vegetative fuels will dry rapidly, and with the amount of fuel loading in the mountains and drought impacts statewide, a burn ban for all 100 counties is necessary to reduce the number of wildfires across our landscape. Please follow this burn ban to help reduce the risk for everyone.”

Under North Carolina law, the ban prohibits all open burning statewide, regardless of whether a permit had previously been issued. Violators face a \$100 fine plus \$183 in court costs, and individuals responsible for starting fires may also be held liable for the cost of extinguishing them.

The burn ban does not apply to fires within 100 feet of an occupied dwelling, where local fire marshals have jurisdiction and may impose additional restrictions. Residents are encouraged to check with their county fire marshal for any local ordinances.

Local fire departments and law enforcement agencies are assisting with enforcement of the statewide ban as conditions remain dry and fire-prone.

Officials say residents should use caution and consider alternatives to open burning, noting that even small fires can quickly get out of control under current conditions.

For common questions, the Forest Service notes that open burning includes leaves, branches and other plant material, while burning trash or non-vegetative items is illegal at any time. Grills and barbecues are allowed if not restricted by local ordinances, but campfires, fire pits and outdoor fireplaces located more than 100 feet from a dwelling are prohibited during the ban.

Fireworks and other pyrotechnic devices are also prohibited statewide while the burn ban is in effect.

Anyone who spots a wildfire or suspects one has been intentionally set is urged to call 911 immediately.

Residents can learn more about burn bans, wildfire prevention and safety at the N.C. Forest Service website at [www.ncforestservice.gov](http://www.ncforestservice.gov). Additional information about air quality restrictions is available through the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality at [www.deq.nc.gov](http://www.deq.nc.gov).

#### Answers to frequently asked questions

**• What is open burning?**

Open burning includes burning leaves, branches or other plant material. Burning trash, lumber, tires, newspapers, plastics or other nonvegetative material is illegal at any time.

**• May I still use my grill or barbecue?**

Yes, if no local ordinances prohibit their use.

**• Can I still use my fire pit or fireplace outdoors?**

Fire pits, outdoor fireplaces and burning barrels located more than 100 feet from an occupied dwelling are considered open burning and are prohibited during the ban. Within 100 feet, local governments have jurisdiction. Check with your county fire marshal for specific rules.

**• Can I have a campfire when I go camping?**

No. Campfires are considered open burning and are not allowed during the burn ban. Portable gas stoves or grills may be used instead.

**• Can I use fireworks during a burn ban?**

No. Fireworks and other pyrotechnic devices are prohibited statewide while the burn ban is in effect.

**• How should I report a wildfire?**

Call 911.

**• How should I report someone intentionally starting a fire?**

Call 911.

**• My county also issued a burn ban. What does that mean?**

Local bans may apply within 100 feet of a dwelling, where local authorities have jurisdiction. If a fire escapes, the person responsible may be liable for suppression costs.

**• Are there other restrictions on open burning?**

Yes. Local ordinances and air quality rules may apply. Outdoor burning is prohibited during Code Orange or Code Red air quality alerts. Learn more at [www.deq.nc.gov](http://www.deq.nc.gov).

**• What can I do to protect my home?**

Learn about wildfire preparedness, risk reduction and prevention at [www.ncforestservice.gov](http://www.ncforestservice.gov).

Ansonville Elementary School is proving that size doesn't determine success. With just 52 students participating, this small rural school made a powerful impact in the IXL Vocabulary Bowl, the nation's largest vocabulary competition.

The competition began in February and ran through the end of March. Despite competing against much larger schools, Ansonville Elementary is currently ranked 48th in the nation, among all school types, in Division III (less than 500 students) - with over 5,800 words mastered. Among elementary and middle schools, AES ranks 29th in the country.

In North Carolina, AES is ranked 2nd, trailing only a much larger middle school with nearly 400 students.

**Among elementary schools, AES is proudly ranked #1 in North Carolina in the Vocabulary Bowl.**

AES students have embraced the challenge through a “Vocabulary Speedway” theme, turning hallways into an engaging, competitive learning environment.

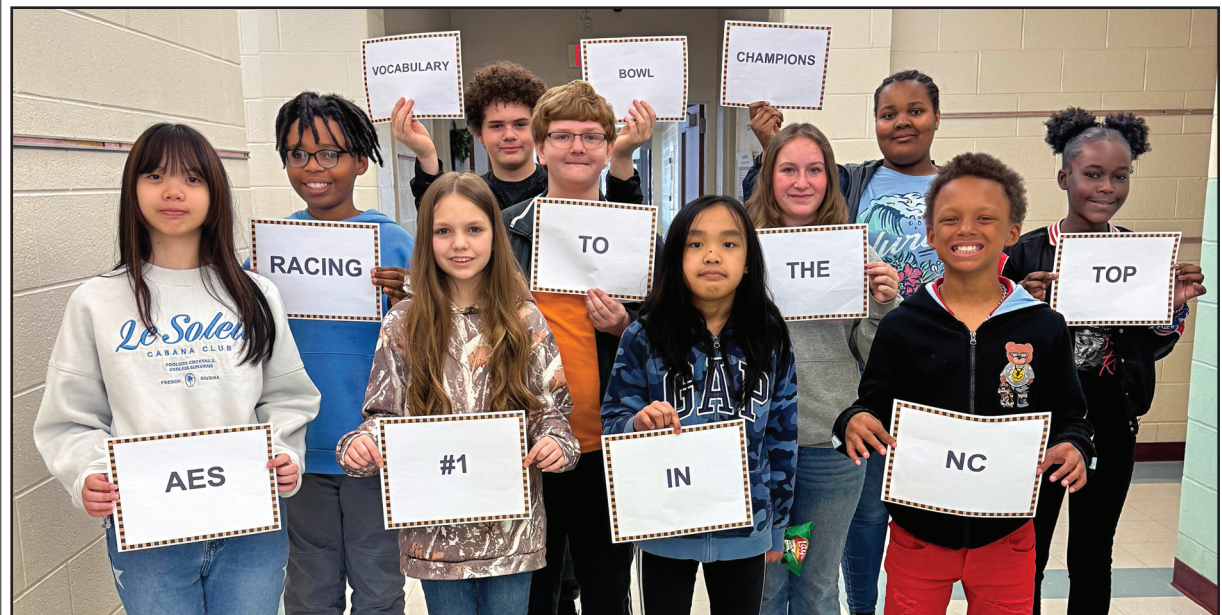
Top student leaders & words mastered include: Eli Carpenter – 454 (6th grade); Quynh Pham – 381 (6th grade); Ayden Lindsey – 300 (6th grade); Laila Kelly – 299 (6th grade); William Graham – 281 (6th grade); Tadarrell Lee – 278 (5th grade); Jaida Bacote – 233 (6th grade); Joyce Sturdivant – 223 (5th grade); Macy Dunlap – 217 (6th grade); and Ashley Nicole Laderas – 217 (5th grade).

This competition has created excitement across campus, turning vocabulary practice into a school-wide celebration.

**Current Rankings:**

- #1 Elementary School in North Carolina • #2 Overall in NC in their division
- #29 in the nation among elementary & middle schools • Top 50 in the nation overall (Division III)

**Small School. Huge Heart** Ansonville Elementary's success shows the power of creativity, community, and student pride. Even the smallest schools can achieve big things.



**AES Top Ten Leaders** Fifth- and sixth-grade students at Ansonville Elementary School display their message, “We Are #1 in NC,” during the the nationwide Vocabulary Bowl competition.

## Plan Announced for Fully Automated “Life Lane” in Anson County

**Residents may soon handle an entire day without leaving their vehicle**

In what may be the boldest local innovation since the invention of sweet tea on ice, a plan was announced on April 1 to create a fully automated “Life Lane” – a drive-through system designed to handle nearly every aspect of daily living in Anson County without residents ever stepping out of their cars.

The concept goes well beyond simple errands. According to early plans, residents would be able to pay bills, renew licenses, pick up prescriptions, attend meetings, receive haircuts and even participate in community events – all while remaining comfortably seated behind the wheel.

“Why stop at convenience when we can eliminate standing altogether?” one official reportedly said while reviewing the proposal. “Standing is outdated anyway.”

The proposed route would wind through downtown Wadesboro and feature a series of highly specialized stations, including a “rapid haircut window,” a “drive-through library browsing tunnel” with conveyor belt book delivery and a “rolling town hall” where citizens can vote or voice concerns while slowly circling the block.

Perhaps the most ambitious feature is a planned “express social stop,” where residents could attend birthday parties, family reunions and even weddings from their vehicles - complete with optional Honking Applause Packages.

To further improve efficiency, officials say the system could incorporate synchronized traffic lights, curbside assistants and a subscription-based “Priority Lane” for those needing to complete an entire week’s worth of living before lunch.

Local organizations are already rumored to be exploring how they might participate. Early ideas include a drive-through choir performance at a local church and a “mobile fish fry lane” capable of serving hundreds without a single folding chair in sight.

While some residents have expressed enthusiasm for the time-saving potential, others have raised questions about how certain activities – such as parallel parking at a wedding or catching a tossed bouquet through a driver’s side window – might actually work.

Officials acknowledged that details are still being finalized but emphasized that innovation sometimes requires thinking a little outside the box...or in this case, entirely inside the car.

Residents interested in the program are encouraged to stay tuned for updates, keep their gas tanks full and - just in case - check the date of this edition of The Express. HAPPY APRIL FOOLS DAY!

## Tigers Den Resource Center to Celebrate Grand Opening at Wadesboro Elementary

**April 14 event will highlight support services for families and students**

Wadesboro Elementary School will celebrate the grand opening of its new Tigers Den Resource Center on Tuesday, April 14, at 10:00 a.m., marking a major step forward in supporting students and families in the community.

The event will take place on the campus of Wadesboro Elementary School and is open to the public, with community members invited to attend and learn more about the new resource center.

The Tigers Den Resource Center is designed to support families, strengthen the community and empower students, offering a space where resources and assistance can be more easily accessed.

Guests attending the grand opening will have the opportunity to tour the facility, meet school staff and community partners and enjoy light refreshments as part of the celebration.

School officials say the center reflects a continued commitment to meeting the needs of students both inside and outside the classroom, creating a stronger foundation for learning and success.

The event will also include a ceremonial ribbon cutting as the school officially opens the new space to the community.

Wadesboro Elementary School, known as the home of the Tigers, encourages families, community members and supporters to attend and take part in this special occasion.