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Schools spotlight apprenticeship program

By MATT LASLEY EDITOR
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Grayson County Schools Superintendent Doug Robinson, far left, and school board members Carolyn Thomason, third from left, and Alfreda Weedman, middle, take a group photo after last Thursday's Chamber of Commerce luncheon with the district's four teacher apprentices, from left, Allie Dotson, Leanne Riggs, Jady Forsyth, and Ashley Dotson.

Matt Lasley | Grayson County News

Grayson County Schools recently shared the details of its apprenticeship program for students wishing to pursue a career in teaching.

The school district sponsored last Thursday's Grayson County Chamber of Commerce membership luncheon, and officials discussed how the apprenticeship program is seeking to address the current teacher shortage locally and nationally.

According to Grayson County Schools Transition Coordinator Brandi Lee, apprenticeships are industry driven career pathways through which states and districts can develop their future workforce.

"Teacher shortages are at an all-time high, especially after COVID," Lee said.

Through Grayson County Schools' "Grow Your Own" teacher apprenticeship program, teachers in training "earn as they learn" by working with mentor teachers in local classrooms for the district while obtaining their teaching degree.

Lee said teacher apprentices can gain 1,500 to 2,000 hours of experience in the classroom, as opposed to a traditional student teacher who can garner around 600 to 900 hours of experience.

"They're in a variety of settings with a variety of students," she said.

By blending teaching theory with practice, this method will create better qualified teachers, according to Lee.

Currently, Grayson County Schools has four teacher apprentices in the program: Ashley Dotson, Jadyn Forsyth, Leanne Riggs, and Allie Dotson.

A 2021 Grayson County High School (GCHS) graduate, Ashley Dotson started her apprenticeship in November of 2019, and said the hands-on opportunities provided through the program have given her a deeper insight into education and have better prepared her to be flexible and adaptable in many different classroom situations. She graduated from Elizabethtown Community & Technical College (ECTC) with an Associate in Arts last December. She currently attends Western Kentucky University (WKU) to obtain her dual certification in Elementary Education and Special Education while also working with GCHS Family and Consumer Sciences teacher Cody Mooneyhan through her apprenticeship.

A 2022 GCHS graduate, Forsyth started her apprenticeship in August of 2021. She also graduated from ECTC in December of 2022 with an Associate's degree and is attending WKU to study Elementary Education. Forsyth said she appreciates the opportunity to garner extra teaching experience through her apprenticeship while still going to college full-time. Currently, her apprenticeship has her working in a 2nd grade classroom at Clarkson Elementary School.

A 2022 GCHS graduate, Riggs also started her apprenticeship in August of 2021, and currently attends WKU with the goal of becoming a high school history teacher while working as a substitute teacher at GCHS. She said her apprenticeship has taught her “countless tips and tricks on classroom management” and provided valuable experience for her chosen profession.

Lastly, Allie Dotson, a 2023 GCHS graduate, started her apprenticeship in October of 2022 and now attends ECTC to garner her Associate’s degree. Her goal is to earn a dual certification in Elementary Education and Physical Education. She said her apprenticeship has afforded her many opportunities, from creating lesson plans



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