Dr. Mary Ellis retired as superintendent of the Union County Public Schools in Union County, North Carolina. She worked in North Carolina schools for over 38 years as teacher, bus driver, coach, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, deputy superintendent, and superintendent. She was a classroom teacher for 18 years and building level administrator for eight years prior to working at the central services level.

Dr. Ellis served as superintendent of Union County Public Schools four years, retiring on June 1, 2016. Prior to being named superintendent, Dr. Ellis was deputy superintendent from 2009 – 2012 and assistant superintendent from 2005 – 2009.

Dr. Ellis is a native of Union County. She attended and graduated from Piedmont High in the Union County School System. She earned her bachelor’s degree in English, master’s degree in human development and learning, and doctorate in educational leadership from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

In addition to working for the Union County Public Schools, Dr. Ellis has served as an adjunct professor at Wingate University at both the masters and doctoral levels.

Dr. Ellis has received numerous awards for her outstanding work as an educator. As a teacher, she was named Union County’s Teacher of the Year and worked as Regional Teacher of the Year in for one year. In 2011, the North Carolina Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) named Dr. Ellis the Distinguished Educator of the Year. She also received the Professional Administrator of the Year award from the Union County Educational Office Professionals. She has served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for United Way for Union County, was on the Executive Committee of the North Carolina School Superintendent Association, and a is member of the North Carolina Public Schools Forum.

Dr. Ellis was named North Carolina Region 6 Superintendent of the Year in 2014 and was named the inaugural recipient of the Frances Jones Trailblazer of the Year Award in 2016 from the North Carolina Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Living on a working farm all of her life, Dr. Ellis enjoys photography, her “designer” goat herd, the North Carolina coast, and her children and grandchildren.

Dr. Ellis is now president of FAY Innovations, LLC, consulting with groups interested in educational innovation and reform. She concentrates on leadership services to turn around low performing schools in North Carolina and surrounding states.