

BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

DEPARTMENT: Communications/Public
Information Department

TOPIC: GOOD NEWS

FOR THE MONTH OF: May 2025

1. The following educators were announced during the **Gaston County Schools** Evening of Excellence ceremony as “Of the Year” winners for the 2025-2026 school year: Teacher of the Year: **John Ramos, Forestview High School**; Principal of the Year: **Jaime Wallace, Brookside Elementary School**; Assistant Principal of the Year: **Charlotte Friday, W.A. Bess Elementary School**; New Teacher of the Year: **Richard Morris, Forestview High School**; Teacher Assistant of the Year: **Christi Jolley, Grier Middle School**; and Central Office Administrator of the Year: **Leigh Smith, Human Resources**. Truist sponsored the ceremony with additional partnership support from Courage Kia in Gastonia and the Gaston County Education Foundation.
2. **Gaston County Schools** was among 26 businesses, organizations, and individuals from the western part of the state to be honored during the United Way of North Carolina’s Spirit of North Carolina Awards ceremony, which was held at the Gastonia Conference Center. The award was given in the Community Impact category, recognizing the school district’s fundraising efforts for 2024-2025 that totaled close to \$132,000 as the largest campaign for the United Way of Gaston County. This is **Gaston County Schools’** third consecutive year for receiving the Spirit of North Carolina Award.
3. Three promising educators in **Gaston County Schools** have been chosen for the Principal Fellows program at UNC-Charlotte. **Ashlyn Steelman of W.C. Friday Middle School, Tishawana Leach of Ashbrook High School, and Matthew Jennings of Lowell Elementary School** were selected as Principal Fellows and will participate in a professional development program that is designed for teachers who aspire to become school administrators/district leaders.
4. **Gaston County Schools** was honored at the North Carolina School Public Relations Association’s Blue Ribbon Awards program in High Point for winning a gold award in the special events and programs category. The state honor recognizes the Communications Department’s efforts to coordinate the “School Showcase and Parent Fair” that was held in February 2024.
5. The **Gaston County Schools** Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department hosted a Career Signing Day program for seniors who have earned an apprenticeship or permanent employment after graduation with one of the school district’s CTE business partners.
6. **Gaston County Schools** received a supply of 500 pairs of shoes for students in need from the Soles 4 Souls organization.

7. **Gaston County Schools** hosted the annual Star Teacher-Star Student Awards ceremony on April 10 at the Gaston Early College High School. The program celebrated the achievements of the Star Students in the Class of 2025 (one from each high school) and the Star Teachers who have influenced their lives. GSM Services sponsored the event.
8. The following students are recipients of the Albert G. Myers Scholarship: **James Thomas Bowen IV, Macie Bridgeman, John-Thomas McQuay, and Charlie Price**, all of **South Point High School**; **Ann M. Sproul** of **Stuart W. Cramer High School**; **Kelsey Griffin** of **Hunter Huss High School**; **Carson Reed** of **Cherryville High School**; and **Sadie Morton** of **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences**.
9. **Gaston County Schools** has partnered with Kintegra Health to expand services to all schools for the 2025-2026 year. The expansion will ensure that students across the school district have greater access to essential healthcare resources, further supporting their well-being and academic success. In addition to behavioral health services, Kintegra Health will implement telehealth medical services at all schools. These services include well and sick visits, school physicals, and ongoing care provided by qualified, licensed medical staff. All services will be available to students with parental consent. The expansion reflects **Gaston County Schools'** commitment to ensuring that students have access to the care they need to thrive, grow, and be successful.
10. The following educators are recipients of the Glenn Sisters Legacy Grant presented by the Gaston County Education Foundation: **Jessica Blake** of **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**; **Sandra Engbarth** of **Pleasant Ridge Elementary**; **Amy Motley** of **North Gaston High School**; **Christy Garcia** of **Warlick Academy**; and **Heather Brown** of **Rankin Elementary**.
11. **Dr. Christelle Corpin**, a science teacher at **Stuart W. Cramer High School**, has been chosen as the EPI (Educational Partners International) Teacher of the Year for North Carolina. She was selected as one of three finalists from more than 100 nominations statewide and was chosen as the official state winner. Additionally, Corpin will receive the Association of Filipino Teachers of America's Global Teacher Award during a ceremony at the end of May in New York. Corpin has been supportive of the international teachers in **Gaston County Schools** and has played an important role in facilitating meetings, cultural events, and other programs for her colleagues in addition to her responsibilities as a classroom teacher.
12. The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association has recognized **East Gaston High School** athletic director **Haley Stewart** as a Certified Athletic Administrator.
13. **Chapel Grove Elementary School** hosted a celebration on April 29 to commemorate the school's 100th anniversary. The event brought attention to a century of learning, growth, and community spirit and featured special recognitions, student performances, and school history presentations, including honoring former principal **Jack Kimbro** for his 25 years of service at Chapel Grove.

14. **Bessemer City High School** and **Hunter Huss High School** had representatives attend the MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) secondary schools networking session in Wilkesboro. They had the opportunity to present about how the MTSS framework is offering positive support for students' academic, behavioral, and social/emotional needs through individualized support for students based on their needs and challenges. The representatives from Gaston County also spent time collaborating with people from other school districts and the N.C. Department of Public Instruction on various topics related to MTSS for a full day of learning and sharing.
15. **Bessemer City High School** senior **Tionna Pettus** was chosen for the N.C. Coaches Association's 2025 East-West All-Star Girls Basketball Game, which is scheduled for July 21.
16. The County Commissioners and Gaston County Government have established a committee called "Gaston Project 250" to bring attention to the 250th anniversary of the United States in 2026. This is being done in correlation with the "America 250 Project," which is intended to educate and publicize the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. A part of the committee is a subgroup that focuses on education and awareness. **Laura Long**, lead media coordinator, and **Valerie Yatko**, business partnerships director, have been representing **Gaston County Schools** on the committee, and with input from **Bryan Denton**, executive director for secondary instruction, they presented the committee with ideas about how the school district can raise student/employee awareness about the historical events related to the semiquincentennial observance through school libraries/media centers and communication channels.
17. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** senior **Olivia Michael** is the recipient of the 2025 Wayne F. Shovelin Scholarship, a four-year scholarship valued at \$24,000 each academic year for undergraduate studies in a healthcare-related field.
18. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** earned third place in the North Carolina Battle of the Books competition.
19. The **Stuart W. Cramer High School** men's golf team won the 3A Western Regional Championship at the Waynesville Inn and Golf Club and the 3A State Championship at Gates Four Golf and Country Club.
20. **Cramerton Middle School** has achieved the next level of certification from the National Paideia Center, moving from the "Paideia Seminar" to the "Paideia Classroom Certification" level. The Paideia approach encourages teaching and learning engagement, critical thinking, creativity, and other skills among students, teachers, and staff and serves as the cornerstone for the school's Gifted and Talented Academy.
21. **W.C. Friday Middle School** student **Iyanna Brienne Flores** performed with the Charlotte Concert Band in the biennial "Musician of a Lifetime" concert on April 26 at the Ann R. Belk Theater on the campus of UNC-Charlotte.

22. The **Gaston County Schools** middle school band directors sponsor two to three Kelly Robb Scholarships each year. Applicants must submit a 200-word essay about how music has impacted their lives along with a video performance of a solo. The \$250 scholarships are intended to support attendance at a band camp or private lessons. During the 2025 all-county band clinic, the Kelly Robb Scholarship committee announced this year's recipients: **Camilia Vargas Parra** and **Iyanna Brianne Flores**, both eighth-grade band students at **W.C. Friday Middle School**.
23. Recently, the Gastonia East Rotary Club put out a call for donations of bread to make sandwiches for people who are in need. In response, the **Gaston County Schools Human Resources** staff contributed 36 loaves of bread. This is an example of how employees embrace the spirit of caring and giving to support the community and make it a better place for others.
24. **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences** students **Jalen Starr**, **Rhema Smith**, and **Mia Hibbert** were awarded academic scholarships for their participation in the Debutante Ball hosted by the Zeta Mu Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and Twenty Pearls, Inc. Other scholarship winners include **Evelyn Gutierrez Lira**, who received the Daniel C. Ragan Scholarship valued at \$20,000; **Sadie Morton**, who was awarded the Albert G. Myers Scholarship valued at \$20,000. **Nevaeh Dover**, who received the E.R. and Lillian B. Dimmette Scholarship worth \$24,000, and **Vidhi Patel**, who was awarded the John Willoughby Scholarship valued at \$1,000.
25. **Hunter Huss High School** senior **Alaina Peavy** is the recipient of the 2025 Paul Fuller Mentoring Scholarship. The \$4,000 scholarship is given each year to a student who has been positively influenced by a mentor. It is named in memory of Paul Fuller, one of the first mentors in **Gaston County Schools**. She plans to attend the University of North Carolina at Greensboro this fall to study art education.
26. **K'Mari Spikes**, a student at **North Gaston High School**, has been awarded two scholarships: the E.R. and Lillian B. Dimmette Scholarship for \$3,000 per year and the George and Patricia Barnard Scholarship for \$5,000 per year. Both scholarships are renewable for up to four years.
27. **Page Primary** finished in the top three in the district for iReady math. In addition, the school's beautification committee received a grant from Keep Belmont Beautiful to add new trees and plants in the front circle driveway. Plus, CrossFix Ministries assisted with the planting of new greenery.
28. Members of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Beta Mu Zeta Chapter, donated physical education equipment to **Sherwood Elementary School**. Each grade level received a classroom container filled with sports balls, rings, racquets, and frisbees to promote physical activity and fitness. As part of a chapter project this year, the sorority also adopted **Sherwood** and **Woodhill Elementary School**. Their support included donating bottled water for field day, volunteering as proctors for end-of-grade testing, and providing small gifts to staff during Teacher Appreciation Week.

29. **Springfield Elementary** celebrated the opening of a brand-new playground, which was made possible by a generous \$40,000 donation from a local business. Board of Education members **Dot Cherry** and **A.M. Stephens** attended the special event along with Assistant Superintendent of Operations **Bessie Harvey**. Several first-grade students shared their writing about the new playground, and kindergartener **Elias Williams** was recognized for winning the “Name the Playground” contest with his creative entry, “Blue Bear-y.”
30. **James Dover** and **Rex Dover** of **South Point High School** won the state 3A doubles tennis championship at the Burlington Tennis Center.
31. **South Point High School** teacher **Bobbie Cavnar**, a former **Gaston County Schools** and N.C. Teacher of the Year 2016-2017, was named to Governor Josh Stein’s Teacher Advisory Committee.
32. **South Point High School** students **Patrick Blee** and **Gavin Smith** were named to the 2025 Academic All-American Team by the National High School Coaches Association.