

## BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

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**DEPARTMENT:** Communications/Public  
Information Department

**TOPIC: GOOD NEWS**

**FOR THE MONTH OF:** November 2024

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1. **Gaston County Schools** had a group of 13 school counselors and social workers go to Buncombe County Schools in Asheville to provide support as students returned to school following the devastating effects of Hurricane Helene.
2. **Gaston County Schools** held its annual Marching Band Fanfare on Saturday, November 2 at **Stuart W. Cramer High School**. The event featured performances by all 10 high school marching bands. For the first time, the **Highland School of Technology** band presented a field show performance.
3. Students from **Gaston County Schools** participated in the annual Gaston County Veterans Day parade, which was held this year in Dallas. The high school JROTC groups marched in the parade along with the all-county marching band that included students from all high schools.
4. The following teachers received Ron L. Ensley grants from the Gaston County Education Foundation: **Heather Griffin, McAdenville Elementary; Austin Ferguson, Anne Rymer, and Courtney Lawing, Brookside Elementary; Shelbie Setzer, W.C. Friday Middle; Melissa Chapple, Gaston Virtual Academy; Amanda Froehlich, W.A. Bess Elementary; Kristi McClellan, W.A. Bess Elementary; Rebecca Backus, Chelsea Harley, Erica Powell, and Amy Stinnett, New Hope Elementary; Alexandra Klein, Rankin Elementary; Victoria Kiser, Highland School of Technology; and Amy Thomson, Bessemer City High School.**
5. Pisgah ARP Church awarded a total of \$42,527 in education grants to 153 **Gaston County Schools** teachers from 15 schools.
6. The following schools participated in the annual Mount Holly Lantern Parade sponsored by Awaken Gallery: **H.H. Beam Elementary, Belmont Middle, Carr Elementary, John Chavis Middle, Stuart W. Cramer High School, Cramerton Middle, Grier Middle, Holbrook Middle, Hunter Huss High School, Mount Holly Middle, and Pinewood Elementary.**
7. A generous donor partnered with the Belmont Bookshop to provide a copy of “Kisses from Space” to every elementary school in **Gaston County Schools**. The donation is valued at more than \$500.
8. Redeemer Lutheran Church donated more than \$300 worth of feminine hygiene products for students in **Gaston County Schools**.

9. **Kim Lynch** and **Amber Spargo**, secondary curriculum facilitators for **Gaston County Schools**, presented at the national conference of the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE). Their session was titled “E.N.G.A.G.E. Your Class! Everybody Needs Games and Great Experiences in Class.”
10. **Gaston County Schools** had a group of more than 30 high school students attend the Aspiring Educators Summit at UNC-Charlotte. The program was intended for students who are interested in the education profession.
11. **Gaston County Schools’** international teachers hosted a “Cultural Extravaganza 2024” at Holbrook Middle School. The event featured performances, food, and festivities highlighting the 14 countries that are represented by the school district’s international teaching faculty.
12. The **Ashbrook High School** marching band earned several awards at the Providence Cup: first place in percussion, second place in visuals, first place in overall effect, second place in music, and first place in Class 2A.
13. **Ashbrook High School’s Jeremiah Pagan** and **JJ Gordon** were selected to play in the third annual Queen City Bowl football game on December 21.
14. **Ashbrook High School** cheerleader **Andi Ballard** was selected by Varsity Spirit to perform at Walt Disney World Resort during the Spring Break Performance.
15. The following **Belmont Middle School** students were selected for the North Carolina Music Educators Association’s middle school chorus: **Liam Bain, Isaac Bansen, Charles Marks, Bentley McGugan, Easton Messick, and Roman Olivares.**
16. **Bessemer City Central Elementary** partnered with **Bessemer City Primary, Bessemer City Middle, and Bessemer City High School** for a “Bee Kind Drive” and collected items for families and students in western North Carolina.
17. **Bessemer City Central Elementary** and **Bessemer City Primary** sponsored a Fall Festival and Bingo Night. Families from both schools enjoyed playing educational games and sharing a meal together.
18. **Bessemer City Primary** hosted the school’s annual Storybook Character Parade. Students dressed up as characters from their favorite books and had guest readers read books to them.
19. The **Cherryville High School** cheerleading team won first place in the small varsity division at the Davidson College Spirit Invitational. The team also took first place in both the small varsity traditional and small varsity gameday categories at the Universal Cheerleaders Association competition in Raleigh.
20. The following **Cramerton Middle School** students were selected for the North Carolina Music Educators Association’s middle school chorus: **Joseph Beam, Worth Helms, and Abby Yost.**

21. **Weston McGinnis** of **Stuart W. Cramer High School** was the October Young Exceptional Perspectives (YEP) North Carolina's Got Talent winner. He was selected by the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC) youth advisory team for his impressive card tricks.
22. **Keith Henson** of **Stuart W. Cramer High School** was selected for the North Carolina Music Educators Association's (NCMEA) high school honors chorus. In addition, **Maddie Moore** is one of only 10 students statewide to be chosen to perform in the North Carolina High School Singer/Songwriter Competition.
23. The Chick-fil-A Leadership Academy and Student Government at **Stuart W. Cramer High School** raised nearly \$5,000 in donations for individuals affected by Hurricane Helene. Student **Addison Royall** coordinated the collection drive.
24. The **Stuart W. Cramer High School** marching band received several awards at the Porter Ridge Pirate's Cove Classic, including first place for drum major, second place for music, second place for general effect, second place for color guard, third place for visual, and third place overall in Class 2A.
25. The **East Gaston High School** JROTC competed at the South Iredell Drill Meet, taking first place in color guard and unarmed drill and earning second place in armed drill, inspection, and overall. In addition, the JROTC color guard presented the colors and the chorus sang the national anthem at the key ceremony for Operation Homefront, which is a program in conjunction with Meritage Homes where veterans are able to receive a home debt-free.
26. The **East Gaston High School** JROTC visited the Stanley Total Living Center to spend time talking to veterans, listening to their stories, and presenting them with gifts and notes to show appreciation for their service.
27. **Brandon Taylor**, the band director at **East Gaston High School** and the 2024-2025 Gaston County Teacher of the Year, was chosen as a semi-finalist in the Southwest Region Teacher of the Year competition.
28. **Forestview High School's Cass Phillips** was selected to play in the third annual Queen City Bowl football game on December 21.
29. The **Forestview High School** band earned second place overall in Class 2A at the Providence Cup. Additionally, the band won second place in effect, color guard, and percussion.
30. Students in **Erika McHenry's** Health Science II class at **Forestview High School** have completed the Prevent Blindness of North Carolina training certification, enabling them to assist **Gaston County Schools'** nurses in administering annual vision screenings to third and fifth graders. The certification is valid for two years and aims at the early recognition and intervention of vision problems in children. Students helped with vision screenings at **Belmont Central, North Belmont, W.A. Bess, New Hope, and Robinson** elementary schools.

31. **Andrew Taylor** of **Forestview High School** was selected as the overall winner at the local level in the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Good Citizen contest. His essay, along with other supporting materials, will advance to the district competition with the goal of progressing to the state and national levels.
32. The **Gaston Early College High School** held a “Grade A Eight-Peat” celebration to highlight the school’s achievement of earning an A school performance grade for the eighth consecutive year.
33. **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, which was named a 2024 North Carolina STEM School of Distinction, enjoyed a visit by the current North Carolina Teacher of the Year Heather Smith, an eighth-grade math teacher in Haywood County Schools. Smith, who strongly believes in connecting what is taught to real-life applications, was able to see how Hawks Nest focuses on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) education through engaging lessons and activities and learn how teachers bring STEAM to life for students.
34. **Hunter Huss High School** band director **Heaven Watson-Weary** was featured in a segment on WBTV about overcoming breast cancer and receiving support from her students and colleagues while undergoing treatment.
35. **Kiser Elementary** received a \$2,500 donation from Blum, Inc. to build a makerspace in the media center.
36. **Kiser Elementary** students collected more than 2,000 items for the Webb Street School “One Can Make A Difference” food pantry.
37. Volunteers from First ARP Church and Clean Rite Pressure Washing planted flowers, cleaned, and pressure washed at **Lingerfeldt Elementary** to help beautify the school campus.
38. **Julia Conger**, a fifth-grade teacher at **New Hope Elementary**, was featured in a “Newsweek” article about using gymnastics to reward good behavior in class.
39. The **North Gaston High School** marching band took home multiple awards at the Fred T. Ford competition: second place in music, second in marching, first in general effect, second in percussion, first in color guard, first in drum major, and second in band. At the East Burke competition, the band won first place in drum major, second in percussion, second in color guard, second in music, second in general effect, and second in band along with a superior rating.
40. **North Gaston High School** students **Ruby Ruiz-Vargas** (clarinet), **Ronald Tovilla-Pablo** (alto saxophone), and **Laylah Lindsay** (trumpet) were selected for the Winthrop University Invitational Band Clinic.
41. **North Gaston High School’s Nysir Thomas** was selected to play in the third annual Queen City Bowl football game on December 21.

42. The **Page Primary** book fair raised more than \$2,300 for the media center. Additionally, families donated books valued at \$894.16 to support classroom teachers.
43. The **Sherwood Elementary** PTO, along with volunteers from United Way of Gaston County and SouthState Bank, created an outdoor learning space at the school.
44. **South Point High School's Chanyce Ford** was selected to play in the third annual Queen City Bowl football game on December 21.
45. The **South Point High School** girls' golf team won the 3A team state championship at Longleaf Golf and Family Club in Southern Pines. In addition, junior **Madison Pruden** placed fifth in the individual state championship.
46. The **South Point High School** marching band earned several awards in Class 1A, including placing second overall in their class. The band's drum major took first place while the percussion and color guard sections both earned second place. The band also placed second in general effect and visual performance, and third in music performance.
47. The following **Stanley Middle School** students were selected for the North Carolina Music Educators Association's middle school chorus: **Ada Buchanon, Kaylee Handsel, Athena Johnson, and Alaina Lammie.**
48. **Stanley Middle School** chorus teacher **Nyi Myin** received the Outstanding Emerging Choral Educator Award at the North Carolina American Choral Directors Association Conference.
49. **Tryon Elementary School** established the first chapter of the National Elementary Honor Society in **Gaston County Schools**. Additionally, the school has a newly-installed, nationally-recognized student council and a nationally-registered AAA Safety Patrol.