

BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

DEPARTMENT: Communications/Public
Information Department

TOPIC: GOOD NEWS

FOR THE MONTH OF: June 2025

1. **Gaston County Schools** had 28 students in the Class of 2025 to earn valedictorian or salutatorian honors. The students were recognized during high school graduation for their commitment to academic excellence.
2. The **Gaston County Schools** Class of 2025 was awarded more than \$35 million in scholarships.
3. **Gaston County Schools** conducted its annual retirement celebration on June 5 at CaroMont Health Park. More than 100 retirees and guests enjoyed food, fellowship, and the Gastonia Ghost Peppers baseball game. It was a casual and relaxing atmosphere to recognize this year's retirees and thank them for their dedication and service.
4. For the third consecutive year, **Gaston County Schools** received the Golden Eagle Award from the United Way of Gaston County for having the highest fundraising total of any business/organization participating in the 2024-2025 campaign. Nearly \$132,000 (a record amount) was raised by our schools and central level departments. The funds will go toward the United Way's efforts to support programs related to three areas: education, health and wellness, and financial stability.
5. **Gaston County Schools** held a Career Signing Day program for nine seniors to sign a "letter of intent" and accept a job offer with one of five companies. The following students were recognized during the program: **Blake Stewart, North Gaston High School**, GSM Services; **Cameron Phelps, Bessemer City High School**, GSM Services; **Felipe Acosta Velazquez, Stuart W. Cramer High School**, GSM Services; **Devin Patterson, Ashbrook High School**, Dixon Quick Coupling; **Brandon Pagan, Ashbrook High School**, Dixon Quick Coupling; **William Bagent, North Gaston High School**, Webb Metals Recycling; **Matthew York, East Gaston High School**; MyConstruction; **Mayson Maag, Hunter Huss High School**, Blum; and **Ayden Stines, North Gaston High School**, Blum.
6. The **Gaston County Schools** Academic Services Department coordinated a two-day leadership conference for principals and assistant principals on June 4-5 at **Forestview High School**. The professional development centered around academic performance and student proficiency for the 2025-2026 year. The sessions were well-planned, engaging, and beneficial, and they were designed to complement the "Lights, Camera, ACTION" theme with emphasis on taking action in the new school year to improve student achievement.

7. **Josh Bromley**, principal at **Belmont Middle School**, was selected as the GCAEOP (Gaston County Association of Educational Office Professionals) Administrator of the Year, and **Cherri Johnston**, data manager at **Belmont Middle School**, was selected as the GCAEOP Educational Office Professional of the Year. GCAEOP also presented its annual scholarships to **Kushi Patel** of **Highland School of Technology** and **Jayden Surratt** of **South Point High School**.
8. The recipients of the 2024-2025 Tracy Lea Calhoun Award are **David Hedgepath** from **North Gaston High School**, **Randy Helms** from **Belmont Middle School**, **Ericka Gains** from **Belmont Central Elementary**, and **Terry Sherrill** from **Webb Street School**. The award is given each year to bus drivers who go beyond expectations and demonstrate a commitment to school bus safety.
9. The following students have been awarded the State Employees' Credit Union "People Helping People" Scholarship valued at \$10,000: **Elliott Stone**, **Gaston Early College High School**; **Abigail Fallin**, **Highland School of Technology**; **Carson Reed**, **Cherryville High School**; **Rachel Tolbert**, **South Point High School**; **Carley Carpenter**, **Stuart W. Cramer High School**; and **Daniel Denton**, **Lilly Friday**, and **Cameron Cannon**, all from **Forestview High School**.
10. The following students are recipients of scholarships presented by the Community Foundation of Gaston County: **Cadee Dobbins**, **Cherryville High School**, Alaina N. Abernathy Scholarship Clyde and Dezaree Brackett Family Scholarship and William and Hazel Education Scholarship; **K'mari Spikes**, **North Gaston High School**, George and Patricia Barnard Scholarship; **Jorel Breeden**, **Highland School of Technology**, George and Patricia Barnard Scholarship; **Khusi Patel**, **Highland School of Technology**, Bancroft Poston Scholarship and Honorable Ralph C. Gingles, Jr. Scholarship; **Evelyn Gutierrez Lira**, **Gaston Early College High School of Medical Sciences**, Bess Chapel UMC/Brad Baxter Scholarship and Daniel C. Ragan Scholarship; **Macie Bridgeman**, **South Point High School**, Alfred W. Bohanan Scholarship; **Cameron Browning**, **Gaston Early College High School**, Tom Browne Scholarship; **Kwaaba Eshun**, **Forestview High School**, Mary Armstrong Coffey Scholarship; **Avery Beam**, **Cherryville High School**, Van and Vergie Costner Memorial Scholarship; **Charlie Price**, **South Point High School**, Perry Fewell Honorary Leadership Scholarship; **Carli Phillips**, Max J. Fowler Scholarship; **John-Thomas McQuay**, **South Point High School**, Pat E. Haney Scholarship; **Luke Denton**, **Forestview High School**, John Hunsucker Memorial Scholarship; **Reegan Racz**, **Highland School of Technology**, Dr. William and Karen Hunter Science Scholarship; **Piper Summey**, **Abigail Rink**, and **Ellory Lamp** of **Stuart W. Cramer High School**, Maxine Porch Scholarship; **Luna Peterkin**, **Highland School of Technology**, Mildred J. Sadler Scholarship; **James Bowen**, **South Point High School**, Theodore Drury Stowe Science and Technology Scholarship; and **Vidhi Patel**, **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences**, John E. Willoughby Scholarship.
11. Representatives from EPI (Educational Partners International) were at **Forestview High School** recently to record a video feature about **John Ramos**, who won the **Gaston County Schools Teacher of the Year** award for 2025-2026.

12. **John Ramos** of **Forestview High School**, the **Gaston County Schools** Teacher of the Year for 2025-2026, received a new Kia K4 from Courage Kia in Gastonia. This is the third consecutive year that Courage Kia has provided a vehicle lease agreement to the county-level Teacher of the Year winner.
13. All students in the Nursing Fundamentals program at **Forestview High School** passed both the written and skills exams to earn certification as a Nurse Aide I in North Carolina.
14. **Darryl Thompson**, Engineering and Graphics Academy coordinator at **Highland School of Technology**, was named the 2025 Technology Student Association (TSA) Chapter Advisor of the Year.
15. **Peter Jones** and **Jeanette Rodillas**, teachers at **North Gaston High School**, have been named ExploreLearning Gizmos Teacher Leaders for **Gaston County Schools** for the 2024-25 school year. In addition, Jones was recognized as a Top Teacher, and North Gaston High School earned the distinguished honor of being named one of the Top Schools for outstanding STEM instruction and innovative use of Gizmos.
16. For the third consecutive year, all 21 varsity athletic teams at **South Point High School** earned “Scholar-Athlete” team honors from the North Carolina High School Athletic Association. In addition, South Point won the Wells Fargo Cup for the Big South 3A Conference for the 2024-2025 school year. This marks the sixth time in the past eight years the school has received the award, which recognizes overall athletic success across all varsity sports.
17. The **South Point High School** boys’ tennis team won its second consecutive 3A dual championship and finished the season with a 19-1 record. **Brandon Cunningham** earned MVP honors for the Dual Team Championships, and **Asher Dover** was named a 2025 N.C. Farm Bureau Sportsmanship Award winner.
18. The **South Point High School** girls’ soccer team won the western regionals championship and secured their third consecutive trip to the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) 3A state championship. The team finished the season as Big South 3A Conference champions with a record of 21-4-2, despite a loss in the state championship to Western Alamance. Junior **Taylor Culbertson** was honored before the game as the NCHSAA Sportsmanship Award winner. Additionally, junior **Grace Maynard** was named to the North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association (NCSCA) 3A all-state team.
19. **Stanley Middle School** competed in the North Carolina Envirothon in May at Cedarock Park in Burlington. For the second year in a row, **Stanley Middle School** was the highest-scoring public school team in the state at the middle school level. The school’s “Crazy Crawdads” team placed first in the Current Environmental Issue category and fifth overall. The “Antarctic Armadillos” team finished eighth, and “The Smarties” team placed tenth.

20. **Stuart Cramer High School**'s yearbook, *The Procella*, has been honored for its outstanding design and inclusivity by being featured in the Jostens Look Book 2025, which showcases top yearbooks from across the country. The yearbook was created by students **Sontee Stowe, Holly Sherbert, Ava Mercer, Abigail Rink, and Amyrrah Hodge**, with guidance from their adviser, **Kristie Smith**.
21. **Rylee Jordan** of **Tryon Elementary School** was recognized for reading 55 books in two months as part of the "Flash A Light on Literacy" reading program. She read the most books and earned a special ride in a Tryonota Fire Department fire truck. In addition, the fourth grade won a pizza party for reading the most books; the students read a total of 521 books.