

BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

DEPARTMENT: Communications/Public
Information Department

TOPIC: GOOD NEWS

FOR THE MONTH OF: March 2025

1. **New Hope Elementary School** and **Cramerton Middle School** were the overall winners at the annual RoboGASTON competition. Other school winners were **Belmont Central Elementary** and **Tryon Elementary** earned first and second place, respectively, in the Team Work category for elementary schools. In the middle school division, **Cramerton Middle School** took first place, followed by **Stanley Middle School** in second. For Project Presentation, **New Hope Elementary School** claimed first place with **McAdenville Elementary School** finishing second. **Mount Holly Middle School** secured first place in the middle school category while **W.C. Friday Middle School** placed second. In Robot Performance, **Rankin Elementary School** earned first place, and **Sadler Elementary School** took second. **Grier Middle School** captured first place in the middle school category with **Belmont Middle School** finishing second. Additional awards included the Coach's Award presented to **Matthew Woods** of **Belmont Middle School**; the Spirit Award given to **Lowell Elementary**; the Innovative Team Name award earned by the **W.A. Bess Elementary** Sea Dogs; and the Gracious Professionalism award, which went to **Pinewood Elementary**.
2. Gaston College, in collaboration with the Gaston County Art Guild, hosted the Senior Art Show at the Jeanne Rauch Art Gallery. Merit awards were presented to **Janaiya Glenn** of **Bessemer City High School**, **Ellory Lamp** of **Stuart W. Cramer High School**, and **Amaiya Endsley** of **Bessemer City High School**. Honorable mentions were awarded to **Jasany Johnson** and **Carolina Lara-Terrones**, both from **East Gaston High School**. **Carolina Lara-Terrones** was recognized twice for her outstanding work. **John Gonzalez-Ochoa** of **Hunter Huss High School** received the prestigious Gaston County Art Guild Award.
3. The **Gaston County Schools** Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Department hosted the middle school Battle of the Books and Math Elite competitions. In the Battle of the Books competition, **Belmont Middle School** placed first followed by **W.C. Friday Middle School** in second and **Cramerton Middle School** in third. In the Math Elite competition, **Cramerton Middle School** took first place followed by **Belmont Middle School** in second and **Southwest Middle School** in third.
4. The **Gaston County Schools** Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Department hosted the high school Battle of the Books competition on February 28. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** took first place followed by **Gaston Early College High School** in second.

5. The following students have advanced to the North Carolina Science and Engineering Fair, with virtual judging on March 25 and in-person judging on March 29 based on their performance at the UNC-Charlotte Region VI Science and Engineering Fair. In the Elementary Engineering and Technology category at the regional competition, **Braxton Allen, Belmont Central Elementary**, first place, while **Henry Markwith** from **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy** earned third place. **Sawyer Ford** from **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy** took first place in Elementary Physics and Mathematics at the regionals. In Junior Biological Sciences A, **Connor Abernathy, Marshall Deal, and Walter Thompson** from **Stanley Middle School** placed second, and **Emma McGinnis** of **Belmont Middle School** placed second in the Chemistry category. Senior Biological Sciences B saw **Olive Campbell, Charlotte Hearne, and Laurel Campbell** from **Gaston Early College High School** also earning second place. **Anderson Hammon, Karson McDonald, and Schafer Nunn** from **McAdenville Elementary** placed third in Elementary Biological Sciences while **Luisanna Suarez** from **Pinewood Elementary** earned third place in Elementary Chemistry. **Evelyn Daly** from **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy** took third place in Elementary Earth and Environmental Sciences. In Junior Earth and Environmental Sciences, **Chance Barron, Chandler Jordan, and Christian Rivera-Lopez** from **Stanley Middle School** placed fourth. **Michael Borum Gray** from **East Gaston High School** earned fourth place in Senior Biological Sciences A, and **Jayden Sullivan** and **Caiden Buckner** from **Gaston Early College High School** placed fourth in Senior Engineering at the regional competition.
6. The following students received recognition at the UNC-Charlotte Region VI Science and Engineering Fair: **Avery Anderson, Annsley Schultheis** and **Becka Anderson** of **Stanley Middle School** along with **Sofia Jimenez, Inari Joseph, and Hayden Trinh** of **Gaston Early College High School** received the American Chemical Society Award. **Chance Barron, Chandler Jordan, and Christina Rivera-Lopez** from **Stanley Middle School** received the Environmental Protection Agency Award while **Reese Sexton** from **East Gaston High School** was honored with the Society for In Vitro Biology Award. Both awards were presented by the ISEF Regional Award Organization. Additionally, **Aidan Wood** of **Belmont Middle School** earned the Thermo Fisher Scientific Junior Innovators Challenge Award.
7. The following students received honorable mention at the UNC-Charlotte Region VI Science and Engineering Fair: **River Adams** and **Will McClean** of **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy** in Elementary Biological Sciences; **Marissa Lynn** of **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy** in Elementary Chemistry; **Blythe Sipe** of **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy** in Elementary Earth and Environmental Sciences; **Jericho Martin** of **Pleasant Ridge Elementary** in Elementary Physics and Mathematics; and **McKinley Ward** and **Mason Back** of **John Chavis Middle School** in Junior Physics.
8. The following schools participated in the Gaston County Special Olympics “polar plunge” and raised the following amounts: **Mount Holly Middle**, \$3,127.46; **Gardner Park Elementary**, \$1,805; **H.H. Beam Elementary**, \$330; **Sherwood Elementary**, \$250; **Robinson Elementary**, \$150; and **Ashbrook High School**, \$90.

9. **Gaston County Schools** held the annual Middle School Cheer Showcase at **North Gaston High School** on February 28. The following schools received recognition: **Holbrook Middle**, first place; **Stanley Middle**, second place; and a tie for third place between **Belmont Middle School** and **Cramerton Middle School**.
10. Students, teachers, and staff in **Gaston County Schools** observed “Read Across America Day” the week of March 3 with a variety of special activities. The event coincided with Dr. Seuss’ birthday.
11. The **Ashbrook High School** JROTC program has had a busy and successful season with several new initiatives and community engagements. The inaugural drone team has launched with 10 drones requiring coding and designed for racing. The newly-formed Raider team recently competed in their first event at Fort Mill High School. More than 20 cadets volunteered at RoboGASTON, assisting with parking and cleanup. The cadets have also collected more than 1,000 bottles of Gatorade and cans of soup for the ongoing Cancer Services drive. Flight Bravo cadets are receiving ground school instruction from a Certified Flight Instructor (CFI), and the program is currently fundraising to purchase an FAA-approved flight simulator to log flight and instrument hours. In addition to community service, the cadets presented a flag to a local veteran and Ashbrook alumnus and proudly marched in the Veterans Day Parade.
12. Eight fourth- and fifth-grade students from **H.H. Beam Elementary** showcased their classroom research during the Rotary Club of Gastonia’s midday meeting. Their presentation titled “The Magic of H.H. Beam” highlighted projects they have been working on throughout the school year.
13. **H.H. Beam Elementary** recently launched its “Bulldog Pantry,” a service that provides food items to support school families in need.
14. **Belmont Central Elementary** fourth-grader **Adalyn Kolbash** organized a sock donation drive for the Salvation Army and worked with school counselor **Francina Newby** to promote the drive by creating flyers and a poster.
15. The **Belmont Middle School’s** seventh and eighth grade band earned a superior rating at the Music Performance Adjudication (MPA). In addition, the eighth grade band and chorus will perform at the Disney Imagination Workshop.
16. **Bessemer City Central Elementary** highlighted the creative talents of its students with a breakfast-themed art show. With help from art teacher **Hillary Koon**, fifth graders made ceramic cereal bowls filled with handmade cereal and clay pancake platters. Fourth graders created clay donuts while third graders made three-dimensional coffee mugs. The event also featured a pancake dinner and an iced coffee bar for everyone to enjoy.
17. **Cherryville High School** student **Lillie Colson** and **Lila St. Romain** from **Gaston Early College High School** were chosen to perform in the North Carolina Western Regional Orchestra at Appalachian State University.

18. The **Cramerton Middle School** eighth grade band received a superior rating at the Music Performance Adjudication (MPA).
19. **Logan Watkins**, a senior at **Stuart W. Cramer High School**, was awarded the prestigious Elizabeth McRae Scholarship to attend Lees-McRae University. The highly-competitive and generous scholarship covers full tuition for four years of undergraduate study.
20. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** junior **Bentley Sly** won his third consecutive individual wrestling 3A state championship in the 144-pound weight class.
21. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** sophomore **Jakalri Galvin** earned third place in the boys' long jump competition at the N.C. High School Athletic Association 3A Indoor Track and Field Championship.
22. **East Gaston High School** junior **Brayden Smith** placed third in the 2A individual state wrestling championship in the 157-pound weight class.
23. The **W.C. Friday Middle School** band received a superior rating at the Music Performance Adjudication (MPA).
24. **Alex Cornwell**, a student at **Highland School of Technology**, earned first chair in the all-state band for snare drum and general percussion.
25. The **Hunter Huss High School** boys basketball team advanced to the 3A Western Regionals, but fell short against Ben L. Smith High School. **Jaleel Smith** led the Huskies with 19 points and 15 rebounds while **Antonio Worthy** and **Ziayir Phillips** contributed 14 and 10 points, respectively.
26. **New Hope Elementary** raised a record-breaking \$21,240.62 for the American Heart Association as part of the Kids Heart Challenge. Students who raised more than \$250 were able to participate in a dodgeball game with teachers.
27. **North Gaston High School** students **Aaliyah Love** and **Amara Howard** were chosen as delegates to the N.C. Youth Legislative Assembly, which is a mock legislative session where high school students voice their opinions and vote on issues concerning local, state, and national government.
28. **North Gaston High School** junior **Barrett Stroud** enlisted in the National Guard and will serve while attending North Gaston's Leadership Academy as a senior next year.
29. Three **North Gaston High School** seniors earned top-five finishes at the 3A individual state wrestling championship. **James Weaver** placed fifth in the 150-pound weight class, **Dewayne Davis** finished fourth in the 215-pound division, and **Tripp Norwood** secured fifth place in the 165-pound class.
30. **Robinson Elementary** principal **William Winston** agreed to camp out on the school's roof after the students and staff raised \$10,000 during the PTO fun run.

31. The Farm Bureau in Dallas awarded a \$4,740 grant to **Will Washington**, a junior at **Forestview High School**, for his Eagle Scout project, which includes building four 12x8 greenhouses and several raised beds at **Robinson Elementary**. Elementary science curriculum facilitator **Dr. Laura Clawson** outlined the K-5 science and social studies standards and explained how gardening supports the curriculum.
32. **South Point High School** senior **Rachel Tolbert** placed third place in the girls' 500-meter event at the N.C. High School Athletic Association 3A Indoor Track and Field Championship.
33. **South Point High School** freshman **Ammon Scott** placed fifth in the 3A individual state wrestling championship in the 144-pound weight class.
34. **Woodhill Elementary**, in partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina and Atrium Health, provided groceries, including dry goods, chicken drumsticks, fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, bread, and juices, to families in need. More than 230 vehicles went through the drive-thru food pickup, which was held for a second time this school year.