

BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

DEPARTMENT: Communications/Public
Information Department

TOPIC: GOOD NEWS

FOR THE MONTH OF: February 2023

1. **Rex Dover** of **Belmont Middle School** won the **Gaston County Schools** Spelling Bee, which was held on February 1 at **Ashbrook High School**. He will compete in March at the Carolina Panthers Spelling Bee presented by Bank of America. The top four finishers in the regional bee will receive invitations to advance to the Scripps National Spelling Bee. **Lawrence Martin** of **Pleasant Ridge Elementary** was the district runner-up.
2. The following students placed in the UNC-Charlotte Region 6 Science and Engineering Fair: **Samuel Diamond**, **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, engineering and technology, first place; **Abby Yost**, **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, physics and math, first place; **Morgan Barnill** and **Eason Hobbs**, **W.A. Bess Elementary**, chemistry, honorable mention; **Aniston Johnson** and **Berkley Livingston**, **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, earth and environmental science, honorable mention; **Samantha Frake**, **Stanley Middle**, engineering; first place; **Joseph Ramey**, **Cramerton Middle**, technology, second place; **Brookly Stroupe**, **Stanley Middle**, physics, honorable mention; **Dylan Grimes**, **Gaston Early College High**; physics, first place; **Lydia Walls**, **East Gaston High School**, biology, second place; **Jesmarie Gonzalez** and **Zoey Adams**, **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences**, biology, fourth place; **Cameron Browning** and **Dalton Scism**, **Gaston Early College High School**, engineering, fourth place; and **Kelly Smith**, **Stuart W. Cramer High School**, chemistry, fourth place. In addition, the following students received special awards: **James Gunter**, **Forestview High School**, National Geographic and NC One Water; **Sariah Alege**, **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences**, Association for Women Geoscientists; **Bubacarr Jatta**, **Shanyae Justice**, and **Jasmine Sanders**, **Gaston Early College High**, Society for In Vitro Biology, and **Lizzy Jane Ross**, **Stanley Middle**, Lemelson Early Inventor. **Samantha Franke** of **Stanley Middle School** received a special nomination for Thermo Fisher Scientific Junior Innovators Challenge.
3. **Lowell Elementary** (partnered with Dominion Energy) won the “Are You Smarter Than a Gaston County Fifth Grader?” competition. **W.A. Bess Elementary** earned second place, and **McAdenville Elementary** took third place. Sponsored by the Gaston County Education Foundation, “Are You Smarter” is a popular annual event that pairs businesses and organizations with elementary schools in a fun game show format. Proceeds go toward the Ron L. Ensley grants for teachers to fund innovative classroom lessons and projects.
4. For the 2022-2023 school year, **Gaston County Schools** employees from schools and central level departments contributed approximately \$90,000 to the United Way to help fund important programs in Gaston County.

5. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** hosted the South Central All-District Band Clinic, which featured more than 300 outstanding student musicians from across the Charlotte region. The following students from **Gaston County Schools** were chosen for the all-district band: **Cyrus Baltimore** and **Mackenzie Hart** of **Stanley Middle**; **Annabelle Radford** of **Cramerton Middle**; **Hannah Lineberger**, **Ada Hartge**, and **Carson Phillips** of **Belmont Middle**; **Ayden Kisby-Jones**, **Khalil Houston**, **Catherine Putnam**, and **Danny Major** of **W.C. Friday Middle**; **Ruby Ruiz** of **North Gaston High School**; **Jerry Bradley**, **Anakin Booth**, and **Alexa Laycock** of **South Point High School**; **Mattie Grace Branham**, **Hayden Dillard**, and **Jake Perryman** of **East Gaston High School**; and **Eben Mathis** of **Forestview High School**.
6. **Gaston County Schools** had more than 150 students participate in the all-county high school band clinic on February 10-11 at **Ashbrook High School**. Students were chosen for the band clinic through an audition process. **Kameron Radford** from **Stuart W. Cramer High School** conducted the symphonic band, and Dr. Hunter Kopczynski from the UNC-Charlotte conducted the wind ensemble. **Ashbrook High School** band director **Josh Westbrook** oversaw the event with help from the band directors from other Gaston County high schools.
7. The “Do the Right Thing” award winners for February are **Kaitlyn Dockery**, **W.A. Bess Elementary**; **La’Darius Pratt**, **Lowell Elementary**; **Azriel Adams**, **Southwest Middle**; and **Autumn Queen**, **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences**.
8. **Gaston County Schools** was honored during the N.C. School Public Relations Association’s Blue Ribbon Awards ceremony. The district received awards in the writing, photography, and special events and programs categories for excellence in school public relations and communications.
9. The following student-athletes signed a National Letter of Intent to play college sports: **Carmelo Bess**, **Ashbrook High School**, N.C. Wesleyan; **Russell Guinn**, **Ashbrook High School**; N.C. Wesleyan; **Omarien Hall**, **Ashbrook High School**, N.C. Wesleyan; **Elijah Haynes**, **Ashbrook High School**, Winston-Salem State University; **Jason Nichols**, **Ashbrook High School**, N.C. Wesleyan; **J’vontre Duff**, **Bessemer City High School**, N.C. Wesleyan; **Jameer Holmes**, **Bessemer City High School**, N.C. Wesleyan; **Nate Aguilar**, **Forestview High School**, Ferrum College; **Lilly Harmon**, **Forestview High School**, Colby College; **Parker Hope**, **Forestview High School**, Erskine College; **Kenneth Odugba**, **Forestview High School**, Presbyterian College; **Kamari Sheppard**, **Highland School of Technology**, N.C. Wesleyan; **James Taylor**, **Hunter Huss High School**, Winston-Salem State University; **Justin Ross**, **Hunter Huss High School**, U.S. Naval Academy; **Mehan Towery**, **North Gaston High School**, Wofford College; **Ashton Pope**, **North Gaston High School**, Belmont Abbey College; **Madison Sipe**, **North Gaston High School**; Patrick and Henry Junior College; **Zachary Sigmon**, **North Gaston High School**, Gardner-Webb University; **Davis Adcock**, **South Point High School**, Gardner-Webb University; **Will Ross**, **South Point High School**, U.S. Naval Academy; and **Micah Stowe**, **South Point High School**; Averett University.

10. **John Chavis Middle, Cramerton Middle, W.C. Friday Middle, Grier Middle, and Mount Holly Middle School** held a basketball tournament on February 10 at Mount Holly Middle School. Students in the special adaptive classroom curriculum participated in the United Champion Middle School Special Olympics tournament, and each middle school had students who served as “coaches” for the event.
11. Fifth grade students at **W.A. Bess Elementary, Bessemer City Central Elementary, and Lingerfeldt Elementary** participated in a career awareness program sponsored by the Gaston County Schools Career and Technical Education Department. The program focused on such areas as health sciences and electrical technology/engineering.
12. Students at the following elementary schools celebrated the 100th day of school by dressing as centenarians: **W.A. Bess, Carr, Catawba Heights, Costner, Gardner Park, Pinewood, and Sherwood.**
13. **Ashbrook High School** junior **Camryn Massey** won the 3A indoor track and field state Championship in the girls shot put competition, and **Alexis Willis** of **Stuart W. Cramer High School** claimed the 3A state title in the long jump and triple jump events.
14. **Ashbrook High School** nurse **Rebecca Harris** was named the **Gaston County Schools** Nurse of the Year.
15. **Bessemer City Primary** social worker **Tabatha Lynch** was named the **Gaston County Schools** Social Worker of the Year.
16. **Bessemer City High School** senior **Janiya Adams** broke the school’s all-time basketball scoring record for girls basketball. In addition, senior **Randall Pettus** became the all-time leading scorer in basketball for the school.
17. **Bessemer City High School** student **Keyshawn Adams** scored the 1,000th point of his basketball career.
18. The **Carr Elementary** cafeteria staff earned a 100 percent sanitation rating.
19. **Cherryville High School** and **East Gaston High School** won awards at the North Carolina Cheerleading Coaches Association state championship. **Cherryville** earned first place in the Varsity Game Day D2 and Small Varsity D2 categories, and **East Gaston** captured first place in Large Varsity D2 category.
20. **Cramerton Middle School** students **Hannah Langley, Sanaa Swain, Amy McPherson, and Ramona Rice** received recognition during the Mid-Carolina Scholastic Art and Writing Awards virtual ceremony. Their artwork and others will be on display at the Mint Museum in Uptown Charlotte from March 17 until April 23. Langley and Swain will have their Gold Key artwork judged in the national competition. In addition, Langley’s artwork has been selected to appear on a local billboard as part of an agreement with Adams Advertising.

21. **East Gaston High School** junior **Trenton Sherrill** scored the 1,000th point of his basketball career.
22. **East Gaston High School** teacher **Nikki Akins** was selected by **Gaston County Schools** to participate in the next cohort of the Principal Fellows program at UNC-Charlotte.
23. **East Gaston High School** counselor **Jordan Johnson** was named the **Gaston County Schools** Counselor of the Year.
24. The **East Gaston High School** cheerleaders performed one of their game-day routines during a recent Davidson College men's basketball game.
25. **East Gaston High School** student **Clayton Harper** placed third in the one-meter dive at the 1A/2A state swimming championship, and **Jake Simpson** finished third in the 100-yard butterfly.
26. The **Forestview High School** 200-yard medley relay team of **Graham Kines, Andrew Taylor, Tristan Peyton, and Beckett Tabor** placed fourth in the 3A swimming state championship. In addition, Peyton finished third in the 200-yard individual medley and third in the 100-yard backstroke.
27. Bimbo Bakery employees volunteered their time to paint the **Gardner Park Elementary** media center. The company also donated technology, flexible seating, and other items.
28. **Gardner Park Elementary** held its annual Cinderella Valentine's Ball on Tuesday, February 14. The event featured kindergarten students wearing Valentine outfits and enjoying music and a time of fellowship.
29. In partnership with Keep Gastonia Beautiful, **Gaston Early College High School** students created snowmen decorations out of old fence posts. The fence posts were sold for a donation of five dollars and proceeds benefited the Highland Community Garden.
30. **Gaston Early College** senior **Emma Quick** received an honorable mention in the Mid-Carolina Scholastic Art and Writing Awards for her piece titled "Not Your Pest!"
31. **Gaston Virtual Academy** held a "I Love CTE Career Cafe" program for middle school students to learn about the opportunities available to them in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) fields of agriculture, foods, and natural resources; education and training; government and public administration; hospitality and tourism; human services; arts, audio, and video technology; and communications.
32. **Gaston Virtual Academy** science teacher **Melissa Holland** was chosen to be a judge at the UNC-Charlotte Region 6 Science and Engineering Fair. She judged the earth and environmental science category for high schools and the physics and math category for elementary schools.
33. In partnership with the Gaston County Cooperative Extension, **Grier Middle School** students are learning how to grow vegetables such as romaine lettuce and spinach.

34. **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy** received a donation in the amount of \$10,000 from Daimler and The Blackbaud Giving Fund that will be used to purchase robotics.
35. **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy** welcomed Miss Gaston County Erin Emiroglu as a special guest for the “One School, One Book” assembly that celebrated the students reading a book about toys and then creating their own toys.
36. **Highland School of Technology** senior Josie Houchard was named a 2023 U.S. Presidential Scholars semifinalist. She was nominated for her academic success in the engineering program at Highland and is one of five students in the state selected as a candidate for the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program for her accomplishments in Career and Technical Education.
37. **Highland School of Technology** student **Samantha Saltiel** received an honorable mention in the Mid-Carolina Scholastic Art and Writing Awards for her painting titled “I Miss You, Ms. Susan.”
38. **North Gaston High School** received a grant to use remote telescopes in Chile and Canary Islands for a full year, making it the only school in Gaston County to have access to both the Northern and Southern Hemisphere skies through professional observatories. In their astronomy and science classes, students will be able to observe the skies in the same way a professional astronomer would. Teacher **Milton Villarroel Navajas** arranged the opportunity for teachers and students to participate in the learning and leadership experience.
39. **North Belmont Elementary** celebrated its 100th anniversary of serving the North Belmont community as a public elementary school. The community was invited to visit the school for a special program on February 16 and reminisce about its history.
40. To help celebrate Black History Month, members of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority conducted rap sessions for fourth and fifth grade students at **Sherwood Elementary**. The sessions focused on the importance of setting goals. In addition, actress and singer Maria Howell, a graduate of **Hunter Huss High School**, visited with third grade students, and a children’s puppeteer conducted a program for students in grades K-2.
41. **South Point High School football** coach **Adam Hodge** will serve as an assistant for the N.C. Coaches Association’s 2023-2024 all-star football game.
42. **South Point High School** senior **Joshua Crowder** was accepted to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point.
43. **South Point High School** senior **Davis Adcock** finished second in the 100-yard backstroke and third in the 50-yard freestyle at the 3A state swimming championship.
44. **Warlick Academy** received a grant from the Truliant Foundation in the amount of \$5,000 for the “Project Patriot Patch” program. The grant was written by staff members **Anderson Mayes, Vakezia Williams, and Evan Reid**.