

BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

DEPARTMENT: Communications/Public
Information Department

TOPIC: GOOD NEWS

FOR THE MONTH OF: July-August 2024

1. **Gaston County Schools** received the prestigious Golden Eagle Award from the United Way of Gaston County for having the highest fundraising total among all contributing businesses and organizations. The award recognizes the school district's outstanding participation in the United Way's annual fundraising campaign, contributing nearly \$115,000 for the 2023-2024 school year. In addition, **Valerie Yatko**, director of business partnerships who coordinates the school district's fundraising efforts, received the Campaign Coordinator of the Year Award.
2. **Gaston County Schools** hosted a "pack-a-thon" where personnel from Human Resources, Professional Development, and Communications/Business Partnerships gathered to assemble care packages for the district's new international teachers. The packages were filled with non-perishable food and essential supplies like paper towels, soap, toothpaste, and other items.
3. More than 140 beginning teachers participated in the **Gaston County Schools** Teacher Induction Program for Success (TIPS). The teachers gathered at **Stuart W. Cramer High School** to receive information from various departments about policies and procedures. They also met by grade levels to learn about content standards, instructional expectations, and classroom management strategies, and they visited classrooms to get ideas to incorporate into their own.
4. **Gaston County Schools'** teachers and administrators attended the Teaching and Learning Conference, which was held on August 2 at **Stuart W. Cramer High School**. The conference featured a variety of professional development workshops and sessions.
5. **Gaston County Schools** has 13 teachers who were selected to serve as Catalyst Leaders based on their outstanding academic content, technology, and teaching skills. They participated in a week-long professional development at **Mount Holly Middle School** in July. The Catalyst Leaders are **Kristen Bullock, Grier Middle School; Rachel Drake, Gaston Virtual Academy; Carissa Ervin, North Belmont Elementary; Lane Graves, North Belmont Elementary; Megan Guyton, Pinewood Elementary; Barbara Hall, Lowell Elementary; Kayla Hatcher, York Chester Middle; Allie Kleinheinz, Hawks Nest STEAM Academy; Amber Manoff, Catawba Heights Elementary; Charli Mims, Robinson Elementary; Rebecca O'Bryon, Pinewood Elementary; Tanya Price, New Hope Elementary; and Tommy Ramkissoon, Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences.**

6. The annual **Gaston County Schools** secretaries conference was held on July 11 at **Highland School of Technology**. The theme was “Facing the Future – Together.” The training sessions focused on finance, payroll, budgeting, purchasing, expenses, and other areas. The attendees also participated in sessions that covered topics such as school funds online, Google and technology, policies and procedures, the Synovia transportation system, sales tax requirements, school safety, and Title I spending.
7. The **Gaston County Schools** nutrition program provided approximately 4,500 meals a week for students during the summer months. Breakfast and lunch meals were made available at various school and community locations across the county.
8. **Caleb Hovis** of **Cherryville High School** and **Angela Rimmer** of **Bessemer City Primary School** were recognized in June at the Gaston County Jaycees Distinguished Service Awards banquet and celebration. Caleb was named the Jaycees Outstanding Student, and Ms. Rimmer was chosen as the Jaycees Outstanding Teacher for 2024. The awards are given based on outstanding community service and commitment to volunteerism.
9. The following teachers are recipients of the Glenn Sisters Legacy Fund for Educators Grant presented by the Gaston County Education Foundation: **Victoria Kiser, Highland School of Technology; Jenna Markwith, Hawks Nest STEAM Academy; Mary McGraw, Gaston Early College High School; and Rebekah Stover, Springfield Elementary.**
10. Four Gaston County teachers were among 20 educators selected to tour the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. The group included **Angela Bates, Bessemer City High School; Nicki Balczunas, North Gaston High School; Jennifer Pugh, Cramerton Middle School; and Makayla Self, Chavis Middle School.** During a four-day bus trip, they toured the museum, participated in breakout sessions, and engaged in discussions about Holocaust history and the importance of teaching it. The trip was fully funded by the N.C. Council on the Holocaust with participants chosen through a competitive application process.
11. **Dr. Bill Kessler**, principal at **Page Primary School**, submitted an article to EducationNC, and the organization published it in July. In the article, he shared his perspective about low-performing schools.
12. The following four students were selected for the 2024-2025 North Carolina High School All-Star Cheerleading Team: **Ava Miller** of **Cherryville High School; Gracie Hullett** of **East Gaston High School; Landyn McBride** of **Cherryville High School; and Chloee Stroupe** of **Cherryville High School.** The cheerleaders showcased their skills at the East-West All-Stars basketball games and cheered at the coaches conference. They also will cheer at the East-West All-Stars football game in December.
13. **Belmont Middle School** received a donation of school supplies from South Point Baptist Church.

14. First Wesleyan Church of Bessemer City provided a generous donation of school supplies to **Bessemer City Central Elementary, Bessemer City Middle School, and Bessemer City High School.**
15. **Carr Elementary** received a donation of school supplies from CMC Rebar and Lowe's Home Improvement.
16. **Chapel Grove Elementary** received a donation of 100 book bags filled with school supplies from Parkdale Mills.
17. The **Cherryville High School** Education Foundation provided each classroom teacher and counselor at the school with a \$150 gift card to help offset out-of-pocket expenses for supplies.
18. **Dalton Pence**, a 2021 graduate of **Cherryville High School** and a standout baseball player for UNC-Chapel Hill, was selected by the Texas Rangers in the Major League Baseball (MLB) draft.
19. **Cherryville High School** students **Laila Davis** and **Nate Bookout** were chosen as the Female and Male Athletes of the Year for the Class of 2024. Additionally, **Harleigh Williams** and **Michael Griffin** were named the Female and Male Scholastic Athletes of the Year.
20. The **Cherryville High School** golf team ended the 2024 season with a fifth-place finish in the 1A state championship. The team won its second consecutive conference championship to qualify for the state playoffs. **Blake Tedder** led the team and took eighth overall in the individual standings.
21. **Cherryville High School** senior **Nate Bookout** signed a letter of intent to play tennis at Brevard College, and **Eli Newsome** signed a letter of intent to play baseball at Catawba Valley Community College in Hickory.
22. **Cherryville High School** student-athletes and coaches teamed up to conduct a summertime cleanup and beautification of the school's athletic fields and facilities. About 40 people participated in the beautification effort.
23. The following **Forestview High School** students in the Class of 2024 earned the prestigious AP (Advanced Placement) Capstone Diploma: **Naami Abbey, Kaitlyn Anthony, Megan Baker, Andrew Boohene, Morgan Clark, Lucas Crisp, Tripp Current, James Gunter, Rennie Liu, Madelyn Ludwig, Brianna Maga, Alexander Markley, Emma Thweatt, Mary Whatley** and **Matthew Williams**. To achieve the AP Capstone Diploma, students scored a three or higher in AP Seminar and AP Research along with four additional AP exams of their choice. Furthermore, all of the eleventh-grade students who took AP Seminar as well as all of the seniors who took AP Research passed their assessments.
24. **Landon Weaver** of **North Gaston High School** competed in Argentina this summer in a version of mixed martial arts that is based on age and weight and won a gold medal.

25. **W.C. Friday Middle School** resource officer **Zully Castaneda** received the Gaston County Synergy in Service Award. She was called in the early morning hours to assist with a murder case and dedicated two weeks to the investigation, even working on her birthday to support the investigation team and prioritize the victim's family needs.
26. **Lowell Elementary** received a donation of school supplies from Quan Services, Inc.
27. **Southwest Middle School** received a donation of clear book bags from the Gastonia Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and Golden Rule Lodge #82 of Gastonia.
28. **Stanley Middle School** was honored by the Gaston County Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisory Board for being the highest-scoring public school team in the State Envirothon competition.
29. **Sherwood Elementary** received a donation of school supplies from Tindall Law Firm, PLLC.
30. **Warlick Academy** received a monetary donation from Ranlo Baptist Church to implement new incentives. In addition, the church provided the school with a donation of school supplies.
31. **Woodhill Elementary** received a donation of school supplies from Lutheran Chapel Church.