BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

DEPARTMENT: Communications/Public Information Department

TOPIC: GOOD NEWS

FOR THE MONTH OF: April 2024

1. Fourteen students from **Gaston County Schools** were selected to attend the 2024 session of the prestigious North Carolina Governor's School. Students attending Governor's School East at Meredith College are **Melanie Hernandez Martinez**, **Hunter Huss High School**; **Carter Johnson**, **East Gaston High School**; **Caiden McDaniel**, **Forestview High School**; **John Thomas McQuay**, **South Point High School**; **LeAnna Moore**, **East Gaston High School**; and **Charles Price**, **South Point High School**. Students attending Governor's School West at UNC-Greensboro are **Audrey Anthony**, **East Gaston High School**; **Emmerson Dawe**, **South Point High School**, **Lilly Friday**, **Forestview High School**; **Faith Hairston**, **South Point High School**; **Micajah Hanna**, **Gaston Early College High School**; **William Peyton**, **Forestview High School**; **Ajalon Phillips**, **Hunter Huss High School**; and **Elijah Sherrill**, **Highland School of Technology**.

2. Approximately 200 outstanding middle school musicians participated in the all-county band concert on March 23 at **Holbrook Middle School**. The event featured performances by two middle school groups. Students were chosen for the all-county band clinic through an audition process. **W.C. Friday Middle School** band teacher **Cindy Owens** and David Rivero of Hickory Ridge High School were the guest conductors for the clinic.

3. The five finalists for **Gaston County Schools** Teacher of the Year 2024-2025 are **Jennifer Hallman**, **North Gaston High School**; **Melissa Harris**, **Bessemer City Primary**; **Lisa Montgomery**, **North Belmont Elementary**; **Cara Shelton-Harper**, **Bessemer City Middle School**; and **Brandon Taylor**, **East Gaston High School**.

4. The five finalists for **Gaston County Schools** Principal of the Year 2024-2025 are **Mitch Allen**, **Chapel Grove Elementary**; **Lorinda Brusie**, **Kiser Elementary**; **Bryan Denton**, **Hunter Huss High School**; **Jessica Mellon**, **Bessemer City Middle School**; and **Chris Mills**, **Webb Street School**.

5. The five finalists for **Gaston County Schools** Assistant Principal of the Year 2024-2025 are **Stephanie Denton**, **York Chester Middle School**; **Chris Dixon**, **East Gaston High School**; **Charlotte Friday**, **W.A. Bess Elementary**; **Tangela Hinton**, **Sherwood Elementary**; and **Courtney Williams**, **Webb Street School**.

6. The five finalists for **Gaston County Schools** New Teacher of the Year 2024-2025 are **Emma Cloninger, North Belmont Elementary**; **Erin Fletcher**, **Chapel Grove Elementary**; **Anna Jessup**, **Cherryville Elementary**; **Savannah Swanson**, **W.A. Bess Elementary**; and **Sue-Ann Taylor Folkes**, **Pleasant Ridge Elementary**.

7. The five finalists for **Gaston County Schools** Teacher Assistant of the Year 2024-2025 are **Linda Anderson**, **Bessemer City Primary**; **McKenzie Barkley**, **W.A. Bess Elementary**; **Marianne Gibson**, **Springfield Elementary**; **Amy Giles**, **H.H. Beam Elementary**; and **Robin Hensley**, **Bessemer City Primary**.

8. The five finalists for **Gaston County Schools** Central Office Administrator of the Year 2024-2025 are **Caroline Black**, Human Resources; **Melissa Buchanan**, Human Resources; **Sean Corcoran**, Communications; **Kathleen D'Avria**, Academic Services; and **Steve Smith**, Accountability.

9. **Isabella Caicedo** of **Stuart W. Cramer High School** earned the Best in Show honors in the **Gaston County Schools** "Through An Artist's Eyes" art competition and exhibit at Loray Mill. **Carmen Elizabeth Mercado** of **Cherryville High School** won the Director's Choice recognition, **Danny Zarate Castillo** of **Cherryville High School** won the James C. Biggers Award, and **Ellory Lamp** of **Stuart W. Cramer High School** was awarded the Pinnix Prize, which is a $1,000 scholarship. In addition, 100 middle school and high school students received first place, second place, third place, and honorable mention awards in the following categories: mixed media, fiber art, black and white drawing, color drawing, crafts, digital art, comic art, ceramics, sculpture, printmaking, photography, and painting. The art exhibit is conducted in partnership with the Gaston County Museum.

10. The East Division winners in the 2024 Math Masters competition were **Pleasant Ridge Elementary**, first place; **W.A. Bess Elementary**, second place; **Belmont Central Elementary**, third place; and **New Hope Elementary**, fourth place. The West Division winners were **North Belmont Elementary**, first place; **Brookside Elementary**, second place; **W.B. Beam Intermediate**, third place; and **Chapel Grove Elementary**, fourth place. **Pleasant Ridge Elementary** was named the grand champion of the Math Masters competition.

11. The East Division winners in the 2024 Battle of the Books competition were **Belmont Central Elementary**, first place; **Lowell Elementary**, second place; **New Hope Elementary**, third place; and **W.A. Bess Elementary**, fourth place. The West Division winners were **McAdenville Elementary**, first place; **Gaston Virtual Academy**, second place; **W.B. Beam Intermediate**, third place; and **Catawba Heights Elementary**, fourth place.

12. **Belmont Central Elementary** was named the grand champion of the Elementary Battle of the Books competition and will represent **Gaston County Schools** in the regional competition.

13. **Ashbrook High School** held its All-Star Pageant on March 16. Together, contestants raised $6,740.81 for Cancer Services of Gaston County and collected $646.07 for Special Olympics of Gaston County. **JaMarcus Sadler** earned the title of Mr. Ashbrook, and **Kimani Jacobs** was crowned Miss Ashbrook 2024.

14. The **Belmont Middle School** advanced chorus participated in the N.C. Music Educators Music Performance Adjudication and received excellent and superior ratings in performance and a superior rating in sight reading.

15. The **Belmont Middle School** eighth grade band received a superior rating at the Music Performance Assessment (MPA) competition.

16. **Bessemer City Primary** hosted First Responder Day on March 26. Gaston County Communications, Gaston County Police, K-9 Officers, Bessemer City Police, Bessemer City Fire, GEMS, and Gaston County Animal Control all joined in for demonstrations and activities with each class.

17. The **Bessemer City High School** Impact Club delivered 150 Easter treat bags to **Bessemer City Primary** and 102 bags to **Tryon Elementary**.

18. **Carr Elementary** donated 349 non-perishable items to the **Webb Street School** "One Can Make A Difference" food pantry. In addition, the school received canned goods from Mariposa Baptist Church.

19. The **Cherryville High School** band performed at the Carowinds Festival of Music and received a superior rating.

20. The **Stuart W. Cramer High School** Battle of the Books team placed third at the Region 6 North Carolina High School Battle of the Books competition. The team includes **Annabelle Bahr**, **Naveah Floyd**, **Ellory Lamp**, **Cienna Lopez**, **Lakayla Matthews**, **Sabrina Miner**, **Lizzy-Jane Ross**, **Ann Sproul**, **Piper Summey**, and **Molly Sutphin**.

21. **East Gaston High School** senior **Lydia Walls** was named a Spectrum News High School Scholar for the 2023-2024 academic year. The honor recognizes exceptional high school seniors with a $1,000 scholarship award for college expenses.

22. The **East Gaston High School** chorus and concert choir received a superior rating in performance and sight reading, and the concert band received a superior rating at the South Central District High School Music Performance Assessment.

23. The **Forestview High School** winter guard competed in the Carolina Winter Ensemble Association (CWEA) Championship. The junior varsity team took first place, and the varsity team earned second place.

24. Three **Gaston Early College High School** students cut at least eight inches of their hair to donate to the Children With Hair Loss organization.

25. **Gaston Early College High School** student **Jackson Kimble** earned a Certificate of Achievement for meeting the requirements for Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). He had the opportunity to job shadow at the Dallas Rescue Squad.

26. **Highland School of Technology** collected 889 books as part of the school's "Books for Brookside Elementary" campaign.

27. The **North Gaston High School** yearbook was recognized for excellence and featured in the Jostens Look Book 2024, which celebrates the best-of-the-best in yearbook design and inclusivity.

28. Second grade students at **Sherwood Elementary** presented a wax museum of historical figures to parents, students, and staff.

29. **Sherwood Elementary** kicked off its "One Book, One School" family involvement project on March 18. The entire school is reading "The Chocolate Touch" and participating in literacy activities.

30. The **Southwest Middle School** sixth grade chorus received an excellent rating at the First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia Music Performance Assessment.

31. The **Stanley Middle School** sixth, seventh, and eighth grade chorus earned superior rating in choral performance. In addition, the seventh and eighth grade chorus received a superior rating in sight reading and the school's sixth graders received an excellent rating.

32. **Stanley Middle School** was awarded a $10,000 Trailblazers grant to sustain its Envirothon program. Furthermore, the grant extends to students at **East Gaston High School**, **Highland School of Technology**, and **Gaston Early College High School** and enables students at the schools to engage in comprehensive environmental research and travel opportunities.