

## BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

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**DEPARTMENT:** Communications/Public  
Information Department

**TOPIC: GOOD NEWS**

**FOR THE MONTH OF:** January 2024

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1. **Gaston County Schools'** nutrition department won an award from the North Carolina Department of Instruction for its school garden. The 0.06-acre garden, which is certified with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), provided fresh produce for student meals during the summer nutrition program. The garden produced 750 pounds of cucumbers and 40 pounds of cherry tomatoes.
2. The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission selected **Gaston County Schools** as one of 20 school districts in the state to receive a \$50,000 recruitment grant to promote the Teaching Fellows program and the teaching profession. The funds will be used to help support teacher assistants who have an interest in becoming a licensed teacher.
3. **David Noblitt** of **Hunter Huss High School**, **Laura Robinson** of **North Gaston High School**, and **Rebecca Wray** of **Ashbrook High School** were among the 445 Impact Educators recognized by outstanding high school senior semifinalists for the UNC Morehead-Cain Scholarship. The educators from 35 states, the District of Columbia, and 12 countries have played a significant role in shaping the lives and leadership learning of their students.
4. **Ashleigh Arceo** of **Highland School of Technology** and **Jennifer Cloninger** of **South Point High School** received National Board Certification. In addition the following teachers renewed National Board Certification: **Susan Allen, Chavis Middle School; Terri Cochrane, North Gaston High School; Lynda Euchner, East Gaston High School; Alexandra Fitschen, Lowell Elementary; Jaime Keller, North Belmont Elementary; Victoria Kiser, Highland School of Technology; Kerri Lowe, Cramerton Middle School; Chris McKay, Forestview High School; Jennifer Melton, Brookside Elementary; Jordan Paciocco, Chapel Grove Elementary; Katherine Plecnik, Academic Services; Victoria Sain, Gaston Early College High School; Bridget Sleeper-Matzke, Highland School of Technology; Natalie Spargo, McAdenville Elementary; Rhoda Verhosek, Chapel Grove Elementary; and Dustin Weaver, Stuart W. Cramer High School.**
5. **Chelsea Harley** of **New Hope Elementary** and **Kimberly Queen** of **Sherwood Elementary** received the Glenn Sisters Legacy Fund grants from the Gaston County Education Foundation.
6. **Hunter Huss High School** alumnus and actress/singer **Maria Howell** shared important insights with **H.H. Beam Elementary** students. She emphasized the power of stage presence, confidence, and self-esteem during her presentation.

7. The following high school students won awards at the Gaston Regional Science and Engineering Fair: **Stephany Mejia-Lopez, Kayla Carithers, and Rahza Adams** of **Gaston Early College High School** were the overall winners. **Henry Davis** of **Highland School of Technology** placed first in the Biological Sciences A category; **Jozzy Da Rosa** and **Adelai Hardin** of **Gaston Early College High School** placed first in the Biological Sciences B category; **Micajah Hanna** of **Gaston Early College High School** placed first in the Chemistry category. **Kyli Herndon** of **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences** placed first in the Earth and Environmental Sciences category; **Nicholas Markley** of **Forestview High School** placed first in the Physics category; **Addison Royall** of **Stuart W. Cramer High School** placed first in the Math, Statistics, and Data Science category; **Seth Eaker, Grayson Harrington, and Helanea Killian** of **Gaston Early College High School** placed first in the Engineering category; and **Thomas Azar, Shafin Irfan, and Coleson Burgess** of **Forestview High School** placed first in the Technology category. **Maggie Ballard** of **East Gaston High School** and **Jillian Norwood** of **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences** were recipients of the Naval Science Award, and **Raegan Lilja** of **East Gaston High School** was the recipient of SPARC3 of Genius Award presented by Gaston College.
8. The **Ashbrook High School** Cares Program collected more than 1,200 bottles of Gatorade and cans of chicken noodle soup along with cash donations for Cancer Services of Gaston County.
9. The Rotary Club of Gastonia assisted 11 families at **H.H. Beam Elementary** by providing Christmas trees, food, and gift cards. Each student and their family had the opportunity to take a picture with Santa.
10. The Falcon Radio Club, N2FRC, at **W.B. Beam Intermediate School** had an amazing opportunity to intercept and tune in to astronaut Jasmin Moghbeli as she transmitted live from the International Space Station.
11. **W.B. Beam Intermediate School** collected 1,100 canned food and non-perishable items for St. John's Lutheran Church.
12. **W.A. Bess Elementary** students created holiday drawings for the residents at The Ivy at Gastonia. Art teacher **Michelle Curnow** and school counselor **Renea Walker** organized the community service project.
13. **Bessemer City High School** resource officer **Jeffrey Thompson** was named Employee of the Year by Gaston County Government. Through initiatives like the school's Impact Club, Officer Thompson provided students with opportunities for community service such as blanket and winter clothes drives for the Salvation Army and creating Easter baskets for **Bessemer City Primary** and **Bessemer City Central Elementary** students. During the "Cold Weather Drive" for the Salvation Army, the club collected 739 items. Over the past three years, the students under Officer Thompson's guidance have contributed more than 1,900 items.
14. The "Krawl for Coats" initiative collaboration between the Dallas Police Department and the Carolina Krawlerz Jeep Club was held at **Carr Elementary** on December 15.

15. **Chapel Grove Elementary** received a donation of book bags and school supplies from the Gaston County Police Department.
16. **Chavis Middle School** teacher **Eric Miller** received a \$1,250 grant from Piedmont Lithium to purchase 15 drone kits.
17. The **Chavis Middle School** Beta Club organized a canned food drive and gathered 500 items.
18. **Cherryville High School** cheerleaders **Ava Miller, Chloe Stroupe, and Landyn McBride** were selected for the all-state cheerleading team.
19. **Cherryville High School** presented the following football awards during the school's annual fall sports banquet: **Josh Ward**, Golden Helmet Award; **Rayshawn Sewell**, Offense MVP Award; **Jordan Lowrance**, Defense MVP Award; **Caleb Hovis**, Most Valuable Lineman Award; **Andron Patterson**, Most Improved Award; **Justin Harris**, Coaches Award; **Justin Houser**, Senior Award; and **Hunter Jackson**, Ironman Award.
20. **Cherryville High School** presented the following cross country and tennis awards during the school's annual fall sports banquet: **Steven Wyatt**, Most Valuable Runner Award (Male); **Cameryn Bell**, Most Valuable Runner Award (Female); **Payton Cook**, Tennis MVP Award; **Riley Bryant**, Ace Award; and **Sarah Rayfield**, Donna Lavery Coaches Award.
21. **Cherryville High School** presented the following volleyball and soccer awards during the school's annual fall sports banquet: **Jenna Anthony**, Team Before Self Award; **Kate Mulvey**, Best Server Award; **Taylor Digh**, Defensive Specialist Award; **Emily Allen**, Volleyball MVP Award; **Laila Davis**, Ironmen Award; **Kate Bookout**, Most Improved Award; **Jared Varela**, Most Valuable Defensive Player Award; **Cole Kelly**, Most Valuable Offensive Player Award; **Chance Hunt**, Most Improved Player Award; and **Nate Bookout**, Soccer MVP Award.
22. The **Cramerton Middle School** Beta Club hosted a toiletry drive for Catherine's House.
23. **Cramerton Middle School** student **Madaline Goodman** wanted to thank the school's custodians and cafeteria workers during the holidays. With the help of teachers, counselors, and classmates, she organized the making of handmade cards and treats to show appreciation for their hard work.
24. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** senior **Connor Smith** organized a heart healthy food drive to benefit local food pantries and people in need.
25. The **Stuart W. Cramer High School** student government volunteered at Operation Christmas Child and played a part in the collective effort that resulted in a daily total of 85,000 shoeboxes filled with items for people in need.

26. The Tri-M Music Honors Society at **East Gaston High School** presented a Christmas performance for the residents of Holy Angels in Belmont. Tri-M is made up of honors students in the band and choir ensembles who demonstrate leadership, musicianship, and quality of character. They actively engage in music-related service projects at the school and in the community. Over the past year, the group has successfully conducted two service projects in collaboration with Holy Angels.
27. **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy** has been selected for the Building Engineers in K-5 Classrooms Initiative.
28. **McAdenville Elementary** second grader **Kieran Miller** was chosen to “flip the switch” at the annual McAdenville tree lighting ceremony.
29. Students from **McAdenville Elementary** took part in the McAdenville Yule Log Parade. The students sang carols in front of the Pharr building and then proudly pulled the Yule Log sled down Main Street.
30. McAdenville Wesleyan Church and the Cramer Mountain Investment Club provided support for 31 **McAdenville Elementary** families during the holiday season.
31. **Kyle Haywood’s** carpentry students at **North Gaston High School** built a “Blessing Box” at **Chapel Grove Elementary**. The “Blessing Box” is stocked with essentials for the community.
32. **Pinewood Elementary School** hosted a special visit by Governor Roy Cooper, who got a firsthand look at the amazing learning activities happening at one of the three North Carolina A+ Schools in **Gaston County Schools**. He was welcomed by the school’s student ambassadors and a performance by the **East Gaston High School** drumline. Governor Cooper visited three classrooms where he interacted with teachers and students and learned about how the school infuses the arts across the curriculum. Additionally, the school’s show choir performed for him.
33. CarMax in Gastonia donated toys for students and items for the food pantry at **Webb Street School**.
34. Atlantech Distribution, Inc. provided Christmas gifts to several families at **York Chester Middle School**.
35. School resource officer **Patricia Davis** of **York Chester Middle School** was honored with the Chief’s Commendation Award from the Gaston County Police Department. The prestigious award recognizes Officer Davis for exemplary service that demonstrates dedication and concern for the community.