

BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

DEPARTMENT: Communications/Public
Information Department

TOPIC: GOOD NEWS

FOR THE MONTH OF: March 2024

1. **Bessemer City Central Elementary** and **Bessemer City Middle** were the overall winners at the annual RoboGASTON competition. Other school winners were **Belmont Middle**, middle school runner-up; **New Hope Elementary**, elementary school runner-up; **Cramerton Middle**, middle school first place robot performance; **Lowell Elementary**, elementary school first place robot performance; **W.B. Beam Intermediate**, elementary school second place robot performance; **Stanley Middle**, middle school first place project presentation; **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, elementary school first place project presentation; **McAdenville Elementary**, elementary school second place project presentation; **York Chester Middle**, middle school first place teamwork; **Pleasant Ridge Elementary**, elementary school first place teamwork; **Robinson Elementary**, elementary school second place teamwork; **Mount Holly Middle**, judges award; **Kiser Elementary**, gracious professionalism award; **W.A. Bess Elementary**, innovative team name; and **Robinson Elementary**, spirit award.
2. The following students won awards at the Region 6 UNC-Charlotte Science and Engineering Fair: **Laren Brooks Leuschel**, **Robinson Elementary**, first place, biological sciences; **Emalyn Jennings** and **Kellan Jennings**, **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, second place, biological sciences; **Blythe Sipe**, **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, second place, chemistry; **Henry Markwith**, **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, first place, engineering and technology; **Samuel Diamond**, **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, third place, engineering and technology; **Camden Hunter**, **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, honorable mention, engineering and technology; **Muhib Kamdar**, **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, honorable mention engineering and technology; **Kyle Zell**, **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, third place; physics and math; **Brynn Dubois**, **W.A. Bess Elementary**; honorable mention, physics and math; **Reagan Beard**, **Stanley Middle**, third place, biological sciences A; **Prudence Hammond** and **Rosalyn Skidmore**, honorable mention, biological sciences A; **William Coss YLeon** and **Juda Crane**, **Chavis Middle**, third place, biological sciences B; **Jillian Schultheis**, **Stanley Middle**, first place, chemistry; **Trinity Adams** and **Chelsy Hernandez**, **Stanley Middle**, fourth place, chemistry; **Colin Anderson**, **Cyrus Baltimore**, and **Vincent Vernitsky**, **Stanley Middle**, third place, engineering; **David Lopez Saldivar**, **Stanley Middle**, fourth place, engineering; **Payton Bell** and **Cannon Ernst**, **Mount Holly Middle**, second place, physics; **Isabella Ogan**, **Stanley Middle**, honorable mention, physics; **Alexis Dobson** and **Bryson Yarbro**, honorable mention, math and data science; **Micajah Hannah**, **Gaston Early College**, second place, chemistry; **Seth Eaker**, **Grayson Harrington**, and **Helanea Killian**, **Gaston Early College**, third place, engineering; and **Lizette Reyes-Lopez** and **Bannock Scott**, **Gaston Early College**, fourth place, engineering.

3. **Mount Holly Middle School** participated in the “Polar Plunge” event and raised \$3,116.50 for the Special Olympics of Gaston County. Other schools participating were **Gaston Early College High School, Ashbrook High School, Stuart W. Cramer High School, Bessemer City High School, and Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences.** The top fundraising coach was **Amber Radford** from **Ashbrook High School.**
4. The following students were named to the North Carolina All-State Honors Band: **Akela Taylor, Highland School of Technology,** percussion; **Annabelle Radford, Cramerton Middle School,** bassoon; and **Abram Comer, Cramerton Middle School,** trombone.
5. Students, teachers, and staff in **Gaston County Schools** observed “Read Across America Day” on March 1 with a variety of special activities. The observance coincided with Dr. Seuss’ birthday.
6. **Gaston County Schools** held its annual Middle School Cheer Showcase on March 1 at **Ashbrook High School.** The following schools received recognition: **W.C. Friday Middle,** first place; **Stanley Middle,** second place; and **Southwest Middle,** third place.
7. The Battle of the Books middle school winners were **W.C. Friday Middle,** first place; **Belmont Middle,** second place; and **Stanley Middle,** third place.
8. The Math Elite winners were **Cramerton Middle,** first place; **Belmont Middle,** second place; and **Southwest Middle,** third place.
9. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** won the Battle of the Books high school competition with **South Point High School** finishing second.
10. The **Grier Middle School** boys’ team and the **Holbrook Middle School** girls’ team won the county basketball championships.
11. **Gaston County Schools** athletic director **Chad Duncan** received the Rusty Lee Professional Development Award from the North Carolina Athletic Directors Association.
12. **Gaston County Schools** director of exceptional children **Meghan LeFevers** was named a Model Schools Conference Epic Educator. She is one of 10 educators to receive this distinction and will be recognized at the 2024 Model Schools Conference in Orlando, Florida in June.
13. **Amber Spargo,** a math curriculum facilitator for **Gaston County Schools,** was chosen to receive the 2024 North Carolina Association for Middle Level Education (NCMLE) Personnel to Watch Award. She will be recognized at the NCMLE conference in Charlotte. Each year, the Board of Directors of the NCMLE accepts nominations to honor educators who have made significant contributions to the education of middle level students in the state.

14. **Michelle McCotter** of **Hunter Huss High School** was named **Gaston County Schools** Psychologist of the Year, and **Rachel Canipe** of **Cherryville Elementary** was named the **Gaston County Schools** Service Provider of the Year.
15. The following schools and employees were nominated in the Best of Gaston Choice Awards that are presented by The Gaston Gazette: Principal - **Chris Mills, Webb Street School**; School - **W.A. Bess Elementary, Bessemer City Primary, East Gaston High School, Highland School of Technology**, and **Webb Street School**; and Teacher - **Kelli Smith, Bessemer City Primary**.
16. **Sean Adams** of **Ashbrook High School** was named a National Merit Scholarship finalist.
17. **Jonathan Moore** of **Ashbrook High School** placed sixth in the 285-pound weight class at the N.C. High School Athletic Association 3A individual wrestling championship.
18. **H.H. Beam Elementary** had winners in the Gaston County Conservation Poster Contest. **Na'ila Lowery**, kindergarten, second place; **Ezra Barnett** and **D'Aria Antrum**, second grade, second place; **Ava Hill** and **Tahmiyya Odom**, second grade, third place; **Sunni Bryant**, third grade, first place; **Carloa Nolasco Rivera**, third grade, third place; **Madeline Menocal**, fourth grade, second place, **Amirrah Witherspoon**, fourth grade, third place; **Jesselle Muhammad**, fifth grade, first place; **Jae'lynn Burris**, fifth grade, second place; and **Fanny Mendoza**, fifth grade, second place. **Jesselle Muhammad's** work was the overall winner for the school and her work will advance to district level competition.
19. The **Bessemer City Central Elementary** robotics team, the RoboBees, presented a community service project idea to the Bessemer City city council last month. Their proposal is to turn an underpass into a community art area where only positive and inclusive messages and artwork would be displayed.
20. **Chapel Grove Elementary** fifth grader **Landon Dennis** was the top fundraiser for The American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart Program. He raised \$566, contributing to the school's total of more than \$2,000.
21. **Caleb Hovis** of **Cherryville High School** placed third in the 285-pound weight class at the N.C. High School Athletic Association 1A individual wrestling championship.
22. **Bentley Sly** of **Stuart W. Cramer High School** won an individual N.C. High School Athletic Association 3A state championship in the 132-pound weight class.
23. **W.C. Friday Middle School** teacher **Ashlyn Steelman** was awarded a scholarship by the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust, which is facilitated by the North Carolina Department of Instruction. The scholarship grants her an all-expenses-paid trip to Poland this summer where she will engage in immersive study of the Holocaust.

24. **Gaston Virtual Academy** school counselor **Yeva Hall-Williamson** is one of four school counselors across the state to be named an “Emerging Leader” by the North Carolina School Counselor Association.
25. **Grier Middle School** received baseball equipment through a donation from Dick’s Sporting Goods.
26. **Highland School of Technology** junior **Archer Yavelak** placed first in the chemistry category at the 2024 Super Competition, which was sponsored by the UNC-Charlotte Center for STEM Education and the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.
27. **Hunter Digh** of **East Gaston High School** placed second in the 144-pound weight class at the N.C. High School Athletic Association 2A individual wrestling championship.
28. **Riley Rouse**, a senior at **Forestview High School**, completed the John Hunsucker Academic and Athletic Meeting Space to earn the rank of Eagle Scout. He created the space in memory of John Hunsucker, a teacher and coach who passed away in 2018. The area, designed for outdoor learning and sports meetings, benefits teachers, students, coaches, athletes, and the community. His efforts included planning, fundraising, preparing the site, and adding tables, seating, and landscaping.
29. Members of the **Forestview High School** Beta Club, National Honor Society, and Student Council collected 75 gift cards totaling \$1,155 to be distributed to families at Levine Children’s Hospital who have children awaiting a donor transplant. Since 2018, this has been an annual fundraiser for Forestview, honoring the memory of Destiny Stafford in collaboration with the Destiny Lives on Foundation.
30. **Trevon Bowers** of **Forestview High School** placed fourth in the 138-pound weight class at the N.C. High School Athletic Association 3A individual wrestling championship.
31. **Lingerfeldt Elementary** instructional facilitator **Katrina Ashleman** was selected as a Principal Fellow Scholar to represent **Gaston County Schools**.
32. **Lingerfeldt Elementary** celebrated African American History Month with a Black History art show and wax museum. **Dot Guthrie**, a Board of Education member, was the guest speaker. Families and guests were invited to admire student artwork inspired by Bisa Butler and Alma Thomas and to learn about influential African Americans through the wax museum activity.
33. **New Hope Elementary** set a new record by raising more than \$20,000 in the Jump Rope for Heart campaign. Proceeds will be donated to the American Heart Association.
34. **James Weaver** of **North Gaston High School** won an individual N.C. High School Athletic Association 3A state championship in the 150-pound weight class.
35. **Garrett Carpenter** of **North Gaston High School** placed fifth in the 138-pound weight class at the N.C. High School Athletic Association 3A individual wrestling championship.

36. **Dewayne Davis** of **North Gaston High School** placed sixth in the 215-pound weight class at the N.C. High School Athletic Association 3A individual wrestling championship.
37. **Page Primary School** celebrated its 50th Anniversary on Friday, March 15. Built as the replacement school for East Belmont Elementary School, the school is named after former East Belmont principal J.B. Page. Members of the J.B. Page's family were present along with city and county officials and past and current staff.
38. **Pinewood Elementary's** principal, **Kimberly Reese**, was highlighted in an article by EDNC that focused on arts education and Governor Roy Cooper's visit to the school.
39. **Sadler Elementary** launched a school-wide reading initiative featuring the book, "The Lemonade War" by Jacqueline Davies. A website was created where videos of staff, Board of Education member **Dot Cherry**, **Dr. Morgen Houchard**, superintendent, and others reading chapters were posted online. Students are tasked with reading the book nightly with their families and answering trivia for prizes. The event will end with principal **Jacob Barr** and assistant principal **Pharaah Putman** acting out characters from the book along with a lemonade sales contest to raise funds for the school.
40. The **Sherwood Elementary** PTO held a Sweetheart Ball for students. In addition, the school received a \$400 donation for its special education classes.
41. As part of Read Across America Week, the Charlotte Hornets Book Bus visited **Sherwood Elementary School**.
42. In partnership with the Schiele Museum, **Sherwood Elementary** held its third annual "Sherwood Night at the Schiele Museum," which was a free event for all students and their families.
43. **Southwest Middle School** students **Jahmaul Barton** and **Micah Burris** placed first in the coding category at the Technology Student Association (TSA) western regional conference.
44. The Mia Stokes Foundation donated baseball equipment including gloves, bats, helmets, catcher's gear, and additional items to **Southwest Middle School**.
45. **South Point High School** junior **Hannah Bauer** earned the Congressional Gold Medal Award, which is awarded to students by the U.S. Congress for accomplishments in four areas: voluntary public service, personal development, physical fitness, and expedition and exploration.
46. **South Point High School** senior **Sadie Absher** attended the IWBA classifications at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She was one of 34 athletes selected to become internationally classified to play wheelchair basketball.
47. **South Point High School** celebrated its annual Miss South Point High School Scholarship Pageant on March 2. **Hudson Webb** was crowned Miss South Point 2024,

winning a \$10,000 scholarship. **Emma Corripio** took first runner-up honors and received a \$5,000 scholarship; **Ava Bumgardner** was named the second runner-up and won a \$4,000 scholarship; and **Ava Staton** captured the third runner-up spot, receiving a \$3,000 scholarship.

48. The following **Stanley Middle School** students were named winners in the North Carolina Student Academy of Science Virtual Regional Science Fair and have advanced to the North Carolina Student Academy of Sciences State Science Fair: Biological Science - **Rosalyn Skidmore, Prudence Hammond, Reagan Beard, and Kimberly Cruz**; Chemistry - **Chelsy Hernandez, Trinity Adams, and Jillian Schultheis**; Engineering and Technology - **David Lopez, Collin Anderson, Cyrus Baltimore, Logan Vernitsky, and Marshall Deal**; and Mathematics - **Ameilia Burr**. **Diana Baxter** is the science fair sponsor.
49. **Webb Street School** received a donation of non-perishable goods from Atrium Health and the Food Lion in Stanley for the school's "One Can Make A Difference" food pantry.
50. The **York Chester Middle School** band, led by teacher **Julian Wilson**, traveled to Orlando to take part in the Disney Imagination Campus. Selected by Disney through audition videos, students became cast members for a day and performed a variety of musical selections from different cultures in front of crowds at Disney Springs. The trip was made possible by the following sponsors: City Church, Center Baptist Church, Blessed Assurance Outreach Ministries, Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church, Gaston Community Foundation, Gaston County Sports Hall of Fame, and the Faculty and Friends of the York Chester Middle School Band Program.