

**Gaston County Schools
Board of Education
Monday, February 21, 2022
Meeting 5:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a regular session on Monday, February 21, 2022 in the Board Room, 943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC. Additionally, the meeting was live on Spectrum Cable Channel 21 and the Gaston County Board of Education YouTube page. Those Board Members in attendance were: Chairman Jeff K. Ramsey, Vice Chairman Dot Cherry, Kevin Collier, Justin Davis, Steve Hall, Lee Dedmon, Dot Guthrie (joined via Zoom), Robbie Lovelace and Brent Moore.

Additional attendees include: Superintendent Dr. W. Jeffrey Booker, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Associate Superintendents Melissa Balknight and Gary Hoskins, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Administrative Assistant Andrea Stephens and Board Clerk Dana Luoto.

Chairman Ramsey called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Invocation

Superintendent Booker led the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Superintendent Booker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Adoption - Action

The Board considered Agenda Adoption – Action

Motion to adopt the Agenda as presented was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. Brent Moore motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

Good News – Information

Superintendent Booker shared Good News items.

(View PowerPoint)

Public Expression – Information

Cindy Scruggs Johnson
123 Doster Hight Place
Mt. Holly, NC 28120
RE: Retire the Red Raider Mascot

Dana Frady
1327 Perfection Avenue
Belmont, NC 28012
RE: Retire the Red Raider Mascot

Ryan Simms
105 N. Woodcliff Lane
Mt. Holly, NC 28120
RE: Retire the Red Raider Mascot
Although Ryan Simms completed the Request to Speak Form, Ryan Simms did not appear at the meeting

Lauren Frady
1327 Perfection Avenue
Belmont, NC 28012
RE: Retire the Red Raider Mascot

Dr. Jason Edward Black, Ph.D
10397 Falling Leaf Drive
Concord, NC 28027
RE: Retire the Red Raider Mascot
Although Dr. Jason Black completed the Request to Speak Form, Dr. Jason Black did not appear at the meeting

Ava Clarkson
114 Leeper Avenue
Belmont, NC 28012
RE: Retire the Red Raider Mascot

Carrigan Marlowe
117 W. Nims Avenue
Mt. Holly, NC 28120
RE: Retire the Red Raider Mascot
Although Carrigan Marlowe completed the Request to Speak Form, Carrigan Marlow did not appear at the meeting

Blake Marlowe
117 W. Nims Avenue
Mt. Holly, NC 28120
RE: Retire the Red Raider Mascot
Although Blake Marlowe completed the Request to Speak Form, Blake Marlow did not appear at the meeting

John O'Daly & Sandy Botka
112 Brahman Court
Dallas, NC 28034
RE: Gaston County Honor Guard Scholarship

Timothy Allen Ramey
5034 Ashley Place Drive
Bessemer City, NC 28016
RE: Metal Detection

Benjamin Conner
2608 Armstrong Park Drive
Gastonia, NC 28054

RE: Retire the Red Raider Mascot

Although Benjamin Conner completed the Request to Speak Form, Benjamin Conner did not appear at the meeting

Hayley Brezeale
417 Bushmill Drive
Rock Hill, SC

RE: Retire the Red Raider Mascot

Although Hayley Brezeale completed the Request to Speak Form, Hayley Brezeale did not appear at the meeting

Thomas Tanzola
2017 Colchester Court
Belmont, NC 28012

RE: Allow South Point JROTC program to have annual spring trip

James Medelroj
201 Colchester Court
Belmont, NC 28012

RE: Allow South Point JROTC program to have annual spring trip

Kasey Springer
924 Edgemont Avenue
Belmont, NC 28012

RE: Allow South Point JROTC program to have annual spring trip

Approval/Correction of Minutes

The Board considered Approval/Correction of Minutes – Action

Motion to adopt minutes of January 13, 2022 (Regular Meeting) and January 28, 2022 (Board Retreat) as presented was made by Mr. Brent Moore; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry; motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

COVID-19 Update – Information

Chairman Ramsey recognized Superintendent Booker who presented a PowerPoint on COVID-19 Data & Trends.

Superintendent Booker recognized Dr. Jill Payne who presented a PowerPoint on COVID-19 Updates. Discussion occurred.

Action on Whether to Maintain or Amend the Board's Current Face Covering Policy as Required by S.L. 2021-130 – Action

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. Justin Davis; seconded by Mr. Kevin Collier that the Board
Approve that masks are optional for Gaston County Schools for all students, staff and visitors on all campuses until our next Board of Education Meeting on Monday, March 21, 2022.

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried. (9-0)

Superintendent Booker recommended the following — due to the additional duties and responsibilities that Gaston County Schools educational employees have endured since the inception of the pandemic, it is recommended that we pay all eligible employees a \$1,000 one-time COVID retention bonus.

COVID Retention Bonus employee eligibility – employees must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- Must have been hired prior to January 10, 2022
- Must be a permanent employee (contract, interim and temporary employees are **not** eligible)
- Works at least 50% on a regular basis
- Employed at the time the bonus is paid

Motion

The Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. Kevin Collier that the Board
Authorize a COVID Retention Bonus Proposal for a one-time payment of \$1,000 for eligible employees. The estimated number of eligible employees is 3,800 and the estimated amount paid is \$3.8 million. The proposed pay date of the bonus will be June 2022.

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried. (9-0)

(View PowerPoints)

Calendar Update 2021-2022 – Action

Chairman Ramsey recognized Superintendent Booker who reported the following concerning inclement weather days.

During the 2021-2022 school year, Gaston County Schools has canceled school or implemented remote learning on the following days:

January 18, 2022	School cancelation for students and 10-month and 11-month employees. Twelve-month employees had the option of a two-hour delay.
January 19, 2022	Remote learning day for all students and teachers. Twelve-month employees had the option of a two-hour delay.
January 21, 2022	Remote learning day for all students and teachers. Twelve-month employees had the option of a two-hour delay.

There remains one (1) day not attended by students for the district. We have enough instructional hours to forgive January 18, 2022. Superintendent Booker recommended that the Board forgive January 18, 2022 missed by students.

Motion

Motion was made by Mrs. Robbie Lovelace; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry that the Board
Forgive January 18, 2022 snow day for students.

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (9-0)

Operations Committee Report - Information

Chairman Ramsey recognized Ms. Dot Cherry of the Operations Committee who provided a summary of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.

(View report)

Curriculum & Instruction Committee Report - Information

Chairman Ramsey recognized Mrs. Robbie Lovelace of the Curriculum & Instruction Committee who provided a summary of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.

(View report)

Mental Health Services - Information

Chairman Ramsey recognized Dr. Jill Payne who presented a PowerPoint on Social Emotional Learning and on School Mental Health Update.

(View PowerPoint)

Portrait of a Graduate - Information

Chairman Ramsey recognized Dr. Melissa Balknight who presented a PowerPoint on Portrait of a Graduate.

(View PowerPoint)

Consent Agenda - Action

The Board considered the Consent Agenda:

- A. Recommended Personnel
- B. Budget Amendments & Budget Transfers
- C. Construction/Repair Change Orders
- D. Contracts
 - Hunter Huss High School Pavement Improvements
 - Gardner Park Elementary Pavement Improvements
 - Catawba Heights Elementary Pavement Improvements
 - East Gaston High School Pavement Improvements
 - High School Sports Field Upgrades
 - Sale of Surplus Real Property — Dallas, NC
 - Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan

Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Mr. Justin Davis; seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

Superintendent's Comments

Superintendent Booker thanked all the families who attended our first School Choice Fair on Saturday, February 12. It was a great event that showcased our 21 school choice programs. Our next School Choice Fair will be on Saturday, March 5 from 10:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the Gastonia Conference Center. You can submit your school choice application now on our website, and the deadline is Friday, March 18 at 5:00 p.m.

Superintendent Booker thanked everyone who attended the recent all-county high school band concert at Ashbrook High School. Our middle school all-county band concert and our all-county chorus concert for middle schools and high schools are coming up in early April.

Superintendent Booker reported that Tina Peterson, lead social worker, will serve as one of the panelists for the "Building Community Resilience: Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences" program on Thursday, March 3 at 7:00 p.m. at The Pointe Church in Belmont. The program is sponsored by Gaston Together and brings attention to childhood trauma and how the community can help.

Superintendent Booker reported that our spring semester Parent-Teacher Conference Day is Thursday, March 10. Students will be dismissed early and conferences will take place in the afternoon. Friday, March 11 is scheduled as an Optional Teacher Workday, which means no school for students.

Chairman Ramsey reported that our April Board of Education Meeting will be held on April 11, 2022 due to our spring holiday.

Chairman Ramsey wished Mr. Collier and Superintendent Booker a "Happy Birthday."

Closed Session

Chairman Ramsey asked the Board to consider going into Closed Session under, N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel and N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(3) Consultation with Attorney

Motion to go into Closed Session was made by Mr. Kevin Collier; seconded by Mr. Brent Moore; motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

The Board went into Closed Session at 6:37 p.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 7:42 p.m.

Motion

The Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. Brent Moore that the Board

Approve a two-year Assistant Principal contract for:

Towanda Smith

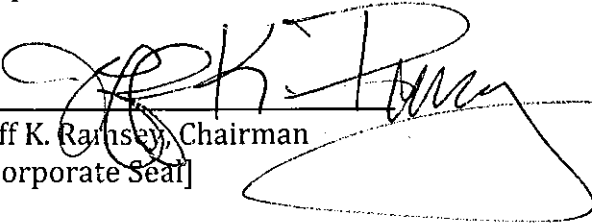
A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (9-0)

Adjournment

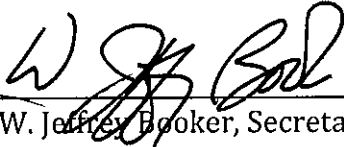
All business having been conducted, Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Lee Dedmon; seconded by Mr. Justin Davis motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Approved:



Jeff K. Ramsey, Chairman
[Corporate Seal]



W. Jeffrey Booker, Secretary

Date Approved: 3/21/2022

Good News from Gaston County Schools

February 2022

Gaston County Schools

Public Schools Week

February 21-25

**We love our
public schools
in Gaston County!**



Gaston County Schools

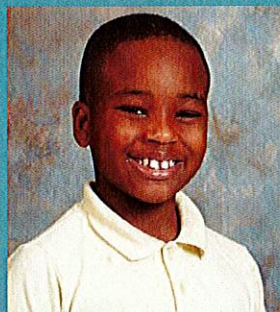


Gaston County Schools

'Do the Right Thing' Winners



Carson Walters
Carr Elementary



Teverean Steele
Gardner Park Elementary

Gaston County Schools

'Do the Right Thing' Winners



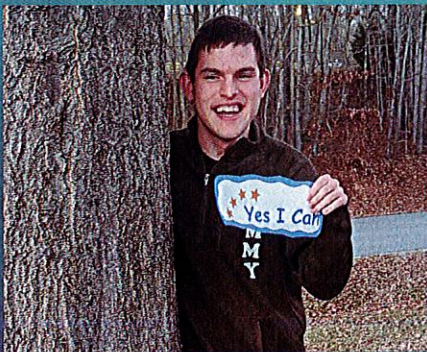
Ariel Pagan
York Chester Middle



Riley Royer
Bessemer City High

Gaston County Schools

'Yes, I Can!' State Award Winner

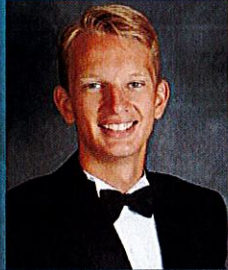


Congratulations!

Timmy O'Shea

Gaston County Schools

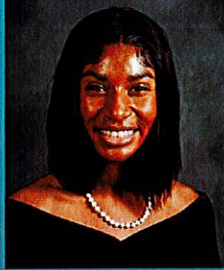
State Champions!



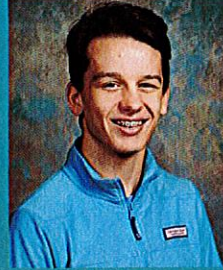
**Asher
Neumann**
Highland
Swimming



**Alexis
Willis**
Stuart W. Cramer
Indoor Track



**Lauren
Tolbert**
Highland
Indoor Track



**Charlie
Sly**
Stuart W. Cramer
Wrestling



**Zach
Karagias**
Stuart W. Cramer
Wrestling

Gaston County Schools

Coaching Milestone



Scott Harrill
Cherryville High School

400th career win
as head basketball coach

Gaston County Schools

Perfect Graduation Rate



**Gaston Early College
High School**



**Highland School
of Technology**

Gaston County Schools

N.C. School Boards Association



Dot Guthrie

**Academy for School
Boardsmanship**

**Certificate of Advanced
Achievement**

Gaston County Schools

Good News from Gaston County Schools

February 2022

Gaston County Schools

GASTON COUNTY COVID-19 DATA & TRENDS

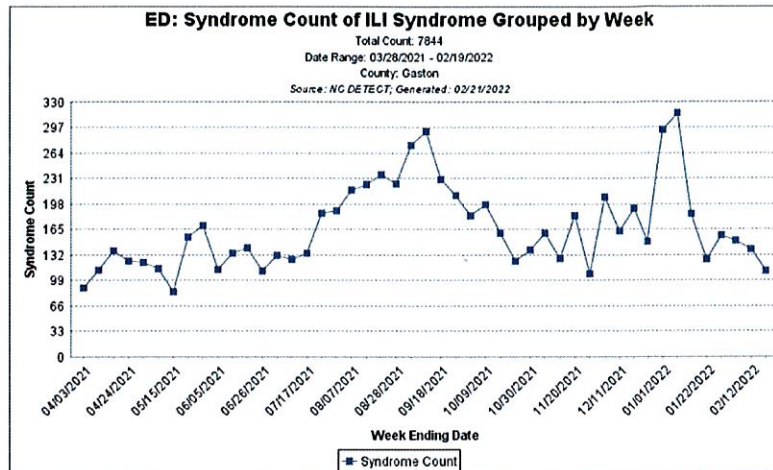
FEBRUARY 21, 2022



SUMMARY OF KEY METRICS

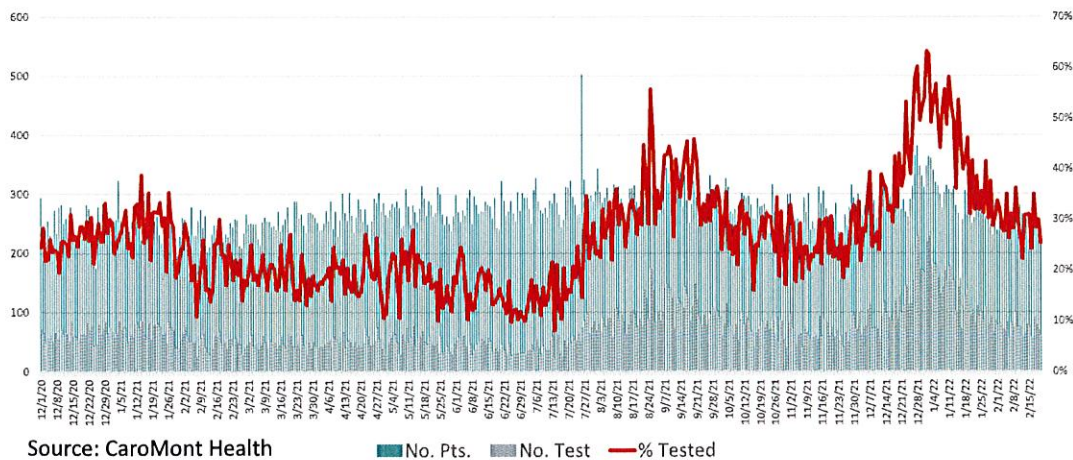
Goal	Note	2/14/22	2/21/22
○ Decline or steady sustained level of influenza like illnesses	<i>This indicator is obtained from NC DETECT, and has increased in the most recent week</i>	✓	✓
○ Downward trajectory or sustained leveling of COVID-like Syndromic cases over 14 days	<i>The indicator for this measure is the percentage of ED visits resulting in a COVID-19 test. This decrease over the past week.</i>	✓	✓
○ Downward trajectory or sustained leveling of cases over 14 days	<i>The number of cases has decreased in the most recent week.</i>	✓	✓
○ Downward trajectory of positive tests as a percentage of total tests over 14 days	<i>Gaston County Percent of Positive cases has decreased in the most recent week.</i>	✓	✓
○ Downward trajectory of hospitalizations over 14 days	<i>Hospitalization level has continued to increase in the two most recent weeks.</i>	—	✓
<div> ✓ Goal Achieved — Trending Towards Goal ✗ Trending Away from Goal </div>			

COUNT OF ED VISITS WITH ILI

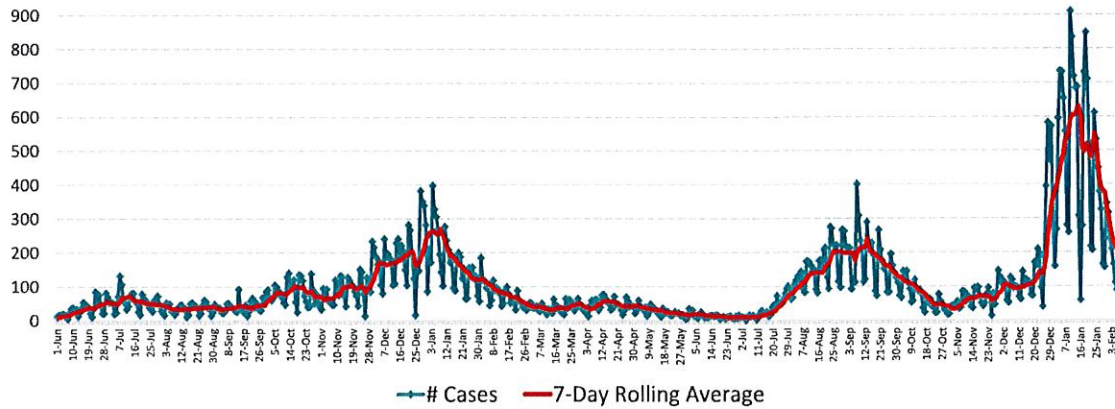


Source: NC DETECT, ILI Syndrome Line List, Week ending 2/19/22

COVID-19 TESTING IN THE ED



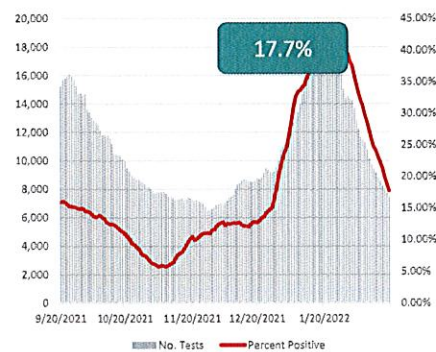
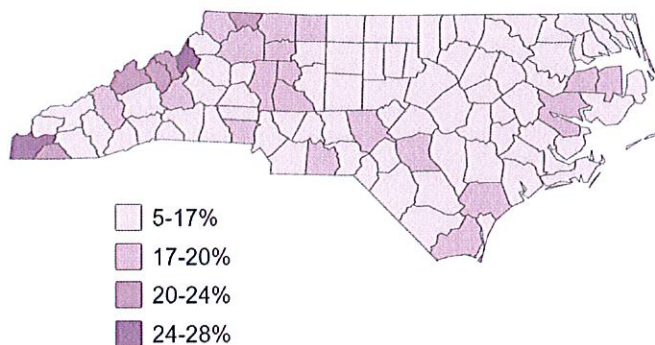
GASTON COUNTY CASES



Source: NC EDSS, 2-21-22, Based upon date of testing, the most recent days are likely to change as testing data becomes available.

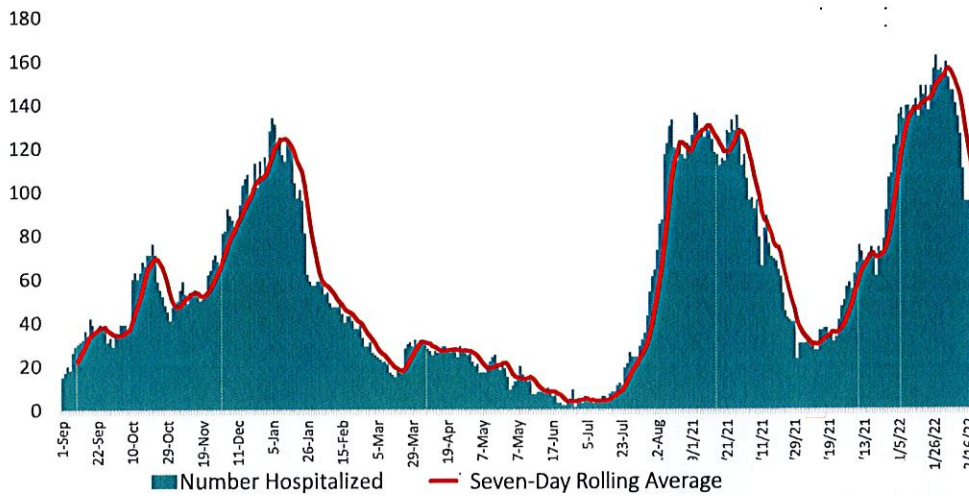
5

PERCENT OF POSITIVE TESTS



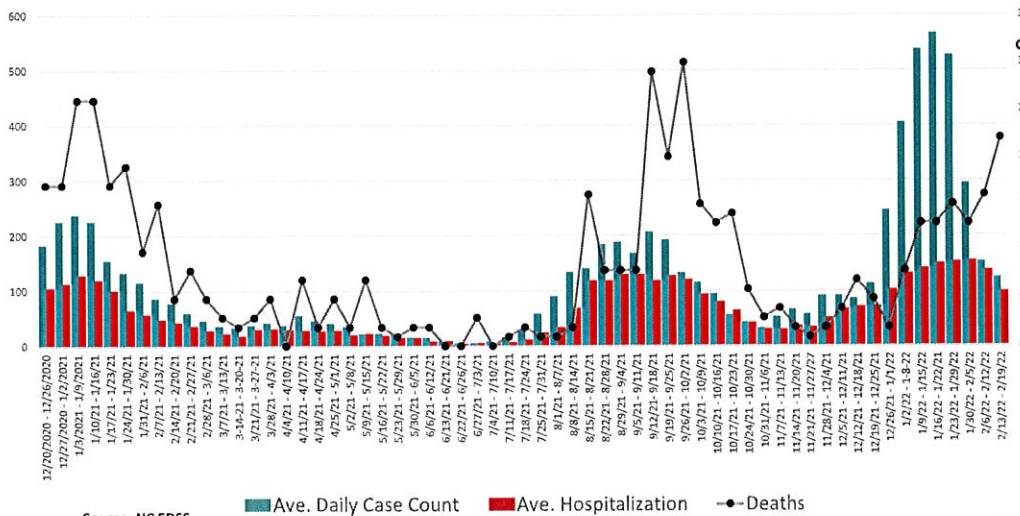
Source: NCDHHS; Calculated based upon the most recent 14-day period.

GASTON COUNTY HOSPITALIZATIONS



Source: Gaston County DHHS; Includes full Caromont count, and Gaston residents of Atrium Health

CASES, HOSPITALIZATIONS AND DEATHS



Source: NC EDSS

GASTON COUNTY COVID-19 DATA & TRENDS

FEBRUARY 21, 2022

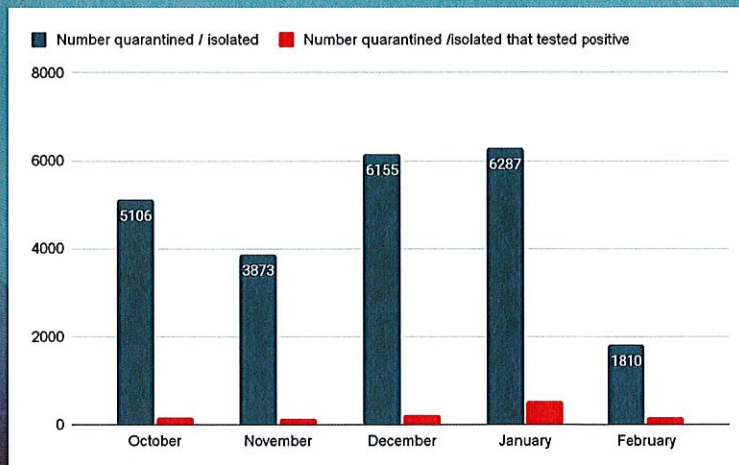




Covid-19 Updates

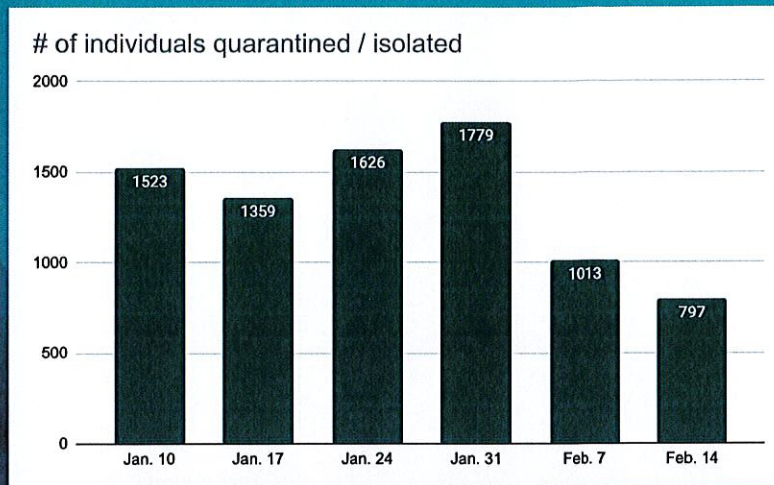
February 21, 2022

Gaston County Schools



Covid-19 Data Updates

Gaston County Schools



Gaston County Schools

StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit Updates

Effective February 21st

- Elimination of Contact Tracing
- Quarantine:
 - Symptomatic - Quarantine for 5 days and return masked for 5 days
 - Exemption includes negative test or alternate diagnosis
 - Positive cases - Quarantine for 5 days and return masked for 5 days
- Principals will continue weekly notification messages

Gaston County Schools

StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit Updates

Test to Stay through 2/21/2022	Updated Toolkit impact on Test to Stay
<p>Exposures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Individual test on day 1,3,and 5 - if negative, individual can return to school (can test at sites and center) <p>Symptomatic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Individual can test at the testing center and if negative results, when symptoms improve, individual can return to school	<p>As of 2/21/2022, Gaston County School will no longer be a participant in the Test to Stay Study</p> <p>Exposures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">If an individual feels they have been exposed at school / home, they may go to any of our sites to be tested <u>but it is not required for attending school</u> <p>Symptomatic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Individual can test at any testing site and if negative results, when symptoms improve, individual can return to schoolIf individual with alternative diagnosis, student can return to school.

Gaston County Schools

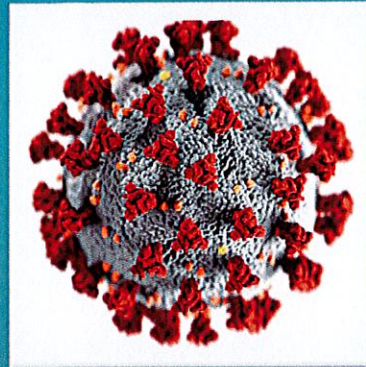


Covid-19 Updates

February 21, 2022

Gaston County Schools

Gaston County Board of Education Meeting



COVID-19 Funding Update

February 21, 2022

Gaston County Schools

COVID Expenditures

COVID Retention Bonus:

Due to the additional duties and responsibilities that educational employees have endured since the inception of the pandemic, a number of NC school districts have paid a COVID retention bonus to their employees. This payment is allowable under Federal ESSER guidelines. We recommend that we also pay all eligible employees a COVID retention bonus as detailed in the following slides.

Gaston County Schools

COVID Expenditures

Employee Eligibility:

Must meet ALL of the following criteria:

- Must have been hired prior to January 10, 2022
- Must be a permanent employee (contract, interim and temporary employees are NOT eligible)
- Works at least 50% on a regular basis
- Employed at the time the bonus is paid

Gaston County Schools

COVID Retention Bonus Proposal

Financial Impact:

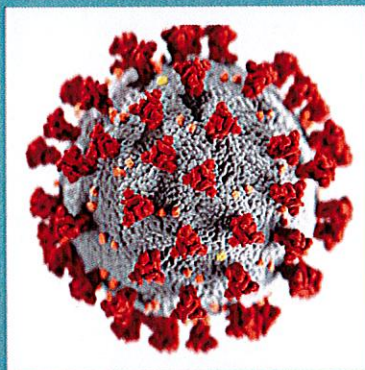
- Recommended amount: \$1,000 (one time payment)
- Estimated number of eligible employees: 3,800
- Estimated amount paid: \$3.8 million
- Proposed pay date: June 2022

Gaston County Schools

Thank you

Gaston County Schools

Gaston County Board of Education Meeting



COVID-19 Funding Update

February 21, 2022

Gaston County Schools

February 21, 2022
Operations Committee Report

The Operations Committee met on Monday, February 7, 2022 at 4:00pm in the Central Office Board Room. Our committee consists of Chairman – Lee Dedmon, Kevin Collier, Dot Cherry, and Brent Moore.

Our agenda and discussions included the following:

1. Our Executive Director of Auxiliary Services, Dr. Morgen Houchard, gave a construction update for Grier Middle School. The land survey has been completed and we are awaiting the results of the soil borings. LS3P, our architect, is currently working on site and floor plan concepts as well as the construction schedule.
2. Dr. Houchard also gave us an update on all Auxiliary Services Departments (Transportation, School Nutrition, Facilities and Safety and Security).
3. The Committee was informed that an offer has been made to purchase the residential property we own in Dallas for the tax value amount of \$126,310. The upset bid process timeline ends February 14, 2022. If there are no upset bids, the Committee will recommend that the Board approve the sale of this property at their February meeting.
4. The Committee reviewed and recommends approval of the following contracts:
 - a. Hunter Huss High School Pavement Improvements;
 - b. Gardner Park Pavement Improvements;
 - c. Catawba Heights Pavement Improvements;
 - d. East Gaston High School Pavement Improvements and
 - e. High School Sports Fields Upgrades.

These contracts appear on the Consent Agenda.

Our next committee meeting is Monday, March 7, 2022 at 4:00pm in the Board Room.

**Gaston County Schools
BOE Curriculum & Instruction Committee
Report for Regular Meeting on February 10, 2022**

Members Present:

Dot Guthrie, Robbie Lovelace, Justin Davis, Steve Hall

The meeting was called to order at 12:01 PM.

Staff presented the Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Plan for information. The AIG Plan must be approved by the Board of Education every three years. The plan for 2022 - 2025 includes proposed changes and updates. The AIG Plan is on the consent agenda for approval.

Student Support Services shared information about GCS student and staff self-care and self-regulation. The department will apply for a grant to purchase items and create one wellness basket for each school to support self-regulation and self-care among students and staff.

The Executive Director of Student Support Services has been working closely with the Counselor PLC (professional learning community) Leads. Professional development will be provided for all counselors this summer. Dates and topics for the face-to-face sessions will be reviewed with counselors by mid-March.

The department of high school instruction provided an update on Math 1 support. Reviewing data from 8th grade identifies the layer of support needed for each student. A structured 90 minute class period allows for direct instruction and data collection to show evidence of learning. Gaston Blended supports rigorous curriculum, responsive instruction, and balanced assessment for students.

The meeting adjourned at 1:08 PM.



Gaston County Schools

Social Emotional Learning and School Mental Health SBOE Policy SHLT 003 Update

February 21, 2022

Gaston County Schools

SB-476/SHLT-003 (School Based MH Policy)

Local School Mental Health Improvement Plan

- Presented to the BOE and Adopted on 5/17/2021
- Submitted to DPI on September 15, 2021
- Yearly review on 2/21/2022

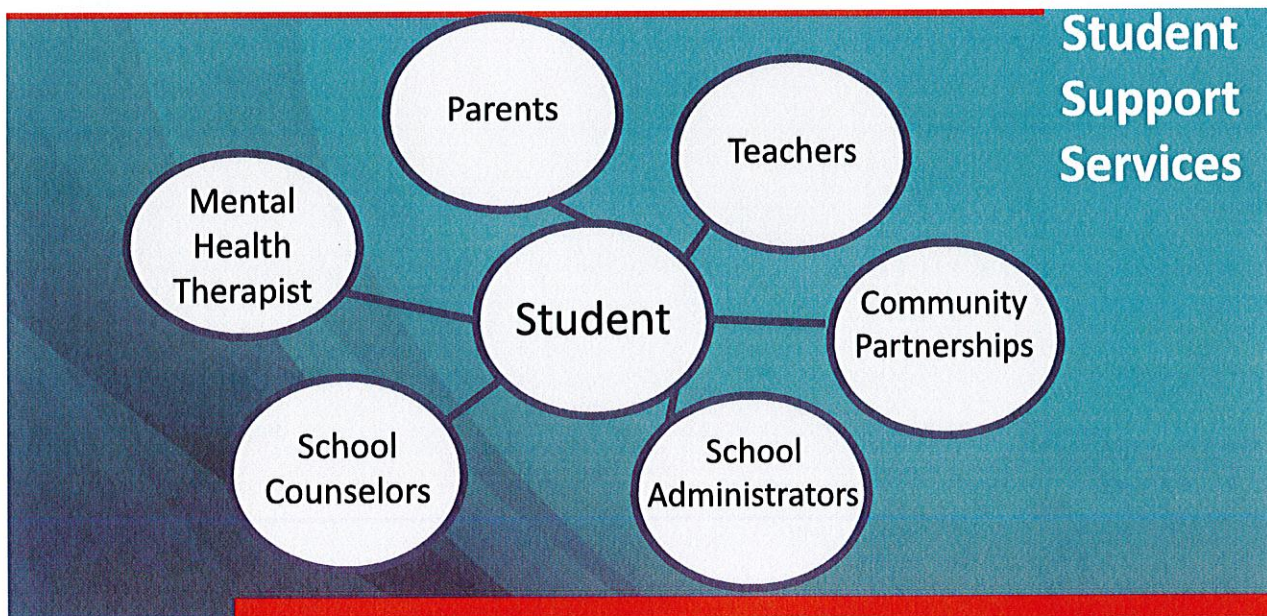
Gaston County Schools

SB-476/SHLT-003 (School Based MH Policy)

Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health Professional Development

- Youth Mental Health
- Suicide Prevention
- Substance Abuse
- Teenage Dating Violence
- Child Sexual Abuse Prevention
- Human Trafficking Prevention

Gaston County Schools



Gaston County Schools

Next Steps

- Learner Profiles
- Graduation plans
- Individual / Small Group and Whole Group Counseling
- RFS process with our School Based Therapy Group
- Grant promoting student safety and mental health

Gaston County Schools



Gaston County Schools

Social Emotional Learning and School Mental Health SBOE Policy SHLT 003 Update

Board of Education Meeting

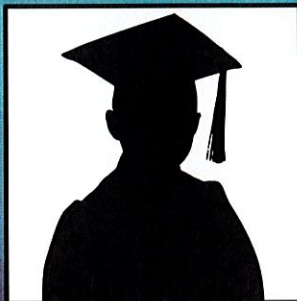
Gaston County Schools

Gaston County Schools Board of Education Meeting

Academic Services
February 21, 2022

Gaston County Schools

Gaston County Schools' Portrait of a Graduate



Gaston County Schools

Our Why

The vision of Gaston County Schools is to **inspire success and a lifetime of learning.**

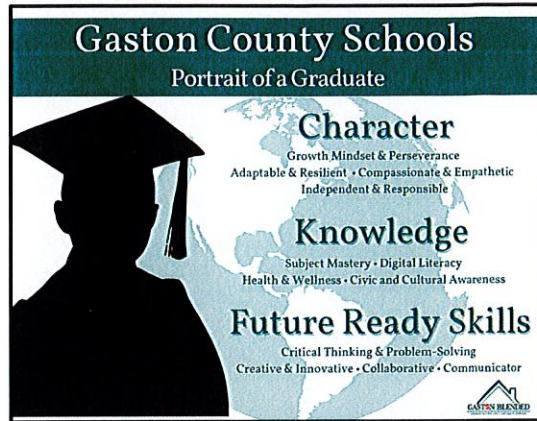
Gaston County Schools

Our How

Through **outstanding employees** and **community partners**, Gaston County Schools provides innovative educational opportunities for all students in a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Gaston County Schools

Our What



Gaston County Schools

Learner Profile

A student specific document that helps teachers and school staff learn more about their students in order to personalize their learning experiences.

[illegible]

Gaston County Schools

2022

**5th
Grade**

**7th
Grade**

**9th
Grade**

Learner Profiles

Gaston County Schools

Beginning 2023

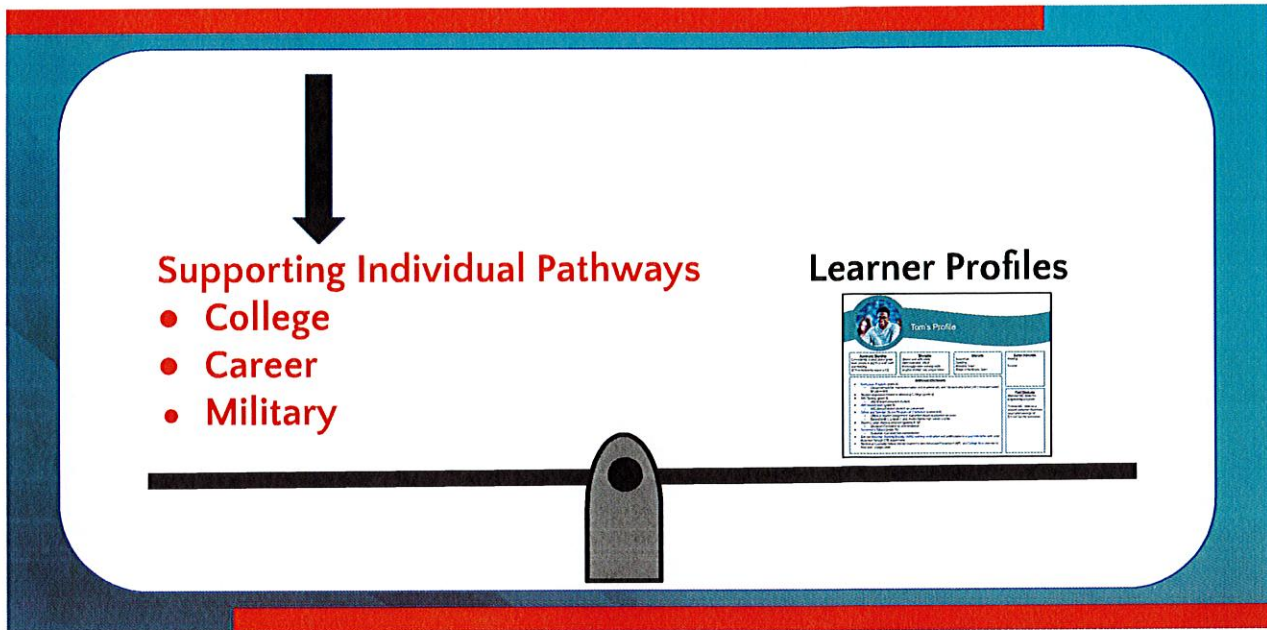
**K-5th
Grade**

**6th-8th
Grade**

**9th-12th
Grade**

Learner Profiles

Gaston County Schools



Gaston County Schools

Gaston County Schools Board of Education Meeting

Academic Services
February 21, 2022

Gaston County Schools