

GASTON COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR SESSION



Shaping Our Future

943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC 28054
March 18, 2024
5:30 p.m.

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Agenda Adoption

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Consideration of Formal Agenda for Monday, March 18, 2024.

Roberts Rules of Order (Revised) adoption of Agenda for meeting sequence and structure.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

Adoption of Agenda

Policy Implications:

None

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: Dr. Morgen A. Houchard

Department: Superintendent

GASTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Jeff K. Ramsey – Chairman

Dot Cherry – Vice Chairman

Josh Crisp, Dallas Township
Lee Dedmon, Gastonia Township
Dot Guthrie, Gastonia Township
Tod Kinlaw, South Point Township



Robbie Lovelace, Cherryville Township
Brent Moore, Crowders Mountain Township
A.M. Stephens, III, Riverbend Township

Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Superintendent
943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC 28054

Monday, March 18, 2024

5:30 p.m.

Agenda

Regular Meeting

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Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Good News

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

Each month, the Communications/Public Information Department compiles "Good News" about our schools, students, employees, and community partners. See attachment.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

None

Policy Implications:

None

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: Todd Hagans, Chief Communications Officer

Department: Communications/Public Information (Superintendent's Office)

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 NCML conference in Charlotte. Each year, the Board of Directors of the NCML 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.

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Classroom Moment

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

The Instructional Technology Facilitators work closely with our teachers to foster a classroom where students actively use technology in their learning to analyze, build, produce, and create. An East Gaston High School biology teacher and her students will share how they used stop motion animation to create videos on cell division.

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

N/A

Policy Implications:

N/A

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 3: Every employee uses innovative practices to serve all students, parents, and other stakeholders.

Submitted by: Aaron W. Slutsky, Chief Technology Officer

Department: TSS

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Public Expression

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

The Board of Education agenda has been made available to the public for review. Citizens wishing to speak before the Board about an agenda item or other topic may do so during Public Expression.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

The Board of Education will establish time (30 minutes) at the beginning of the regular monthly meeting for Public Expression. Any citizen not heard during this time may be heard at the end of the business session.

Policy Implications:

None

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: Todd Hagans, Chief Communications Officer

Department: Communications/Public Information (Superintendent's Office)

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Approval/Correction of Minutes

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Approval of Minutes of:

February 19, 2024 (Regular Meeting)

February 28, 2024 (Legislative Breakfast Meeting)

Efficient consideration of matters pertinent to the successful operation of the school system.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

None

Policy Implications:

Validation of Board Proceedings.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: Dr. Morgen A. Houchard

Department: Superintendent

Gaston County Schools
Board of Education
Monday, February 19, 2024
Meeting 5:30 p.m.
Regular Meeting

MINUTES

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a regular session on Monday, February 19, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Room, 943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC. 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 Ramsey, Vice Chairman Dot Cherry, Josh Crisp, Lee Dedmon, Dot Guthrie, Tod Kinlaw (absent), Robbie Lovelace, Brent Moore, and A.M. Stephens III.

Additional attendees include: Superintendent Dr. Morgen Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Interim Associate Superintendent Dr. Beth Folger and Associate Superintendent Gary Hoskins, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Chief Technology Officer Aaron Slutsky and Board Clerk Dana Luoto.

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

Chairman Ramey welcomed Dr. Morgen A. Houchard as our new Superintendent.

Invocation

Dr. Benjamin Hinton, Pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church, led the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Superintendent Houchard led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Adoption - Action

The Board considered Agenda Adoption – Action

Motion to adopt the Agenda as presented was made by Mr. Brent Moore; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry; motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

Good News – Information

Mr. Todd Hagans welcomed and introduced our new superintendent of schools, Dr. Morgen A. Houchard.

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized Giselle Barr and Joyce Zhu from Cramerton Middle School and Isabella Caicedo from Stuart W. Cramer High School. These students were winners in the prestigious Mid-Carolina Scholastic Art and Writing Awards competition. This year, we have one Gold Key, one Silver Key, and one Honorable Mention winner.

Our Gold Key winner is Giselle Barr of Cramerton Middle School, who is the recipient of the Gold Key for her piece titled "Bartholomew."

Our Silver Key winner is Isabella Caicedo of Stuart W. Cramer High School, who is a recipient of a Silver Key for her piece titled "Acceptance."

Our Honorable Mention winner is Joyce Zhu of Cramerton Middle School earned an honorable mention award for her work titled "Chamelieonized Chameleon."

Giselle and Isabella will have their artwork on display at the Mint Museum in uptown Charlotte from March 1 until April 14 as part of the 2024 Scholastic Gold and Silver Key Exhibition.

Mr. A.M. Stephens III presented a Certificate of Recognition to each student.

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized Lawrence Martin —district spelling bee winner and Cassidy Allen — district spelling bee runner-up. Lawrence of Cramerton Middle School emerged from a field of 38 students to win the district competition. He correctly spelled the word – 'cataclysmic' – to earn the opportunity to compete in March at the Carolina Panthers Regional Spelling Bee in Charlotte. The top four finishers in the regional competition will receive an invitation to advance to the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Cassidy Allen of Bessemer City Middle School impressed us last year with a top-five finish in the spelling bee when she was a student at Bessemer City Central Elementary, and this year, she finished the competition as the runner-up.

Ms. Dot Cherry presented a Certificate of Recognition to Lawrence and Cassidy.

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized Mahogany Spikes and Camryn Massey Ashbrook High School students, who won individual 3A state indoor track and field championships. Mahogany Spikes, who placed first in the girls' 500-meter race, and senior Camryn Massey, who broke the indoor shot put record with a throw of 45 feet and 6.25 inches to win the state title.

Mrs. Dot Guthrie presented a Certificate of Recognition to Mahogany and Camryn.

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized William Peyton, Andrew Taylor, Graham Kines, and Beckett Tabor Forestview High School students who worked as a team to win a 3A state championship in swimming. These student-athletes won the state championship in the 200-yard medley relay. They also came in third in the 400-yard freestyle relay. Overall, Forestview came in fourth at the championship swim meet.

Mrs. Robbie Lovelace presented a Certificate of Recognition to each student.

Chairman Ramsey recognized Mr. Todd Hagans who expressed appreciation to School Board Members in recognition of School Board Recognition Month. Each year, we take pride in recognizing and honoring the citizens who serve on the Gaston County Board of Education. This year to help us recognize and pay tribute to our Board of Education Members and Superintendent Houchard, we chose an elementary school for each Board Member and our Superintendent and had a class at the school "adopt" each Board Member. Representatives from the schools are here to present a framed picture of the class to each Board Member and our Superintendent along with a special "thank-you" card.

To recognize Chairman **Jeff Ramsey**, who is an At-Large Member of the Board of Education, is Linley Richmond who is a student in Amanda Matz's third grade class at North Belmont Elementary School. With them is their principal Justin Beam.

To recognize Vice Chairman **Dot Cherry**, who is an At-Large Member of the Board of Education, is Khalif Abdus-Salaam who is a student in Kaylin Weathers' fourth grade class at Gardner Park Elementary School. With them is their principal Lynn Stamey.

To recognize **Josh Crisp**, who represents the Dallas Township, is Harper Haywood who is a student in Jamie Brackett's second grade class at Costner Elementary School. With them is their principal Jada Owenby.

To recognize **Lee Dedmon**, who represents the Gastonia Township, is Mekhi Lowery who is a student in Crystal Hall's kindergarten class at Woodhill Elementary School. With them is their principal Erik Barton.

To recognize **Dot Guthrie**, who represents the Gastonia Township, is Kassie White and Evonna Smith who are students in Jessie Anderson's first grade class at Robinson Elementary School. With them is their principal Emily Poag.

To recognize **Tod Kinlaw**, who represents the South Point Township, is Evie Tolleson who is a student in Miranda Graham's fourth grade class at Belmont Central Elementary School. With them is their principal Aimee Tolleson.

Chairman Ramsey accepted for Mr. Kinlaw.

To recognize **Robbie Lovelace**, who represents the Cherryville Township, is Sarabeth Proctor, Ella Avery and Hailey Canipe who are students in Amanda Buchanan's fifth grade class at W. Blaine Beam Intermediate School. With them is their principal Josh White.

To recognize **Brent Moore**, who represents Crowders Mountain Township, is principal Dr. April Conley from Bessemer City Central Elementary School.

To recognize **A.M. Stephens III**, who represents the Riverbend Township, is River Guyton and Ari Williams who are students in Ashley Smith's kindergarten class at Pinewood Elementary School. With them is their principal Kimberly Reese.

To recognize **Superintendent Houchard**, is Ombree Rankin who is a student in Amy Giles' second grade class at H.H. Beam Elementary School. With them is their principal Beth Crosby.

Mr. Todd Hagans congratulated our Board of Education members for once again receiving the Gold Bell Award from the North Carolina School Boards Association (NCSBA). To receive this award, each Board Member must earn 12 hours of training during the 2022-2023 NCSBA academic year.

Classroom Moment – Information

Chairman Ramsey recognized Mrs. Kathleen D’Avria. In recognition of Black History Month, Mrs. D’Avria introduced students from York Chester Middle School and Lingerfeldt Elementary School who shared what they have learned and created through music, poetry and speeches in honoring the amazing contributions of black Americans and recognizing pivotal events in our history.

Public Expression – Information

Janet Davis
1006 N. Morris Street
Gastonia, NC 28052

Kevin Eudy
1021 Orchard Grove Court
Belmont, NC 28012
Re: Policy

Approval/Correction of Minutes - Action

Motion to adopt minutes of January 8, 2024 (Special Meeting), January 26, 2024 (Regular Meeting) and January 26, 2024 (Board Retreat) as presented was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Mrs. Dot Guthrie; motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

EOG/EOC Remediation – Information

Chairman Ramsey recognized Mr. Michael Foust who presented a PowerPoint on EOG/EOC Summer Testing Program.

(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
 - None

Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Mr. Lee Dedmon; seconded by Mr. Josh Crisp motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

Superintendent’s Comments

Superintendent Houchard thanked the Gaston County Education Foundation for sponsoring another successful “Are You Smarter Than a Gaston County Fifth Grader?” competition on February 8. Congratulations to Kiser Elementary and its business partner, Next Generation, for winning the competition, and a highlight was the presentation of a \$12,800 check to the Education Foundation from Tindol Subaru as part of the dealership’s “Share the Love” campaign. Proceeds from the “Are You Smarter” competition are used by the Education Foundation to support the Ron L. Ensley grants for teachers.

Superintendent Houchard reminded parents that the deadline to submit a school choice application is Friday, March 8 at 5:00 p.m. You can go to our School Choice webpage to learn about our magnet schools and academies and submit an application online. Additionally, if you have a child who is eligible for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten for next school year, you can go to our website now and register your child.

Superintendent Houchard mentioned several events happening in our schools to celebrate National Black History Month:

- Wednesday, February 28 at 9:00 a.m., Lingerfeldt Elementary will have a Black History Wax Museum and Art Gallery Walk.
- Thursday, February 29 at 5:30 p.m. York Chester Middle School will present “Voice of Victory, an evening of Black History in Beats and Verses”. The event will feature poetry, rap and blues music, and an African drum circle.

For the week of February 26, Hawks Nest STEAM Academy is promoting African-American authors as the school celebrates Read Across America Week and Black History Month.

Superintendent Houchard announced that our annual RoboGASTON robotics competition will be held on Saturday, March 2 at Forestview High School beginning at 9:30 a.m. The event will feature more than 100 elementary and middle school students involved in robot programming. The competition runs throughout the morning with the presentation of awards at lunchtime.

Superintendent Houchard announced that Thursday, March 7 is Parent-Teacher Conference Day for our schools. Students will be dismissed early, and conferences will be held from 1:00 until 7:00 p.m. To schedule a conference, please contact your child’s school or teacher. Friday, March 8 is an optional teacher workday, which means no school for students.

Superintendent Houchard announced that last week was Bus Driver Appreciation Week, and he thanked all of our bus drivers and transportation personnel for their hard work and commitment to keeping our fleet of school buses rolling – 12,000 miles each day across Gaston County transporting more than 15,000 students to and from school.

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 Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

The Board went into Closed Session at 6:48 p.m. and after a brief break Closed Session began at 7:05 p.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 7:17 p.m.

Motion

The Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mrs. Dot Guthrie that the Board

Award a contract for Associate Superintendent of Academic Services through June 30, 2027 to the following:

Tonya Kales

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (8-0)

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. Brent Moore; seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon that the Board
Award a one year contract extension through June 30, 2027 to the following:

Gary Hoskins, Associate Superintendent

Sonya McGraw, Attorney

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (8-0)

Adjournment

All business having been conducted, Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Josh Crisp; seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Approved:

Jeff K. Ramsey, Chairman
[Corporate Seal]

Morgen A. Houchard, Secretary

Date Approved: _____

Gaston County Legislative Meeting
Wednesday, February 28, 2024
Meeting 8:30 a.m.

Minutes

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a Legislative Meeting on Wednesday, February 28, 2024. Those Board Members in attendance were: Chairman Jeff K. Ramsey, Vice Chairman Dot Cherry, Josh Crisp, Lee Dedmon, A.M. Stephens III (left meeting at 9:00 a.m.), (Dot Guthrie, Tod Kinlaw, Brent Moore and Robbie Lovelace absent).

Additional attendees from Gaston County Board of Education included: Superintendent, Morgen A. Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Associate Superintendent Gary Hoskins, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans and Board Clerk Dana Luoto.

Attendees from the Legislative Delegation included: Senator Ted Alexander, Representative Kelly Hastings, Representative Donnie Loftis, Senator Brad Overcash and Representative John Torbett.

Chairman Ramsey welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Mr. A.M. Stephens III led the invocation.

Chairman Ramsey opened the floor to the Legislators and Board Members to make introductions, state the committees they are on and other remarks concerning education.

Items discussed included: Career & Technical Education (CTE), Career and College Promise, Advancement Placement, Artificial Intelligence and Teacher Pay and Retention.

Chairman Ramsey thanked everyone for coming and commented that we are fortunate to have good working relationships with our local delegation and we look forward to working together in the future concerning education matters.

The Gaston County Legislative Delegation Meeting adjourned at 9:47 a.m.

Approved:

Jeff K. Ramsey, Chairman
[Corporate Seal]

Morgen A. Houchard, Secretary

Date Approved: _____

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Operations Committee Report

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

The Gaston County Board of Education's Operations Committee meets regularly to discuss operations-related projects and issues. The Committee met on March 4, 2024. A report of the Operations Committee's actions and discussions will be made at the Board meeting by a member of the Committee.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

None

Policy Implications:

The Board will be informed of Operations Committee discussions and information.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Gary F. Hoskins, CFO and
Associate Superintendent
for Finance and Operations

Department: Operations

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Curriculum & Instruction Committee Report

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

The Gaston County Board of Education's Curriculum and Instruction Committee will report to the Board regarding current committee projects and issues.

A Curriculum and Instruction Committee member will present a report of committee activities occurring since the last Board of Education Meeting.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

None

Policy Implications:

Board will be informed of Curriculum and Instruction projects and issues.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: Curriculum and Instruction Committee

Department: Curriculum and Instruction

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: High School Exam Schedules — Spring 2023-2024
Traditional High Schools and Gaston Early Colleges

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

High Schools are required by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to administer final exams for all courses. The NCDPI Accountability Department requires that exams be taken during the last five days of the semester. The exam schedule covers the administration of state End of Course tests, Career and Technical Education exams, and teacher-made exams. The spring semester for the Early College high schools ends on May 17, 2024. The spring semester for the traditional high schools ends on May 22, 2024.

Early College High School exam schedule: May 13-17, 2024

Traditional High School exam schedule: May 16-22, 2024

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

Approve the final exam schedule as presented.

Policy Implications:

N/A

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 2. Every member of our diverse population has the opportunity for individualized instruction.

Submitted by: Rebekka Powers,
Chief Accountability Officer

Department: Academic Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Annual Engagement Letter with Independent Auditors

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Anderson Smith & Wike PLLC (ASW) has provided audit services to Gaston County Schools for a number of years. However, last year our primary audit partner retired and was not replaced. As a result, ASW does not have sufficient resources to conduct our audit for 2023-2024. However, we were able to receive a quote from Forvis to conduct our financial statement audit for 2023-2024. Forvis was created through a merger with Dixon Hughes, a former independent auditor for GCS. Forvis has recently conducted audits for the five largest school districts in North Carolina and is the 8th largest accounting firm in the US. The quote from Forvis to conduct the financial statement audit for 2023-2024 is \$49,000. Last year ASW charged \$47,000 for preparing the annual audit. Forvis will also charge \$2,000 for a one-time ESSER audit and \$4,000 in travel costs.

Fiscal Implications:

The annual audit fees for fiscal year 2023-2024 are projected to cost \$55,000.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the contract and engagement letter with Forvis to perform audit services for the fiscal year 2023-2024.

Policy Implications:

Board policy 8310 – Annual Independent Audit.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Gary F. Hoskins, Associate
Superintendent and CFO

Department: Finance

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Superintendent's Budget Request 2024-2025

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

The school district is required by G.S. §115C-425 to operate under an annual balanced budget resolution. The 2024-2025 budget process began with a budget survey to GCS stakeholders in December 2023. Data obtained from the budget surveys was presented to the Board at the Board Retreat in January 2024. Also, Fund Managers prepared a local budget request for their area of supervision in February and March 2024. The Superintendent's Budget Request is based on information received from our stakeholders and Fund Managers. The final budget request will be presented to the Board for approval on April 15, 2024, and will be submitted to the County by May 15, 2024, as required by State law.

Fiscal Implications:

The 2023-2024 local operating budget for GCS is \$53.0 million and the respective capital outlay for GCS is \$2.2 million. The Superintendent's Budget Request for 2024-2025 is \$60.2 million for operating funds and \$6.7 million for capital outlay.

Recommendation:

N/A

Policy Implications:

Board Policy 8100 – Budget Planning and Adoption

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Gary F. Hoskins, CFO and
Associate Superintendent

Department: Finance

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Consent Agenda

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Approval of the Consent Agenda by the Board for the following items:

- A. Recommended Personnel
- B. Budget Amendments & Budget Transfers
- C. Construction/Repair Change Orders
- D. EOG/EOC Remediation
- E. Reduction in Force – Strategic Planning
- F. Contracts
 - Microsoft Software Agreement
 - Student Chromebook Purchase
 - Google Workspace Agreement
 - Stuart W. Cramer High School – Wall Design
 - Belmont Middle School – Intercom Upfit
 - Stanley Middle School – Intercom Upfit
 - Hawks Nest STEAM Academy – HVAC Replacement Units
 - Holbrook Middle School – Athletic Field Renovation
 - Freezer/Cooler Replacement Architectural & Engineering Design Services for
Hunter Huss High, Mount Holly Middle, W.C. Friday Middle, Sherwood
Elementary and Catawba Heights Elementary Schools
 - Agency Contracts

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

Consent items will be adopted with a single motion, second and vote, unless a request for removal from the Consent Agenda is heard from a Board member.

Policy Implications:

None

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: Dr. Morgen A. Houchard

Department: Superintendent

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Recommended Personnel

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

In accordance with the provisions of G.S. 115C-276(j), "It shall be the duty of the Superintendent to recommend and the Board of Education to elect all principals, teachers and other school personnel in the administrative unit." It is also within the powers of the Board to hear requests for approved leave, retirement and resignations or terminations in accordance with employment and dismissal regulations.

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

Approve personnel as recommended.

Policy Implications:

Necessary and appropriate personnel will be provided to assure successful administration of schools.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Dr. Morgen A. Houchard

Department: Human Resources

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Budget Amendments and Budget Transfers

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Budget amendments are needed to adjust the approved budget to reflect actual changes in revenue and budget transfers are needed to transfer money to proper expenditure codes as requested by fund managers.

Fiscal Implications:

Makes adjustments to the 2023-2024 budget.

Recommendation:

Approval of the attached listing of recommended budget amendments and transfers.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 8300 Fiscal Management Standards

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Gary F. Hoskins, Associate
Superintendent and CFO

Department: Finance

**Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations**

**2023-2024 Budget Resolution - February
Transfers Between Functions**

State Public School Fund

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
51000	Regular Instructional Services	13,664	
52000	Special Population Services	512,255	
54000	School Leadership Services	448,714	
58000	School-Based Support Services	709,357	
61000	Support and Development Services	19,088	
62000	Special Population Support and Development Services	165,000	
64000	Technology Support Services	11,733	
65000	Operational Support Services		834,986
66000	Financial and Human Resource Services	37,569	
67000	Accountability Services		58,662
68000	System-Wide Pupil Support Services		1,021,371
69000	Policy, Leadership and Communication/Public Information Services		2,361
		<u>1,917,380</u>	<u>1,917,380</u>

Explanation: These transfers adjust budgeted amounts per requests from fund managers/principals.

**Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations**

**2023-2024 Budget Resolution - February
Transfers Between Functions**

Local Current Expense Fund

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
51000	Regular Instructional Services	2,134,531	
52000	Special Population Services		63,397
53000	Alternative Programs and Services	22,146	
54000	School Leadership Services	916,711	
55000	Co-Curricular Services	26,120	
58000	School-Based Support Services		612,276
61000	Support and Development Services		337,881
62000	Special Population Support and Development Services		23,288
63000	Alternative Programs and Services - Support and Development Services		40,153
64000	Technology Support Services		167,243
65000	Operational Support Services		1,552,583
66000	Financial and Human Resource Services	1,317	
67000	Accountability Services		71,917
68000	System-Wide Pupil Support Services		86,087
69000	Policy, Leadership and Communication/Public Information Services		145,998
		<u>3,100,824</u>	<u>3,100,824</u>

Explanation: These transfers adjust budgeted amounts per requests from fund managers/principals.

Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations

2023-2024 Budget Resolution - February
Transfers Between Functions

Federal Grants Fund

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
53000	Alternative Programs and Services	57,747	
58000	School-Based Support Services	18,324	
65000	Operational Support Services		76,071
		<u>76,071</u>	<u>76,071</u>

Explanation: These transfers adjust budgeted amounts per requests from fund managers/principals.

**Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations**

**2023-2024 Budget Resolution - February
Transfers Between Functions**

Restricted Grants Fund

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
65000	Operational Support Services		3
66000	Financial and Human Resource Services	3	
		3	3

Explanation: These transfers adjust budgeted amounts per requests from fund managers/principals.

**Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations**

**2023-2024 Budget Resolution - February
Proposed Expenditures and Sources of Revenue**

State Public School Fund

#	Function	Description	Expense Increase (Decrease)	Revenue Increase (Decrease)
1	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		47,160
	69000	Policy, Leadership and Communication/Public Information Service: This amendment adjusts the funding for the Non-Contributory Employee Benefits - FY24 (PRC0009)	47,160	
2	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		638,580
	58000	School-Based Support Services This amendment budgets the School Safety Grant Allotment - Allotment Revision #40 - FY24 (PRC0040)	638,580	
3	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		1,508
	51000	Regular Instructional Services This amendment adjusts the Principal and Other Teacher Performance Bonus Allotment - Allotment Revision #36 - FY24 (PRC0048)	1,508	
4	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		(18,974)
	65000	Operational Support Services This amendment adjusts the Transportation of Pupils allotment - FY24 (PRC0056)	(18,974)	
5	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		443,588
	52000	Special Population Services This amendment budgets funds for the Children with Disabilities allotment- Allotment Revision #36 - FY24 (PRC0063)	443,588	
6	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		(109,992)
	54000	School Leadership Services This amendment budgets funds for the Assistant Principal Interns allotment- Allotment Revision #36 - FY24 (PRC0067)	(109,992)	
Total State Public School Fund Amendments			<u>1,001,870</u>	<u>1,001,870</u>

**Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations**

**2023-2024 Budget Resolution - February
Proposed Expenditures and Sources of Revenue**

Federal Current Expense Fund

#	Function	Description	Expense	Revenue
			Increase (Decrease)	Increase (Decrease)
1	36000	Federal Revenue		43,943
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	42,583	
	81000	Payments to Other Governmental Units	1,360	
	This budgets adjusts the Career and Technical Education - CTE Program Grant Allotment - FY24 (PRC0017)			
2	36000	Federal Revenue		590,962
	52000	Special Population Services	579,174	
	81000	Payments to Other Governmental Units	11,788	
	This budgets adjusts the IDEA - Children With Disabilities Grant Allotment - FY24 (PRC0060)			
3	36000	Federal Revenue		13,500
	52000	Special Population Services	11,797	
	58000	School-Based Support Services	1,285	
	81000	Payments to Other Governmental Units	418	
	This budgets adjusts the IDEA - Special Needs Targeted Assistance Grant Allotment - FY24 (PRC0118)			
4	36000	Federal Revenue		3,000
	52000	Special Population Services	3,000	
	This budgets adjusts the IDEA - Preschool Targeted Assistance Grant Allotment - FY24 (PRC0119)			
Total Local Current Expense Fund Account			<u>651,405</u>	<u>651,405</u>

Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations

2023-2024 Budget Resolution - February
Proposed Expenditures and Sources of Revenue

Restricted Grants Fund

#	Function	Description	Expense Increase (Decrease)	Revenue Increase (Decrease)
1	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		450,213
	68000	System-Wide Pupil Support Services	450,213	
		This amendment adjusts funds for the Non-Instructional Support Personnel allotment - FY24 (PRC0003)		
2	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		1,260
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	1,260	
		This amendment adjusts the Career Technical Education - Program Support funds - FY24 (PRC0014)		
3	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		606,090
	65000	Operational Support Services	606,090	
		This amendment budgets funds for Transportation of Pupils allotment - FY24 (PRC0056)		
4	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		610
	65000	Operational Support Services	610	
		This amendment adjusts the Cramerton Middle School funds - FY24 (PRC0380)		
5	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		1,600
	53000	Alternative Programs and Services	1,600	
		This amendment budgets funds for the ASPIRE PLUS Grant - FY24 (PRC0610)		
6	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		46,698
	65500	Operational Support Services	46,698	
		This amendment adjust funds received for the Transportation Activity Bus Grant - FY24 (PRC0706)		
7	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		1,500
	65000	Operational Support Services	1,500	
		This amendment budgets funds received for the Sale of Scrap Metal Grant - FY24 (PRC0883)		

Restricted Grants Fund

#	Function	Description	Expense	Revenue
			Increase (Decrease)	Increase (Decrease)
8	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		20,000
	65000	Operational Support Services	20,000	
		This amendment adjusts funds for the Duke Energy Solar Lease Grant - FY24 (PRC0884)		
9	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		45,000
	69000	Policy, Leadership and Communication/Public Information Services	45,000	
		This amendment budgets funds received for the Print Shop Grant - FY24 (PRC0900)		
Total Restricted Grants Fund Amendments			1,172,971	1,172,971

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Construction/Repair Change Orders

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Attached is a listing of construction and repair change orders that were submitted since the last Board meeting. Any change orders that were less than \$100,000 were approved by the Superintendent or his designee in accordance with Board Policy 9030 – Facility Construction. Change orders greater than \$100,000 must be approved by the Board.

Fiscal Implications:

All change orders were prefunded prior to recommendation for approval.

Recommendation:

Approval of the attached listing of construction/repair change orders.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 9030 Facility Construction

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Gary F. Hoskins, CFO and
Associate Superintendent
for Finance and Operations

Department: Operations

GCS CHANGE ORDER NOTIFICATION

In accordance with GCS Board Policy 9030 - Facility Construction, all construction and repair change orders approved by the Superintendent shall be reported to the Board. The project change requests (PCR) and change orders (CO) listed below were approved by the Superintendent, or his designee, since the previous Board meeting.

Presented to BOE	Contractor's Name	Project name	Description of Change	Contract Amount		Change Order Amount	
3-18-24	None						

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: EOG/EOC Remediation

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Students who do not meet proficiency on the End of Grade (EOG) and End of Course (EOC) will attend summer school. Additional learning opportunities will be provided for the students.

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

Allow students to participate in End of Grade (EOG) and End of Course (EOC) summer school as needed.

Policy Implications:

N/A

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 2. Every member of our diverse population has the opportunity for individualized instruction.

Submitted by: Rebekka Powers

Department: Accountability

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Reduction in Force — Strategic Planning

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

NC General Statute 115-325(e)(2) and Gaston County Schools' Board Policy Code: 7820 Reduction in Force: Teachers and School Administrators require the Superintendent to present to the Board of Education a recommendation for a possible reduction in force based on 1) system reorganization, 2) declining enrollment, and/or 3) financial exigency. Board Policy Code 7820 describes the required preliminary determination, criteria and procedures for determining when a reduction in force may be implemented.

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval by the Board to implement the Reduction in Force Policy, if the criteria documented in the respective Board Policy are met.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 7820 Reduction in Force: Teachers and School Administrators

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Gary F. Hoskins, Associate
Superintendent and CFO

Department: Human Resources

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Contracts and Expenditures >\$100,000

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

The attached listing of contracts and expenditures more than \$100,000 was reviewed by staff and recommended for approval by the Board, or are contracts less than \$100,000 but recommended to the Board for approval.

Fiscal Implications:

All contracts and expenditures will be paid using bond funding, capital proceeds or operational savings.

Recommendation:

Approval

Policy Implications:

Board Policy 8640

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Gary F. Hoskins, CFO and
Associate Superintendent
for Finance and Operations

Department: Finance and Operations

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Microsoft Software Agreement

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Microsoft EES (Enrollment for Education) is the Microsoft Volume licensing agreement for academic institutions with 1000 or more users. This agreement provides the following items:

1. Windows operating system
2. Microsoft Office Suite
3. Active Directory (The software used to manage our Windows network)
4. Windows Server operating system.

Fiscal Implications:

TSS Budget for \$207,415.90. This is a current line item in the current TSS operational budget.

Recommendation:

Approve the purchase of the Microsoft EES.

Policy Implications:

None

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 3: Every employee uses innovative practices to serve all students, parents, and other stakeholders.

Submitted by: Aaron W. Slutsky, Chief Technology Officer

Department: TSS

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 03/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Student Chromebook Purchase

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Each year new Chromebooks must be purchased for Kindergarten and 1st grade students to maintain our sustainability plan. Our plan calls for refreshing approximately ¼ of the K-1 Chromebook fleet. We estimate needing 1,200 touchscreen Chromebooks for a total cost of \$365,640. These Chromebooks will be distributed to schools based on enrollment for Kindergarten and 1st grade students for the 2024-2025 school year.

Also, each year new Chromebooks must be purchased for students in 2nd, 6th, and 9th grade to maintain our sustainability plan. We estimate needing 7,200 Chromebooks for a total cost of \$2,101,450. These Chromebooks will be distributed to schools based on the enrollment of rising 2nd, 6th, and 9th grade students for the 2024-2025 school year.

Fiscal Implications:

Gaston County Schools will use a combination of ESSER, local, and state funds for the purchase of 1,200 touchscreen Chromebooks and 7,200 non-touchscreen Chromebooks. The total cost for both is \$2,467,090.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the purchase of student Chromebooks.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 3220 Technology in the Educational Program

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 3: Every employee uses innovative practices to serve all students, parents, and other stakeholders.

Submitted by: Aaron W. Slutsky, Chief Technology Officer

Department: TSS

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Google Workspace Agreement

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Gaston County Schools provides all staff and students a Google Workspace account. While the basic features of Google Workspace remain free, districts have the option to pay for advanced features. Gaston County Schools purchases the Google Workspace Education Plus edition. This provides the following additional features:

1. Advanced security center with additional security, controls, logs, and analytics
2. Premium Google Meet, Google Slides, and Google Docs features
3. Priority response from Google specialists

Fiscal Implications:

There is a current line item in the TSS operational budget in the amount of \$150,000.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the purchase of the Google Workspace Education Plus.

Policy Implications:

None

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 3: Every employee uses innovative practices to serve all students, parents, and other stakeholders.

Submitted by: Aaron W. Slutsky, Chief Technology Officer

Department: TSS

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Stuart W. Cramer High School — Wall Design

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☒ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

H2L Consulting Engineers was hired to complete engineering and design services for the failing retaining walls at the Stuart W. Cramer High School baseball and softball fields. The BOE entered into a contract with H2L in November 2022 to design a replacement for wall #4 (near baseball field) in the amount of \$308,800. In January 2024, Earth Improvement Technologies (EIT) reported that wall #3 (near softball field) would have to be replaced in the next 5-8 years and that there are likely cost advantages and less disruption if replaced at the same time as retaining wall #4. The design cost for wall #3 is projected to be \$256,756.

Fiscal Implications:

The cost of \$256,756 will be paid from funds received in the settlement with the original designer, contractor and builder of the existing retaining wall at Stuart W. Cramer High School.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the contract with H2L for the design of retaining wall #3.

Policy Implications:

N/A

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Jack Brooks, Interim Executive
Director of Auxiliary Services

Department: Auxiliary Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Belmont Middle School — Intercom Upfit

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

The current intercom at the school is unreliable and cannot be updated. The intercom has been a safety issue since the new school was established.

Fiscal Implications:

A bid of \$136,807 was received from Ronco Specializes Systems, Inc. to upfit the school's intercom, with SIP integration. The intercom upfit will be funded by the county bond proceeds.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends awarding Ronco Specializes Systems, Inc. the contract to upfit the intercom system at Belmont Middle School.

Policy Implications:

N/A

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Jack Brooks, Interim Executive Director of Auxiliary Services **Department:** Auxiliary Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Stanley Middle School — Intercom Upfit

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

The current intercom at the school is unreliable and cannot be updated. There have been multiple issues with the system over the last six months.

Fiscal Implications:

A bid of \$130,986 was received from Ronco Specializes Systems, Inc. to upfit the school's intercom, with SIP integration. The intercom upfit will be funded by county bond funds.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends awarding Ronco Specializes Systems, Inc. the contract to upfit the intercom system at Stanley Middle School.

Policy Implications:

N/A

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Jack Brooks, Interim Executive Director of Auxiliary Services **Department:** Auxiliary Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Hawks Nest STEAM Academy - HVAC Replacement Units

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☒ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

There are three (3) rooftop HVAC units that have failed at Hawks Nest. These units are past their workable lifespan and need to be replaced.

Fiscal Implications:

Three (3) vendors were contacted regarding the replacement of these three units. Two (2) vendors submitted bids. Carolina Air Solutions was the low bidder at a cost of \$110,777.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the contract with Carolina Air Solutions to replace the three (3) rooftop units at Hawk's Nest STEAM Academy.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 9200 Care and Maintenance of Facilities

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Jack Brooks, Interim Executive **Department:** Auxiliary Services
Director of Auxiliary Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Holbrook Middle School – Athletic Field Renovation

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☒ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

Upon completion of the approved Holbrook Middle School drainage project at their athletic field, an irrigation system and natural turf will have to be installed.

Fiscal Implications:

Invitations were sent to three (3) vendors with only Landmasters, Inc. submitting a bid of \$254,049. This will be paid using county bond funds.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends awarding Landmasters, Inc. the contract for Holbrook Middle School's athletic field renovation and irrigation installation.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 9200 Care and Maintenance of Facilities

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Jack Brooks, Interim Executive Director of Auxiliary Services **Department:** Auxiliary Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Freezer/Cooler Replacement Architectural & Engineering Design Services for Hunter Huss High, Mount Holly Middle, W.C. Friday Middle, Sherwood Elementary and Catawba Heights Elementary Schools

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Little Diversified Architectural Consulting was selected to complete the Architectural & Engineering Design Services for the freezer/cooler replacement at Hunter Huss High School, Mount Holly Middle School, W.C. Friday Middle School, Sherwood Elementary School and Catawba Heights Elementary School.

Fiscal Implications:

Hunter Huss High School (\$40,000), Mount Holly Middle School (\$54,500), W.C. Friday Middle School (\$28,000), Sherwood Elementary School (\$62,500) and Catawba Heights Elementary School (\$72,500) for a total cost of \$257,000. Each school will be bid separately and have a separate contract for the actual installation.

Recommendation:

Award Little Diversified Architectural Consulting the contracts for Architectural & Engineering Design Services for the freezer/cooler replacement at Hunter Huss High School, Mount Holly Middle School, W.C. Friday Middle School, Sherwood Elementary School and Catawba Heights Elementary School for a total cost of \$257,000.

Policy Implications:

N/A

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Jack Brooks

Department: Interim Executive Director
of Auxiliary Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Agency Contracts

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

On May 15, 2023, June 12, 2023, and September 18, 2023, the Gaston County School Board of Education approved contracting with the below outside agencies to provide a variety of services to support students. Through the Request for Proposal process, we moved forward with awarding contracts to a total of 22 vendors who submitted proposals. Due to increased student needs and increased employee vacancies, the Department for Exceptional Children is asking the Board of Education to consider increasing the potential amount to be expended from \$4,500,000 to \$6,000,000 for this year and the remaining two years of our three-year contract.

This was shared with the Curriculum and Instruction Committee on 3/4/2024 for information.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Aequor Healthcare Services | • Angels of Care |
| • ProCare therapy | • Bayda |
| • Stellar Therapy Services | • BrightStar |
| • Sunbelt Staffing | • Continuum |
| • Thrive Skilled Pediatric Care | • Gifted Health |
| • CTS Health | • Invo Health |
| • EDU Healthcare | • Maxim Nursing |
| • Maxim Health Staffing | • MGA |
| • Stepping Stones | • Positive Behavior Support Corp |
| • Support, INC | • Quantum |
| • AMN | • Speech Center |

Fiscal Implications:

We are seeking to continue our three-year contract with the above-named agencies with total annual implications for the Department for Exceptional Children not to exceed \$6,000,000.

Federal, state, and local funds will be used to support these contracts.

Recommendation:

Approve the request to increase the potential amount to be expended annually from \$4,500,000 to \$6,000,000 for this year and the remaining two years of our three-year contract.

Policy Implications:

N/A

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 2: Every member of our diverse population has the opportunity for individualized instruction.

Goal 3: Every employee is capable and committed to the education of the whole child.

Submitted by: Dr. Stacy Huffman

Department: Executive Director of
Exceptional Children's Programs

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Closed Session

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

Closed sessions shall be held when required to permit a public body to act in the public interest as permitted by law.

– N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel

– N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(3) Consultation with Attorney

In order to consult with the Board's attorney and protect the attorney client privilege, and to receive advice with respect to the lawsuits captioned:

—19-CVS-3893 McKinney et al. vs. Goins and The Gaston County Board of Education

—21-CVS-5016 Bostic vs. Phroneberger and The Gaston County Board of Education

—21-CVS-5017 Lukinoff vs. Barber and The Gaston County Board of Education

—21-CVS-5018 Brittain vs. Beason and The Gaston County Board of Education

—21-CVS-5019 Long vs. The Gaston County Board of Education

—23-CVS-3066 Roger Perkins vs. The Gaston County Board of Education

—23-CVS-4209 Clanton vs. The Gaston County Board of Education

—Any other legal matters.

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

Board to consider information provided in Closed Session in accordance with G.S. §143-318.11.

Policy Implications:

N/A

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Sonya McGraw, Attorney **Department:** Legal/Superintendent's Office

Last Name	First Name	Category	School
Barnette	Stephanie	Transfer	School Nutrition
Barton	Dennis	Transfer	School Nutrition
Bennett	John	Resignation	Ashbrook High School
Bryant	Ja'Oshua	Hire	Bessemer City Middle School
Burrell	Parker	Hire	Springfield Elementary School
Canty	Sherry	Hire	Grier Middle School
Carpenter	Morgan	Hire	Student Support Services
Carr	Isheima	Hire	Pleasant Ridge Elementary School
Carswell	Hannah	Promotion	Springfield Elementary School
Casillas	Ashley	Hire	H.H. Beam Elementary School
Chen	Elizabeth	Hire	Student Support Services
Christopher	Marie	Demotion	School Nutrition
Craig	Teresa	Resignation	School Nutrition
Crane	Jeffrey	Promotion	Facilities
Crews	Donna	Resignation	School Nutrition
Dangler	Rebecca	Promotion	Superintendent's Office
Davis	Javon	Hire	Pleasant Ridge Elementary School
Davis	Katherine	Resignation	W.C. Friday Middle School
Diaz	Jenay	Resignation	Woodhill Elementary School
Ellis	Christina	Promotion	Finance and Operations
Elrod	Megan	Hire	Finance and Operations
Engel	Rebekah	Hire	Robinson Elementary School
Enoch	Curtis	Involuntary Termination	South Point High School
Fernandez	Tina	Rehire an Employee	Department for Exceptional Children
Gabarrete	Eda	Promotion	School Nutrition
Garcia Acosta	Julieann	Rehire an Employee	Student Support Services
Glenn	Yolanda	Rehire an Employee	Gardner Park Elementary School
Glover	Travis	Hire	Tryon Elementary School
Halago	Emmanuel	Hire	Costner Elementary School
Hallman	Bradley	Hire	North Gaston High School
Hardin	Daniel	Resignation	Edward D. Sadler, Jr. Elementary School
Hartsell	Jennifer	Transfer	Gardner Park Elementary School
Hatch	Corey	Hire, Termination	Pleasant Ridge Elementary School
Hill	Cherrita	Demotion	North Gaston High School
Horton	Daniel	Resignation	Facilities
Houchard	Morgen	Promotion	Superintendent's Office
Hudson	Lance	Resignation	Mount Holly Middle School, Bessemer City Middle School
Jackson	Clara	Resignation	Springfield Elementary School
Jackson	Devin	Hire, Resignation	John Chavis Middle School
James	Jill	Resignation	Springfield Elementary School
Justice	James	Resignation	South Point High School
Kampmeyer	Alix	Promotion	Robinson Elementary School
Kiser	Deidre	Rehire an Employee	Pinewood Elementary School
Lawrence	Karen	Add Employee Work Relationship	Edward D. Sadler, Jr. Elementary School
Laws	Stephen	Resignation	Superintendent's Office

Last Name	First Name	Category	School
Loftis	DeLaine	Retirement	Finance and Operations
Mcgill	Shanikie	Resignation	School Nutrition
McQueen	Donna	Retirement	Ida Rankin Elementary School
Miller	Tameka	Rehire an Employee	Forestview High School
Moore	Landis	Hire	Forestview High School
Morales	Melissa	Transfer	School Nutrition
Morrison	Kenya	Transfer	School Nutrition
Nuestro	Leah	Transfer	Lingerfeldt Elementary School
O'Brien	Andreya	Rehire an Employee	Holbrook Middle School
Palanuk	Jackielou	Transfer	School Nutrition
Perkins	Debra	Transfer	School Nutrition
Postell II	James	Resignation	East Gaston High School
Quinn	Brittani	Hire	Department for Exceptional Children
Rainey	Lazelma	Resignation	Holbrook Middle School
Rhodes	Kayleigh	Resignation	Carr Elementary School
Richardson	Yasha	Demotion	Human Resources
Richbourg	Jason	Rehire an Employee	Webb Street School
Rico	Diamond	Resignation	Southwest Middle School
Ritter	Amber	Retirement	Department for Exceptional Children
Roark	Melissa	Transfer	School Nutrition
Roberts	Alecia	Hire	Ashbrook High School
Roberts	Courtney	Transfer	Warlick Academy
Rogers	Larry	Resignation	W.C. Friday Middle School
Rust	Emily	Promotion	Ida Rankin Elementary School
Scott	Sara	Hire	Lowell Elementary School
Sellers	Toni	Promotion	Finance and Operations
Selph	Kristen	Transfer	School Nutrition
Shaver	Cristal	Transfer	School Nutrition
Smith	Jennifer	Promotion	H.H. Beam Elementary School
Smith	Kimberly	Resignation	Bessemer City Primary School
Smith	Lindsay	Transfer	School Nutrition
Smith	Tarryn	Resignation	Elementary Instruction
Stradford	Andrea	Hire, Involuntary Termination	Human Resources
Stringer	Julie	Promotion	School Nutrition
Strong	Ashley	Hire	W.C. Friday Middle School
Taylor	Whitney	Hire	School Nutrition
Toll	Frederick	Retirement	North Gaston High School
Tomes	Mary	Hire	Lingerfeldt Elementary School
Troutman	Kerri	Resignation	Ida Rankin Elementary School
Tyler	Allyson	Hire	Hawks Nest STEAM Academy
Ussery	Andrew	Hire	Woodhill Elementary School
Vargas	Rosa	Hire	School Nutrition
Wallace	Jordan	Resignation	Holbrook Middle School, Ashbrook High School
Wilkinson	Kathryn	Promotion	Ashbrook High School
Williams	Carolyn	Transfer	School Nutrition

Last Name	First Name	Category	School
Wimbush	Kiara	Resignation	Bessemer City Middle School
Wray	Rebecca	Promotion	Forestview High School
Wray	Shelia	Retirement	Gardner Park Elementary School
Wright	Tiffany	Resignation	Webb Street School