

**GASTON COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**REGULAR SESSION**



*Shaping Our Future*

**943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC 28054**  
**April 14, 2025**  
**5:30 p.m.**



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Agenda Adoption

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

**Main Points:**

Consideration of Formal Agenda for Monday, April 14, 2025.

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

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

Monday, April 14, 2025

5:30 p.m.

Agenda

Regular Meeting

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## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**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

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**DEPARTMENT:** Communications/Public  
Information Department

**TOPIC: GOOD NEWS**

**FOR THE MONTH OF:** April 2025

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1. The following students were named to the North Carolina All-State Honors Band: **Alex Cornwell, Highland School of Technology; Bram Comer, Forestview High School; Zeke Tucker, East Gaston High School; Mackenzie Hart, East Gaston High School;** and **Iyanna Brianne Flores, W.C. Friday Middle School.**
2. Fifteen students from **Gaston County Schools** were selected to attend the 2025 session of the prestigious North Carolina Governor's School. Students attending Governor's School East at Meredith College are **Kaitlyn Baker, Forestview High School, Social Science; Saliou Diouf, Highland School of Technology, Natural Science; Ashleigh Fox, East Gaston High School, Instrumental Music, Clarinet; Zachary Hatfield, Stuart W. Cramer High School, Choral Music, Bass I; Joshua Morales, South Point High School, Natural Science; Amor Polanco, Forestview High School, Dance; James Smith, Stuart W. Cramer High School, Instrumental Music, Trumpet; Lily Sullivan, South Point High School, Mathematics; Makayla Turner, East Gaston High School, Mathematics; Chloe Villarreal, South Point High School, Natural Science.** Students attending Governor's School West are **Sofia Jimenez Beltran, Gaston Early College High School, Spanish; Mackenzie Hart, East Gaston High School, Instrumental Music, Oboe; Sarena Nguyen, Forestview High School, Natural Science; Yug Patel, Forestview High School, Natural Science; and Aiden VanderMeer, Stuart W. Cramer High School, Natural Science.**
3. **Gaston County Schools**, in collaboration with the Gaston County Museum of Art and History, is sponsoring the annual "Through An Artist's Eyes" exhibit, which features student artwork in 12 different categories: painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, comic art, ceramics, digital art, color drawing, mixed media, fiber arts, crafts, and black-and-white drawing. The exhibit is open to the public and runs through May 10. **Stanley Middle School** student **Bayleigh Carver** earned "Best in Show" for her award-winning piece titled "Majesty." **North Gaston High School** student **Kira Green** received the Director's Choice Award for her piece titled "Brioche." The James C. Biggers Award was presented to **Nicole Cisnero Saldana of Bessemer City High School** for her color drawing, "Peonies Flourish in Cadence," and the Pinnex Prize was awarded to **Alayah LeDoux of North Gaston High School** for her black-and-white drawing, "Shadow Study."
4. **Belmont Central Elementary** was named the grand champion of the Elementary Battle of the Books competition and placed fourth at the regional competition in Statesville.



5. The Day 1 winners in the 2025 Math Masters competition were **New Hope Elementary**, first place; **Kiser Elementary**, second place; **W.A. Bess Elementary**, third place; and **Pleasant Ridge Elementary**, fourth place. The Day 2 winners were **Chapel Grove Elementary**, first place; **Sherwood Elementary**, second place; **W.B. Beam Intermediate**, third place; and **Woodhill Elementary**, fourth place.
6. The Day 1 winners in the 2025 Battle of the Books competition were **Belmont Central Elementary**, first place; **Rankin Elementary**, second place; **W.A. Bess Elementary**, third place; and **New Hope Elementary**, fourth place. The Day 2 winners were **North Belmont Elementary**, first place; **Sadler Elementary**, second place; **W.B. Beam Intermediate**, third place; and **Brookside Elementary**, fourth place.
7. The five finalists for **Gaston County Schools Teacher of the Year 2025-2026** are **Kathryne Lavender**, **Pleasant Ridge Elementary School**; **Elizabeth Leonard**, **North Gaston High School**; **Bridget Matzke**, **Highland School of Technology**; **John Ramos**, **Forestview High School**; and **Karmen Teague**, **South Point High School**.
8. The five finalists for **Gaston County Schools Principal of the Year 2025-2026** are **Josh Allen**, **South Point High School**; **Laura Clark**, **W.A. Bess Elementary School**; **Rebecca Huffstetler**, **East Gaston High School**; **Donna Kelly**, **Rankin Elementary School**; and **Jaime Wallace**, **Brookside Elementary School**.
9. The five finalists for **Gaston County Schools Assistant Principal of the Year 2025-2026** are **Carmin Adams**, **Pinewood Elementary School**; **Jenny Carper**, **Highland School of Technology**; **Charlotte Friday**, **W.A. Bess Elementary School**; **Deon Kennedy**, **Mount Holly Middle School**; and **Logan McGuire**, **Bessemer City Middle School**.
10. The five finalists for **Gaston County Schools New Teacher of the Year 2025-2026** are **Alyssa Eckard**, **Ashbrook High School**; **Jamie Harris**, **Page Primary School**; **Richard Morris**, **Forestview High School**; **Emily Parris**, **Cherryville Elementary School**; and **Arianna Weber**, **Page Primary School**.
11. The five finalists for **Gaston County Schools Teacher Assistant of the Year 2025-2026** are **Catherine Cox**, **Springfield Elementary School**; **Melanie Dellinger**, **Brookside Elementary School**; **Christi Jolley**, **W.P. Grier Middle School**; **Lee Washington**, **Robinson Elementary School**; and **Angela Yount**, **Lowell Elementary School**.
12. The five finalists for **Gaston County Schools Central Office Administrator of the Year 2025-2026** are **Karen Archer**, **Academic Services**; **Susie Bradley**, **Student Support Services**; **Scott Cassell**, **Technology Support Services**; **Sarah Rector**, **Academic Services**; and **Leigh Smith**, **Human Resources**.
13. **Gaston County Schools English/language arts curriculum facilitator Kim Lynch** received the C. Kenneth McEwin Award for outstanding dedication to middle school education at the North Carolina Association for Middle Level Education conference. The award recognizes individuals who have made a significant, long-term impact on advancing middle-level education in the state.



14. **Gaston County Schools** athletic director **Chad Duncan** was chosen as a Class of 2025 Hall of Fame inductee by the North Carolina Athletic Directors Association.
15. **Forestview High School** athletic director **Brian Horne** and **East Gaston High School** athletic director **Haley Stewart** were recognized with a North Carolina Athletic Directors Association (NCADA) Citation Award at the state athletic directors conference. The award recognizes individuals who have made a significant impact in their school, conference, or region within their first five years in athletic administration.
16. **Stephanie Gigliotti** has been named the **Gaston County Schools** School Psychologist of the Year for 2025-2026, and **Beth Heilig** has been named the **Gaston County Schools** Service Provider of the Year for 2025-2026.
17. Three schools in **Gaston County Schools** have received grants from The Truliant Foundation to support innovative educational projects. **W.C. Friday Middle School** will use its grant for the Broadcasting a Better Future project, which will establish a student broadcast team, fostering collaboration, creativity, and communication skills while teaching media production and public speaking through school news and events. **Highland School of Technology** received funding for a 3D printer to enhance the AP Computer Science Principles curriculum, allowing students to design custom parts for Sphero Bolt+ robots and strengthen their coding, creativity, and engineering skills. **Holbrook Middle School** secured a grant for the Pinewood Derby Project, integrating classroom instruction with the classic Pinewood Derby program with funds providing essential materials for students to design and build their own derby cars. These grants will help students develop hands-on skills and bring learning to life in exciting new ways.
18. The **Gaston County Schools** high school choral arts programs performed at the annual N.C. Music Performance Adjudication.
19. The **Gaston County Schools** high school choral directors from **Bessemer City**, **East Gaston**, **South Point**, and **Stuart W. Cramer** all had students selected for the 2025 All-State Choral Festival.
20. The following coaches and student-athletes were selected for the District 10 all-district team: **Darin Dellinger**, **Ashbrook High School**, was named the Boys Basketball Coach of the Year, and **Isaac Byers, Jr.** of **Ashbrook** earned First Team honors while **Jaleel Smith** of **Hunter Huss** and **Elijah Sherrill** of **Highland School of Technology** were named to the Second Team. **Jamari Smith** of **Ashbrook** was placed on the Third Team. On the girls' side, **Oshauna Holland** of **Stuart W. Cramer** was named the Player of the Year and earned First Team honors. **Tionna Pettus** of **Bessemer City** and **Brooklyn Swann** of **Hunter Huss** were named to the Second Team.
21. The **Ashbrook High School** All-Star Pageant raised \$9,503.81 for Cancer Services of Gaston County. Additionally, the school's Unified Club ran the concession stand during the pageant, adding more than \$700 to the fundraising total in support of the Special Olympics of Gaston County.



22. **Belmont Central Elementary** held its annual PTO “Adventure Run” on March 19 and raised more than \$46,000 thanks to generous parent donations and support from business partners. The funds will go toward updating the media center with new seating, adding swings and a basketball goal to the playground, supporting teacher planning days, and providing classroom grants.
23. **Belmont Central Elementary** hosted a “Walk to School” event on April 4 to promote pedestrian safety. The effort was a collaboration between the school, Belmont police and fire departments, emergency management, and the City of Belmont. More than 115 participants gathered at Davis Park that morning to enjoy a light breakfast before walking together to school.
24. The **Cherryville High School** concert band earned an excellent rating on stage and a superior in sight reading at the Music Performance Adjudication.
25. The **Stuart W. Cramer High School** Battle of the Books team won the Region 6 High School Battle of the Books competition. The team will compete in the state competition on April 28.
26. Team members include **Ellory Lamp, Kayla Matthews, Lizzy-Jane Ross, Ann Sproul, Piper Summey, Molly Sutphin, and Bhadra Vineetha**. The team is coached by **Vanessa Griffith**.
27. The **Forestview High School** girls’ soccer team won the Gaston Cup with **East Gaston High School** as this year’s runner-up. In addition, **Ariene Catindig** of **Forestview** was named the MVP, and **Emy Vicente** of **Ashbrook High School** received the Golden Gloves award.
28. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** junior **Oshauna Holland** was named to the first-team all-state girls’ basketball team.
29. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** has 13 students who were chosen for the N.C. All-State Chorus Festival: **Sadie Revels, Jade Gilliam, Kailyn Campbell, Corey Simpson, Zach Hatfield, Channing Wright, Victoria Walker, Allisan Beauregard, Maddie McDuffie, Colbie McKee, Kae’Asia Jackson, Kylie Hayslett, and Anna Warren**.
30. The **East Gaston High School** concert band (ninth grade) and the symphonic band (grades 10-12) both received superior ratings at the Music Performance Adjudication.
31. **Forestview High School** teacher **Angela Datz** was selected as a 2025 World Affairs Council Scholar through UNC-Charlotte.
32. Students from **Forestview High School** competed in the 2025 Gaston College Math Competition on April 4 and earned first place in Advanced Math, second place in Math 2 and Math 3, and finished second overall.



33. The **Forestview High School** concert choir participated in the Disney Music Festival, earning a superior rating and a gold rating for overall performance. **Ella Queen** received a superior rating as the top soloist. **Steven Austin** is the school's chorus teacher.
34. **Lilly Friday**, a senior at **Forestview High School**, was chosen as a finalist for the Anderson University Scholarship, the Morehead-Cain Scholarship at UNC-Chapel Hill, and the National Merit Scholarship. She also interviewed for the UNC-Charlotte Levine Scholarship.
35. **Gaston Early College High School** student **Bannock Scott** was elected to serve as the N4CSGA President. In this statewide Student Government Association leadership position, he will represent more than 700,000 community college students in North Carolina.
36. **Chinara Welsh** of **Gaston Early College High School** represented the Gaston County Teen Court at the annual Teen Court Summit in Greensboro. She served as a clerk during the event and earned the title of Best Clerk Overall with a perfect score of 30. She also took home the Spirit Award on behalf of the Gaston County team.
37. **Gaston Early College High School** students **Rylee Cates** and **James Hatley** are advancing to the state competition for Envirothon.
38. **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences** junior **Lily Landstoffer** was selected to attend Teens Westward Bound this summer. In addition, sophomore **Mariam Raja** was selected for Summer Ventures at UNC-Wilmington.
39. **Highland School of Technology** students earned top placements at the state-level FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) competition. First place went to **Khushi Patel** and **Madison Darnell** in the Spirit Event-Cheer/Chant/Slogan as well as **Noelle Martin** in Journalism. Second place was awarded to **Henry Davis**, **Zalak Mehta**, and **Karena Singh** in the Spirit Event-Web Banner category. Third place went to **Swara Patel** in Accounting 1. Fourth place finishers included **Aruzhan Suleimenova** in Computer Applications, **Abigail Anderson** in Introduction to Business Procedures, and the team of Davis, Mehta, and Singh in Public Service Announcement. Additionally, top-10 placements were earned by **James Gutierrez** in Accounting 1, **Diksha Sharma** in Introduction to Event Planning, **Iris Zhang** in Personal Finance, and the team of **Nolan Costanzo**, **Elijah Johnson**, and **Thien Vu** in Network Design. **Highland** also received the FBLA Gold Seal Chapter Award of Merit.
40. The following **Highland School of Technology** students won honors at the annual TSA (Technology Student Association) state conference in Greensboro. The Animatronics team of **Luke Falls**, **Lawson Houser**, **Ben Clements**, and **Austin Griffin** earned first place while **Luke Falls** and **Sydney Falls** placed third in Digital Video Production. Both teams have qualified to compete at the TSA national conference in Nashville in June. Several other teams and individuals placed in the top 12 at the state level, including the Architectural Design team of **Luis Jaramillo-Maya**, **Khloye Jones**, **Ayden Kisby-Jones**, **Yash Patel**, and **Diksha Sharma**; Board Game Design Team 1, consisting of **Nii Abbey**, **Leah Brooks**, **Kerrington Deese**, **Ella Hope**, **Renzo Rodrigues** and **Madison**



**Watson**; the Chapter Team of **Nii Abbey, Leah Brooks, Annette Carrillo, Ben Clements, Camille Green** and **Sydney Whitley**; the Drone Challenge Team 4 made up of **Elijah Daugherty, Saliou Diouf, Owen Honeycutt** and **Grayson Rose**; and **Jenna Washam** in Photographic Technology.

41. The **Highland School of Technology** math team competed at the Gaston College Math Competition and earned first place overall. **Katie Fangman, Carsyn Redmond, Hazel Ritter**, and **Jack Morris** placed second in the team competition. In the individual events, **Miles Davis** won first place, and **Jack Morris** placed third in Math 1. **Brady Hubers** earned first place in Math 2, **Ben Kelly** took first place in Math 3, and **Regis Lu** finished third in Advanced Math.
42. **Lowell Elementary** media specialist **Laura Pekarek** is the 2025-2026 **Gaston County Schools** Media Specialist of the Year.
43. **McAdenville Elementary School** raised more than \$20,000 during its Fun Run fundraiser.
44. The **North Gaston High School** symphonic band received superior ratings from all judges at the South Central District Music Performance Adjudication. In addition, the band traveled to Universal Studios in Orlando to compete in the WorldStrides Heritage Festival where they earned a gold rating, the Adjudicator's Award for the top-scoring concert band, the Spirit Award for best group representation, and an invitation to perform at the Festival of Gold.
45. **Page Primary School** resource officer **Pheap Kang** of the Belmont Police Department has been named the School Resource Officer of the Year.
46. First graders from **Page Primary School** enjoyed a walking field trip to Stowe Park in Belmont where they played and drew maps of their adventures.
47. **Sherwood Elementary** fifth grade teacher **Bridget Speller** was selected as a 2024-2025 Council Scholar and received a scholarship to enhance her students' learning by visiting another country.
48. **Sherwood Elementary** welcomed District Court Judge Ed Bogle, who spoke to third through fifth grade students about the judicial system. Additionally, employees from Wells Fargo met with fifth grade students to talk about money, finance, and banking.
49. **Sherwood Elementary** celebrated Read Across America Week with special guests and events for students. Officers from the Gastonia Police Department and the Gaston County Sheriff's Office visited the school, showcasing equipment and vehicles while providing students with various learning opportunities. In addition, students in **Ashbrook High School's** Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) club read to students in kindergarten through third grades.
50. Second grade teachers and students at **Sherwood Elementary** are partnering with the 4-H Cooperative Extension Service to bring their raised flower and vegetable garden to life.



51. **Ashbrook High School** band director **Josh Westbrook** along with several band members, including former **Sherwood Elementary** students, hosted a musical instrument workshop for all fifth-grade students, offering them a fun introduction to the joys of being in the band. The event was coordinated by music teacher **Tim Wilson**.
52. **Southwest Middle School** sixth grader **Derrion Byers** placed third in the middle school cybersecurity event at the North Carolina Technology Student Association (NCTSA) state competition.
53. **Springfield Elementary** will open a new playground on May 4. The playground is designed to accommodate up to 45 students at a time and expands the outdoor space available for physical activity and student collaboration during recess. Features include multiple slides, a climbing wall, a pebble climber, a fire pole, and a tic-tac-toe board.
54. **South Point High School** senior **James Dover** is a National Merit Scholarship recipient.
55. The **South Point High School** environmental club collected 110 pounds of aluminum cans and donated \$47 from recycling proceeds. The club also received a grant from Keep Gastonia Beautiful to purchase additional collection containers to support their ongoing recycling efforts.
56. **Stanley Middle School** teacher **Diana Baxter** is the recipient of the North Carolina Student Academy of Science (NCSAS) Teacher Award.
57. The **Stanley Middle School** Envirothon team competed at regionals, and three of the school's teams qualified for the state competition. One of the teams placed first overall out of 34 teams, making it the first public school to ever win first place at the regional competition.
58. The **York Chester Middle School** band was invited to perform at the Disney Imagination Campus after a successful audition. The students performed on March 13 at the Waterside Stage in Disney Springs with a variety of music for the crowd to enjoy. **Julian Wilson** is the school's band director.
59. Students from **York Chester Middle School**, **Belmont Middle School**, and **W.C. Friday Middle School** participated in the Middle School Jazz Night program on April 1. JazzArts Charlotte facilitated the after-school workshop that featured performances, demonstrations, and a jam session.



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Teacher Appreciation Week Proclamation

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

**Main Points:**

To recognize Teacher Appreciation Week in Gaston County Schools (May 5-9, 2025), a proclamation is presented to the Board of Education for consideration and approval.

See the attachment for the proclamation.

**Fiscal Implications:**

None

**Recommendation:**

The recommendation is for the Board of Education to approve the Teacher Appreciation Week Proclamation. Doing so will signify the importance of observing Teacher Appreciation Week in Gaston County Schools.

**Policy Implications:**

None

**Strategic Goal Alignment:**

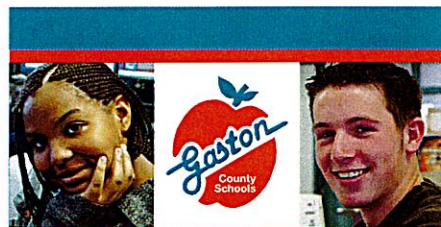
Goal 3. Every employee is capable and committed to the education of the whole child.

**Submitted by:** Todd Hagans, Chief Communications Officer

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



# PRIDE



## PROCLAMATION

### Teacher Appreciation Week

MAY 5-9, 2025

**WHEREAS**, Gaston County Schools is pleased to join school districts across the United States in celebrating Teacher Appreciation Week (May 5-9) and National Teacher Day on Tuesday, May 6; and

**WHEREAS**, Teacher Appreciation Week is an important annual observance as it is a time when everyone can show support for teachers and other educators who go above and beyond for students; and

**WHEREAS**, we know that teachers shine a light on brighter futures as they illuminate paths and guide students toward limitless possibilities – through all of their work, from planning meaningful lessons and focusing on academic growth to offering support and developing young minds, teachers spark curiosity, kindle creativity, and inspire success; and

**WHEREAS**, teachers in Gaston County Schools are often referred to as the “superheroes of public education” because they are a dynamic force in the learning process and work to ensure that children discover, grow, and thrive in a safe, caring, and nurturing school environment; and

**WHEREAS**, our teachers embrace the awesome responsibility of ensuring that children gain the knowledge and skills necessary to be productive in life beyond graduation, thus preparing them to become lifelong learners and contributing members of our community.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, to honor all teachers for their important contributions to our schools and diligent efforts to positively influence the leaders of tomorrow, the Gaston County Board of Education is proud to proclaim the week of

MAY 5-9, 2025

### Teacher Appreciation Week

in Gaston County Schools and encourages students, parents, alumni, and others in the community to express their appreciation for our teachers.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this proclamation be made a part of the minutes of the Board of Education, adopted this the fourteenth day of April, 2025.

**Gaston**  
COUNTY SCHOOLS

*shaping our future*

Joshua D. Crisp, Chairman  
Gaston County Board of Education

Morgen A. Houchard, Superintendent  
Gaston County Schools



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Classroom Moment

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

**Main Points:**

The Classroom Moment highlights the incredible learning taking place in our Pre-K classrooms. Our youngest learners are building the foundation for lifelong success through hands-on, engaging experiences that foster curiosity, collaboration, and a love for learning. A brief video captures the joy and excitement of our Pre-K students as they grow in a nurturing, high-quality learning environment. Our Pre-K classrooms provide a strong start that prepares children for success in kindergarten and beyond.

**Fiscal Implications:**

N/A

**Recommendation:**

N/A

**Policy Implications:**

N/A

**Strategic Goal Alignment:**

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

**Submitted by:** Emily Poag, Director

**Department:** Academic Services



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**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) during 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:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Approval/Correction of Minutes

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

**Main Points:**

Approval of Minutes from:  
March 17, 2025 (Regular Meeting)

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

**Fiscal Implications:**

None

**Recommendation:**

The Board will approve the minutes presented.

**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, March 17, 2025  
Meeting 5:30 p.m.  
Regular Meeting

MINUTES

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a regular session on Monday, March 17, 2025 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 Josh Crisp, Vice Chairman Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon, Tod Kinlaw, Robbie Lovelace, Brent Moore, Jeff Ramsey, Janna Smith and A.M. Stephens III.

Additional attendees include: Superintendent Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Associate Superintendents Gary Hoskins and Tonya Kales, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Chief Technology Officer Curtis Poplin and Board Clerk Dana Luoto.

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

**Invocation**

Pastor Chad Collins from Epic Church at Linwood led the invocation.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Darluh Mattaldi, Stanley Middle School, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Character Trait**

Caleb Lafon, Sadler Elementary School, reported on the Character Trait of Honesty.

**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**

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized a group of our educational office professionals who have completed the requirement for their Professional Standards Program Certificate. The state level certification is granted by the North Carolina Association of Educational Office Professionals.

- Rhonda Ingram
- Tammy Wade
- Sandra Whitmire
- Jennifer Blanton
- Beverly McCombs
- Jamie Shepker
- Pam Dellinger
- Vicki Welch
- Jennifer Kay



Mr. Hagans also acknowledged the following who were unable to attend the meeting:

- Sharon Barnett
- Amy Cobb
- Crystal Laughrun
- Lavondra McClain
- Darla Mellon
- Dana Phillips
- Tina Seibeck
- Charlotte Wright
- Crystal Kiser
- Jacqueline Baucom
- Kathleen MacDonald
- Lori Hamm

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

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized Bentley Sly of Stuart W. Cramer High School. Bentley won the individual 3A state championship in the 144-pound weight class and he is a three-time state champion in wrestling.

Mr. Tod Kinlaw presented a Certificate of Recognition to Bentley.

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized the Stuart W. Cramer High School girls' basketball team. The team is the 3A western regional champions and the 3A state runner-up in basketball for 2025.

Mr. Jeff Ramsey presented a Certificate of Recognition plaque to the team.

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized a group of high school students who will experience life in another country as they serve as youth ambassadors for the Gastonia Sister Cities student exchange program. Some of the students will visit Gotha, Germany this summer while others will travel to Santiago de Surco, Peru.

The following students will be visiting Germany:

- Samurai Coleman, Ashbrook
- Hayden Moore, Stuart W. Cramer
- William Arnold, Forestview
- Oliver Weidert, Forestview
- Maddie Borrromeo, Highland School of Technology
- Logan Hawkins, Forestview
- Elijah Ray Simpson, Stuart W. Cramer
- Livia Forbes, Highland School of Technology



The following students will be visiting Peru:

- Paolo Sexton, Hunter Huss
- DJ Perry, Gaston Early College
- Parker Gordon, North Gaston
- Daniella Saddai Gonzalez Alejos, Highland School of Technology
- Miguel Osio, North Gaston
- Khadyjah McCaskill, North Gaston
- Kenya Myles, Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences

Mrs. Janna Smith presented a Certificate of Recognition to each student.

Mr. Todd Hagans announced that March is designated Arts in our Schools Month and it is time to celebrate the creativity, aesthetics, performances and beauty associated with the fine arts. To bring attention to Arts in Our Schools Month, Mr. Hagans recognized Brandon Taylor who is the band director at East Gaston High School and the current Gaston County Teacher of the Year. Mr. Hagans also recognized Cindy Owens, the band director at W.C. Friday Middle School, Steven Austin, the chorus director at Forestview High School and Elizabeth Covington, the art teacher at East Gaston High School.

Ms. Dot Cherry presented a Certificate of Recognition plaque to Mr. Taylor on behalf of Arts in Our Schools Month.

#### **Classroom Moment – Information**

Chairman Crisp recognized Dr. Bryan Denton, Executive Director of Academic Services, who shared about the Teacher Cadet program at Hunter Huss High School. Teacher Cadet is a course study offered in high Schools that exposes students to the teaching profession as a potential career.

(View PowerPoint)

#### **Public Expression – Information**

No one signed up for Public Expression.

#### **Approval/Correction of Minutes – Action**

Motion to adopt minutes of February 17, 2025 (Regular Meeting) and February 28, 2025 (Legislative Meeting) as presented was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith; motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

#### **Operations Committee Report – Information**

Brent Moore is chair of the committee and members are Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon and Tod Kinlaw. Chairman Crisp recognized Ms. Dot Cherry who provided a summary of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.

(View Report)

#### **Curriculum & Instruction Committee Report – Information**

Jeff Ramsey is chair of the committee and members are Robbie Lovelace, Janna Smith and A.M. Stephens III. Chairman Crisp recognized Mrs. Janna Smith who provided a summary of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.



(View Report)

### **High School Exam Schedules Spring Semester 2024-2025 Traditional High Schools and Gaston Early Colleges – Action**

Chairman Crisp recognized Dr. Bryan Denton who presented a PowerPoint on High School Exam Schedules Spring Semester 2024-2025.

(View PowerPoint)

### **Motion**

Motion was made by Mr. Jeff Ramsey; seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon that the Board

### **Approve High School Exam Schedules Spring Semester 2024-2025 Traditional High Schools and Gaston Early Colleges**

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

### **Superintendent's Budget Request 2025-2026 - Information**

Chairman Crisp recognized Mr. Gary Hoskins who presented a PowerPoint on the Superintendent's Budget Request 2025-2026.

(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. AIG Plan 2025-2028
- E. Summer Program Plan 2025
- F. Innovation Schools Strategy
- G. Board Policy Updates
  - Policy 4170 – School Assignment
- H. Contracts
  - District Chromebook Refresh
  - Classroom/Instructional Technology – New Grier Middle
  - Google Workspace
  - Chiller Replacement – W.A. Bess Elementary School
  - Chiller Replacement – Bessemer City Middle School
  - UVA PLE (Partnership for Leaders in Education)

Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

Chairman Crisp thanked former Board Member Dot Guthrie for attending the meeting.

### **Superintendent's Comments**

Superintendent Houchard thanked everyone who participated in Parent-Teacher Conferences.



Superintendent Houchard thanked Board Members and others that participated in Read Across America.

Superintendent Houchard reminded everyone that our Academically Gifted Department is hosting the Math Masters and Battle of the Books competitions for elementary schools Tuesday, March 18 through Friday, March 21.

Superintendent Houchard announced the Gaston Art Show and Reception will be held on Sunday, March 23 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at Loray Mill in Gastonia. The exhibit will be on display until Saturday, May 10 Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and Saturday from 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Superintendent Houchard announced that Forestview High School is hosting a Prom Closet on Saturday, March 29 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. This is an opportunity for students who are in need of a dress for the prom to get one free-of-charge.

Superintendent Houchard announced the following upcoming high school theater productions:

- Forestview High School – “Mean Girls: High School Edition”  
March 27-29 at 7:00 p.m.

- Highland School of Technology – “The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee”  
April 3-4 at 7:00 p.m.  
April 5 at 2:00 p.m.

- Ashbrook High School – “SpongeBob SquarePants: The Musical”  
April 11-12 at 7:00 p.m.

- Stuart W. Cramer High School – “Once Upon a Mattress”  
April 11-13 at 7:00 p.m.

Superintendent Houchard announced that the all-county middle school band concert will be held on Saturday, April 12 beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the Holbrook Middle School auditorium.

Superintendent Houchard announced that there will be an Advanced Placement (AP) exam review session at the Gaston Early College High School on Saturday, April 12 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. These sessions are designed to prepare students for their upcoming AP exams.

Superintendent Houchard announced that the Star Teacher-Student Awards for the Class of 2025 will be held on Thursday, April 10 beginning at 5:00 p.m. at the Gaston Early College High School. This program honors one Star Student from each high school and the Star Teacher who had a great influence on their life.

Superintendent Houchard announced that due to spring break, our April Board Meeting will be held on Monday, April 14 and the committee meetings will be held on Monday, March 31.

Chairman Crisp wished Mrs. Robbie Lovelace, Mr. A.M. Stephens III and Superintendent Houchard a “Happy Birthday”.



### **Closed Session**

Chairman Crisp asked the Board to consider going into Closed Session under, N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(3) Consultation with Attorney, N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(5) Real Property and N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel.

Motion to go into Closed Session was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Ms. Janna Smith; motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

The Board went into Closed Session at 6:43 p.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 7:26 p.m.

### **Motion**

The Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith that the Board  
**Award a three-month Principal contract for the following:**

- Stephanie Gust

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

Superintendent Houchard announced the following principals will be placed at Innovation Schools beginning in the 2025-2026 school year:

- Ashbrook – Matt Rikard
- B.C. Central – Anna Miller
- Grier – Jessica Mellon
- H.H. Beam – Beth Crosby
- Hunter Huss – Kelsey Elms
- Lingerfeldt – Jenny Cabe
- Pleasant Ridge – Shawn Hubers
- Sherwood – Justin Beam
- Southwest – TBD
- Woodhill – Jaime Wallace

### **Adjournment**

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

The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Josh Crisp, Chairman  
[Corporate Seal]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Morgen A. Houchard, Secretary

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**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. Brent Moore is chair of the committee and members are Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon and Tod Kinlaw. 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

**Department:** Finance



## Agenda Item

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Curriculum & Instruction Committee Report

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

**Main Points:**

The Gaston County Board of Education's Curriculum & Instruction Committee meets regularly to discuss curriculum and instruction-related topics and issues. Jeff Ramsey is chair of the committee and members are Robbie Lovelace, Janna Smith and A.M. Stephens III. A report of the Curriculum & Instruction 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 Curriculum and Instruction Committee discussions and information.

**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:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Innovation Schools Strategy

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

### **Main Points:**

The Innovation Schools Strategy will launch for the upcoming school year, 2025-2026, to address the needs of the leaders, teachers and students within ten of our low performing schools, most of them are Restart Schools. The Innovation Schools Strategy will include: the use of state salary supplement to pay high performing principals, the implementation of the Advanced Teacher Roles grants and high-quality professional development and partnerships. The three key components are linked to research for student outcomes and will serve as a model for the district for transformation that can be applied to other GCS schools in the future.

### **Fiscal Implications:**

At risk student state funding and federal Title I and II funding will be leveraged to support the work within the Innovation Schools

### **Recommendation:**

For information

### **Policy Implications:**

N/A

### **Strategic Goal Alignment:**

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

**Submitted by:** Tonya Kales, Associate Superintendent of Academic Services

**Department:** Academic Services



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/25

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Summer Program Plan Addendum: School Year  
Re-Administration Plan

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

**Main Points:**

Students who do not achieve proficiency on End of Grade (EOG) and End of Course (EOC) assessments in Reading and Math will be provided the opportunity to attend remediation in content standards and domains for tested areas in which they were not proficient. This remediation will occur during the school year within the last five (semester) or ten (year-long) days of the school year. At the conclusion of the remediation period, students may take their End-of-Grade or End-of-Course test(s). This opportunity is in addition to the summer program plan, previously approved by the BOE on March 17, 2025.

**Fiscal Implications:**

None

**Recommendation:**

Approve the school year re-administration plan.

**Policy Implications:**

None

**Strategic Goal Alignment:**

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

**Submitted by:** Kelly Cunningham, Chief Accountability Officer

**Department:** Accountability



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**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. Out-of-County Tuition 2025-2026
- E. Gaston County School's Budget Request 2025-2026
- F. Contracts
  - Microsoft Software Agreement
  - Bus Planner Renewal (Sole Source)
  - Ida Rankin Elementary School — Mural Easement
  - Elementary School LED Light Conversions
  - Melmark, Inc.
  - Instructional Resources 2025-2026 — Academic Services

**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:** 4/14/2025

**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:** 4/14/2025

**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 2024-2025 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, CFO and  
Associate Superintendent

**Department:** Finance



**Gaston County Schools**  
**Changes in Appropriations**  
**2024-2025 Budget Resolution - March**  
**Transfers Between Functions**

**State Public School Fund**

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
51000	Regular Instructional Services		992,456
52000	Special Population Services	614,718	
53000	Alternative Programs and Services		1,200
54000	School Leadership Services		5,518
58000	School-Based Support Services	261,444	
61000	Support and Development Services		2,995
62000	Special Population Support and Development Services	126,757	
65000	Operational Support Services		750
		<u>1,002,919</u>	<u>1,002,919</u>

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



**Gaston County Schools**  
**Changes in Appropriations**  
**2024-2025 Budget Resolution - March**  
**Transfers Between Functions**

**Local Current Expense Fund**

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
51000	Regular Instructional Services	1,298,268	
53000	Alternative Programs and Services	20,000	
54000	School Leadership Services		51,914
55000	Co-Curricular Services	423,135	
58000	School-Based Support Services		96,000
61000	Support and Development Services	29,637	
64000	Technology Support Services		1,194,194
65000	Operational Support Services		310,360
66000	Financial and Human Resource Services		91,907
68000	System-Wide Pupil Support Services		6,549
69000	Policy, Leadership and Communication/Public Information Services		20,115
		<u>1,771,039</u>	<u>1,771,039</u>

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



**Gaston County Schools**  
**Changes in Appropriations**  
**2024-2025 Budget Resolution - March**  
**Transfers Between Functions**

**Federal Grants Fund**

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
51000	Regular Instructional Services	2,751	
52000	Special Population Services		352,013
53000	Alternative Programs and Services		92,830
58000	School-Based Support Services	54,108	
61000	Support and Development Services		6,011
62000	Special Population Support and Development Services	275,262	
63000	Alternative Programs and Services - Support and Development Services	84,525	
65000	Operational Support Services	23,025	
66000	Financial and Human Resource Services	3,270	
67000	Accountability Services	9,794	
68000	System-Wide Pupil Support Services		1,882
81000	Payments to Other Governmental Units		
		<u>452,736</u>	<u>452,736</u>

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



**Gaston County Schools**  
**Changes in Appropriations**  
**2024-2025 Budget Resolution - March**  
**Transfers Between Functions**

**Restricted Grants Fund**

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
51000	Regular Instructional Services		600
52000	Special Population Services		5,000
53000	Alternative Programs and Services		4,705
58000	School-Based Support Services	2,000	
61000	Support and Development Services	600	
62000	Special Population Support and Development Services	5,000	
63000	Alternative Programs and Services - Support and Development Services	5,552	
65000	Operational Support Services		2,847
		<u>13,152</u>	<u>13,152</u>

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



**Gaston County Schools**  
**Changes in Appropriations**  
**2024-2025 Budget Resolution - March**  
**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		162,543
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	88,474	
	52000	Special Population Services	11,191	
	54000	School Leadership Services	5,579	
	58000	School-Based Support Services	12,362	
	65000	Operational Support Services	28,175	
	66000	Financial and Human Resource Services	8,043	
	68000	System-Wide Pupil Support Services	8,720	
	This amendment budgets funds for the Non-Contributory Employee Benefits allotment - FY25 (PRC0009)			
2	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		6,684
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	6,684	
	This amendment budgets funds for the Drivers' Education allotment - Allotment Revision #80- FY25 (PRC0012)			
3	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		(395,273)
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	(395,273)	
	This amendment budgets funds for the Career Technical Education -Months allotment - ABC Transfer - Allotment Revision #82 - FY25 (PRC0013)			
4	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		395,273
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	395,273	
	This amendment budgets funds for the Career Technical Education -Program Support allotment - ABC Transfer - Allotment Revision #82 - FY25 (PRC0014)			
5	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		1,008,267
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	1,008,267	
	This amendment budgets funds for the Children with Disabilities allotment - Allotment Revision #80- FY25 (PRC0032)			
6	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		225,000
	58000	School-Based Support Services	225,000	
	This amendment budgets funds for the School Safety Grant - Allotment Revision #83 - FY25 (PRC0040)			
7	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		163,635
	65000	Operational Support Services	163,635	
	This amendment budgets funds for the Transportation of Pupils - Equipment/Helene Emergency - Allotment Revision #83 - FY25 (PRC0056)			



# **State Public School Fund**

#	Function	Description	Expense Increase (Decrease)	Revenue Increase (Decrease)
8	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		40,482
	52000	Special Population Services	40,482	
		This amendment budgets funds for the IDEA-Special Education State Improvement - Allotment Revision #84 - FY25 (PRC0089)		
9	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		69,357
	72000	Community Services	69,357	
		This amendment budgets funds for the Hurricane Relief and Recovery - Allotment Revision #83 - FY25 (PRC0230)		
<b>Total State Public School Fund Amendments</b>			<u>1,675,968</u>	<u>1,675,968</u>



**Gaston County Schools**  
**Changes in Appropriations**  
**2024-2025 Budget Resolution - March**  
**Proposed Expenditures and Sources of Revenue**

**Local Current Expense Fund**

#	Function	Description	Expense Increase (Decrease)	Revenue Increase (Decrease)
1	48900	Local Sources - Restricted		300,000
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	300,000	
		This amendment budgets funds for the E-Rate allotment FY22 (PRC519)		

**Total Local Current Expense Fund Account**

300,000	300,000
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**Gaston County Schools**  
**Changes in Appropriations**  
**2024-2025 Budget Resolution - March**  
**Proposed Expenditures and Sources of Revenue**

**Federal Current Expense Fund**

#	Function	Description	Expense Increase (Decrease)	Revenue Increase (Decrease)
1	36000	Federal Revenue		124,988
	53000	Alternative Programs and Services	124,988	
	This amendment budgets funds for the Title IV, Part B - 21st Century (ASPIRE) Allotment - FY25 (PRC0110)			
2	36000	Federal Revenue		25,993
	53000	Alternative Programs and Services	25,175	
	81000	Payments to Other Governmental Units	818	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Title III, Part A - English Language Allotment - FY25 (PRC0111)			
3	36000	Federal Revenue		48,103
	52000	Special Population Services	48,103	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Title VI, Part B - Special Needs Target Allotment - FY25 (PRC0118)			
4	36000	Federal Revenue		5,394
	52000	Special Population Services	5,394	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Title VI, Part B - Special Needs Target Allotment - FY25 (PRC0119)			
<b>Total State Public School Fund Amendments</b>			<u>204,478</u>	<u>204,478</u>



**Gaston County Schools**  
**Changes in Appropriations**  
**2024-2025 Budget Resolution - March**  
**Proposed Expenditures and Sources of Revenue**

**Restricted Grants Fund**

#	Function	Description	Expense Increase (Decrease)	Revenue Increase (Decrease)
1	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		150,000
	53000	Alternative Programs and Services	150,000	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Title IV, Part B - 21st Century (ASPIRE) Allotment - FY25 (PRC0110)			

**Total Restricted Grants Fund Amendments**

150,000	150,000
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## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**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:** Bessie Harvey, Assistant  
Superintendent of Operations

**Department:** Facilities



# **GCS CHANGE ORDER NOTIFICATION**

In accordance with GCS Board Policy 9030 - Facility Construction, all construction and repair change orders approved by the Superintendent, or his designee, shall be reported to the Board. In addition, any change orders that involve amounts over \$100,000 must be approved by the Board. This GCS Change Order Notification provides the required information for change orders \$100,000 or less that have already been approved by the Superintendent, or his designee, and change orders over \$100,000 that need Board approval.

Presented to BOE	Contractor's Name	Project name	Description of Change	Contract Amount	Change Order Amount
4-14-25	None				



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Out-of-County Tuition 2025-2026

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

### **Main Points:**

GCS students domiciled outside of Gaston County are charged out of county tuition. The rate of out of county tuition is calculated by dividing the local county appropriation for operating expenses by the student count after the second month of school. This would result in a local per pupil expenditure of \$1,858 (\$55,601,704 local appropriation / 29,928 students). As a result, the recommended out of county tuition rate for 2025-2026 is \$1,858 per pupil. Out of state students would also be required to pay an additional \$7,507 to reimburse GCS for the state per pupil appropriation. The total tuition for out of state students would be \$9,365. For 2024-2025, the out of county tuition was \$7,173 and the total out of state tuition was \$8,952.

### **Fiscal Implications:**

The District will be reimbursed for the respective per pupil allocation for any GCS students that are not domiciled in Gaston County.

### **Recommendation:**

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the 2025-2026 out of county tuition rate of \$1,858 for GCS students domiciled outside of Gaston County and \$8,952 for GCS students domiciled outside of North Carolina.

### **Policy Implications:**

Policy Code: 4150 Tuition for Discretionary Admissions

### **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:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Gaston County School's Budget Request 2025-2026

**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 2025-2026 budget process began with a budget survey to GCS stakeholders in December 2024. Data obtained from the budget surveys was presented to the Board at their retreat in January 2025 and Fund Managers prepared a budget request for their area of supervision in February and March 2025. The Superintendent's Budget Request was based on information received from our stakeholders and Fund Managers and was presented as information to the Board on March 17, 2025. The revised request is \$60.1 million for operating funds (compared to \$60.8 million) and \$2.2 million for capital maintenance (compared to \$4.0 million). This revised Superintendent's Budget Request represents the final budget request that is presented to the Board for approval. After the GCS Budget Request has been approved, it will be presented to the Gaston County Commissioners for their consideration. A copy of the current Budget Request has been posted on the GCS website.

### **Fiscal Implications:**

N/A

### **Recommendation:**

Board approval of the Gaston County School's Budget Request 2025-2026

### **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:** 4/14/2025

**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

**Department:** Finance



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Microsoft Software Agreement

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

### **Main Points:**

Microsoft Enrollment for Education Solutions (EES) is the Microsoft volume licensing agreement for academic institutions with 1,000 or more users. This renewal of 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:**

The cost is \$205,700 which is included as a budget item in the current TSS operational budget.

### **Recommendation:**

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the renewal of the Microsoft EES license agreement.

### **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:** Curtis Poplin, Chief Technology Officer

**Department:** TSS



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** BusPlanner Renewal (Sole Source)

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

### **Main Points:**

Currently, GCS utilizes BusPlanner USA, Inc. software to provide computer-assisted school bus routing and scheduling through integration with CalAmp Synovia, Power School and eventually, Infinite Campus. BusPlanner USA, Inc. is the sole source provider of their proprietary software modules, hosting, licensing production services and training that meet GCS Transportation bus routing needs.

### **Fiscal Implications:**

The cost to contract with BusPlanner for three (3) years is \$345,276.

### **Recommendation:**

Approve BusPlanner as a sole source provider for providing computer-assisted school bus routing and scheduling software for Gaston County Schools.

### **Policy Implications:**

Policy Code: 6320: Organization of Student Transportation Services

### **Strategic Goal Alignment:**

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

**Submitted by:** Bessie Harvey, Assistant  
Superintendent of Operations

**Department:** Operations



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Ida Rankin Elementary School — Mural Easement

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

**Main Points:**

The town of Mount Holly has requested a five-year easement for the purpose of designing, producing, painting and maintaining a mural on a detached wall in the back of the school, located on the southeastern face near Main Street. The artwork has been approved by appropriate GCS personnel.

**Fiscal Implications:**

N/A

**Recommendation:**

The Operations Committee recommends this five-year easement be granted for the proposed mural at Ida Rankin Elementary.

**Policy Implications:**

Policy Code 9200 Care and Maintenance of Facilities

**Strategic Goal Alignment:**

Other: Policy See Above

**Submitted by:** Bessie Harvey, Assistant  
Superintendent of Operations

**Department:** Operations



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Elementary School LED Light Conversions

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

### **Main Points:**

After converting Middle and High Schools to LED lighting, we now need to shift our focus to our Elementary Schools throughout the district. After speaking with the Electrical Department in Facilities, they have recommended the following schools be the first schools completed due to existing lighting and equipment conditions.

McAdenville Elementary//New Hope Elementary//Belmont Central Elementary

Chapel Grove Elementary//Robinson Elementary//Catawba Heights Elementary

### **Fiscal Implications:**

The estimated cost for this project is \$1,500,000.

### **Recommendation:**

Authorization to move forward with LED conversion at the listed Elementary Schools.

### **Policy Implications:**

Policy Code 9200 – Care and Maintenance of Facilities

### **Strategic Goal Alignment:**

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

**Submitted by:** Bessie Harvey, Assistant  
Superintendent of Operations

**Department:** Auxiliary Services



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Melmark, Inc.

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

### **Main Points:**

On May 6, 2024, the Gaston County Schools Board of Education approved initiating an annual contract with Melmark, Inc. Due to the increased needs of students who require this level of support, the Department for Exceptional Children received approval to increase of the amount to be expended from \$200,000 to \$300,000 on August 19, 2024. As the needs and level of support for our students continue to increase throughout the year, the Department for Exceptional Children is asking to increase the amount to be expended from \$300,000 to \$400,000 for the 2024-2025 year.

### **Fiscal Implications:**

We seek to continue our annual contract with Melmark, Inc. with total annual implications for the Department for Exceptional Children not to exceed \$400,000.

Federal, state, and local funds will be used to support this contract.

### **Recommendation:**

Approve the request to increase the potential amount to be expended from \$300,000 to \$400,000 for the current 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:** Chris Mills

**Department:** Executive Director of Exceptional Children's Programs



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**Agenda Item Title/Topic:** Instructional Resources 2025-2026 — Academic Services

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

### **Main Points:**

Academic Services will seek Board approval on contracts being utilized during the 2025-2026 school year to ensure staff members are provided with the necessary research-based resources that support increased academic achievement and student growth. These resources will also support the continued implementation of the North Carolina academic standards. Each of these contracts are renewal of resources currently in use in our schools. They do not represent any additions.

**ACT WorkKeys Curriculum/Test Prep (9-12)** will support test preparation for the ACT WorkKeys at most high schools with Career and Technical Education programs. The program includes a placement screener, quizzes to check for mastery of content, and opportunities for learners to practice skills via embedded, interactive components. A one-year contract will be initiated not to exceed \$20,000.

**Assessing Math Concepts** continuum of nine 1:1 math assessments for kindergarten, that are formative, summative, and diagnostic. They pinpoint what a child knows and still needs to learn. A one-year contract will be initiated not to exceed \$13,300.

**College and Career Promise (CCP)** is North Carolina's dual enrollment program for high school students. This program allows NC high school students to enroll in college classes at Gaston College and earn college credit. Per NC General Statute, GCS is required to pay curriculum fees for all eligible GCS students. In addition to the curriculum fees, GCS has opted to pay for student's college textbooks, workbooks, and access codes. This year's payment for books, workbooks, and access codes shall not exceed \$350,000.

**Discovery Education Streaming (K-5) and Science Techbook (5-8)** are used by science teachers. Discovery Education provides standards-based digital curriculum resources for K– 8 classrooms. The program is a K-8 curriculum resource to support the NC Science and Social Studies Essential Standards. This year's payment is \$285,600.

**EdPuzzle** provides digital content for all secondary subject areas. EdPuzzle enables teachers to create engaging learning experiences for their students while they track student results quickly and easily. The current three-year contract is set to expire on June 30, 2025 and we are asking for a one-year extension not to exceed \$93,100.



**HealthSmart Digital** is a digital curriculum currently used for 6th-9th grade health education. It is designed to promote healthy behaviors, decision-making skills, and critical thinking through engaging, age-appropriate lessons. It aligns with our NC state standards, GCS Health Education pacing guides, and scope & sequence, ensuring seamless integration into our health education program. The 2025-2026 payment shall not exceed \$50,000.

**HMH Into Reading & Into Literature** is our core English/Language Arts curriculum resource for K-5 and high school. For K-5, HMH will provide student consumable workbooks each year of the adoption. Each high school English teacher received a class set of student textbooks. All teachers received hardcover teacher editions as well as teacher guides that provided suggestions for lesson activities, differentiation, and enrichment. Our purchase includes access to a digital platform, which contains an expansive digital library, diagnostic assessments, and progress monitoring. The six-year contract was approved on May 15, 2023, with a three-year payment plan. The third and final 2025-2026 payment shall not exceed \$1,095,000.

**Imagine Learning (6-12)**, formerly Edgenuity, is an online platform used to support students in Gaston Virtual Academy and provide additional elective opportunities, as well as the curriculum for our High School students in credit recovery. The current three-year contract was approved on April 17, 2023. This year's payment is \$260,482.20.

**Instructure/Canvas** is the learning management system (LMS) for our secondary schools. An LMS is intended to support teaching and learning by providing equitable learning experiences for all students. Teachers can house course materials, grades, and communication within the LMS for easy access for students. The two-year contract was approved April 15, 2024. This year's payment is \$116,358.

**iREADY Math Diagnostic Assessment for 1st-5th grade students & Ready Classroom Mathematics K-8** includes the math core curriculum for grades K-8, the diagnostic assessment for grades 1-5, and the teacher toolkit for differentiated instruction in grades K-8. This is a one-year contract extension that renews an existing resource. The 2025-2026 payment shall not exceed \$604,000.

**IXL** is the diagnostic assessment in middle school English/Language Arts and middle school and high school math. IXL engages students in skill-based practice and provides teachers with lesson activities and standards-aligned EOG review. A three-year contract was approved on April 15, 2024. This year's payment is \$133,900.

**Leader in Me (K-12)** is a framework based on the educational practices of the Franklin Covey Educational Group and the principles of the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. The Leader in Me program is the focus of the schools in the Dallas Community. The program explores various leadership paradigms by teaching highly effective practices to support the transformation of students as they prepare for college and life as citizens in our community and globally. Educators from Leader in Me schools will participate in training and discussion on new advancements to improve the model and processes to



ensure effective transformation results for students. Students in the secondary program will have the opportunity to earn Leadership credentials. A one-year contract will be initiated not to exceed \$120,000.

**LETRS training for New Staff Members (PreK-5 classroom, EC, EL, Instructional Coaches, and Curriculum Coordinators)** is designed to target the needs of teachers who must understand the "what," "why," and "how" of literacy instruction. LETRS for teachers is a comprehensive, flexible, research-based, and relevant professional learning course of study. During our initial two-year cohort with LETRS, state funding was provided. We will sustain this training for our newly hired teachers with district funding. A one-year contract will be initiated not to exceed \$120,000.

**RazPlus** for K-5 classrooms provides a robust collection of resources, lesson plans, activities, and quizzes to ensure students receive the differentiated standards-aligned instruction they need. This platform provides a student portal for independent reading. Texts also support the science and social studies units. A one-year contract will be initiated not to exceed \$180,000.

**Schoolnet** is an application provided by Pearson that allows educators to build lesson plans, create instructional materials, and supplement their teaching with digital resources. This tool gives teachers the ability to create and modify assessments as well as receive results in real-time with relevant data for reporting purposes. The assessment and reporting tools are complemented by a fully integrated materials bank for searching, storing, and editing lesson plans and curricular material. It can also support district-wide curriculum management with tools for creating and scheduling curriculum and district-wide pacing guides. A one-year contract will be initiated not to exceed \$40,000.

**Fiscal Implications:** Total cost of contracts: \$3,481,740.20. Federal, state, and local funds will be used to support instructional resources.

**Recommendation:** Approve contracts for the 2025-2026 school year to continue supporting instructional resources.

**Policy Implications:**

N/A

**Strategic Goal Alignment:**

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

**Submitted by:** Tonya Kales

**Department:** Academic Services



## **Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** 4/14/2025

**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

—3:23-CV-643-RJC-DCK Roger Perkins 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



<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>School</b>
Adams	Brittany	Resignation	School Nutrition
Aguero	Ana	Transfer	School Nutrition
Alexander	Craig	Hire	Facilities
Ambrose	Brittany	Resignation	Chapel Grove Elementary School
Aytekin	Murat	Resignation	Facilities
Baez	David	Hire	South Point High School
Bano Rivera	Wendy	Resignation	School Nutrition
Benson	Nisheba	Resignation	North Gaston High School
Berryman	Sjon	Hire	Mount Holly Middle School
Booker	Brionna	Rehire an Employee	East Gaston High School
Brooks	William	Hire	Tryon Elementary School
Brown	Michael	Resignation	Transportation
Carswell	Hannah	Resignation	Springfield Elementary School
Chapman	Yvonne	Resignation	Department for Exceptional Children
Childers	Robert	Hire	Facilities
Christopher	Geordin	Hire	Ida Rankin Elementary School
Cruz	Jose	Hire	Forestview High School
Dalton	Carrie	Promotion	Cherryville High School
Davis	Helaine	Involuntary Termination	Cherryville Elementary School
Dowdle	Michael	Hire	Ashbrook High School
Erwin	Regina	Resignation	School Nutrition
Escobar Garces	Oscar	Transfer	School Nutrition
Estate of Gibson	Dana	Death	Lowell Elementary School
Faggart	Joel	Hire	Stuart W. Cramer High School
Farley	Laquita	Promotion	H.H. Beam Elementary School
Fowler	Sarah	Promotion	Cherryville High School
Freeman	Dorian	Resignation	Grier Middle School
Garner	Tamara	Resignation	School Nutrition
Glenn	Elaine	Retirement	Superintendent's Office
Gust	Stephanie	Hire	Lingerfeldt Elementary School
Hearns	Ashley	Resignation	Hunter Huss High School
Heavner	Sylvia	Resignation	Cherryville High School
Hedgpeth	Alexandra	Resignation	Bessemer City Middle School
Helms	Steven	Hire	Ashbrook High School
Hendrick	Paige	Rehire an Employee	Transportation
Hester	Cynthia	Rehire an Employee	Academic Services
Heustess	Tucker	Hire	Technology Support Services
Holland	Wilmot	Resignation	Webb Street School
Huffman	Stacy	Resignation	Title I
Johnson	Mindy	Resignation	School Nutrition
Jones	Heather	Transfer	School Nutrition
Kapus	Ana Marie	Transfer	School Nutrition
Kaylor	Chloe	Hire	Stuart W. Cramer High School
Kimmel	Scott	Hire	Hunter Huss High School
Lindsay	Urania	Resignation	Lingerfeldt Elementary School
Lopez	Barbara	Transfer	School Nutrition



<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>School</b>
Lowery	Sandra	Resignation	School Nutrition
Lunsford	Ashton	Resignation	School Nutrition
Mantecon	Valentino	Promotion	Facilities
Marr	Whitney	Resignation	Robinson Elementary School
Mauney	Elizabeth	Retirement	School Nutrition
McCabe	Stephanie	Resignation	Belmont Middle School
MCCain	Brenda	Resignation	School Nutrition
McCall	Kristy	Promotion	Forestview High School
McCaskill	Jasmine	Resignation	School Nutrition
McCormick	Dy'Air	Hire	South Point High School
McGinnis	Adrienne	Hire	Student Assignment
Meeks	Summer	Transfer	Holbrook Middle School
Miller	Tonya	Transfer	Webb Street School
Mitchell	Priscilla	Hire	Sherwood Elementary School
Morrison	Kenya	Promotion	School Nutrition
Pace	Catherine	Retirement	John Chavis Middle School
Parker	Darby	Resignation	Pleasant Ridge Elementary School
Payne	Amber	Resignation	Student Support Services
Perez Valle	Eblin	Promotion	School Nutrition
Pray	Destiny	Demotion	School Nutrition
Reinhardt	Kendra	Hire	Pinewood Elementary School
Riley	Myra	Transfer	School Nutrition
Robinson	Dominique	Resignation	School Nutrition
Rodriguez Torres	Elba	Transfer	School Nutrition
Russell - Gonzales	Shannon	Transfer	School Nutrition
Sain	Teresa	Resignation	Chapel Grove Elementary School
Santillana	Victoria	Retirement	Webb Street School
Showers	Rodnita	Resignation	Pleasant Ridge Elementary School
Sigmon	Betsy	Retirement	W.C. Friday Middle School
Sim	Angela	Hire	Southwest Middle School
Sisak	Cheryl	Resignation	Pinewood Elementary School
Smetak	Jodie	Resignation	Webb Street School
Smith	Greta	Transfer	School Nutrition
Sullivan	Raina	Hire	Holbrook Middle School
Tscheiller	Michael	Transfer	School Nutrition
Walker	Tony	Resignation	W.A. Bess Elementary School
Wilcox-Sommersell	Vickie	Resignation	School Nutrition
Williams	Erica	Hire	Department for Exceptional Children
Wilson	Helen	Promotion	School Nutrition
Wray	Sierra	Resignation	Auxiliary Services