

GASTON COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR SESSION



Shaping Our Future

943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC 28054
May 19, 2025
5:30 p.m.

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Agenda Adoption

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Consideration of Formal Agenda for Monday, May 19, 2025.

•

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

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

Adoption of Agenda

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 2350 Board Meeting Agenda.

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

Josh Crisp – Chairman

Dot Cherry – Vice Chairman

Lee Dedmon, Gastonia Township
Tod Kinlaw, South Point Township
Robbie Lovelace, Cherryville Township
Brent Moore, Crowders Mountain Township



Jeff K. Ramsey, At Large
Janna Smith, Gastonia Township
A.M. Stephens, III, Riverbend Township

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

Monday, May 19, 2025

5:30 p.m.

Agenda

Regular Meeting

Page(s)

I.	Call to Order	
II.	Invocation	
III.	Pledge of Allegiance	
IV.	Agenda Adoption – Action.....	1-3
V.	Good News – Information.....	4-9
VI.	Classroom Moment – Information.....	10
VII.	Public Expression – Information	11
VIII.	Approval/Correction of Minutes – Action	12
	April 1, 2025 (Joint BOE/BOC Meeting)	13
	April 14, 2025 (Regular Meeting).....	14-20
IX.	Operations Committee Report – Information	21
X.	Curriculum & Instruction Committee Report – Information.....	22
XI.	School Nutrition Annual Report – Information	23
XII.	School Nutrition Formal Bids 2025-2026 – Action	24-25
XIII.	Consent Agenda – Action.....	26
	Consent Agenda Item (s) will be adopted with a single motion, second vote, unless a request for removal from the Consent Agenda is heard from a Board Member.	
	A. Recommended Personnel.....	27
	B. Budget Amendments & Budget Transfers.....	28-35
	C. Construction/Repair Change Orders.....	36-37
	D. Armstrong Property Purchase	38
	E. Contracts.....	39
	—Driver Education	40
	—Replacement of AX JACE Controllers.....	41
	—Grier Middle School Graphics.....	42

—Substitute Staff Placement Services — ESS Southeast, LLC	43
—Educator’s Handbook (K-12)	44
—Federal Programs Proposed Budget for 2025-2026	45
—Annual Engagement Letter with Independent Auditors	46
XIV. Superintendent’s Comments	
XV. Closed Session – Information	47-48
— N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(3) Consultation with Attorney	
— N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel	
XVI. Adjournment	

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

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

DEPARTMENT: Communications/Public
Information Department

TOPIC: GOOD NEWS

FOR THE MONTH OF: May 2025

1. The following educators were announced during the **Gaston County Schools** Evening of Excellence ceremony as “Of the Year” winners for the 2025-2026 school year: Teacher of the Year: **John Ramos, Forestview High School**; Principal of the Year: **Jaime Wallace, Brookside Elementary School**; Assistant Principal of the Year: **Charlotte Friday, W.A. Bess Elementary School**; New Teacher of the Year: **Richard Morris, Forestview High School**; Teacher Assistant of the Year: **Christi Jolley, Grier Middle School**; and Central Office Administrator of the Year: **Leigh Smith, Human Resources**. Truist sponsored the ceremony with additional partnership support from Courage Kia in Gastonia and the Gaston County Education Foundation.
2. **Gaston County Schools** was among 26 businesses, organizations, and individuals from the western part of the state to be honored during the United Way of North Carolina’s Spirit of North Carolina Awards ceremony, which was held at the Gastonia Conference Center. The award was given in the Community Impact category, recognizing the school district’s fundraising efforts for 2024-2025 that totaled close to \$132,000 as the largest campaign for the United Way of Gaston County. This is **Gaston County Schools’** third consecutive year for receiving the Spirit of North Carolina Award.
3. Three promising educators in **Gaston County Schools** have been chosen for the Principal Fellows program at UNC-Charlotte. **Ashlyn Steelman** of **W.C. Friday Middle School**, **Tishawana Leach** of **Ashbrook High School**, and **Matthew Jennings** of **Lowell Elementary School** were selected as Principal Fellows and will participate in a professional development program that is designed for teachers who aspire to become school administrators/district leaders.
4. **Gaston County Schools** was honored at the North Carolina School Public Relations Association’s Blue Ribbon Awards program in High Point for winning a gold award in the special events and programs category. The state honor recognizes the Communications Department’s efforts to coordinate the “School Showcase and Parent Fair” that was held in February 2024.
5. The **Gaston County Schools** Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department hosted a Career Signing Day program for seniors who have earned an apprenticeship or permanent employment after graduation with one of the school district’s CTE business partners.
6. **Gaston County Schools** received a supply of 500 pairs of shoes for students in need from the Soles 4 Souls organization.

7. **Gaston County Schools** hosted the annual Star Teacher-Star Student Awards ceremony on April 10 at the Gaston Early College High School. The program celebrated the achievements of the Star Students in the Class of 2025 (one from each high school) and the Star Teachers who have influenced their lives. GSM Services sponsored the event.
8. The following students are recipients of the Albert G. Myers Scholarship: **James Thomas Bowen IV, Macie Bridgeman, John-Thomas McQuay, and Charlie Price**, all of **South Point High School**; **Ann M. Sproul** of **Stuart W. Cramer High School**; **Kelsey Griffin** of **Hunter Huss High School**; **Carson Reed** of **Cherryville High School**; and **Sadie Morton** of **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences**.
9. **Gaston County Schools** has partnered with Kintegra Health to expand services to all schools for the 2025-2026 year. The expansion will ensure that students across the school district have greater access to essential healthcare resources, further supporting their well-being and academic success. In addition to behavioral health services, Kintegra Health will implement telehealth medical services at all schools. These services include well and sick visits, school physicals, and ongoing care provided by qualified, licensed medical staff. All services will be available to students with parental consent. The expansion reflects **Gaston County Schools'** commitment to ensuring that students have access to the care they need to thrive, grow, and be successful.
10. The following educators are recipients of the Glenn Sisters Legacy Grant presented by the Gaston County Education Foundation: **Jessica Blake** of **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**; **Sandra Engbarth** of **Pleasant Ridge Elementary**; **Amy Motley** of **North Gaston High School**; **Christy Garcia** of **Warlick Academy**; and **Heather Brown** of **Rankin Elementary**.
11. **Dr. Christelle Corpin**, a science teacher at **Stuart W. Cramer High School**, has been chosen as the EPI (Educational Partners International) Teacher of the Year for North Carolina. She was selected as one of three finalists from more than 100 nominations statewide and was chosen as the official state winner. Additionally, Corpin will receive the Association of Filipino Teachers of America's Global Teacher Award during a ceremony at the end of May in New York. Corpin has been supportive of the international teachers in **Gaston County Schools** and has played an important role in facilitating meetings, cultural events, and other programs for her colleagues in addition to her responsibilities as a classroom teacher.
12. The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association has recognized **East Gaston High School** athletic director **Haley Stewart** as a Certified Athletic Administrator.
13. **Chapel Grove Elementary School** hosted a celebration on April 29 to commemorate the school's 100th anniversary. The event brought attention to a century of learning, growth, and community spirit and featured special recognitions, student performances, and school history presentations, including honoring former principal **Jack Kimbro** for his 25 years of service at Chapel Grove.

14. **Bessemer City High School** and **Hunter Huss High School** had representatives attend the MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) secondary schools networking session in Wilkesboro. They had the opportunity to present about how the MTSS framework is offering positive support for students' academic, behavioral, and social/emotional needs through individualized support for students based on their needs and challenges. The representatives from Gaston County also spent time collaborating with people from other school districts and the N.C. Department of Public Instruction on various topics related to MTSS for a full day of learning and sharing.
15. **Bessemer City High School** senior **Tionna Pettus** was chosen for the N.C. Coaches Association's 2025 East-West All-Star Girls Basketball Game, which is scheduled for July 21.
16. The County Commissioners and Gaston County Government have established a committee called "Gaston Project 250" to bring attention to the 250th anniversary of the United States in 2026. This is being done in correlation with the "America 250 Project," which is intended to educate and publicize the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. A part of the committee is a subgroup that focuses on education and awareness. **Laura Long**, lead media coordinator, and **Valerie Yatko**, business partnerships director, have been representing **Gaston County Schools** on the committee, and with input from **Bryan Denton**, executive director for secondary instruction, they presented the committee with ideas about how the school district can raise student/employee awareness about the historical events related to the semiquincentennial observance through school libraries/media centers and communication channels.
17. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** senior **Olivia Michael** is the recipient of the 2025 Wayne F. Shovelin Scholarship, a four-year scholarship valued at \$24,000 each academic year for undergraduate studies in a healthcare-related field.
18. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** earned third place in the North Carolina Battle of the Books competition.
19. The **Stuart W. Cramer High School** men's golf team won the 3A Western Regional Championship at the Waynesville Inn and Golf Club and the 3A State Championship at Gates Four Golf and Country Club.
20. **Cramerton Middle School** has achieved the next level of certification from the National Paideia Center, moving from the "Paideia Seminar" to the "Paideia Classroom Certification" level. The Paideia approach encourages teaching and learning engagement, critical thinking, creativity, and other skills among students, teachers, and staff and serves as the cornerstone for the school's Gifted and Talented Academy.
21. **W.C. Friday Middle School** student **Iyanna Brianne Flores** performed with the Charlotte Concert Band in the biennial "Musician of a Lifetime" concert on April 26 at the Ann R. Belk Theater on the campus of UNC-Charlotte.

22. The **Gaston County Schools** middle school band directors sponsor two to three Kelly Robb Scholarships each year. Applicants must submit a 200-word essay about how music has impacted their lives along with a video performance of a solo. The \$250 scholarships are intended to support attendance at a band camp or private lessons. During the 2025 all-county band clinic, the Kelly Robb Scholarship committee announced this year's recipients: **Camilia Vargas Parra** and **Iyanna Brianne Flores**, both eighth-grade band students at **W.C. Friday Middle School**.
23. Recently, the Gastonia East Rotary Club put out a call for donations of bread to make sandwiches for people who are in need. In response, the **Gaston County Schools Human Resources** staff contributed 36 loaves of bread. This is an example of how employees embrace the spirit of caring and giving to support the community and make it a better place for others.
24. **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences** students **Jalen Starr**, **Rhema Smith**, and **Mia Hibbert** were awarded academic scholarships for their participation in the Debutante Ball hosted by the Zeta Mu Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and Twenty Pearls, Inc. Other scholarship winners include **Evelyn Gutierrez Lira**, who received the Daniel C. Ragan Scholarship valued at \$20,000; **Sadie Morton**, who was awarded the Albert G. Myers Scholarship valued at \$20,000. **Nevaeh Dover**, who received the E.R. and Lillian B. Dimmette Scholarship worth \$24,000, and **Vidhi Patel**, who was awarded the John Willoughby Scholarship valued at \$1,000.
25. **Hunter Huss High School** senior **Alaina Peavy** is the recipient of the 2025 Paul Fuller Mentoring Scholarship. The \$4,000 scholarship is given each year to a student who has been positively influenced by a mentor. It is named in memory of Paul Fuller, one of the first mentors in **Gaston County Schools**. She plans to attend the University of North Carolina at Greensboro this fall to study art education.
26. **K'Mari Spikes**, a student at **North Gaston High School**, has been awarded two scholarships: the E.R. and Lillian B. Dimmette Scholarship for \$3,000 per year and the George and Patricia Barnard Scholarship for \$5,000 per year. Both scholarships are renewable for up to four years.
27. **Page Primary** finished in the top three in the district for iReady math. In addition, the school's beautification committee received a grant from Keep Belmont Beautiful to add new trees and plants in the front circle driveway. Plus, CrossFix Ministries assisted with the planting of new greenery.
28. Members of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Beta Mu Zeta Chapter, donated physical education equipment to **Sherwood Elementary School**. Each grade level received a classroom container filled with sports balls, rings, racquets, and frisbees to promote physical activity and fitness. As part of a chapter project this year, the sorority also adopted **Sherwood** and **Woodhill Elementary School**. Their support included donating bottled water for field day, volunteering as proctors for end-of-grade testing, and providing small gifts to staff during Teacher Appreciation Week.

29. **Springfield Elementary** celebrated the opening of a brand-new playground, which was made possible by a generous \$40,000 donation from a local business. Board of Education members **Dot Cherry** and **A.M. Stephens** attended the special event along with Assistant Superintendent of Operations **Bessie Harvey**. Several first-grade students shared their writing about the new playground, and kindergartener **Elias Williams** was recognized for winning the “Name the Playground” contest with his creative entry, “Blue Bear-y.”
30. **James Dover** and **Rex Dover** of **South Point High School** won the state 3A doubles tennis championship at the Burlington Tennis Center.
31. **South Point High School** teacher **Bobbie Cavnar**, a former **Gaston County Schools** and N.C. Teacher of the Year 2016-2017, was named to Governor Josh Stein’s Teacher Advisory Committee.
32. **South Point High School** students **Patrick Blee** and **Gavin Smith** were named to the 2025 Academic All-American Team by the National High School Coaches Association.

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Classroom Moment

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

Information will be shared about the various celebrations and events connected to graduation for the Class of 2025. Some of these include Senior Walks, Awards Nights, Scholarship Recognitions, and Decision Day events.

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

N/A

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 3000 Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

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

Submitted by: Dr. Bryan Denton & Kevin Doran, Executive Directors of Secondary Instruction

Department: Academic Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

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:

Policy Code: 2310 Public Participation at Board Meetings.

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: 5/19/2025

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Approval/Correction of Minutes

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Approval of Minutes from:

April 1, 2025 (Joint BOE/BOC Meeting)

April 14, 2025 (Regular Meeting)

Efficient consideration of matters pertinent to the successful operation of the school system. Contributes to validation of Board Proceedings and is consistent with the Open Meetings Law.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

The Board will approve accurate minutes consistent with the Open Meetings Law.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 2320 Compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

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
Joint Board of Education/Board of Commissioner Meeting
Tuesday, April 1, 2025
10:00 a.m.

Minutes

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a special meeting on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at the Gaston County Administrative Building, Conference Room 3A, Gastonia, NC. Board Members in attendance were: Chairman Josh Crisp, Vice Chairman Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon, Tod Kinlaw, Robbie Lovelace, Brent Moore, Jeff Ramsey (absent), Janna Smith and A.M. Stephens III.

Additional attendees from Gaston County Board of Education include: Superintendent Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Associate Superintendents Gary Hoskins and Tonya Kales, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services Rebekka Powers, Assistant Superintendent of Operations Bessie Harvey and Board Clerk Dana Luoto.

Attendees from Gaston County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chad Brown, Vice Chairman Cathy Cloninger, Jim Bailey, Allen Fraley, Bob Hovis, Tom Keigher, and Scott Shehan.

Additional attendees from Gaston County Board of Commissioners: County Manager Matt Rhoten, Assistant County Managers Steve Eaton and Brian Sciba, Budget Coordinator Elizabeth McGee, Executive Directors Ray Maxwell and Justin Amos, Financial and Management Services Director Scott Attaway, County Attorney David Goldberg, Executive Legal Counsel Martha Thompson, Communications Director Adam Gaub and Clerk to the Board Donna Buff.

Chairman Chad Brown called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Superintendent Houchard thanked the Commissioners for past support of Gaston County Schools and an on-going relationship between staff and Board Members. Superintendent Houchard presented a PowerPoint presentation of the 2025-2026 Gaston County Schools Budget.

(View PowerPoint)

Discussion occurred.

Chairman Brown and Chairman Crisp thanked everyone for coming.

The meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Approved:

Josh Crisp, Chairman
[Corporate Seal]

Morgen A. Houchard, Secretary

Date Approved: _____

Gaston County Schools
Board of Education
Monday, April 14, 2025
Meeting 5:30 p.m.
Regular Meeting

MINUTES

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a regular session on Monday, April 14, 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 (absent), Robbie Lovelace, Brent Moore (absent), 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 Justin White from Frontline Worship Center led the invocation.

Character Trait

Alyxandra Childs, H.H. Beam Elementary School, reported on the Character Trait of Perseverance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Ranchan Chahil, Belmont Middle School 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. Jeff Ramey; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

Good News – Information

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized All-State Band students – Alex Cornwell from Highland School of Technology, Bram Cromer from Forestview High School, Mackenzie Hart and Zeke Tucker from East Gaston High School and Iyanna Brienne Flores from W.C. Friday Middle School. These students auditioned in March and earned invitations to participate in the North Carolina All-State Honors Band Clinic which is scheduled for May 2-4 at UNC-Greensboro.

Mr. Jeff Ramsey presented a Certificate of Recognition to each student.

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized Diane Baxter from Stanley Middle School who was honored with the North Carolina Student Academy of Science (NCSAS) Award which recognizes educators across the state who support students in STEM research.

Mr. Jeff Ramsey presented a Certificate of Recognition to Ms. Baxter.

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized Kim Lynch an English/Language Arts Curriculum Facilitator. Ms. Lynch received the 2025 C. Kenneth McEwin Distinguished Service Award from the North Carolina Association for Middle Level Education. This honor signifies her significant contributions to the development and success of middle school students in Gaston County Schools.

Ms. Dot Cherry presented a Certificate of Recognition to Ms. Lynch.

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized representatives from Tindol Subaru and Amy Spencer Executive Director of the Gaston County Education Foundation. For 16 years, the annual Subaru Share the Love Event has shown Subaru's commitment to being more than a car company. During this event, Subaru of America donates \$250 for every new Subaru vehicle purchased or leased at participating retailers. Customers can choose to send that donation to one of four national charities or to a hometown charity selected by the retailer. For several years, Tindol Subaru has chosen the Gaston County Education Foundation as their hometown charity. In addition to Subaru of America's contributions, Tindol Subaru also gives a portion of every car sale directly to the Gaston County Education Foundation. This effort reflects Tindol Subaru's strong support for teachers and education in our community.

Tindol Subaru presented a check for \$25,245 to the Gaston County Education Foundation.

Ms. Dot Cherry presented a Certificate of Recognition plaque to the Tindol Subaru dealership.

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized the following to celebrate Library Recognition Month:

- Jeremy Tucker – Bessemer City Middle School – our current Media Specialist of the Year
- Nancy Olls – Cherryville High School – who is retiring after 30 years – 29 years as a media specialist
- Karen Lowrance – media assistant who is retiring
- Lauren Pekarek – Lowell Elementary School – Media Specialist of the Year for 2025-2026
- Laura Long – Lead Media Coordinator

Mr. A.M. Stephens III presented a Certificate of Recognition plaque to the group in honor of their dedication and role school library media coordinators play in student success.

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized the following Social Workers to bring attention to the importance of School Social Work Week. These dedicated professionals play a vital role in supporting students' academic success and well-being every day:

- Tabatha Lynch
- Chuck Harkey – current School Social Worker of the Year
- Michelle Black
- Beryl Miller
- Heather Baker
- Angela Ferguson
- Moran Stewart
- Elizabeth Lanier – School Social Worker of the Year for 2025-2026

Mrs. Janna Smith presented a Certificate of Recognition plaque to the group to recognize our social workers.

Mr. Todd Hagans announced that Gaston County Schools received a Blue Ribbon Award from the North Carolina School Public Relations Association. The award was presented on Friday, April 11, 2025 during a ceremony in High Point. It is a gold-level award in the special events and programs category for our "School Showcase and Parent Fair," which was held in February 2024 at Stuart W. Cramer High School. We would like to commend the Communications Department on winning another Blue Ribbon Award and bringing state-level attention to Gaston County Schools.

Teacher Appreciation Week Proclamation – Action

Chairman Crisp recognized Mr. Todd Hagans who presented the Teacher Appreciation Week Proclamation for consideration.

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. Jeff Ramsey seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith that the Board
Approve Teacher Appreciation Week Proclamation

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (7-0)

Mr. Todd Hagans recognized the following:

- Brandon Taylor – East Gaston High School – current Teacher of the Year
- Emma Richardson – North Belmont Elementary School – current Linda Rader New Teacher of the Year
- John Ramos – Forestview High School – top five finalist 2025-2026 for Teacher of the Year
- Richard Morris – Forestview High School – top five finalist 2025-2026 for New Teacher of the Year
- Alyssa Eckard – Ashbrook High School – top five finalist 2025-2026 for New Teacher of the Year

Chairman Crisp and Superintendent Houchard presented the Teacher Appreciation Week Proclamation Recognition plaque to the group.

(View Proclamation)

Classroom Moment – Information

Chairman Crisp recognized Emily Poag, Pre-K Director and Rita Evans, Lowell Elementary Pre-K Teacher who presented a PowerPoint on Pre-Kindergarten Services.

(View PowerPoint)

Public Expression – Information

Teresa MacFarlane
1139 E. Franklin Blvd.
Gastonia, NC 28054

Approval/Correction of Minutes – Action

Motion to adopt minutes of March 17, 2025 (Regular Meeting) as presented was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

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 Mr. A.M. Stephens III who provided a summary of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.

(View Report)

Innovation Schools Strategy - Information

Chairman Crisp recognized Ms. Tonya Kales who presented a PowerPoint on Innovation School Strategy.

(View PowerPoint)

Summer Program Plan Addendum: School Year Re-Administration Plan - Action

Chairman Crisp recognized Ms. Kelly Cunningham who presented a PowerPoint on the summer Program and School Year Re-Administration Plan 2025. 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 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 retake their EOG or EOC test(s).

Motion

Motion was made by Mr. Jeff Ramsey; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry that the Board

Approve the Summer Plan Addendum: School Year Re-Administration Plan

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (7-0)

(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. Out-of-County Tuition 2025-2026
- E. Gaston County School's Budget Request 2025-2026
- F. Contracts
 - Microsoft Software Agreement
 - BusPlanner Renewal (Sole Source)
 - Ida Rankin Elementary School — Mural Easement
 - Elementary School LED Light Conversions

—Melmark, Inc.

—Instructional Resources 2025-2026 — Academic Services

Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

Superintendent's Comments

Superintendent Houchard announced that next week is Spring Break – April 21-25. When students return to school on April 28, there will only be 3½ weeks of school left. The focus will be on end-of-year testing, awards day and celebrating the Class of 2025.

Superintendent Houchard announced that a wonderful time was had at the Star Student-Star Teacher Ceremony on Thursday, April 10 celebrating our Star Students in the Class of 2025 and their Star Teachers. The ceremony will air on Channel 21 in a few weeks.

Superintendent Houchard announced our springtime job fair will be held on Tuesday, May 6 at the Linder Rader Staff Development Center in Cramerton. The event runs from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. and we are seeking employees for both teaching and non-teaching positions.

Superintendent Houchard announced that tomorrow, Tuesday, April 15 our AIG (Academically Gifted and Intellectually Gifted) Department will host the Poetry and Prose Celebration at Highland School of Technology for all fourth-grade students.

Superintendent Houchard announced the annual Evening of Excellence Awards Ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 1 at 6:30 p.m. at Stuart Cramer High School. The event is being sponsored by Truist Bank and we are looking forward to recognizing our outstanding educators and finding out who our Teacher, Principal, Assistant Principal, New Teacher, Teacher Assistant and Central Office Administrator of the Year will be for 2025-2026.

Superintendent Houchard reminded everyone that our annual Sports Physical Day will be held on Saturday, May 10 at CaroMont Specialty Surgery in Gastonia. Appointment times are from 8:05 a.m. until 11:40 a.m. The cost is free, but space is limited.

Superintendent Houchard reminded everyone that the "Through An Artist's Eyes" art exhibit runs through Saturday, May 10 at Loray Mill. The exhibit features the most outstanding artwork by students in Gaston County Schools.

Superintendent Houchard reminded everyone that registration for kindergarten is on-going and parents can register on the Gaston County Schools website. While kindergarten registration continues throughout the summer, registration for pre-kindergarten ends in May.

Chairman Crisp wished Mr. Brent Moore a "Happy Birthday".

Chairman Crisp announced that graduation will be held on Friday, May 23.

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 Mrs. Robbie Lovelace; motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

The Board went into Closed Session at 6:34 p.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 7:05 p.m.

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens; seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon that the Board
Award a four-year Principal contract for the following:

- NaKishia Glenn

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (7-0)

The Motion was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith that the Board
Award a one-year Principal contract for the following:

Melissa Knick

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (7-0)

The Motion was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith that the Board
Award a two-year Principal contract for the following:

Stephanie Gust

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (7-0)

The Motion was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith that the Board
Award a two-year Principal contract for the following:

Sierra Jennings

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (7-0)

Superintendent Houchard announced the following placements:

NaKishia Glenn — Catawba Heights Elementary School

Melissa Knick — Tryon Elementary School

Stephanie Gust — North Belmont Elementary School

Sierra Jennings — Brookside Elementary School

Superintendent Houchard announced the following Principal placements:

Staci Bradley — York Chester Middle School

Kristie Gornto — John Chavis Middle School

Mitch Allen — Cherryville High School

Miriam Harvey — Chapel Grove Elementary School

Lorinda Brusie — Costner Elementary School

Adjournment

All business having been conducted, Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Jeff Ramsey; seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Approved:

Josh Crisp, Chairman
[Corporate Seal]

Morgen A. Houchard, Secretary

Date Approved: _____

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

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:

As indicated in the report.

Recommendation:

Committee recommendations are reflected in the report.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 2230 Board Committees

Strategic Goal Alignment:

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

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

Department: Finance

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

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:

As indicated in the report.

Recommendation:

Committee recommendations are reflected in the report.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 2230 Board Committees

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: 5/19/2025

Agenda Item Title/Topic: School Nutrition Annual Report

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

Angela Calamia, Director of School Nutrition, will provide to the Gaston County Board of Education current operational data including information related to student participation, free and reduced meal benefits, charged meals, financial performance, legislative and regulatory topics, food initiatives, and personnel. The School Nutrition Department is financially solvent and in compliance with federal, state and local regulations and policies. School Nutrition continues to provide our students the daily nutrition necessary for success in the classroom and also provides nutritious meals to as many students as possible throughout the year.

Fiscal Implications:

See Report.

Recommendation:

Report for Information.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code 6200: Goals of School Nutrition Services

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Angela Calamia
Director of School Nutrition

Department: School Nutrition

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

Agenda Item Title/Topic: School Nutrition Formal Bids 2025-2026

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Gaston County Board of Education to authorize School Nutrition award of formal bids for the period beginning August 1, 2025 through July 31, 2026. A table recapping the awards follows:

FOOD

IFB/RFP CATEGORY	VENDOR	SY 25-26 Projected Cost	Actual Paid 7/1/24-5/6/25	Difference
North Carolina Procurement Alliance Lot 1 Distributor Bid 2023-2024 for Gaston County Rollover/Renewal Year 2 of 4	US Food Service, Inc.	\$3,612,854.19	\$ 3,569,954.03	+42,900.16
North Carolina Procurement Alliance Direct to Manufacturer & Commodity Processing Bid 2025-2026	Kellanova	\$ 103,125.00	\$ 75,928.10	+ 27,196.90
	Super Bakery Inc.	\$ 137,081.60	\$ 95,940.75	+41,140.85
	Gold Creek Foods Inc.	\$ 254,590.70	\$ 399,015.60	(144,424.90)
	Tyson Foods Inc.	\$ 157,174.95	\$ 308,676.04	(151,501.09)
	Nardone Bros Baking Co Inc.	\$ 274,414.00	\$ 246,528.70	+27,885.30
	JTM Provision Co Inc.	\$334,866.50	\$ 390,071.48	(55,204.98)
	Schwan's Food Service Inc.	\$ 461,780.29	\$ 433,041.53	+28,738.76
North Carolina Procurement Alliance Lot 4 Produce Bid 2025-2026 for Gaston County New Contract with option to renew for 5 one-year periods	Foster Caviness	\$913,603.40	\$ 1,091,664.63	(178,061.23)
Milk & Fresh Orange Juice "GCS-2022-DAIRY" Rollover/Renewal Year 3 of 3	Dairy Farmers of America d/b/a Pet Dairy	\$1,200,170.00	\$ 1,211,694.48	+11,524.48
ESTIMATED FOOD PURCHASES		\$7,449,660.63	\$ 7,666,574.59	(216,913.96) -2.93%

FOOD PROCESSING SUPPLIES

Paper Supplies "GCS-2024-PAPERSUPPLIES" Rollover/Renewal Year 1 of 4	Southeastern Paper Group	\$ 602,932.50	\$ 626,831.25	(23,898.75)
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Note: **Awards in Bold Print**

Fiscal Implications:

Bids are awarded on the basis of lowest delivered price of approved brands and/or products.

Recommendation:

Approval of bids to the vendors listed.

Policy Implications:

Bids have been solicited, received, and evaluated in compliance with federal, state, and local procurement regulations.

Recommendation:

Approval of bids to the vendors listed.

Policy Implications:

Board Policy 6220 – Operation of School Nutrition Services

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Angela Calamia
Director of School Nutrition

Department: School Nutrition

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

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. Armstrong Property Purchase
- E. Contracts
 - Driver Education
 - Replacement of AX JACE Controllers
 - Grier Middle School Graphics
 - Substitute Staff Placement Services — ESS Southeast, LLC
 - Educator's Handbook (K-12)
 - Federal Programs Proposed Budget for 2025-2026
 - Annual Engagement Letter with Independent Auditors

Fiscal Implications:

As state din each Agenda item.

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:

Policy Code: 1010 Board Authority and Duties.

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: 5/19/2025

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:

Policy Code: 7100 Recruitment and Selection of Personnel.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

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

Submitted by: Dr. Morgen A. Houchard

Department: Human Resources

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

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 - April
Transfers Between Functions

State Public School Fund

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
51000	Regular Instructional Services		131,182
53000	Alternative Programs and Services	113,385	
54000	School Leadership Services	7	
58000	School-Based Support Services	2,467	
61000	Support and Development Services		14,677
65000	Operational Support Services	30,000	
		<u>145,859</u>	<u>145,859</u>

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

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

Local Current Expense Fund

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
51000	Regular Instructional Services		132,594
52000	Special Population Services		4,156
54000	School Leadership Services		145
55000	Co-Curricular Services		85
58000	School-Based Support Services	4,702	
61000	Support and Development Services	3,667	
64000	Technology Support Services	78,036	
65000	Operational Support Services	49,158	
66000	Financial and Human Resource Services	3,104	
69000	Policy, Leadership and Communication/Public Information Services		1,686
		<u>138,666</u>	<u>138,666</u>

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

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

Federal Grants Fund

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
52000	Special Population Services	11,490	
53000	Alternative Programs and Services		15,622
65000	Operational Support Services	2,122	
81000	Payments to Other Governmental Units	2,010	
		<u>15,622</u>	<u>15,622</u>

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

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

Restricted Grants Fund

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
52000	Special Population Services		1,000
58000	School-Based Support Services	1,000	
65000	Operational Support Services	7,624	
66000	Financial and Human Resource Services		7,624
		8,624	8,624

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

Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations
2024-2025 Budget Resolution - April
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		61,694
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	61,694	
		This amendment budgets funds for the Non-Contributory Employee Benefits allotment - FY25 (PRC0009)		
2	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		24,000
	52000	Special Population Services	24,000	
		This amendment budgets funds for the Behavioral Support - Allotment Revision #89- FY25 (PRC0029)		
3	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		(7,500)
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	(7,500)	
		This amendment adjusts funds for the Career Technical Education -Program Support allotment for the Adobe license reduction - Allotment Revision #85 - FY25 (PRC0014)		
4	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		142,831
	65500	Operational Support Services	142,831	
		This amendment budgets funds for the Transportation of Pupils - FY25 Final Allotment - Allotment Revision #85 - FY25 (PRC0056)		
5	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		27,000
	52000	Special Population Services	27,000	
		This amendment budgets funds for the Children with Disabilities - Special Funds allotment - Allotment Revision #89- FY25 (PRC0063)		
6	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		102,526
	58000	School-Based Support Services	102,526	
		This amendment budgets funds for the Children with Disabilities - Special State Revenue - Allotment Revision #89 - FY25 (PRC0089)		
7	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		134,588
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	134,588	
		This amendment budgets funds for the Economically Disadvantaged Public School - Allotment Revision #83 - FY25 (PRC0251)		
Total State Public School Fund Amendments			485,139	485,139

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

Federal Current Expense Fund

#	Function	Description	Expense Increase (Decrease)	Revenue Increase (Decrease)
1	36000	Federal Revenue		8,000
	52000	Special Population Services	7,746	
	81000	Payments to Other Governmental Units	254	
This amendment budgets funds for the IDEA - Special Education State Improvement Allotment - FY25 (PRC0082)				

Total State Public School Fund Amendments

8,000	8,000
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Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations
2024-2025 Budget Resolution - April
Proposed Expenditures and Sources of Revenue

Restricted Grants Fund

#	Function	Description	Expense Increase (Decrease)	Revenue Increase (Decrease)
1	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		18,982
	52000	Special Population Services	18,982	
	This amendment budgets funds for the Central Office Administration Fund - FY25 (PRC0002)			
2	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		180,000
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	180,000	
	This amendment budgets funds for the Cooperative Innovative High Schools Allotment - FY25 (PRC0055)			
3	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		(110,626)
	53000	Alternative Programs and Services	(105,626)	
	58000	School-Based Support Services	(5,000)	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Title IV, Part B - 21st Century (ASPIRE) Allotment - FY25 (PRC0110)			
Total Restricted Grants Fund Amendments			88,357	88,357

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

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
5-19-25	Beam Construction Company	Grier MS	Increase allowances for Phase II due to high levels of rock removed during Phase I and new emergency responder system.	\$51,691,500	\$500,000

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Armstrong Property Purchase

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

On February 17, 2025, the Board approved an Offer to Purchase and Contract of Sale for a property consisting of a building and approximately 2.63 gross acres located on Gaston County Tax Parcel No. 204335 located at 3372 Robinwood Rd, informally known as the Armstrong Property. Due diligence is complete and no disqualifying issues were found. The Board is ready to move forward with the purchase of this property for the asking price of \$1.5 million. The appraised value is more than \$2.0 million.

This Offer is subject to approval of the purchase price by the Board of County Commissioners' who will consider this item at their meeting on May 27, 2025.

Fiscal Implications:

Funding will be paid from the \$110 million school bond proceeds.

Recommendation:

Board to approve the purchase of the Armstrong Building and land for \$1.5 million pending approval of the purchase price by the County Commissioners.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 9000 Planning to Address Facility Needs

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Department: Operations

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

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 of Contracts with the Board.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 8640 Contracts with the Board.

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: 5/19/2025

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Driver Education

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

North Carolina Driving School is submitting a request for a bid price increase for the 2025-2026 school year. This request is due to the increasing costs associated with providing quality driving education to students. Over the last several years, North Carolina Driving School has experienced a significant rise in operational costs, including fuel prices, vehicle maintenance, insurance, and staff salaries. These factors have necessitated a re-evaluation of the current pricing structure to ensure the continued delivery of high-standard education and safety. Following negotiations, the proposed \$25 fee increase was revised, and the provider has agreed to a \$10 increase for this year. Our Driver's Ed program serves approximately 2,000 students, and with this revised increase, families will continue to pay \$25 rather than the previously discussed \$40.

Fiscal Implications:

Contingent upon State funding for driver education services, Gaston County students will continue to receive driver education.

Recommendation:

Approve the increase for driver education services in Gaston County.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 8640 Contracts with the Board.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

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

Submitted by: Rebekka Powers
Assistant Superintendent

Department: Student Support Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Replacement of AX JACE Controllers

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

Main Points:

The AX platform JACE controller provides integrated control, supervision, data logging, scheduling and network management within a building. Our current AX JACE controller has reached its end of life and is now obsolete. We have this controller installed at 40 locations, including 39 schools. The current product is the JACE 9000 controller which will be used to replace the existing AX platform JACE controllers.

Fiscal Implications:

A mandatory pre-bid was held Friday, January 24, 2025 at 1:00 PM in the Facility Director's Office. Two vendors were present at the pre-bid meeting. Both vendors submitted a bid and Facility Systems Services provided the lowest at a cost of \$424,448 — \$129,048 will be funded by the Repair & Renovation Fund and \$295,400 will be funded by Bond Funds.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends replacing the AX platform JACE controller with the JACE 9000 controller at 40 locations.

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

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Grier Middle School Graphics

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

Main Points:

The new Grier Middle School will open for students in August 2025. Nu-Idea, the furniture vendor for the project, has been recommended to purchase and install graphics and signage in the new building. This includes graphics and signs throughout the entire building including the lobby, hallways, offices, gymnasium, cafeteria, media center, etc.

Fiscal Implications:

The contracted cost of materials and labor for the purchase and installation of signs and graphics in the new Grier Middle School is \$113,009. This will be paid using funds from the \$80 million school bond.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the contract with Nu-Idea for the purchase and installation of graphics for the new Grier Middle School.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 9030 Facility Construction

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

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

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Substitute Staff Placement Services – ESS Southeast, LLC

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

One of our focus areas is high quality teaching and learning. In order to accomplish that we must have a qualified teacher in each classroom. When classroom vacancies occur we generally have a substitute teacher (sub) in the classroom. We currently have over 300 active subs. Our current fill rate for instructional day classroom teacher vacancies is approximately 85%. ESS is a company that specializes in recruiting and placing qualified staff in classrooms that need a sub at a higher fill rate than most districts can do on their own. ESS would also manage the entire program from hiring and training staff to calling subs to fill vacancies. All subs will become employees of ESS and could become available for benefits and would not be subject to limitations on hours worked by the State retirement system. They would also be paid on a weekly basis. A number of other NC school districts that use ESS for their sub program have recommended their service.

Fiscal Implications:

ESS will bill the substitute rate set by GCS (currently \$150/day certified and \$120/day non-certified) plus 30%. ESS will pay all fees related to payroll taxes (7.65%), ASEOP subscription (\$46,800), recruiting, hiring, onboarding, payroll management, workers compensation insurance and training of substitute teachers for GCS. The projected net annual incremental cost for FY 2025-26 is \$300,000.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the contract with ESS Southeast, LLC to provide substitute staff placement services for Gaston County Schools. The contract will be in effect through June 30, 2026. It will automatically renew for four additional years unless either party provides a written notice of termination at least 90 days prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 7430 Substitute Teachers

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Beth Suber,
Executive Director of HR

Department: Human Resources

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Educator's Handbook (K-12)

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Educator's Handbook is a digital platform to record minor incidents and office referrals for behavior. The platform allows staff members to review readily available information about student behavior trends and patterns that can be viewed by school and district staff. This platform provides faster identification of students in need of individualized services.

Fiscal Implications:

Three-year contract not to exceed \$134,064.

Recommendation:

Approve a three-year contract with Educator's Handbook for the 2025 - 2028 school year.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 8640 Contracts with the Board.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

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

Submitted by: Rebekka Powers
Assistant Superintendent

Department: Student Support Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/25

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Federal Programs Proposed Budget for 2025-2026

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Point:

The Federal Programs Department for Gaston County Schools has submitted a Planning Budget for the 2025-2026 school year.

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

Approval of Federal Programs Proposed Budget for 2025-2026.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 8685 Federal Grant Administration.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

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

Submitted by: Dr. Cynthia Reynolds,
Director of Federal Programs

Department: Academic Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 5/19/2025

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

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Last year Gaston County Schools engaged Forvis Mazars, LLP ("Forvis") to conduct its financial statement audit and required reviews of major programs for FY 2023-2024. This was our first year using Forvis as our independent auditor. Our previous auditor retired last year and his firm was not able to take any additional clients. The quote from Forvis to conduct the audit for FY 2023-2024 and any other required reviews was \$55,000. However, due to an unexpected increase in the hours to complete the audit the contract was amended in December 2024 to \$81,300. The increase in hours was largely due to being a new customer on a unique system with some lingering issues resulting from the conversion which were resolved with the assistance of the auditors. The expected cost of the audit and review for FY 2024-2025 is \$65,000.

Fiscal Implications:

The annual audit fees for fiscal year FY 2024-2025 are projected to not exceed \$65,000. This will be paid using local funds.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the contract and engagement letter with Forvis to perform audit services for the fiscal year 2024-2025.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 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: 5/19/2025

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:

TBD

Recommendation:

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

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 2610 Board Attorney

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
Abram	Carlithea	Hire	Bessemer City High School
Aguilar	Maria	Promotion	School Nutrition
Alexis	Jean	Hire	Bessemer City Middle School
Alford	Jonnecia	Hire	Academic Services
Barnes	Rebecca	Demotion	School Nutrition
Beach	Ashley	Transfer	School Nutrition
Bolin	Thomas	Resignation	Hunter Huss High School
Browne	Jason	Resignation	Cherryville High School
Buhler	Steven	Promotion	Technology Support Services
Burgess	Melanie	Resignation	Tryon Elementary School
Carver	Devon	Transfer	Facilities
Clement	Amber	Hire	Bessemer City High School
Coleman	Leigh	Resignation	Warlick Academy
Cooper	Justice	Hire	Bessemer City Middle School
Crank	Keesha	Transfer	School Nutrition
Falls	Barbara	Demotion	School Nutrition
Fulp	Joshua	Hire	Webb Street School
Gramarossa	Christine	Demotion	School Nutrition
Harper	David	Hire	Southwest Middle School
Hoffman	Lesley	Resignation	Cherryville High School
Hope	Shona	Transfer	School Nutrition
Hudson	Jessica	Rehire an Employee	Cherryville Elementary School
Jennings	Nina	Promotion	Grier Middle School
Jones	Damar	Hire	Bessemer City Middle School
Kasper	Kimberly	Retirement	School Nutrition
Kimble	James	Retirement	Grier Middle School
Lang	Macev	Resignation	Sherwood Elementary School
Leary	Timothy	Hire	Forestview High School
Lewis	Shanna	Hire	School Nutrition
Logan	Miranda	Promotion	School Nutrition
Lowery	Yvette	Resignation	Ashbrook High School
Mason	Johnnie	Resignation	Webb Street School
McDade	Michael	Transfer	Facilities
Miller	Victoria	Resignation	Lowell Elementary School
Miller	Michelle	Transfer	School Nutrition
Morrow	Jonathon	Transfer	Facilities
Murphy	Carl	Hire	Hunter Huss High School
Orozco Calle	Gicela	Resignation	Holbrook Middle School
Postell	Aaron	Hire	Forestview High School
Reece Jr.	Stephen	Hire	W.C. Friday Middle School
Reed	Jennifer	Rehire an Employee	North Gaston High School
Roseberry	Madison	Resignation	North Gaston High School
Sain	Sylvia	Resignation	School Nutrition
Sellers	Julie	Retirement	School Nutrition
Sherrin	Ronnie	Hire	Facilities
Steele	Kimberly	Hire	Gaston Early College High School
Velez Pulgarin	Karol	Promotion	School Nutrition