

Gaston County Schools  
Board of Education  
Thursday, January 30, 2025  
Meeting 8:30 a.m.  
Regular Meeting

MINUTES

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a regular session on Thursday, January 30, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. at Gaston College, Robinson Building - Room 126, Dallas, NC. Those Board Members in attendance were: Chairman Josh Crisp, Vice Chairman Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon (absent), Tod Kinlaw (absent), Robbie Lovelace (absent), 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 8:38 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

**Invocation**

Ms. Anarah Henderson led the invocation.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Superintendent Houchard led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Agenda Adoption - Action**

The Board considered Agenda Adoption – Action

Motion to adopt the Agenda as presented was made by Mr. Jeff Ramsey; seconded by Mr. Brent Moore; motion carried unanimously. (6-0)

**Good News – Information**

Mr. Todd Hagans reported that January is designated as National School Board Recognition Month. It is a time to recognize the work, leadership and dedication of Board of Education members. We plan to acknowledge School Board Recognition Month during the Board’s meeting on February 17.

Mr. Todd Hagans reported that we have a feature on our website about Jason Pelusio, a graduate of East Gaston High School, who is the company manager for the Angelica National Tour of “Hamilton,” which is playing now at the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center in Charlotte. Last week, Mr. Pelusio took time out of his schedule to return to East Gaston and talk with students about his work.

Todd Hagans reported that at our February meeting we will announce the grand total for fundraising for the United Way of Gaston County. We will invite the top ten fundraising schools to attend the meeting for a special time of recognition and celebration.

**Public Expression – Information**

No one signed up for Public Expression.

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

Motion to adopt minutes of December 2, 2024 (Organizational Meeting) and December 16, 2024 (Regular Meeting) as presented was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. Brent Moore; motion carried unanimously. (6-0)

### **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 Below)

### **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 Below)

### **Acceptance of the June 30, 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) - Action**

Chairman Crisp recognized Mr. Gary Hoskins who introduced Mr. Josh Puryear with Forvis Mazars. Mr. Puryear reviewed the June 30, 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports.

### **Motion**

Motion was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens; seconded by Mr. Jeff Ramsey that the Board

#### **Approve the Acceptance of the June 30, 2024 Comprehensive Financial Reports (ACFR)**

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (6-0)

### **Consent Agenda – Action**

The Board considered the Consent Agenda:

- A. Recommended Personnel
- B. Budget Amendments & Budget Transfers
- C. Construction/Repair Change Orders
- D. Board Policy and School Safety
  - Board Policy Updates – Proposed from the 12/16/24 Meeting
  - School Safety Policy Code 4200 - Proposed from the 1/6/25 Committee Meeting
- E. Early Colleges Calendar 2025-2026
- F. Contracts
  - AIS Digital Imaging (formerly Scribbles)
  - Freezer/Cooler Replacements:
    - Catawba Heights Elementary School
    - Sherwood Elementary School
    - Mount Holly Middle School
    - W.C. Friday Middle School
    - Hunter Huss High School
  - Independent Auditors (Contract Amendment)
  - Wide Area Network (WAN)

- Annual Renewal – Data Processing (CherryRoad Technologies)
- Sole Source Authorization – MCA (Motorola)

Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III motion carried unanimously. (6-0)

### **Superintendent's Comments**

Superintendent Houchard held his comments until the Retreat.

### **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. (6-0)

The Board went into Closed Session at 9:13 a.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 9:40 a.m.

Mr. Chris Mills is the new Director of Exceptional Children.

### **Motion**

The Motion was made by Mr. Jeff Ramsey seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III that the Board  
**Award a two-year Assistant Principal contract for the following:**

Andrea Thompson

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (6-0)

### **Motion**

The Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III that the Board  
**Award a two-year Principal contract for the following:**

Courtney Williams

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (6-0)

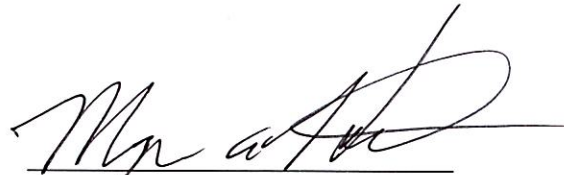
**Adjournment**

All business having been conducted, Motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III motion carried unanimously. (6-0)

The Board Meeting adjourned at 9:42 a.m.

Approved:

  
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Josh Crisp, Chairman  
[Corporate Seal]

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

Date Approved: 2/17/2025

**Gaston County Schools  
Operations Committee Report – January 6, 2025**

The Operations Committee met at the Central Office Board Room on Monday, January 6, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. The committee consists of Chairman Brent Moore (absent), Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon and Tod Kinlaw. Ms. Dot Cherry presided over the meeting.

Our agenda and discussions included the following:

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Rebekka Powers provided an update on revisions to Policy Code 4200 School Safety. This item is on the Consent Agenda.

Executive Director Kevin Doran reviewed the draft 2025-2026 Early Colleges Calendar. The first day of school is August 11, 2025 and graduation will be held on May 19, 2026. This item is on the Consent Agenda.

Associate Superintendent Gary Hoskins provided an update on the Budget Survey Results. This item will be discussed at our Board Retreat meeting.

Mr. Hoskins provided an update on the Independent Audit. This item is on the agenda as an Action Item.

Mr. Hoskins reviewed the Data Processing - Annual Renewal Contract. This item is on the Consent Agenda.

Superintendent Houchard reported on a potential property purchase in Gaston County.

Assistant Superintendent Bessie Harvey provided an update on the School Radio Project.

The Committee is recommending approval of the following contracts on the Consent Agenda:  
—Freezer/Cooler Replacements: Catawba Heights Elementary School, Sherwood Elementary School, Mount Holly Middle School, W.C. Friday Middle School and Hunter Huss High School

Chief Technology Officer Curtis Poplin provided an update on Wide Area Network (WAN). This item is on the Consent Agenda.

Superintendent Houchard reviewed current specialized programs that are proposed for closure, while potential new programs are being recommended for implementation across various schools.

## **Gaston County Schools Curriculum & Instruction Committee Report – January 6, 2025**

The Curriculum & Instruction Committee met at the Central Office Board Room on Monday, January 6, 2025 at 11:30 a.m. The committee consists of Chairman Jeff Ramsey, Robbie Lovelace, Janna Smith and A.M. Stephens III.

Our agenda discussions included the following:

Chief Accountability Officer Kelly Cunningham led the group in a community building activity.

Associate Superintendent Tonya Kales reviewed the Academic Services organizational chart.

Ms. Kales announced that Gaston County Schools has received the Teacher Pathway Grant that was submitted in August 2024. This is a three-year grant and we will receive approximately \$1M over the three years.

Assistant Superintendent Rebekka Powers reviewed the application window for the Choice Programs. The Choice Lottery window opens on Wednesday, January 15, 2025 through Friday, March 21, 2025. Kindergarten enrollment opens on Monday, March 3, 2025. Superintendent Houchard reviewed current specialized programs that are proposed for closure, while potential new programs are being recommended for implementation across various schools.

Dr. Rebekka Powers reviewed the AIS Digital Imaging Contract. The contract is for digital scanning and storage of EC Records and Student Cumulative Files. This item is on the Consent Agenda.

Dr. Rebekka Powers provided an update on revisions to Policy Code 4200 School Safety. This item is on the Consent Agenda.

Executive Directors Bryan Denton, Kevin Doran, Anarah Henderson, Tyler West and Directors Kathleen D'Avria and Shannon Hullett presented a PowerPoint on First Semester Instructional Leadership.

Dr. Bryan Denton and Mr. Kevin Doran reviewed the draft 2025-2026 Early Colleges Calendar. The first day of school is August 11, 2025 and graduation will be held on May 19, 2026. This item is on the Consent Agenda.

Superintendent Houchard reported on a potential property purchase in Gaston County.