

Gaston County Schools
Operations Committee
Monday, March 3, 2025

MINUTES

The Operations Committee met on Monday, March 3, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. in the Central Office Board Room, 943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC. Those Board Members in attendance were: Chairman Brent Moore, Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon, and Tod Kinlaw.

Additional attendees included: BOE Chairman Josh Crisp, Superintendent Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Associate Superintendents Gary Hoskins and Tonya Kales, Assistant Director of Finance James Beckford, Executive Directors Bryan Denton, Kevin Doran and Beth Suber, Assistant Superintendents, Bessie Harvey and Rebekka Powers, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Chief Technology Officer Curtis Poplin, Directors Susie Bradley and Tom Nencetti, and Board Clerk Dana Luoto.

Chairman Moore called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

Approval/Correction of Minutes

Motion to adopt minutes of January 6, 2025 as presented was made by Mr. Tod Kinlaw; seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon; motion carried unanimously. (4-0)

Policy Code: 4170 School Assignment – Policy Update

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Rebekka Powers and Director of Student Assignment Susie Bradley provided an update on revisions to Policy Code 4170 School Assignment. The changes come after being vetted through a committee of administrators, parents and a final review by the Board. The draft version of this policy will be posted on our website for review.

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. Lee Dedmon; seconded by Mr. Brent Moore that the Board

Approve Policy Code: 4170 School Assignment to be placed on the Consent Agenda for the March 17, 2025 Board Meeting absent negative feedback from the website posting.

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (4-0)

Superintendent's Local Budget Request

Associate Superintendent Gary Hoskins presented a PowerPoint on the Superintendent's Budget Request. This item will be presented at the March 17, 2025 Board Meeting.

(View PowerPoint)

Infinite Campus Transition Update

Chief Technology Officer Curtis Poplin reported that we continue to transition from PowerSchool to Infinite Campus for the 2025-2026 School Year.

Human Resources Assessment Presentation

Director Tom Nencetti and Executive Director Beth Suber reported that a Needs Assessment was conducted for Human Resources. A few of the key findings included:

- Restructure to improve the hiring process
- Enhance recruitment strategies
- Cross Training for staff needed
- Conduct quarterly job fairs

Prospective School Bond Projects

Assistant Superintendent Bessie Harvey presented a PowerPoint on Prospective School Bond Projects.

(View PowerPoint)

Contract Approvals

The following contracts were reviewed and recommended for approval:

- Chiller Replacement – W.A. Bess Elementary
- Chiller Replacement – Bessemer City Middle
- AX JACE Upgrades – Multiple Schools
- District Chromebook Refresh
- Classroom/Instructional Technology – New Grier Middle
- Google Workspace Agreement

Motion

The Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. Tod Kinlaw that the Board

Approve Contracts to be placed on the Consent Agenda for the March 17, 2025 Board Meeting

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (4-0)

Meeting Schedule

The next Operations Committee Meeting is scheduled for April 7, 2025 in the Central Office Board Room beginning at 8:30 a.m. (NOTE: Post meeting change — the Operations Committee will meet on Monday, March 31, 2025 beginning at 8:30 a.m. due to spring break).

Other Business and Discussion

Superintendent Houchard reported that after additional discussions with CTE staff, the Armstrong Building will not be conducive for a CTE hub as originally thought. Dr. Houchard reported that we still have the option to purchase this property and use for future plans.

Adjournment

All business being conducted, Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Lee Dedmon; seconded by Mr. Tod Kinlaw motion carried unanimously. (4-0)

The Operations Committee Meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

Approved:



Brent Moore, Chairman

Date Approved: 3-31-25

Superintendent's Budget Request 2025-2026

To be presented at
the March 17, 2025
Board Meeting as
information

GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS



BUDGET REQUEST 2025-2026

Morgen A. Houchard, Ed.D
Superintendent

943 Osceola Street - P.O. Box 1397
Gastonia, NC 28053

www.gaston.k12.nc.us



GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

56
Schools

31,011
Pre-Kindergarten -
High School
Students

15,000
Students Transported
Daily

Scholarship money offered
to graduates to the
Class of 2024 : More than
\$28.3 million

86.7%
Graduation
Rate

More than
3,800
Employees

22
School Choice / Magnet
school programs

1.9 million Breakfasts
3.7 million Lunches
Served Annually



Average Years of Experience for Teachers
8.6

AT A GLANCE



1,950
Classroom Teachers

7,720 CTE credentials
earned by students in
2022-2023

Met or exceeded academic
growth expectations
27 schools

10th
Largest School District in
the State


Number of Graduates in the
Class of 2024
2,229

59
Different
Languages Spoken
by Students

1:1
Student to
Mobile Device
Ratio

3,039
Academically and Intellectually
Gifted Students

2nd
Largest
Employer in
Gaston County



GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Five Year History

- Local per Pupil Expenditure Ranking
- Charter School Payments
- County Appropriation
- Student Count
- Local Teacher Supplements

Local Per Pupil Expenditure Ranking*					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Brunswick County Schools	19	13	20	16	20
Iredell-Statesville Schools	70	54	55	41	29
Union County	30	37	32	36	37
Onslow County	42	34	68	67	39
Johnston County Schools	74	85	82	68	44
Cabarrus County Schools	39	30	33	46	48
Cleveland County Schools	68	46	53	52	76
Lincoln County Schools	83	80	92	87	79
Catawba County Schools	66	71	81	86	80
Gaston County Schools	71	70	84	85	85
Alamance County	57	55	62	55	89

Source: DPI Table 25 - Per Pupil Expenditure Ranking (Child Nutrition Excluded)

*Out of 115 School Districts in the State of North Carolina

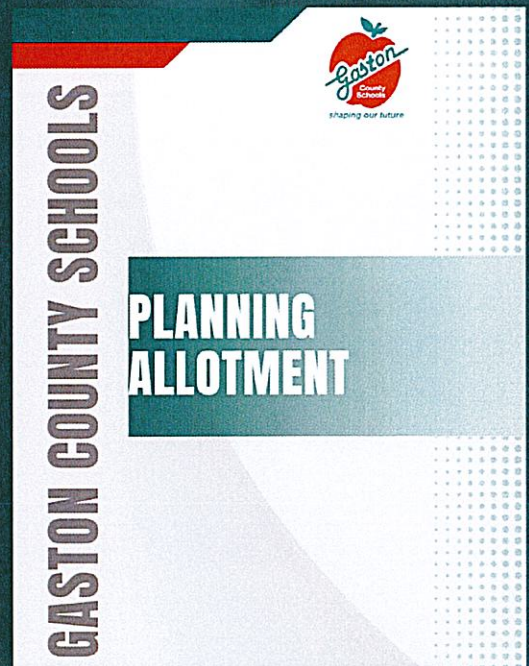
Peer Group Local Funding Comparison

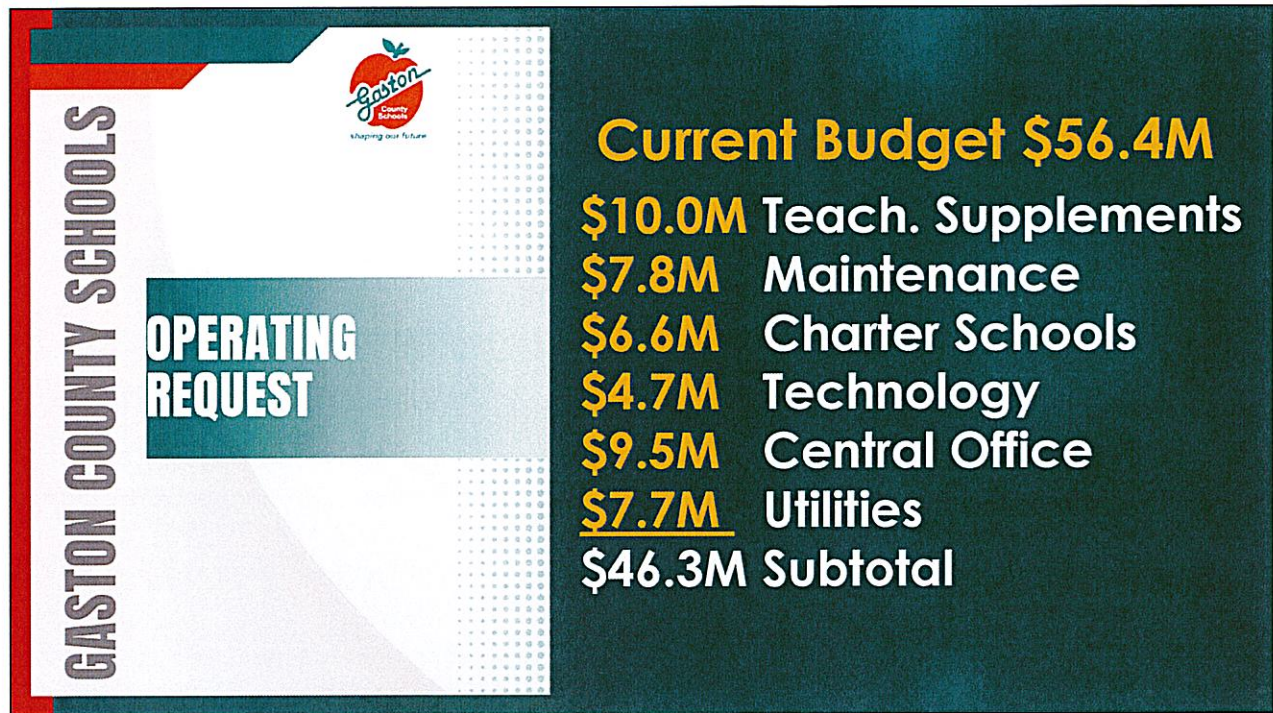
County	Per Capita Income	K-12 Funding	Local Per Pupil Expense	Property Tax Levy	K-12 Funding / Property Tax Levy
Gaston	\$49,674	\$53,000,000	\$1,551	\$202,400,000	26.2%
Peer Group					
Alamance	\$48,980	\$48,800,000	\$1,971	\$109,100,000	44.7%
Brunswick	\$58,281	\$54,400,000	\$3,694	\$172,100,000	31.6%
Cabarrus	\$54,754	\$97,500,000	\$2,307	\$239,700,000	40.7%
Catawba	\$55,223	\$44,000,000	\$2,015	\$121,600,000	36.2%
Cleveland	\$45,126	\$10,300,000	\$681	\$77,200,000	13.3%
Iredell	\$64,437	\$72,000,000	\$2,314	\$204,200,000	35.3%
Johnston	\$49,672	\$88,500,000	\$2,211	\$189,600,000	46.7%
Lincoln	\$58,227	\$26,800,000	\$1,920	\$94,700,000	28.3%
Onslow	\$51,585	\$73,997,000	\$2,740	\$137,299,000	53.9%
Union	\$67,641	\$122,700,000	\$2,694	\$235,600,000	52.1%
Average Peer Group	\$55,393	\$63,899,700	\$2,255	\$158,103,900	40.4%
GC Less Average Peer Group	-\$5,719	-\$10,899,700	-\$704	\$44,296,100	-14.2%

Source: NCACC County Map Book, 2024

DPI/Local Allotments

- DPI ADM Allotment
- DPI Planning Allotments
- Local Allotment Formulas
- Local Principal/AP Supplements
- Local Athletic Supplements
- Local Teacher Supplements





FY 2025-26 Local Funding Expansion Request			
Gaston County Schools Funding Request			
Recommendation Item	Expenditures		
	Ongoing	New	Total
Ongoing Expenditures			
Inflation - Supplies and Contracted Services	\$ 315,000	\$ -	\$ 315,000
State Increase in Employee Compensation	540,000	-	540,000
State Increase in Employer Paid Benefits	770,000	-	770,000
New Expenditures			
Teacher Salary Supplement Increase	\$ -	\$ 3,600,000	\$ 3,600,000
Total	\$ 1,625,000	\$ 3,600,000	\$ 5,225,000

Local Supplements - Certified Employees

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Local Supplements Paid to Employees	\$6,193,029	\$6,216,047	\$6,413,867	\$7,185,213	\$7,501,433
FICA- Employee Contribution	\$473,767	\$475,528	\$490,661	\$549,669	\$573,860
Retirement - Employer Contribution	\$1,220,027	\$1,347,639	\$1,468,134	\$1,760,377	\$1,876,859
Total Amount of Local Supplement	\$7,886,823	\$8,039,214	\$8,372,662	\$9,495,259	\$9,952,152

GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS



CAPITAL MAINTANCE REQUEST

Capital Maintenance and Repairs (FY 2025-26)

School: All Schools
Department: Facilities
Project Title: Capital Maintenance and Repairs
Total Cost: \$ 4,000,000

Project Description

Funding for the routine and preventive maintenance and repairs for the District's 5.1 million square feet of school and administrative space.

Background & Justification / Status

The weighted average age of GCS facilities is over 40 years. As a result, the cost to maintain these aging facilities and their respective capital systems has been increasing over time. However, the County funding to support capital maintenance and repairs has remained flat at \$2.2 million over the past three years. Our goal is to have capital outlay funding consistent at a level consistent with the median routine maintenance rate of \$1.35 per square foot as published in the 2024 edition of the *Managing for Results in America's Great City Schools*. Our request will start at \$4.0 million, or \$0.78 per square foot, for next year and will increase \$1.5 million each year thereafter until we reach \$6.9 million, or \$1.35 per square foot in 2028-2029.

Potential Impact If Not Funded or Delayed

GCS will continue to experience difficulty in proactively maintaining our capital systems such as roofing structures, HVAC units, etc. This will result in less efficient operation of our buildings and the need to make large capital replacements sooner than necessary.

Estimated Annual Increases

Expenditure	FY 2025-26 Planning	FY 2026-27 Planning	FY 2027-28 Planning	Total
Salaries and Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Materials and Supplies	4,000,000	5,500,000	6,900,000	16,400,000
Hardware and Software	-	-	-	-
Other Operating Expenses	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 5,500,000	\$ 6,900,000	\$ 16,400,000

Summary

- Operating Request of **\$61.6 million** compared to \$56.4 million
- Capital Maintenance Request of **\$4.0 million** compared to \$2.2 million
- Total increase of **\$7.0 million** (+12%)

GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

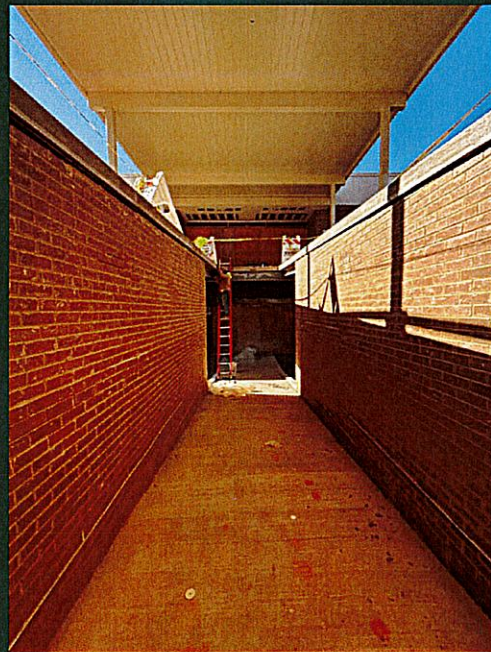


CONCLUSION

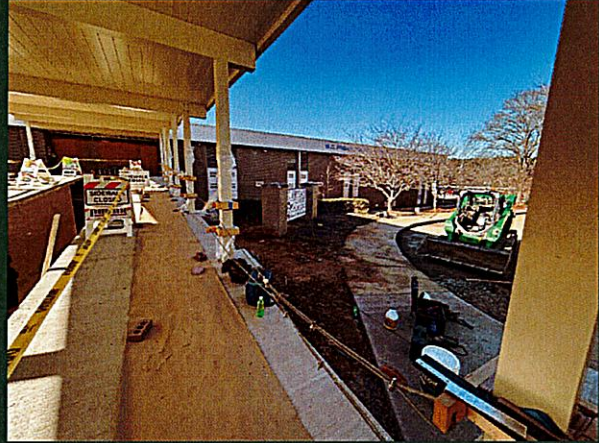
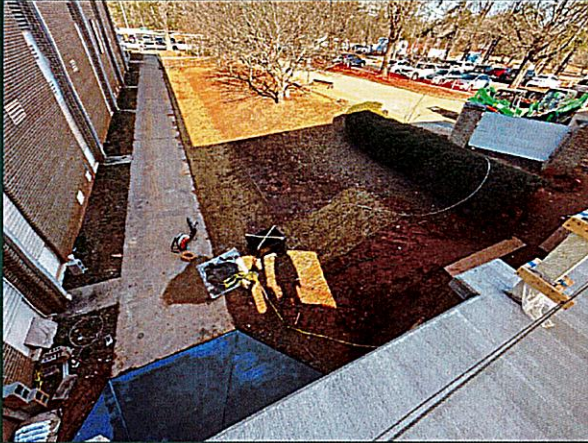
Operations

Bessie Harvey
Assistant Superintendent of Operations

WC Friday



WC Friday



Future Bond Projects

- ◆ **Belmont Central Expansion:** 10 classrooms/cafeterium addition.
- ◆ **Armstrong Building Purchase:** Enables the opportunity to expand our Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.
- ◆ **Highland School of Technology Renovations:** Renovate outdated science classrooms at Highland School of Technology.
- ◆ **HVAC Equipment Replacement and Upfit:** Replace various aged HVAC equipment, which has extended beyond its useful life.

Future Bond Projects

- ◆ **Security Vestibule Upgrades:** Continue to upgrade our security vestibules, increasing safety and security for our students and staff.
- ◆ **Freezer/Cooler Replacements:** The replacement of freezers and coolers in five schools is necessary due to their age and increasing maintenance costs.
- ◆ **Lighting Upgrades:** Continuing our phase work on lighting upgrades, we will focus on elementary schools, as many high schools and middle schools have already been completed.
- ◆ **Webb Street Sewer Line Project:** Project will address the sewer line needs at one of our most high-needs schools.

Future Bond Projects

- ◆ **School Nutrition Facility Generator:** Installing a generator at our School Nutrition facility providing backup power for our smaller coolers; ensuring food safety during power outages.
- ◆ **Emergency Radio Project:** Enhancing communication for emergency management response improving our ability to coordinate and respond effectively during emergencies.
- ◆ **Miscellaneous Projects:** If funding allows, we will also undertake additional projects such as, ADA site work, and various sewer, water, and drainage repairs.