# Catawba Heights Elementary School Student Handbook 2023-2024



101 Ivey Street Belmont, North Carolina 28012 (704) 836-9119

Principal - Staci M. Bradley

# WELCOME TO CATAWBA HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



# Home of the Hurricanes

**Vision:** Creating lifelong learners who strive for individual excellence.

**Mission:** To provide, within a safe and positive environment, educational experiences that will prepare all of our students for life in the 21st century.

### GREETINGS FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Welcome to the 2023-24 school year at Catawba Heights Elementary School where **Education is a Journey.** I am excited about the upcoming year and working with this wonderful staff. Most importantly, I look forward to supporting the growth and success of our students. As we continue to increase our student achievement, we need your assistance to make these great strides. Please read with your child every night, inquire about what they are learning in class and their homework, make sure they are on time and present at school everyday unless they are ill, ensure that they are giving their best effort, and encourage positive behavior. I look forward to a wonderful year at CHES. Thank you, in advance, for your support.

Staci Bradley, Principal swbradley@gaston.k12.nc.us

Cooperate Safely
Have Respect
Excel in Learning
Show Responsibility

Office Staff: Wendy Hawkins Savannah Grigg

wwhawkins@gaston.k12.nc.us shgrigg@gaston.k12.nc.us

### BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

One of the most important aspects of education is appropriate behavior. While it does not appear as a subject, it is the foundation of the educational structure. It is the training that develops self control, character, and focus. Please read and discuss the Gaston County Student Code of Conduct with your child. Unsafe behavior or any behavior which causes a disruption to the learning process is unacceptable. Students are to respect other students and staff members as well as their property, privacy, etc. Students are not allowed to bring personal items, such as toys, sport/trading cards, video games, candy, gum, etc., to school.

### **CELL PHONES**

Cell phones must be off and out of sight during the instructional day. Phones that are taken out during the school day will be confiscated and kept in the main office until a parent picks the item(s) up.

# **COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION**

In order to be informed about our school or school system, tune into Cable Channel GCS 21 or visit the GCS Website at <a href="www.gaston.k12.nc.us">www.gaston.k12.nc.us</a>. We also have a Parent Link phone system which is used to deliver phone messages about various school activities and student absences to our parents. It is **important that we have your correct** phone number so that you will receive all messages.

# **TOBACCO FREE POLICY**

Catawba Heights Elementary School is a tobacco free school. Gaston County Schools' policy prohibits the use of tobacco products on school grounds: everywhere, by everyone, at all times! This also means that no one can smoke in his/her car while on school property. Students are prohibited from the use and/or possession of tobacco products and shall not possess, smoke, dip, chew or otherwise use any tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products at any time while a student is at school. Thank you for your cooperation.



### **REPORT CARDS TO PARENTS**

An Interim Report for every student will be sent home at the midpoint of the grading period. Please review the report, sign and return the envelope to school. Report Cards will be issued at the end of each nine-week period. Those students in grades 3 -5 who receive all As, and/or Bs, and Ss on conduct will be named to the school Honor Roll. Please feel free to contact the school with questions or concerns at any time.

Interim Dates:	Report Card Dates:
September 14, 2023	October 19, 2023
November 16, 2023	January 11, 2024
February 8, 2024	March 7, 2024
April 18, 2024	May 31, 2024 (mailed)



### **TESTING DATES**

This year, students in grades 3-5 will be required to take Check Ins (formerly Benchmarks) every quarter. Students will also take the Beginning of the Year (BOY), Middle of the Year (MOY), and End of the Year (EOY) Assessments for mClass (K-3) and iReady (K-5). The End of Grade Assessments (EOGs) for grades 3-5 will take place in May 2024: May 9th - Reading, May 14th - Math, and May 16th - Science (5th grade only)

# **TEXTBOOKS**

All basic texts are available for student use during the school year. Textbooks should be cared for properly. Students are required to pay for lost or damaged books.

### WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS

The school should be notified at least two days in advance for a student's withdrawal from school due to moving out of the school's district. All textbooks, library books, and other debts must be paid before a transfer record can be sent to another school.

# **INCLEMENT WEATHER:**

During extremely bad weather, it sometimes becomes necessary for a decision to be made concerning the closing of schools. When a decision is made in the early morning that schools will be closed for the day, it must be relayed

quickly to all students and parents. A decision to close will affect all schools in the Gaston County Schools' system. In order to accomplish this task efficiently and with maximum coverage, school officials are asking pupils and parents to cooperate by following the suggestions listed below:

Listen to one of the area Radio Stations:

WLTC – Gastonia (1370)	WGNC – Gastonia (1450)
WGAS- Gastonia (1420)	WLON – Lincolnton (1050)
WCGC – Belmont (1270)	WMXC – Charlotte (104.9)
WEZC – Charlotte (102.9)	WBCY – Charlotte (107.9)
WAAK – Dallas (960)	WBT – Charlotte (1110)

Watch Channel 21

In case of unexpected weather, please do not call the school. Our phones must be kept open for emergencies. For any special instructions, please listen to radio stations and other area television stations. Information is also reported on the GCS Website.

# **SAFETY INFORMATION**

Keeping children safe while at school is a priority. Therefore, we conduct monthly fire drills, two (2) tornado drills per year, one (1) metal detection screening per week, and three (3) lockdown drills per year. An Emergency Transportation Evacuation Plan for Nuclear Emergencies and a Crisis Plan is kept in the principal's office. Evacuation plans are posted in every classroom. In the event of an evacuation, windows and doors are closed, and classrooms are emptied quickly and quietly. We believe that it is important for students to know what to do if an emergency occurs. Procedures for drills are discussed with students. All safety drills are conducted in accordance with the Gaston County Schools Emergency Plans.

### **BUS REGULATIONS**

Transporting bus students safely is a priority at our school. Therefore, students are expected to behave appropriately while waiting for the bus, boarding the bus, riding the bus and exiting the bus. Any student who participates in behavior or activity that endangers the safety and well-being of others will have riding privileges revoked. It will be the parent's responsibility to provide transportation for students who are suspended from riding the bus. Parents are requested to discuss bus safety rules with their children and return the signed form to school. Bus safety and expectations will be reviewed with all bus riders at the beginning of the school year. Only assigned bus students are allowed to ride the bus. Students are not allowed to ride the bus home with other students. If there is a problem or concern related to the school bus, please contact the principal immediately. The bus driver **is not** allowed to conference with parents.

### **BUS RULES**

- 1. Students are to obey the driver at all times.
- 2. Students are to stay seated with their backs against the seats at all times.
- 3. Students are to use quiet voices and should talk only to the person in the seat with them.
- **4.** Students are not to touch other students or their belongings.
- 5. Students are to wait at their bus stop in a safe and orderly manner. DO NOT PLAY IN THE ROAD.
- 6. Students who must cross the road are to cross over in front of the bus. NEVER WALK BEHIND THE BUS.
- 7. Students are not to bring food (except lunch), candy, gum or drinks onto the bus.
- 8. Students should help small children cross the road, board, and exit the bus.







# ASBESTOS STATEMENT

Our school has asbestos in some of the ceilings. There is no danger to students as long as the asbestos remains undisturbed. A copy of our Asbestos Management Plan is on file in the office and is available for review upon request.

### **WORK FOLDERS**

Communication Folders containing student work and information from the school are sent home each Thursday. Please review your child's work, sign and return the folder on Friday. Feel free to request a conference if you have concerns about the contents of the folder or your student's progress.

# PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

If you wish to have a conference with your child's teacher, please send a note or email to the teacher requesting a date and time. Teachers are available for conferences after 2:45 p.m. This year's school calendar has designated October 12, 2023, and March 7, 2024, as Teacher/Parent Conference days. Please contact your child's teacher and set up a conference day/time as needed throughout the year.

# MEDICATION POLICY/ILLNESS/ACCIDENTS

Gaston County Schools has an established policy for dispensing medication to students. Medication forms must be signed by the physician issuing the prescription before we can dispense any medication to a child. Parents or guardians should bring the medication to the office with the proper forms. Prescription medication must be in the original bottle from the pharmacy for the specific student. We cannot deviate from the directions on the prescription bottle. Parents must personally administer any over the counter medication that is not authorized by a physician.

When students become sick or hurt during the school day, parents will be called. In order to do this, we need accurate contact information at all times. Please keep your child's teacher and the school office informed of any changes that occur in addresses, phone numbers and emergency contact persons. To make changes, parents must complete a Change Form and submit to the office in person.

Children must be fever free for 24 hours, without medication, before returning to school. Also, please keep your child home if they have vomited within a 24-hour period. Please notify the school when your child has a contagious illness such as chicken pox or has been exposed to such an illness.

# **STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

Throughout the year, classes may have special activities during the last hour of the school day. Treats may be given at Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentines' Day, Easter, and the end of the school year. As a school, we will participate in Field Day activities.

# **BALLOONS, FLOWERS AND GIFTS**

<u>Balloons</u>, flowers and other gifts for children should be delivered to your home. Some gifts have been damaged, and delivery to classrooms has placed extra demands on clerical staff. Parents may send in store bought, individually wrapped treats to their student's class to celebrate birthdays. Teachers will decide when to distribute the treats.

# **FORGOTTEN ITEMS**

If you find that your child has forgotten something, bring the item to the school office, and we will get it to your child's class. Students are not allowed to call home for forgotten items.

# LOST ITEMS AND CLOTHING

Please mark all of your children's articles of clothing and other items so that they are easily identifiable and can be returned to the owner quickly. The school cannot take responsibility for lost or stolen items that children bring to school.

### **SCHOOL NUTRITION**

This year Catawba Heights Elementary School will participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Universal Free Breakfast and Lunch Program. Both breakfast and lunch will be provided for **free for every student**. Students may bring extra money to buy a la carte items from the cafeteria.

Parents are welcome to visit at any time to have lunch with their children in our Hurricane Hub.





Meal prices for visitors are as follows:

Breakfast: Adults \$2.00 Lunch: Adults \$4.00

The Thanksgiving Meal will take place on Wednesday, November 15, 2023.

The Holiday Meal will take place on December 6, 2023.

Adults: \$4.50

To ensure safety and sanitation, all foods served to students in the school must be obtained from a commercial food service entity which is subject to local rules, regulations and inspections.

Home made foods and snacks in the classroom and cafeteria will not be allowed except for personal meals consumed by individual students.

# **SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS**

Students who require modifications to their school meals for a diagnosed medical condition (i.e. allergy, diabetes, celiac disease, etc.) must have a completed Diet Order form on file at the School Nutrition Office. **All requests for special diets must be resubmitted annually and whenever there is a change to an existing special diet.** These requests must be completed on the Diet Order form, signed by a physician, and sent to the School Nutrition Office. Diet Order forms may be obtained from the School Nutrition office, Cafeteria Manager, or School Nurse. Upon receipt of each completed Diet Order form, the nutritionist will modify menus and instruct cafeteria managers with regard to each individual Diet Order. The parent/guardian of the student requiring a special diet will be notified by School Nutrition regarding the effective date of the Diet Order.

# **COMPETITIVE SALES**

The School Nutrition Department at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Agriculture have rules which affect the way that we handle food sales and donations at our school. These rules are associated with a term that the state calls <u>competitive sales</u>. Competitive sales, as defined by the state, are any foods or beverages sold or served at school from the beginning of the school day until the end of the last lunch period by an entity other than the food service department. This means that no food or beverages can be given to students until after 12:30 p.m. when the last child in our school has been served lunch.

These rules affect our school in the following ways:

- Parents are allowed to bring in store bought cupcakes, drinks, or other food items to be served to students in celebration of birthdays after 12:30pm
- Parents are not allowed to donate lunch (or treats to be served at lunch) for the whole class or groups of students.
- Food rewards for Honor Roll and Students of the Month will only be given after the students have had lunch
- Parents are able to bring in fast food lunches **for their child only.** This food cannot be shared with other students.

If our school is found to be in violation of any of these rules, we will be assessed a fine.

# **SCHOOL TELEPHONE**

Students are permitted to use the school telephone only if they have a valid reason and written permission from their teacher. The school telephone is a business phone to be used primarily for school business. Messages delivered to students must be emergency calls only.

# SCHOOL INSURANCE

Insurance is optional. Information will be sent home. If you purchase insurance, send the payment directly to the insurance company. If a child, who has insurance, is injured, please get an accident form from the school office.

# STUDENTS' SCHOOL DAY

School Daily Time Schedule

7:00am Bus students enter building 7:05-7:25am Car Riders enter building

7:00am-7:25am Breakfast 7:30 am Class Begins

2:20 pm Dismissal - First bus load, Car Riders, Walkers

2:30 pm End of School Day

2:40 pm 2<sup>nd</sup> Bus Load Bus Students Dismissed

Our building does not open for bus riders until <u>7:00 am</u>. Car riders should not be dropped off before <u>7:05am</u>. There is no one on duty to supervise student safety. Teachers are not on duty until 7:05 am.

Students should be picked up after school between 2:30 - 2:45 pm Please pick up your children promptly as teachers have planning, workshops and meetings after 2:45 p.m. They will not be available to supervise students. Thank you for being patient and cooperating with our dismissal procedures.

### LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTENDING SCHOOL

Students must comply with the compulsory school attendance law until 16 years of age. Every child must be immunized against tetanus, whooping cough, polio, diphtheria, red measles, and rubella upon entering school. Kindergarten children must be five years of age on or before August 31st. First grade children must be six years old on or before August 31st. Certified birth certificates are required for proof of age.

# **Rules For Visitors To Our School Building**

A visitor is defined as any person seeking to enter the school building who is not an employee of the school or a student currently enrolled in the building. Visitors are welcome at our school, but access will be limited. For the safety of our students and staff, all visitors must come to the office to sign-in and get a visitor's badge when entering the school. All visitors shall sign in using our visitor's management system and be required to wear a visitor's badge while on school premises. Visitors without badges will be asked to return to the office. Visitors are subject to metal detection screening. Because classrooms and other instructional areas are the most vulnerable to disruption, access to these areas may be restricted upon the recommendation of the teacher or by the principal. Whenever possible, visitors should obtain authorization from the principal in advance.

Parents may have lunch with their student during their assigned lunchtime. Parents and students will eat in the *Hurricane Hub* once the student picks up their lunch from the cafeteria.

# **ATTENDANCE**

It is the responsibility of the parents to see that their children attend school as stated under Article 20, Section 115-378 of the Public School Laws of North Carolina. The Gaston County School Board requires that all students be in attendance 94% of each school year. The school year is approximately 180 days. Students must be in attendance at least 168 days. Only 12 absences, including excused and unexcused, are permitted each school year, in order for a student to be eligible for promotion. A student who accumulates 13 or more absences must go before the schools promotion/retention committee. A student must be in attendance at school for 3 ½ hours to be counted present for the day.



Children may receive excused absences for the following: death in immediate family, court proceedings, religious observances, personal illness, school-sponsored trips, medical appointments, and special cases handled by the principal. Following any absence, a student is required to present written documentation from the parent or physician stating the reason for the absence. Written documentation or a doctor's note must be presented within three (3) school days after the student returns to school; otherwise, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. Extended absences for vacations or trips will be recorded as unexcused.

A written notification will be sent to parents/guardians when a student accumulates excessive absences. To view the full attendance policy, please visit our GCS website at www.gaston.k12.nc.us.

# **TARDINESS**

Being on time for school is very important. The school day begins at 7:30 a.m. Students who arrive after 7:30 a.m. are considered tardy and must be signed in by parents at the office.

When three (3) or more **unexcused** tardies or early dismissals are recorded in a nine-week period, parents will be contacted and conferences will be scheduled. Excessive tardies will require a meeting with the principal and contact from the school Social Worker.

Excessive tardies and/or absences will result in revocation of transfers.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Any parent or emergency contact wishing to check a student out before the scheduled dismissal time must come to the office to sign the child out with the school secretary and <u>must have photo identification</u>. Students may be excused from school during the day for the following reasons: personal illness, illness in the family, funerals, court proceedings and religious observances. Medical or dental appointments should be arranged during after school hours, if possible. If a student is checked out before 11:00 a.m. he/she will be marked absent and **will not be allowed back on campus to visit.** 

NO STUDENT WILL BE DISMISSED AFTER 2:00 P.M. IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR THE PARENT TO WAIT UNTIL THE 2:30 BELL, UNLESS THERE IS AN EMERGENCY.



# NORTH CAROLINA STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS

North Carolina public school students are required to meet statewide standards for promotion in addition to local promotion requirements. Mastering the standards will ensure that students are working at grade level in reading, writing and mathematics before being promoted to the next grade. Since educating our students is a combined effort between parents and school staff, parents of children in grades K - 12 are asked to sign the **Student Accountability Agreement.** This agreement is a pledge for parents to work with the school staff to support his or her child's achievement.

# **ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

The Internet is a unique opportunity to enhance instructional methods, appeal to different learning styles and meet each student's educational goals. It is accessible at our school and is integrated into our instructional program. Before students are allowed to use the Internet, they must electronically sign and submit a Student User Agreement - STUDENT NETWORK AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY AGREEMENT - confirming that they agree to use the Internet responsibly and appropriately. Parents must also sign and return a Parent/Guardian Permission form. Students who do not complete the Internet AUP Agreement are not allowed to use the Internet.

This year we have 1:1 technology for all of our students, allowing each student to have a device to use throughout their day. If a student is not responsible and the device is damaged, or parts need to be replaced beyond normal wear and tear, it is the parent's responsibility to pay for repairs or replace the device. Please discuss this with your student and the importance of taking care of their device.

# **Title One**

Catawba Heights is a Title I School.

Under federal law, parents of students attending Title I schools have the right to know information on the professional qualifications of their student's teacher, including:

- 1. Whether the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- 2. Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances.
- 3. Whether the teacher has any advanced degrees and the field of discipline of the teacher's certification or degree.

4. Whether the child receives services from a paraprofessional and the qualifications of the paraprofessional. Contact the school principal for further information.

Parents of students in Title I schools are required to sign additional pledges to work collectively with the staff to support their student: <u>Family Engagement Compact and the Learning Compact.</u>





### STUDENT DROP OFF / PICK UP

It is very important that adults drive slowly in the parking lot and remain in cars in the line of traffic. In the morning, **students should be dropped off between 7:05 and 7:25am**. In the afternoon, **there are two (2) lines for student pickup. DO NOT** park and walk to the sidewalk to get students. Students who walk between cars are sometimes hard to see. Students should enter and exit cars from the passenger side. Please help us keep our children safe.

A WRITTEN NOTE FROM THE PARENT IS REQUIRED ANYTIME THERE IS A CHANGE in how a student is going home. We will not accept a child's word on transportation changes.

Changes will NOT be taken over the phone.

### P T O

Catawba Heights invites you to become an active member of our PTO organization. We need and want your involvement in our school. Yearly Membership Dues are \$4.00 per person. Meetings: TBA

President	Brooke	McClure
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### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

All parents are encouraged to take an active role in the education of their child and attend all school activities. We will have four (4) Parent Involvement Nights throughout the year. More information will be forthcoming.

# **SCHOOL DRESS CODE**

The appearance of a student is primarily the responsibility of that individual and his/her parents. Each student is expected to maintain an appearance that is neither distracting to other students, disruptive to the educational environment, or detrimental to the safe and healthy climate of the school. Students shall not wear:

Headwear –hats, bandanas or other types of headgear including sunglasses in the building. Clothing – Clothing that displays explicit words or drawings, profanity or alcohol, drug or gang symbols.

No style of clothing or the manner in which it is worn may expose undergarments or create a distraction or disturbance in the educational setting.

The expectations noted above represent the minimum standards established throughout the school system. In addition, items not specifically mentioned may still be deemed inappropriate in a school setting in the judgment of the school administration.

# **CITIZENSHIP**

It is each student's responsibility to display qualities of good citizenship. Your best conduct is expected when you are moving about the building, on the playground, in the classroom, on the bus, or when leaving the school grounds.

Courtesy and good manners should be the foundation to a student's conduct at school. A good attitude toward teachers and fellow students will make school more enjoyable. Students are expected to have respect for school property and to take good care of books, desks, devices, furniture and equipment. Character Education is an important part of our curriculum. We emphasize one character trait each month.

# SPIRIT ROCK

If you would like to paint the Spirit Rock in observance of your student's birthday or another special occasion, you must come into the office to sign up. Once the date is reserved, you will receive specific instructions on the rules and timeframe.



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16 17 18 19 20 21 22	July 4 Holiday (Independence Day)		<b>45</b>		17	18	19	20
23 24 25 26 27 28 29	August 7 Optional Teacher Workday	21	22	23	24	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
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6 7 8 9 10 11 12	October 19 9-Week Report Cards Distributed November 10 Holiday (Veterans Day)	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13 <b>14 15 16</b> 17 18 19	November 22 Student Holiday Teacher Annual Leave	L1	12	13	14	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	17
20 21 22 23 24 25 26	November 23-24 Holidays (Thanksgiving)	<b>L8</b>	19	20	21	<b>22</b>	23	24
27 28 29 30 31	December 20 End of Second 9-Week Grading Period December 21 Student Holiday	25	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	28	29		
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3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Teacher Annual Leave January 3 Optional Teacher Workday	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 11 12 13 14 15 16	January 4-5 Mandated Teacher Workdays	10	11	12	13	14	<b>15</b>	16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23	January 11 9-Week Report Cards Distributed January 15 Holiday (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 25 26 27 28 29 30	February 19 Optional Teacher Workday				27			
	Parent-Teacher Conferences	/31	20					30
OCTOBER	(All Grade Levels) Early Dismissal for Students			Α	PRI	L		
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8 9 10 11 12 <b>13</b> 14	Teacher Annual Leave	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
15 16 17 18 <b>19</b> 20 21	April 5 Optional Teacher Workday May 22 Students' Last Day	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
22 23 24 25 26 27 28	May 23-24 Mandated Teacher Workdays May 24 Graduation Day	 21	22	23		25	26	27
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NOVEMBER	Inclement Weather Makeup Days January 5 February 19 March 8				MA			
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1 2 3 4	The Board of Education reserves the right to use early release days and Saturdays as makeup days				1	2	3	4
5 6 7 8 9 🛈 11	for inclement weather. The Board may add days	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 13 14 15 16 17 18	of employment to end of the school year.	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 20 21 22 23 24 25	Testing dates will be available on the district website after they are determined by the state.	L9	20	21	22	23	24	25
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26 27 28 29 30	Holiday Mandated Teacher Workday	26 (	27	28			31	
DECEMBER	First/Last Day of School Optional Teacher Workday  Teacher Annual Leave 9-Week Report Cards Distributed			-	JUN	<u> </u>		
S M T W T F S	Parent-Teacher Conferences/Early Dismissal for Students	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 2	<b>Gaston County Schools</b>	2	3	4	5	6	7	1/8
3 4 5 6 7 8 9		9	10	11	12	13	14	15
10 11 12 13 14 15 16	r. O. Box 1397 Gastolila, NC 20033 (104) 800-0100	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
17 18 19 20 <b>21 22</b> 23	The Board of Education approved the 2023-2024	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
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<sup>24</sup> / <sub>31</sub> <b>25 26 27 28 29 30</b>	Calendar design produced by the Communications Department	30						