

Gaston County Schools
Board of Education
Monday, August 18, 2025
Meeting 5:30 p.m.
Regular Meeting

MINUTES

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a regular session on Monday, August 18, 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, Tod Kinlaw, Robbie Lovelace, Brent Moore, Janna Smith, and A.M. Stephens III. Lee Dedmon and Jeff Ramsey were absent and excused.

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

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

Moment of Silence

Superintendent Houchard called for a Moment of Silence for Mrs. Kaye Gribble, who served on The Gaston County Board of Education (2010-2014) as the Dallas Township representative. Mrs. Gribble passed away on July 28th, 2025. Superintendent Houchard asked that the Moment of Silence honor Mrs. Kaye Gribble's life, legacy, and leadership.

Invocation

Associate Pastor, Brad Simpson, from First Presbyterian Church, Gastonia, led the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Student, Mason Powers from Cherryville High 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. Bent Moore; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry; motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

Good News – Information

Mr. Todd Hagans presented the Good News for August:

First, Mr. Todd Hagans focused on the well-deserved attention on the students, staff, and administration at Carr Elementary School. Mr. Hagans announced that Carr Elementary has earned the recertification as a Leader in Me Lighthouse School. The honor is presented by Franklin Covey Education and recognizes the school's outstanding efforts to integrate Covey's seven leadership habits across the curriculum, which contribute to student growth, building relationships, achieving common goals, and upholding the belief that everyone can be a leader. The recertification is for two years, and it is a highly-regarded standard for schools.

Ms. Dot Cherry presented a Plaque that signifies that Carr Elementary School has earned the recognition of the Lighthouse School Recertification to the Principal Lauren Stefaniak, Assistant Principal Gina Vellia Hille, staff members, and a group of students.

Mr. Todd Hagans spotlighted Cherryville High School art teacher Ms. Lacey Dellinger, whose painting titled "What a Croc?" was selected for the Cape Fear Studios' 14th annual 2D national competition.

Mr. A.M. Stephens presented a Certificate of Recognition.

Each school year, Kintegra Health provides care to students in Gaston County Schools through its mobile dental health program. For the 2024-2025 school year, 1,817 students received a dental evaluation, X-rays (if needed), cleaning, and fluoride treatment (about 1,600 students were served in 2023-2024). There were 5,726 cavities discovered, 1,780 sealants were applied, and 50 students with significant dental concerns were referred for consultation/treatment with a Kintegra family dentist. The care provided free of charge to students has a value of \$202,660.

Mrs. Janna Smith presented a Certificate of Recognition to the Kintegra Dental Health Team.

Mr. Hagans announced that Patrick Blee of South Point High School and Caleb Gordon of Ashbrook High School have been named to WSOC-TV's Big 22, an annual program that honors the top 22 high school football players in the Charlotte area. The program features standout athletes every August and concludes with the selection of a Player of the Year.

Mr. Tod Kinlaw presented the Certificate of Recognition to Mr. Patrick Blee and Mr. Caleb Gordon.

Public Expression – Information

Suzanne McPherson
1010 Harrogate Drive
Bessemer City, NC 28016
Regarding Support via resolution for HB430/S318

Approval/Correction of Minutes – Action

Motion to adopt minutes of June 16, 2025 and July 21, 2025 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 A.M. Stephens III. Chairman Crisp recognized Ms. Dot Cherry of the Operations Committee, who provided a summary of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.

(View report)

Curriculum & Instruction Committee Report – Information

Mr. Jeff Ramsey is chair of the committee, and the members are Tod Kinlaw and Robbie Lovelace. Chairman Crisp recognized Mrs. Janna Smith of the Curriculum & Instruction Committee, who provided a summary of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.

(View report)

Summer Projects Update

Chairman Crisp recognized Ms. Bessie Harvey, who provided an overview of the numerous Summer Projects that have recently been completed, which included Painting, Building enhancements, Pressure washing, LED Conversion Upfits, Freezer/Cooler Replacements, Chiller Replacements, Boiler Replacements, School Nutrition-Dock Curtain Replacements, Kitchen Piping and Drain Replacements, Bottle Fillers, Fencing, In-house Projects.

Ms. Bessie Harvey concluded by thanking our Director of Facilities, Gary Carter, and his staff, and Paul Nault for their work and efforts in helping with Grier Middle School.

(View PowerPoint)

Sanitary Sewer Easement - Forest Heights/1 Learning Place

Chairman Crisp Ms. Bessie Harvey, who presented the Agenda Item of the Sanitary Sewer Easement - Forest Heights/1 Learning Place.

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry, that the Board approve the Sanitary Sewer Easement - Forest Hieghts/1 Learning Place.

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

Annual Surplus Report – Information

Chairman Crisp recognized Ms. Bessie Harvey, who gave an update on the annual surplus sales report. During the 2024-2025 school year, we received \$3,885.29 from the sale of surplus items.

(View PowerPoint)

Chairman Crisp thanked Ms. Bessie Harvey for her and her Team's work. Chairman Crisp noted that Ms. Bessie Harvey with Leadership in Action by leading in the front.

Classroom Moment/Back to School Moment

Superintendent Houchard thanked the Board of Education members for their support as we prepared for back-to-school. He commended the Teachers, Staff members, School and District Administrators, Facility Staff, School Nutrition, Bus Drivers, and all Employees who contributed to a successful start of the new school year.

Superintendent Houchard highlighted the Grier Middle School Grand Opening. He noted that Phase 2 of the project should begin soon on the athletic fields.

Superintendent Houchard reported that teachers and school personnel participated in professional development activities, which encompassed Teaching and Learning sessions, the Teacher Induction Program for Success (TIPS), Orientation programs, and training for International Teachers.

Superintendent Houchard spotlighted the Media Coverage for Back to School.

Superintendent Houchard commented on our 10 District Innovation Schools that were introduced this year. Our Innovation Schools are concentrating on doing what is necessary to achieve higher student performance. He listed our 10 Innovation Schools: Sherwood Elementary, Bessemer City Central, HH Beam Elementary, Lingerfeldt Elementary, Pleasant Ridge Elementary, Woodhill Elementary, Grier Middle, Southwest Middle, Hunter Huss High School, and Ashbrook. Superintendent commented that he is excited about all the work that is being done this year.

Superintendent Houchard gave appreciation for the work done during the summer, resulting in the lowest number of teacher vacancies in at least the last three years, beginning school.

Superintendent Houchard thanked schools for making bus routes as efficient and effective as possible.

Superintendent Houchard concluded by thanking everyone in our school family for providing a great start to the school year.

Official Depository Designation – Action

Chairman Crisp recognized Mr. Gary Hoskins, who presented a PowerPoint on Official Depository Designation.

(View PowerPoint)

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. Tod Kinlaw; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III that the Board approve the Official Depositories for each School/Department.

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

(View PowerPoint)

Appointment of School Treasurers – Action

Chairman Crisp recognized Mr. Gary Hoskins, who presented a PowerPoint on Appointment of School Treasurers.

Motion

The Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. Brent Moore that the Board approve Treasurers for Each School.

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. Academic Services-District Literacy Intervention Plan
- D.. Contracts
 - Carr Elementary Interior Painting
 - Costner Elementary Interior Painting
 - Pinewood Elementary Interior Painting
 - Springfield Elementary Interior Painting
 - W.A. Bess Elementary Interior Painting
 - Southwest Middle Interior Painting
 - Holbrook Middle School Walkway & Canopy Replacement
 - Annual Contract for Minor Roof Repairs
 - Annual Contract for Pest Control for all GCS Facilities
 - Installation of Flower Bed Mulch at all GCS Locations
 - Purchase of Greenhouse for School Nutrition
 - Cropper Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

Superintendent's Comments

Superintendent Houchard reported he was impressed with the hard work that went into opening the schools.

The Gaston Business Association will be hosting a Business After Hours Event on Thursday, August 21, 2025, from 4-6 PM, and the Board is invited to attend at our Career and Technical Exploration Center at Forest Heights. Gastonia Business Association members and Board members are encouraged to learn more about our Career and Technical Education Programs.

Superintendent Houchard encouraged everyone to be part of our athletics and Friday night Football games to support our Players, Coaches, Cheerleaders, Dance Teams, Marching Band Members, as well as all of our athletic teams. A Facebook Live Pep Rally will take place, weather permitting, on Friday, August 22, 2025, at Stuart W. Cramer High School to kick off the year.

Superintendent Houchard wished Chairman Josh Crisp a happy birthday this month.

Chairman Crisp thanked the Board for their work for our System as well as our Teachers, Bus Drivers, Staff Members, Assistant Teachers, and Parent Volunteers who made the first four days of school a success.

Closed Session

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

Motion to go into Closed Session was made by M s. Dot Cherry; Mrs. Janna Smith seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

The Board went into Closed Session at 6:39 p.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 7:15 p.m.

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith on that the Board

Award a two-year Assistant Principal contract to:

Nichole Caroniti

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

Superintendent Houchard advised that Ms. Nichole Caroniti will be assigned to Bessemer City High School.

Adjournment

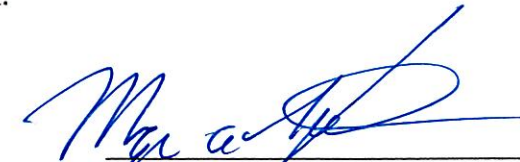
All business having been conducted, Motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Robbie Lovelace, and motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Approved:



Josh Crisp, Chairman
[Corporate Seal]



Morgen A. Houchard, Secretary

Date Approved: 9-15-25