

**Gaston County Schools
Operations Committee
Monday, August 4, 2025**

MINUTES

The Operations Committee met on Monday, August 4, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. in the Central Office Board Room, 943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC. The Committee 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, Executive Director Beth Suber, Assistant Superintendents Dr. Rebekkah Powers and Bessie Harvey, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Chief Technology Officer Curtis Poplin, Chief of Staff Tom Nencetti, and Board Clerk Cindy Beck.

Chairman Moore called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to adopt minutes of June 2, 2025, as presented was made by Lee Dedmon; seconded by Dot Cherry; motion carried unanimously. (4-0)

Safer School Video State Mandated

Dr. Rebekkah Powers presented information about the Safer School Video Program, which is state-mandated pursuant to G.S. 115C-124.7. She shared that the process to be used by schools to comply with this mandate, and parental information about the videos will be distributed at the school level, along with the beginning-of-the-year materials. Parents will choose to opt in or out for their child to participate.

Finance Update

Associate Superintendent Gary Hoskins presented information on Insurance Renewals and an Update of the Budget.
(View Presentation)

Technology Support Services Updates

Chief Technology Officer Curtis Poplin presented an update on the Summer Projects: Infinite Campus, Windows 11, New Grier Middle School, WAN Upgrade, Student Chromebook Update, and Digital Learning Plan.
(View Presentation)

Human Resources Updates

Executive Director Beth Suber presented an update on Staffing and current vacancies.
(View Presentation)

Operations Updates

Assistant Superintendent Bessie Harvey presented the most recent Grier Middle School Updates. She shared that the Grand Opening Celebration and Ribbon Cutting will take place on Thursday, August 7, 2025.

Assistant Superintendent of Operations Bessie Harvey presented the following updates on Summer Projects: LED Conversion Upfits, Freezer, Cooler Replacements, Bottle Fillers, Kitchen Piping, and Drain Replacement, Boiler Replacements, School Nutrition Dock Curtain Replacements, Chiller Replacements, Cooling Tower Replacements, Ida Rankin Drainage Reconfiguration, Fencing, and In-house projects.

Assistant Superintendent of Operations Bessie Harvey presented the Construction Manager at Risk (CM-at-Risk) method that will be used at the Belmont Central addition to work alongside the architect and engineer to help oversee this project and potentially larger projects in the future.

Assistant Superintendent Bessie Harvey presented that the following contracts are upcoming: Interior painting at Six Schools to include Pinewood Elementary, Springfield Elementary, Costner Elementary, W.A. Bess Elementary, Carr Elementary, and Southwest Middle Schools. Roof Repairs, HVAC parts, Pest Control, Flower Bed Mulch, School Nutrition Greenhouse, Canopy, and Walkway at Holbrook Middle were presented as well. These items will be presented to the Full Board for approval at the August 18th, 2025, regular meeting.

Capacity and Utilization Update

Chief of Staff Tom Nencetti presented the information on The Gaston County Schools Demographic Study and Utilization Report. The data from the Cropper Geographic Information Systems (GIS) could forecast the District Population Change, School Level Forecast, and Enrollment Forecast. Tom Nencetti presented that Cropper GIS Consulting could be an option to help Gaston County Schools plan for the future.

(View Presentation)

Board Policy Updates

Attorney Sonya McGraw presented the proposed Board Policy Updates as per the changes from State Law, or state Board of Education policies. These policies are placed on the Gaston County Schools website for review. This item will come back before the Board at the August 18th, 2025, meeting.

(View Presentation)

Other Business and Discussion

Chairman Josh Crisp asked that the District be consistent with the bag Policy at athletic events. Superintendent Morgen Houchard advised that he would communicate this expectation.

Meeting Schedule

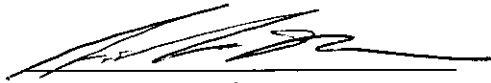
The next Operations Committee Meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2025, in the Central Office Board Room beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Adjournment

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

The Operations Committee Meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Moore", written over a horizontal line.

Brent Moore, Chairman

Date Approved: 10-6-25

Board of Education Operations Committee Meeting

Central Office Board Room
August 4, 2025

Operations Committee Agenda

- Call to Order
- Review and Approve Minutes
 - **June 2nd, 2025**

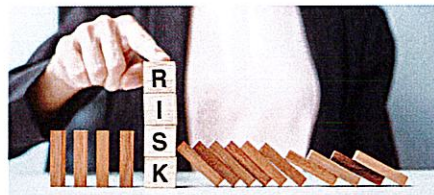
Finance

Gary Hoskins
Associate Superintendent and CFO

Insurance Renewals

Primary Types of Insurance

- Liability
- School Leaders Errors and Omissions
- Workers Compensation
- Property and Casualty
- Automobile



Liability Insurance

Umbrella Liability \$5M Liberty Mutual Insurance Company									Workers' Compensation Statutory
Automobile Liability \$1M Liberty Mutual	Garage Liability \$1M Liberty Mutual	School Leaders E&O \$1M Liberty Mutual	Health Occupation Education \$1M Liberty Mutual	Sexual Abuse Molestation \$1M Liberty Mutual	Employee Benefits Liability \$1M Liberty Mutual	Law Enforcement \$1M Liberty Mutual	General Liability \$1M Liberty Mutual	Employers Liability \$1M/\$1M/ \$1M Liberty Mutual	Liberty Mutual
NIL	NIL	\$25,000	NIL	\$25,000	\$1,000	\$10,000	NIL	NIL	\$200,000

Insurance Carriers

Insurance Carriers	Rating
Liberty Mutual	A
Travelers	A++
Chubb	A++
National Union (AIG)	A
Hartford	A+

Insurance Renewals

Line of Coverage	7-1-24 to 7-1-25 Premium	7-1-25 to 7-1-26 Premium
General Liability	\$443,341.00	\$517,002.00
Law Enforcement Liability	\$31,012.00	\$31,012.00
School Leaders E&O	\$167,776.00	\$191,654.00
Automobile	\$139,291.00	\$157,102.00
Umbrella	\$220,431.00	\$258,629.00
Workers Compensation	\$524,729.00	\$415,031.00
Property	\$895,500.00	\$1,024,771.00
Boiler & Machinery	\$46,303.00	\$50,546.00
Crime	\$6,610.00	\$6,880.00
Volunteer Accident	\$1,777.00	\$1,256.00
Active Shooter	\$5,931.00	\$5,931.00
Job Shadowing/Job Internship/Health Occupations Accident	\$2,455.20	\$2,455.00
Cyber Liability	\$26,879.00	\$26,949.00
Total	\$2,512,035.20	\$2,689,218.00

Budget Update

- State Funding
- County Funding
- Federal Funding



State Funding



State Funding

- There is currently no **2025-27 State Budget**
- There are currently no **budget bill substitutes** or “mini” budgets to provide temporary funding
- Some “experts” are estimating that we will not have a State budget until around **September**



State Funding

NC Senate and House disagreements:

- Future individual tax rate decreases
- Projected annual budget shortfall
- Spending priorities

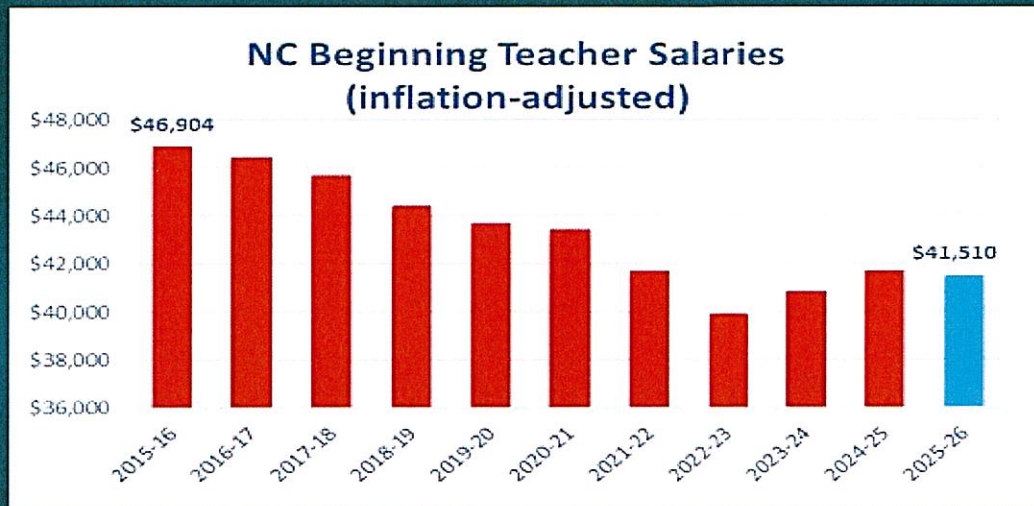


State Funding

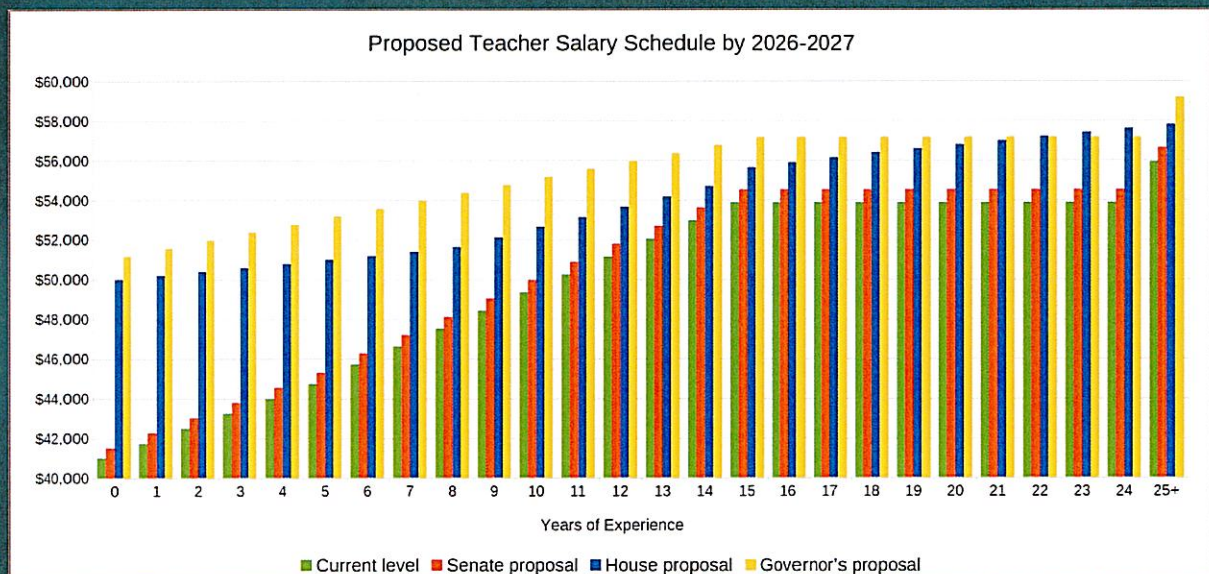
- State **recurring funding will continue** at the current level prescribed in the most recent certified budget
- **No salary increases** for employees or experience step increases for teachers at this time



State Funding



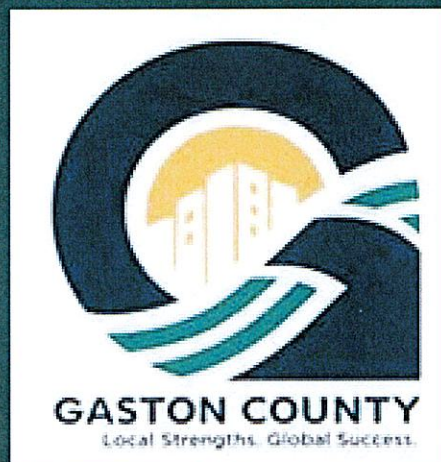
State Funding



Senate vs House Differences

- House requires DPI to keep Low Wealth allotment the same as this year (+\$7.3M)
- House increases EC cap from 13.00% to 13.25%
- House reinstates Master's pay for teachers
- Senate salary increase of 1.25% + \$1,500 bonus; House salary increase 2.50%

County Funding



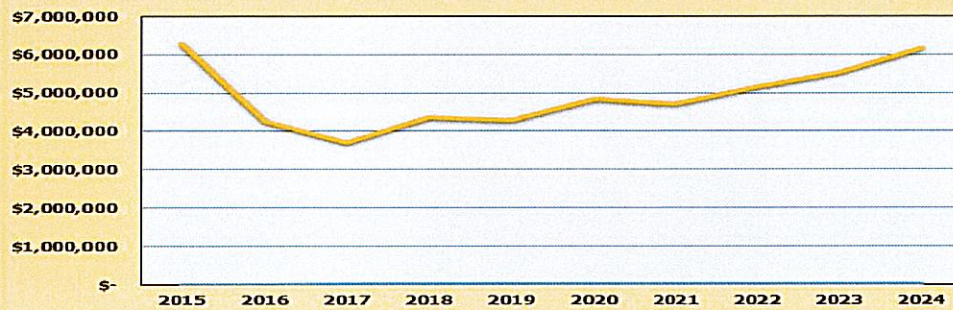
County Funding - Operating

Operating Funds	Expenditures		
	Funded	Unfunded	Needed
Current Operating Funds	\$ 54,301,704	\$ -	\$ 54,301,704
Inflation - Supplies and Contracted Services	-	315,000	315,000
State Increase in Employee Compensation	-	540,000	540,000
State Increase in Employer Benefits	-	770,000	770,000
Teacher Salary Supplement Increase	500,000	-	500,000
Total Operating Funds	\$ 54,801,704	\$ 1,625,000	\$ 56,426,704

County Funding - Capital

Capital Funds	Expenditures		
	Funded	Unfunded	Needed
Reallocated Capital Funds	\$ 2,227,000	\$ -	\$ 2,227,000
Unfunded Capital Funds	-	4,673,000	4,673,000
Student Devices	1,773,000	352,000	2,125,000
Total Operating Funds	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 5,025,000	\$ 9,025,000

Unassigned Fund Balance



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Unassigned Fund Balance	6,299,324	4,267,131	3,713,330	4,371,959	4,277,089
Change in Fund Balance	(2,122,111)	(2,032,193)	(553,801)	658,629	(94,870)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Unassigned Fund Balance	4,851,995	4,722,972	5,164,021	5,544,293	6,177,019
Change in Fund Balance	574,906	(129,023)	441,049	380,272	632,726

Federal Funding



Federal Funding

On June 30 the DOE notified DPI that it **would not send** Grant Award Notifications for four federal programs totaling **\$2.6 million**. This funding was released prior to the end of July.

However, this raises serious questions about the **continued availability of these funds** in the future.

Technology Support Services

Curtis Poplin
Chief Technology Officer

TSS Updates

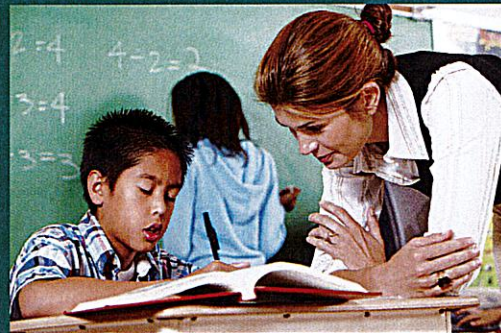
- Infinite Campus
- Windows 11
- New Grier Middle School
- WAN Upgrade
- Student Chromebook Refresh
- Digital Learning Plan

Human Resources

Beth Suber
Executive Director of HR

Human Resources Updates

➤ Staffing Update



Operations

Bessie Harvey
Assistant Superintendent of Operations

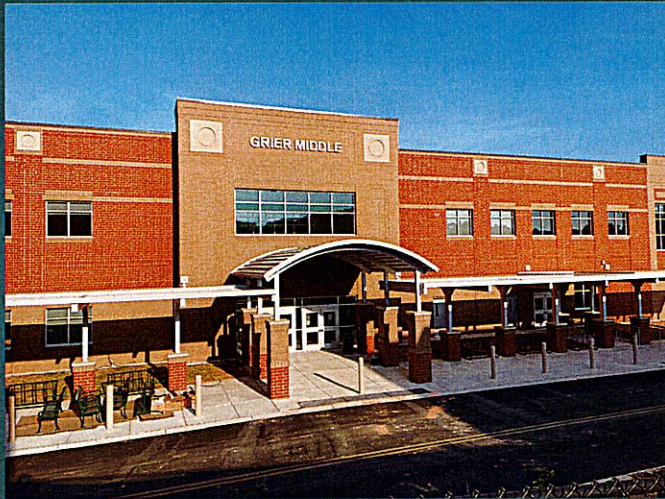
Operations Updates

- Summer Projects Update
- Grier Turf
- Construction Manager at Risk (CM-at-Risk)

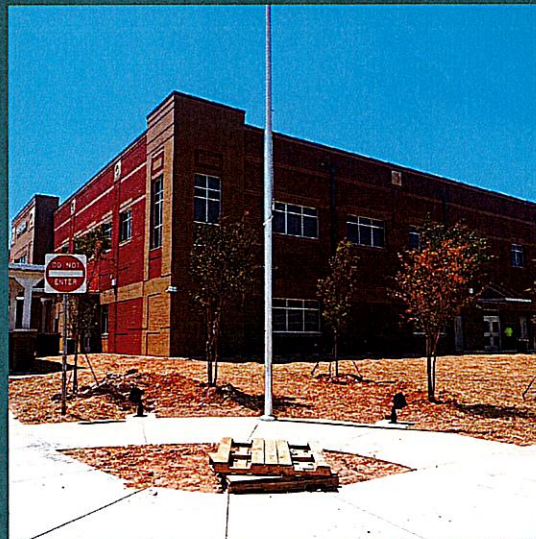
Grier Middle School



Grier Middle School



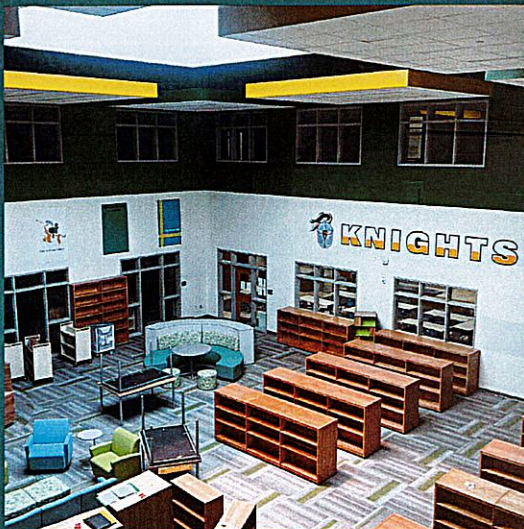
Grier Middle School



Grier Middle School



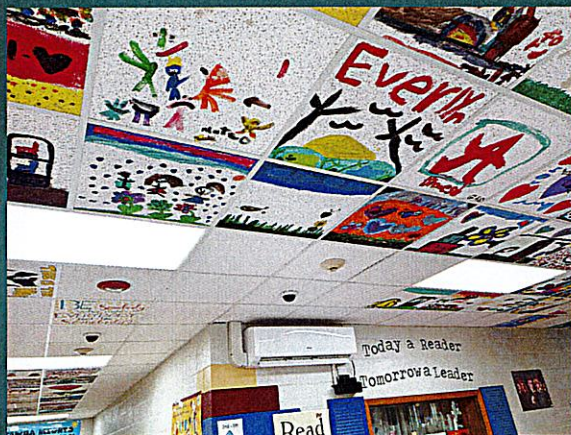
Grier Middle School



Bottle Fillers (Lowell ES)

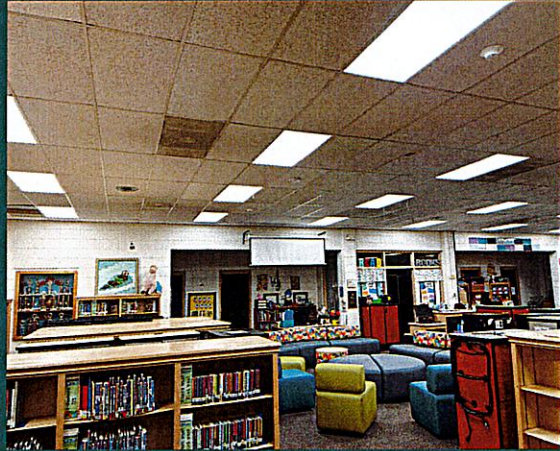
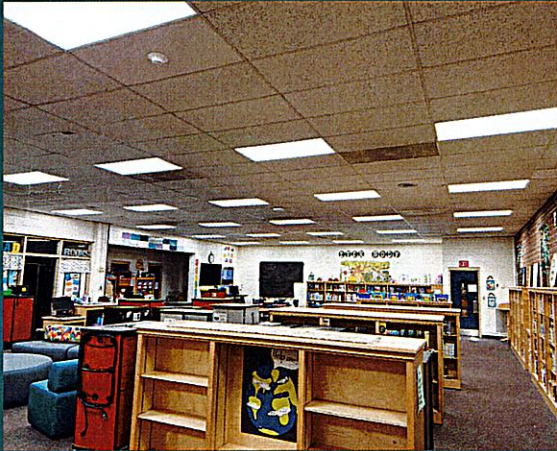


LED Conversion Upfits



Catawba Heights

LED Conversion Upfits



Belmont Central

LED Conversion Upfits



McAdenville

Ida Rankin Drainage Reconfiguration



Cooling Tower Replacements

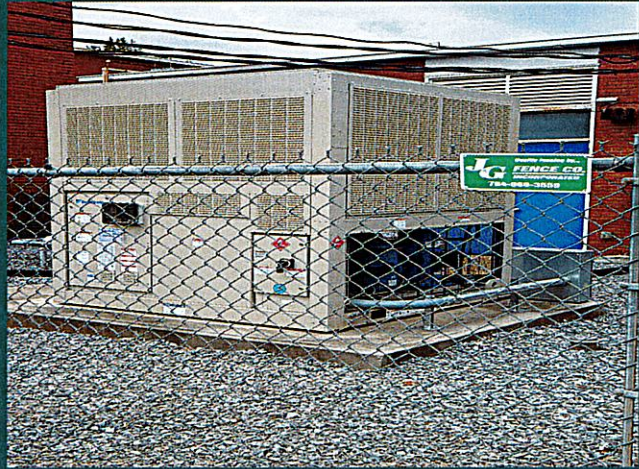


Hunter Huss HS

Chiller Replacements



W.A. Bess

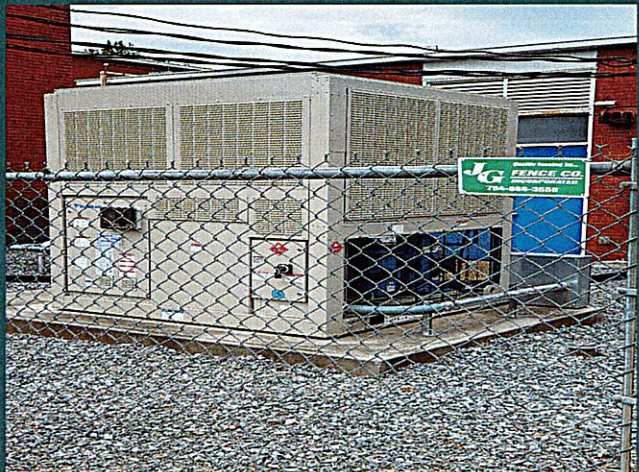


Bessemer City MS

Chiller Replacements

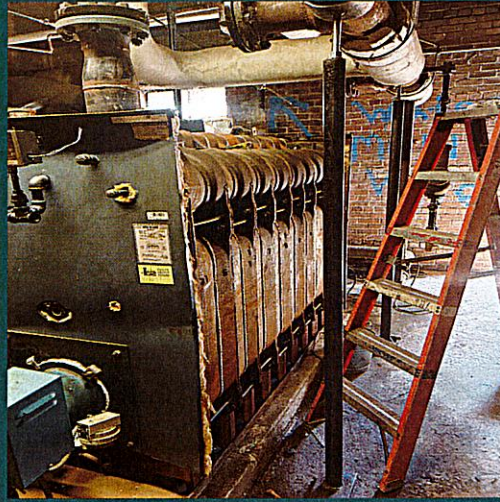
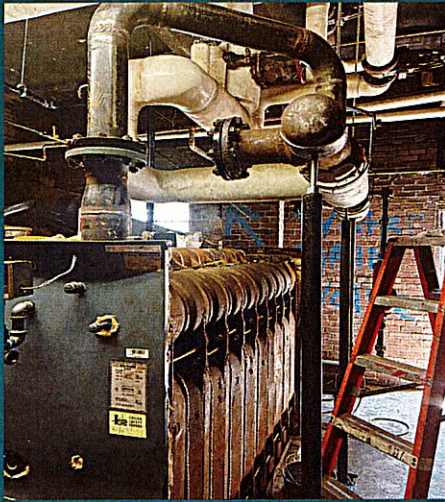


W.A. Bess



Bessemer City MS

Boiler Replacements



Holbrook MS

Freezer/Cooler Replacements

Freezer/Cooler Replacements

Freezer/Cooler Replacements

Fencing



John Chavis: Enclosed Soccer Field

Fencing



Fencing



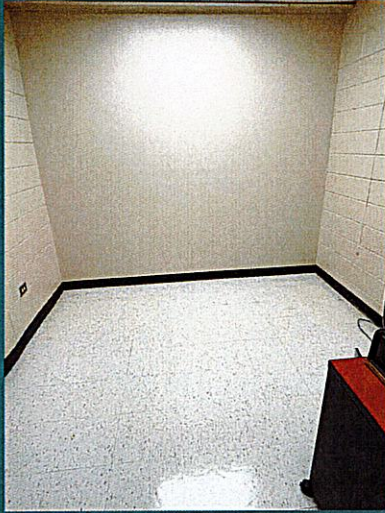
Bessemer City Central: Secured Playground Area

Fencing

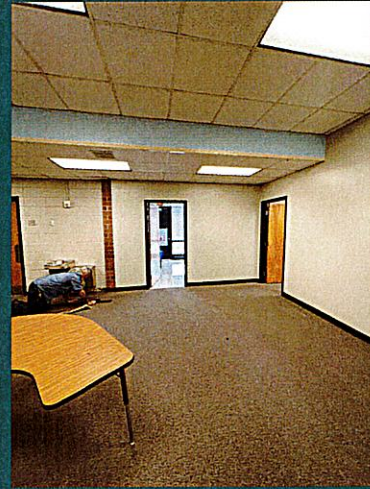


Sherwood ES

Project Highlights

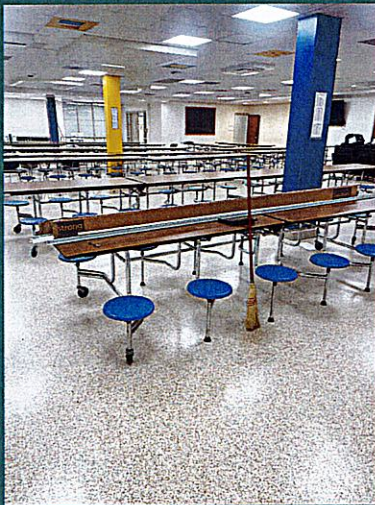


W.A.Bess



Ida Rankin

Project Highlights



Southwest MS



Woodhill ES

Project Highlights



Springfield ES

CM-at-Risk

What is Construction Management at Risk (CMAR)?

Construction Management at Risk (CMAR) is a project delivery method where a **Construction Manager (CM)** is hired by the project owner during the **design phase** to provide preconstruction services and later takes responsibility for construction.

The CM:

- Works alongside the architect/engineer early in the design process.
- Provides an Agreed Upon Price based on construction documents.
- Acts as the general contractor during construction.
- Bears the financial risk if the project exceeds the GMP (except for approved changes).

CM-at-Risk

NC General Statutes § 143-128.1

This statute permits public entities (e.g., state agencies, local governments, public universities) to use CMAR as an alternative to the traditional **Design-Bid-Build** method.

Key points:

- **CMAR must be selected through a qualifications-based process** or a combo of qualifications and price.
- The **agreed upon price must be established** before construction starts.
- Subcontractors are usually selected through **competitive bidding**.
- The owner typically holds **two contracts**: one with the designer and one with the CMAR firm.

CM-at-Risk

Benefits of Using CMAR:

- **Ideal for complex projects:** Especially effective for large-scale public buildings (schools, hospitals, government facilities).
- **Predictable budgeting:** GMP provides financial confidence for public owners.
- **Better management of design changes:** CM can adapt cost and schedule efficiently.
- **Legal support in NC statutes:** Public agencies can use CMAR with legal clarity and confidence.
- **Helps meet urgent schedules:** CMAR is often used for projects with tight timelines (e.g., storm recovery, university expansions).

Contract Discussions

- Interior Painting (six schools)
- Roof Repairs
- HVAC Parts
- Pest Control
- Flower Bed Mulch
- School Nutrition Greenhouse
- Canopy and Walkway - Holbrook

Capacity and Utilization Discussion

Tom Nencetti
Chief of Staff

Other Items

- Next Operating Committee meeting will be on **September 8th** at 8:30am in the Central Office Board Room
- Motion to **adjourn**

Adjourn