

Gaston County Schools
Policy Committee Meeting
Monday, October 29, 2025
6:00 a.m.

MINUTES

The Gaston County Board of Education Policy Committee met on Wednesday, October 29, 2025, at 6:00 a.m. in the Board Room, 943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC. Members in attendance were Chair Dot Cherry, Janna Smith, and A.M. Stephens III. Mr. Stephens was excused at 7:30 a.m.

Additional attendees included: Lee Dedmon, Superintendent Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Chief of Staff Tom Nencetti, and Board Clerk Cindy Beck.

Ms. Cherry called the meeting to order at 6:06 a.m.

Invocation

An invocation was given by Ms. Cherry.

Agenda Adoption - Action

The Board considered Agenda Adoption – Action

Motion to adopt the Agenda as presented was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III, motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

Committee Overview and Schedule - Information

Chair Cherry encouraged that the focus of the newly formed Committee should be to craft strong, effective, and clear policies that serve the entire district. The Committee should work in collaboration and transparency to work efficiently with accountability to uphold the law for our students and staff. Committee members were encouraged to come prepared and ready.

After discussion for scheduling future meetings, the Committee decided on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. to meet as needed.

The Panel expressed their goal of reviewing every current board policy in a comprehensive audit.

Motion

Chair Cherry proposed that, as the Committee reviews current policies, they indicate the review date along with a label “Reviewed” to all policies to show when the Policy Committee last examined them, regardless of whether changes occurred.

Motion to adopt the addition as presented was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III, motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

Legal Overviews, Updates, Changes in the Law

Attorney McGraw shared the process of how changes in law can cause the need to revise policies. This information typically comes through "updates" from the North Carolina School Board Association(NCSBA). Updates contain specific policy changes in response to new state legislation that is in effect for the 2025-2026 school year.

At this meeting, the Policy Committee focused on six pieces of legislation that necessitate substantive revisions to 13 policies. Copies of the current policies and the recommended revisions were distributed for reference, as were copies of the new laws.

The Following Policies were presented from the Summer 2025 NCSBA Special Policy Updates:

Policy 3210 - Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials Motion

The Motion was made by Mrs. Janna Smith and seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III that the Board accept the policy as presented. Motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

3310 - School Trips

Motion

Motion to adopt the addition as presented was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III, motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

3515 - Religious-Based Exemptions from School Programs

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III and seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith that the Board adopt the new policy. Motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

3610 - Extracurricular Activities

Motion

Motion to adopt the addition as presented was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith. Motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

4020 - Parental Involvement

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III and seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith that the Board accept the policy as presented. Motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

4120 - Domicile or Residence Requirements

Motion

Motion to adopt the update as presented was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III, motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

4318 - Use of Wireless Communication Devices -Motion

North Carolina Session Law 2025-38 requires all public school districts to establish wireless communication device policies by January 1, 2026.

The Policy Committee had a lengthy discussion about Options A and B as presented. The Committee members aim to establish clear guidelines for the use of wireless communication devices and intend to carefully craft a well-defined policy update while remaining mindful of the approaching deadline.

The discussion was tabled at this time. The Policy Committee will reconvene to further review and take formal action on the policy at a future meeting.

5070 - Public Records - Retention, Release, and Disposition

Motion

Motion to adopt the addition as presented was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith, motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

6130 - Administering Medicines to Students

Motion

Mrs. Janna Smith led a discussion about medication security, including the requirement for nurses to lock up student medications and the availability of lock boxes in each school.

Superintendent Houchard responded that each school should have a lock box provided if a school does not already have one. He will follow up with Dr. Rebekkah Powers from Student Support Services to confirm which department provides the lock box.

Motion to adopt the addition as presented was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III, motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

6172 - Emergency Epinephrine Auto-Injector Devices

Motion

Motion to adopt the addition as presented was made by Ms Dot Cherry; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith, motion carried unanimously. (2-0)

6390 - Transportation Service-Vehicle Contracts

Motion

Motion to adopt the addition as presented was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry, motion carried unanimously. (2-0)

7100 - Recruitment and Selection of Personnel

Motion

Motion to adopt the addition as presented was made by Ms Dot Cherry; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith, motion carried unanimously. (2-0)

7730 - Personnel Files

Motion

Motion to adopt the addition as presented was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry, motion carried unanimously. (2-0)

NEXT STEPS:

The approved policies will be presented to the Operations Committee and the Curriculum and Instruction Committee at their meetings on November 3, 2025.

They will be posted on the Gaston County Schools webpage for review by the general public.

They will be presented to the full Board for approval on the Consent Agenda at the November 17, 2025, Regular Meeting.

Other Business

The next Policy Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 25, 2025, at 6 p.m.

Adjournment

All business being conducted, a Motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Janna Smith and seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry.

The Policy Committee adjourned at 8:13 a.m.

Approved:

Dot Cherry, Chair

Dot Cherry, Chairman

Date Approved: 12-1-2025