

**Gaston County Schools
Operations Committee
Monday, November 3, 2025**

MINUTES

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

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 Superintendent Bessie Harvey, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Chief Technology Officer Curtis Poplin, Chief of Staff Tom Nencetti, Assistant Finance Officer James Beckford, District Budget Analyst Susan Brooks, and Board Clerk Cindy Beck.

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

Approval/Correction of the Minutes

Motion to adopt the Minutes from the October 6, 2025, as presented was made by Mr. Lee Dedmon and seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry; motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Finance Update

Associate Superintendent Gary Hoskins, Assistant Finance Officer James Beckford, and District Budget Analyst Susan Brooks presented an update and overview of the district's funding structure for the overall budget.

Funding Overview and Revenue Sources

Revenue for Gaston County Schools is derived from four primary sources: State Funding, Local Funding, Federal funding, and Special Revenue.

State Allotment Formulas and Funding:

The state allotment formulas determine funding based on student enrollment and specific program categories.

It was noted that the district's Average Daily Membership (ADM) increased to 30,616, up from 29,928 in the previous year, representing an increase of 688 students. This growth positively impacts the district's overall state funding allocations. However, these increases were offset by a \$7.3 million decrease in the Low Wealth Counties Supplemental allotment from the state. This decrease was the result of the recent county property tax revaluation and subsequent decrease in the property tax rate.

Allotments for classroom teachers vary by grade level and include established caps for Exceptional Children (EC) and Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) programs.

Additional funding factors include allotments for non-instructional support staff and program enhancement teachers.

Budget Allotment Revisions and Changes

Budget allotment revisions for the district were discussed in detail. There were 105 revisions during the 2024–2025 fiscal year, and 24 revisions have already been recorded in the first quarter of 2025–2026.

These adjustments were primarily due to changes in Legislation, Federal fund appropriations, and internal budget transfers necessary to maintain balanced operations.

Local funding sources and allocations were reviewed. Local revenue is generated through operating appropriations, capital outlay funds, and fines and forfeitures.

Federal Funding and Grants Overview:

A detailed summary of federal funding sources and grants was identified. The budget and any amendments are submitted to and approved by DPI.

Special Revenue and Its Sources

Special revenue funds were also reviewed. The beginning budget for special revenue stands at \$15.4 million, with major sources including Medicaid and NC Pre-K.

Expenditures are projected at approximately \$7.1 million for Medicaid services and \$5.1 million for NC Pre-K programs, with the remaining funds allocated to various state and federal grants supporting specialized educational initiatives.

Factors Impacting the Budget

Several internal and external factors may impact the district’s financial position in the coming year.

Internal factors include staffing levels, curriculum development, and investments in instructional technology.

External factors include potential adjustments to state funding formulas, shifts in local demographics, and broader economic conditions that influence revenue streams.

2025-2026 Budget Resolution

Mr. Hoskins asked for a recommendation for the 2025-2026 Budget Resolution to come before the full Board for approval at the next meeting on November 17, 2025.

Classified Bonus Payment

An annual bonus was recommended to eligible classified employees to be paid on November 21, 2025. The budgeted cost is \$1.4 million.

Motion

The Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry and seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon that the Board:

Approve the recommendation of the Classified Bonus Payment.

A vote was taken, and a motion to approve the Classified Bonus Payment as presented carried unanimously. (4-0)

(View Presentation)

State Health Plan

Mr. Hoskins presented the following State Health Plan Updates, including:

- Premiums are now based on the employee's salary with supplements included.
- Aetna remains the health insurance provider.
- The effective date of insurance will be January 1, 2026, but the health insurance premium deductions will be made beginning in December 2025.

TSS Updates

Chief Technology Officer Curtis Poplin reported on the following updates for TSS:

- There are 25% of students whose parents have now accessed Infinite Campus.
- Digital Learning Facilitators have documented 500 hours of Professional Development and follow-up, 150 hours of co-teaching and modeling in classrooms, and 300 hours of in-person planning and collaborating with teachers.
- The Engineering Team of six members monitors continuously to keep the District's network safe and secure.
- The TSS Technicians have reimaged 5000 Windows 10 devices to Windows 11.

(View Attachment)

Human Resources Update

The Executive Director of Human Resources presented the November Human Resources Report:

- ESS Update-Substitute Fill Rate: 88%
- Teacher Vacancy Update District Wide: 43
- Upcoming Recruiting Event-11/5 Employ a Veteran Job Fair, Shelby, NC
- Classroom Central and the Carolina Panthers donated over 7,000 backpacks with school supplies for Gaston County Schools' students.

(View Attachment)

Operations Updates**Adult Meal Price Increase - Motion**

Assistant Superintendent of Operations Bessie Harvey presented in accordance with federal guidance outlined in FNS Instruction 782-5, Rev. 1, it is proposed that an adjustment be made to the Adult Meal Price. The proposed increase aligns with the

requirement that adult meal prices reflect the full cost of meals, including the value of USDA Foods and other operational expenses.

Under this proposal, food items will be listed and charged à la carte, consistent with federal pricing standards. The proposed new pricing structure would become effective January 5, 2026.

Motion

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

Approve Adult Meal Price Increase to be placed on the Consent Agenda for the November 17, 2025, Board Meeting.

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

Construction Updates - Information

Ms Harvey reported the status on the Emergency Radio Communication Coverage project:

Sites Completed:

New Hope Elementary

Hawks Nest STEAM Academy

W.A. Bess Elementary

Scheduled Sites:

Forestview HS

Cramerton Middle

North Belmont Elementary

Sadler Elementary

Gardner Park Elementary

Warlick

(View Presentation)

Contract Discussion

The following contracts were reviewed and recommended to be placed on the Consent Agenda:

1. Gardner Park Elementary School LED Light Conversion

Motion

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

Approve Contract for Gardner Park Elementary School LED Light Conversion to be placed on the Consent Agenda for the November 17, 2025, Board Meeting.

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

2. Fitfields selected as Design Firm for Forestview Stadium Renovations

Motion

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

Approve Contract for FitFields selected as Design Firm for Forestview Stadium Renovations to be placed on the Consent Agenda for the November 17, 2025, Board Meeting.

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

(View Presentation)

Legal/Policy Updates

Ms. Dot Cherry gave the following update of the Policy Committee and reported that it held a productive meeting, during which eleven of the thirteen proposed policy revisions were approved. The Committee is scheduled to convene again on Tuesday, November 25, 2025.

Superintendent's Comments

Superintendent Houchard advised that dates will be forthcoming for the following:

-Annual Board Retreat in January

-There should be two special meetings called for Finance Planning in preparation for the Finance Meeting in April with Gaston County. The meetings may take place in February.

Other Business and Discussion

The next Operations Committee Meeting is scheduled for December 1, 2025, in the Central Office Board Room beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Adjournment

All business being conducted, the meeting was adjourned. Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Tod Kinlaw and seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon. The Motion carried unanimously. (4-0)

The Operations Committee Meeting adjourned at 9:49 a.m.

Approved:



Brent Moore, Chairman

Date Approved: 1-23-26