

Gaston County Schools
Board of Education
Monday, December 15, 2025
Meeting 5:30 p.m.
Regular Meeting

MINUTES

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a regular session on Monday, December 15, 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, Lee Dedmon, Tod Kinlaw, Robbie Lovelace, Brent Moore, Jeff Ramsey, Janna Smith, and A.M. Stephens III.

Additional attendees include: Superintendent Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Associate Superintendents Gary Hoskins and Tonya Kales, Assistant Superintendents Bessie Harvey and Rebekka Powers, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Chief Technology Officer Curtis Poplin, Executive Director of Human Resources Beth Suber, Executive Directors Anarah Henderson, Chris Mills, and Tyler West, and Board Clerk Cindy Beck.

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

Invocation

Father James Raber, Chaplain for Belmont Abbey College, led the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Braxton Combs, 7th-grade student at Belmont Middle School led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Character Trait

Isla Infanzon, a 3rd-grade student from North Belmont Elementary School, reported on the Character Trait, Generosity.

Agenda Adoption - Action

The Board considered Agenda Adoption – Action

Motion to adopt the Agenda as presented was made by Mr. Brent Moore; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry, motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

Good News – Information

Mr. Todd Hagans presented the Good News for December:

Carrie Lineberger, Belmont Middle School Band Director, was recognized for the South Central District Band Award of Excellence.

Mr. Tod Kinlaw presented a plaque of recognition to Ms. Lineberger.

Mr. Hagans recognized First Presbyterian Church for awarding a Reading Grant that made take-home Book Kits available to Sherwood Elementary third grade students.

Mrs. Janna Smith presented a plaque of Recognition to the First Presbyterian Church Representatives.

The Attendance Matters Video Contest finalists were recognized and awarded. John Chavis Middle School took first place, followed by Ashbrook High School in second place and Cherryville Elementary in third.

Ms. Dot Cherry presented a plaque of Recognition to the schools.

Classroom Moment

Chairman Crisp recognized Mr. Chris Mills and students from Webb Street School. This year, Webb Street School has worked diligently to expand its music program, offering more diverse opportunities for students. The expansion of the arts program allows students at Webb Street to engage through music and participate in activities similar to those of their non-disabled peers. During the recognition, students showcased musical skills gained through the expanded program, including a performance by a group of students playing bells.

(View PowerPoint)

Public Expression – Information

Dionna Graham

Re: School Performance

Sean Bates

Re: School Performance

Approval/Correction of Minutes – Action

Motion to adopt minutes of November 17, 2025, as presented was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith, motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

Operations Committee Report – Information

Brent Moore is chair of the Operations Committee, and members are Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon, and Tod Kinlaw. Ms. Dot Cherry provided a summary report of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.

(View report)

Curriculum & Instruction Committee Report – Information

Mr. Jeff Ramsey is chair of the Curriculum & Instruction Committee, and the members are Robbie Lovelace, Janna Smith, and A.M. Stephens III. Ms. Janna Smith provided a summary report of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.

(View report)

Policy Committee Report - Information

Ms. Dot Cherry is chair of the Policy Committee, and the other members are Janna Smith and A.M. Stephens III. Mr. Stephens provided a summary report of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.

(View report)

Gaston County Schools Academic Calendar 2026-2027 - Action

Chairman Crisp recognized Beth Suber, who presented a PowerPoint on School Calendar Survey Results 2026-2027 for the three calendar options. Calendar "C" had the highest number of votes on the Calendar Survey.

Motion

Motion was made by Mr. Lee Dedmon; seconded by Mr. Tod Kinlaw that the Board:
Approve Calendar "C" as presented for the 2026-2027 school year.

A vote was taken, and a motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (9-0)

Consent Agenda - Action

The Board considered the Consent Agenda:

- A. Recommended Personnel
- B. Budget Amendments & Budget Transfers
- C. Construction/Repair Change Orders--none
- D. Proposed Policies:
 - 3610 - Extracurricular Activities
 - 4318 - Use of Wireless Communication Devices (WCDs)
- E. Chapel Grove Permanent Sewer Easement
- F. Cramerton MS Temporary Easement
- G. Hunter Huss Water Meter/Drainage Easement
- H. Contracts
 - Security Vestibules
 - Amendment #1 to Trash Removal Contract
 - Skylight panel tinting at Cramerton MS
 - Forestview High School Auditorium HVAC Replacement
 - Amendment to DRM Finance Roof Replacement Contract
 - Architect Selection CMAR
 - Annual Renewal - Oracle Data Processing
 - DEC Updated Contracts

Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Ms. Dot Cherry ; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith. Motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

Superintendent's Comments

Superintendent Houchard addressed the Board and shared several important updates:
Gaston County Schools has made a difficult, yet fiscally responsible decision to implement a temporary hiring freeze due to budgetary constraints, effective immediately and until further notice. The hiring freeze applies to all schools and central office-level departments.

The Elementary Gaston Regional Science and Engineering Fair took place a few weeks ago. Students who placed in this event will move on to the Region 6 Science Fair that will be in February. The Secondary level Gaston Regional Science and Engineering Fair will be held on January 8, 2026.

Superintendent Houchard expressed his appreciation for students and staff in their participation of the local holiday parades.

Winter break is almost here and our mid-year exams will conclude on Friday, December 19. Students will be out of school beginning Monday, December 22 and will return on Monday, January 6, 2026 to begin the second semester.

Closing Remarks

Chairman Crisp wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Chairman Crisp wished Ms. Dot Cherry and Mr. Tod Kinlaw a "Happy Birthday".

Chairman Crisp reported our regular meeting in conjunction with our Board Retreat will be held on Friday, January 23rd.

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 Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. Brent Moore; motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

The Board went into Closed Session at 6:34 p.m. and after a brief break Closed Session began at 6:38 p.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

All business having been conducted, a Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Tod Kinlaw, seconded by Mr. Jeff Ramsey, and the motion carried unanimously. (9-0)

The Board Meeting adjourned at p.m.

Approved:


Josh Crisp, Chairman
[Corporate Seal]


Morgen A. Houchard, Secretary

Date Approved: 1-23-26