

**GASTON COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Session**



943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC 28054

March 16, 2026

5:30 p.m.

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Agenda Adoption

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Consideration of the Formal Agenda for Monday, March 16, 2026

Roberts Rules of Order (Revised), adoption of the Agenda for meeting sequence and structure.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

Adoption of Agenda

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 2350 Board Meeting Agenda.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: Dr. Morgen A. Houchard

Department: Superintendent

GASTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Josh Crisp, Chairman, Dallas Township
Lee Dedmon, Gastonia Township
Robbie Lovelace, Cherryville Township
Jeff K. Ramsey, At Large
A.M. Stephens, III, Riverbend Township



Dot Cherry, Vice Chairman At Large
Tod Kinlaw, South Point Township
Brent Moore, Crowders Mountain Township
Janna Smith, Gastonia Township

Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Superintendent
943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC 28054
Monday, February 16, 2026
5:30 p.m.
Agenda
Regular Meeting

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Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Good News

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

Each month, the Communications/Public Information Department compiles "Good News" about our schools, students, employees, and community partners. See attachment.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

None

Policy Implications:

None

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: Todd Hagans
Chief Communications Officer

Department: Communications
(Superintendent's Office)

BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

DEPARTMENT:

Communications/Public

Information
Department

TOPIC: GOOD NEWS**FOR THE MONTH OF: March 2026**

1. The following employees were named finalists for **Gaston County Schools** Teacher of the Year, 2026-2027: **Erica Baird, Forestview High School; Noah Hartley, Hunter Huss High School; Allison Lockridge, Rankin Elementary; Jenna Markwith, Hawks Nest STEAM Academy; and Clarissa Sanders, Pleasant Ridge Elementary.**
2. The following employees were named finalists for **Gaston County Schools** New Teacher of the Year, 2026-2027: **Jessa Cannon, W.A. Bess Elementary; Ean Cooke, Ashbrook High School; Sarah Divers, Carr Elementary; Paige Lane, Ashbrook High School; and Connor Settlemyre, South Point High School.**
3. The following employees were named finalists for **Gaston County Schools** Principal of the Year, 2026-2027: **Josh Allen, South Point High School; Jenny Cabe, Lingerfeldt Elementary; Shawn Hubers, Pleasant Ridge Elementary; Jessica Mellon, W.P. Grier Middle School; and Tammy Mims, Forestview High School.**
4. The following employees were named finalists for **Gaston County Schools** Assistant Principal of the Year, 2026-2027: **Brittany Beckham, Southwest Middle School; Deon Kennedy, Mount Holly Middle School; Logan McGuire, Belmont Middle; Heather Parrish, Cherryville High School; and Amber Tuttle, Brookside Elementary.**
5. The following employees were named finalists for **Gaston County Schools** Teacher Assistant of the Year, 2026-2027: **Jennifer Clemmer, Carr Elementary; Jessica Gurganus, Gardner Park Elementary; Amy Light, Carr Elementary; Teresa Schiavoni, Page Primary; and Deanna Thornburg, Cherryville Elementary School.**
6. The following employees were named finalists for **Gaston County Schools** Central Office Administrator of the Year, 2026-2027: **Michelle Elrod, Human Resources; Chad Hovis, Student Support Services; Shannon Hullett, Academic Services, Amber Spargo, Academic Services, and Kyle Wood, Academic Services.**
7. The following students in **Gaston County Schools** won awards in the high art show competition: **Ryka Nowrouzzadeh of Stuart W. Cramer High School** received Best of Show for *Tomoe Shinohara*. First place went to **Brooklynn Stewart of East Gaston High School** for *Fishy Fashion*. **Anna Broome of Stuart W. Cramer High School** placed second for *Turmoil*, and **Yajaira Casas of Hunter Huss High School** earned third place for *Freedom and Justice for All*. Merit awards were presented to **Jace Walsh** and **Morgan Spivey of Highland School of Technology**. Honorable mentions went to **Rodrigo Mondragon Rivera of Bessemer City High School** and **Andrea Reyes**

Landaverde of Ashbrook High School. Nicole Cisnero Saldana of Bessemer City High School received the Gaston County Art Guild's honorable mention for *Charcoal Cat*.

8. The **Gaston County Schools** Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Department hosted the middle school Battle of the Books and Math Elite competitions. In the Battle of the Books competition, **Belmont Middle School** placed first followed by **Cramerton Middle School** in second and **W.C. Friday Middle School** in third. In the Math Elite competition, **Cramerton Middle School** took first place followed by **Stanley Middle School** in second and **Mount Holly Middle School** in third.
9. The **Gaston County Schools** Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Department hosted the high school Battle of the Books competition on February 26. **Gaston Early College High School** took first place followed by **Highland School of Technology** in second.
10. **Gaston County Schools** held its annual Middle School Cheer Showcase at **Stuart W. Cramer High School** on February 27. The following schools received recognition: **Belmont Middle**, first place; **Holbrook Middle**, second place; and **Stanley Middle**, third place.
11. **Gaston County Schools** was honored at the North Carolina School Public Relations Association's Blue Ribbon Awards ceremony in Greensboro on March 6, winning three gold awards and one bronze in electronic media, one silver award in digital media engagement, and one bronze award in publications.
12. Students, teachers, and staff in **Gaston County Schools** observed "Read Across America Day" the week of March 2 with a variety of special activities. The event coincided with Dr. Seuss' birthday.
13. **Belmont Central Elementary**, in partnership with Belmont Eye, earned first place in this year's "Are You Smarter Than a Gaston County Fifth Grader?" competition. **W.A. Bess Elementary** and First Horizon finished second. **Lowell Elementary** and Enbridge took third place. Several teams also received special recognition. **Pleasant Ridge Elementary** and GSM Services were honored with the Team Spirit Award. Gaston Emergency Medical Services and **Chapel Grove Elementary** received the Most Creative Team Award. Hosted by the **Gaston County Education Foundation**, "Are You Smarter" is an annual event that brings together local businesses and elementary schools for a game show-style competition. Proceeds support the Ron L. Ensley and Jennie Stultz grant programs that provide teachers with funding for creative classroom projects and lessons.
14. The following wrestlers earned medals at the N.C. High School Athletic Association's individual wrestling state championships: **Bentley Sly, Stuart W. Cramer High School**, 4A state champion in the 150 weight class; **Aiden VanderMeer, Stuart W. Cramer High School**, third place in the 4A 157 weight class; **Chris Wurster, Stuart W. Cramer High School**, fourth place in the 4A 215 weight class; **Nick McClellan, East Gaston High School**, first place in the 4A 285 weight class; **Jonathan Moore, Ashbrook High School**, first place in the 6A 285 weight class; **Benjamin Gregory, Ashbrook High**

School, third place in the 6A 215 weight class; **Maverick Monteith, Ashbrook High School**, third place in the 6A 138 weight class; **Jacob Perez, Ashbrook High School**, third place in the 6A 132 weight class; **Cameron Massey, North Gaston High School**, first place in the 5A 138 weight class; **Marquez Macarthur, North Gaston High School**, third place in the 5A 113 weight class; **Louis Scott, North Gaston High School**, third place in the 126 weight class; **Ammon Scott, South Point High School**, second place in the 150 weight class; **Kaden Brown, North Gaston High School**, third place in the 150 weight class; and **Aiden Sullivan, South Point High School**, third place in the 215 weight class.

15. **Ashbrook High School, W.C. Friday Middle School, Gaston Early College High School** and **Mount Holly Middle School** took part in this year's Polar Plunge, which raises money for the Special Olympics of Gaston County. **Mount Holly Middle School** led the way as the top donating school. **Matty Holland** of **Mount Holly Middle School** was the top overall fundraiser, and **Amber Radford** of **Ashbrook High School** was the top coach fundraiser.
16. The following schools received a superior rating at the annual Music Performance Assessment: **Belmont Middle; Bessemer City Middle, and Cramerton Middle.**
17. The following individuals were named to the HighSchoolOT.com all-state football team: **Caleb Gordon, Ashbrook High School**, first team; **Jonathan Moore, Ashbrook High School**, honorable mention; **Chris Wurster, Stuart W. Cramer High School**, honorable mention; and **Kaveaun Pless, South Point High School**, honorable mention.
18. **Ashbrook High School** senior **Tupelo Guzauskas** was selected as a recipient of the prestigious Goodnight Scholarship at North Carolina State University, which recognizes outstanding North Carolina students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or STEM education.
19. The **Belmont Central Elementary** PTO raised \$59,540 during the school's Adventure Run "Zoom for the Room." This provides supplies and materials for the classrooms, a new basketball goal for the playground, and more.
20. The **Belmont Middle School** boys basketball team won its fourth county title with a 42-34 win over **York Chester Middle School.**
21. The **Belmont Middle School** Random Acts of Kindness Club collected more than \$1,000 worth of donations for Gaston County Animal Care to help feed and provide blankets and toys for pets in the shelter.
22. **Paul Sayegh** of **Belmont Middle School** competed in the Carolina Panthers Regional Spelling Bee and placed fifth overall.
23. **Cherryville High School** senior **Steven Wyatt** placed second in the 500-yard freestyle and third in the 200-yard freestyle at the N.C. High School Athletic Association's 1/2/3A state championships.

24. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** senior **Oshauna Holland** broke the North Carolina High School Athletic Association state record for most points scored in a high school career for girls basketball. In addition, she was selected to participate in the 2026 Carolinas Classic scheduled for March 21 at Dorman High School in Spartanburg.
25. **Mike Patton**, athletic director at **Stuart W. Cramer School**, presented a \$1,000 donation to **Billy James**, athletic director at **Bessemer City High School**. The gift, made by the **Stuart W. Cramer High School** Athletic Booster Club, will help the **Bessemer City High School** athletic department cover costs related to an incident of vandalism earlier this year.
26. **East Gaston High School** sophomore **Phillip Johnson** won two state championships at the 4A NCHSAA swim meet. Johnson won the 200-yard individual medley with a time of 1:56.91 and the 100-yard breaststroke with a time of 58.08. In addition, **East Gaston** junior **Wyatt Smith** placed third in the one-meter diving event.
27. **East Gaston High School** competed at the SkillsUSA Southwest Regional Competition at Rowan-Cabarrus Community College. **Carleigh Clippard** earned first place in Adobe Visual Design; **Ridge Pearson** took first in Automotive Service MLR (Maintenance and Light Repair) and **Ryland Martinez-Caulder** placed second with **Ben Sawyer** finishing fourth in the same category. **Nick McClellan** earned second in Automotive Tool ID; **Matthew Allen** and **Jackson Kuveikis** placed fourth in Debate, and **Eduardo Aragon-Cortes** earned third in Extemporaneous Speaking.
28. **Cyrus Baltimore**, a student at **East Gaston High School**, earned second chair for tuba in the North Carolina Bandmasters Association 9-10 All-State Honors Band.
29. **W.C. Friday Middle School** student **Rose Pichardo** was selected to perform in the All-State Honors Band.
30. **Elijah Ninyeh** of **Forestview High School** received one of the highest honors from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He was offered and accepted the Levine Scholarship, the university's premier merit scholarship. The Levine Scholarship recognizes outstanding academic achievement, leadership, and community service.
31. **Michael Schwabe** of **Forestview High School** was awarded the Goodnight Scholarship at North Carolina State University, which recognizes outstanding North Carolina students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or STEM education.
32. The **Forestview High School** Advanced Math competition team earned first place in Math 1 and Math 2, placed third in Advanced Math, and finished second overall in the regional competition.
33. The **Highland School of Technology** math team earned first place at the Gaston College math competition. The team of **Cosmo Fisher**, **Miguel Hernandez**, **Prudence Hammond** and **Daniel Lin** won first place in the team event. Several students also earned top honors in individual competitions: **Cosmo Fisher**, Advanced Math, first place; **Miguel Hernandez**, Math 3, first place; **Liam Martin**, Math 3, third place; **Miles Davis**, Math 2, second place; and **Carly McMillan**, Math 1, third place.

34. The **Holbrook Middle School** girls basketball team captured its fifth consecutive county championship with a 49-43 victory over **Bessemer City Middle School**. With the win, **Holbrook Middle** extends its incredible winning streak to 61 games.
35. **Lingerfeldt Elementary** students supported the community by collecting 366 pairs of socks and gloves to donate to two local nonprofit groups, Closet of Hope and The Least of These.
36. The sixth, seventh, and eighth grade chorus students at **Mount Holly Middle School** all received superior ratings at state level festivals this year.
37. **Page Primary School** raised \$5,000 as part of the American Heart Association Kids Heart Challenge.
38. **South Point High School's Ila Turner** placed second in the North Carolina High School Athletic Association's 5A state swim championship in the 50-meter freestyle.
39. **Woodhill Elementary School** was recognized for an exciting opportunity highlighting Black History Month. Through a partnership with Keep Gastonia Beautiful, all students participated in a hands-on creative experience designed specifically for the school.

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Classroom Moment

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points: The Classroom Moment will highlight how teachers collaborate to analyze student data, identify learning gaps, and plan targeted reteaching to ensure every student moves toward mastery. This collaborative approach allows educators to respond quickly to student needs and provide the right support at the right time, strengthening instruction and improving outcomes for every student.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

None

Policy Implications:

None

Strategic Goal(s) Alignment:

By 2030, Gaston County Schools will increase student achievement and growth across all schools so that more students are prepared for college, career, and life success.

By 2030, Gaston County Schools will have a stable, skilled, and supported workforce in every school, contributing to strong instruction and positive outcomes for students.

Submitted by: Kelly Cunningham

Department: Academic Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Public Expression

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

The Board of Education agenda has been made available to the public for review. Citizens wishing to speak before the Board about an agenda item or other topic may do so during Public Expression.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

The Board of Education will establish time (30 minutes) during the regular monthly meeting for Public Expression. Any citizen not heard during this time may be heard at the end of the business session.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 2310 Public Participation at Board Meetings.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: Todd Hagans
Chief Communications Officer

Department: Communications
(Superintendent's Office)

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Approval/Correction of Minutes

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Approval of Minutes from:

February 16, 2026 (Regular Meeting)

February 23, 2026 (Budget Work Session)

Efficient consideration of matters pertinent to the successful operation of the school system.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

The Board will approve accurate minutes consistent with the Open Meetings Law.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 2320 Compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: Dr. Morgen A. Houchard

Department: Superintendent

Gaston County Schools
Board of Education
Monday, February 16th 2026
Regular Meeting

MINUTES

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a regular session on Monday, February 16th, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in Central Office Boardroom at 943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC 28054 Those Board Members in attendance were: Chairman Josh Crisp, Vice Chairman Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon, Tod Kinlaw, Brent Moore, Jeff Ramsey, Janna Smith, and A.M. Stephens III. Robbie Lovelace was excused.

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, and Board Clerk Cindy Beck.

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

Invocation

Mr. Todd Terry, Pastor of Ridge Baptist Church, led the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Haddaway Moore - 6th grade, Madelyn Hopper - 7th grade, Imirian Knox-Lowery - 8th grade, students of Southwest Middle School led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Character Trait

London Baker and Jaleal Keith, 3rd-grade students from HH Beam Elementary School reported on the Character Trait of Good Judgement.

Agenda Adoption - Action

The Board considered Agenda Adoption – Action

Motion to adopt the Agenda as presented was made by Mr. Lee Dedmon; seconded by Ms. Jeff Ramsey, motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

Good News – Information

Mr. Todd Hagans presented the Good News for February.

Academic WorldQuest

Teacher Jason Drummond and students Joseph Beam, Brayden Clemmer, Nixon Sipe, and Manas Suleimenova from the Highland School of Technology placed first among 25 high schools from across the region in the Academic WorldQuest competition, which was held in Charlotte.

The team competed in seven categories: World Flags, The Geography of India: Land, Water, and Borders, History: The Fall of the Berlin Wall and European Integration, Current Events, The Global Digital Battlefield: Cybersecurity, Disinformation, and Tech Diplomacy, Where in the World? Landmarks Around the Globe, and Anything and Everything Trivia.

Academic WorldQuest is the World Affairs Councils of America's flagship youth education program. It is a fast-paced team competition that tests students' knowledge of world politics, geography, economics, history, and cultures.

By placing first, Highland now advances to the national competition in Washington, D.C., in April. Please join me in congratulating our championship team in the Academic WorldQuest competition.

Mr. Tod Kinlaw presented each student with a certificate of recognition.

GRSEF & ISEF

Jillian Schultheis was recognized as placing first overall at the Gaston Regional Science and Engineering Fair. She later advanced to the UNC Charlotte Region VI Science and Engineering Fair, where she was selected as a finalist for the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair, also known as ISEF.

She will represent East Gaston High School, Gaston County Schools, and the state of North Carolina at the international science fair competition in Phoenix, Arizona, in May.

Jillian earned this distinction through original research examining how a biological control for invasive zebra mussels may affect native freshwater mussels. Using a lysosomal assay to detect cellular stress, her project explores how invasive species and ecosystem management strategies can affect freshwater environments. Her work reflects a strong interest in biology and earth sciences.

This is an amazing accomplishment for East Gaston High School, as Jillian is only the second student in school history to advance to ISEF, which is the world's largest international pre-college science competition. She will present her research alongside top student scientists from more than 60 countries, regions, and territories.

Mr. A.M. Stephens III presented Jillian Schultheis with a certificate of recognition.

CTE Presidential Scholarship Nominees

Rori McCorkle and Kent Kido, Career and Technical Education students who have been selected as our nominees for the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program in Career and Technical Education. This prestigious program honors students who excel in CTE and demonstrate strong leadership.

Rori McCorkle of Forestview High School. Rori has completed the health care professional pathway and earned multiple industry credentials, including CPR, Stop the Bleed, Prevent Blindness of North Carolina vision screening, and Nurse Aide I certification in North Carolina.

Kent Kido of Highland School of Technology. Kent is enrolled in the computer science pathway and has earned several industry credentials, including Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, Adobe Photoshop, CompTIA ITF+, Python PCEP, Python PCAP, and Cisco Certified Support Technician Networking.

Rori and Kent were commended for their hard work and for representing Career and Technical Education and Gaston County Schools so well.

Earlier today, it was announced that Kent has been chosen as a state-level winner in the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program for Career and Technical Education.

Mrs. Janna Smith presented a certificate of recognition to both students.

National School Counseling Week

Lead Counselors, Jordan Johnson, East Gaston High School, Jennifer MacDonald, Stuart W. Cramer High School (School Counselor of the Year), Shenice Bailey, Director of School Counseling, were honored as a part of the National School Counseling Week recognition.

School counselors are an important part of our schools as they are always ready to help students when they need it most. They support students in many ways, whether it's helping with schoolwork, offering advice, helping with course selection and college planning, emphasizing character education, or just being there to listen.

Their job is to make sure every student feels safe, heard, and supported. They help students not only with academics, but also with personal challenges that can affect their school life.

Further, our counselors create a positive environment where students can talk about their feelings and problems. They help students build confidence, learn how to cope with tough situations, and stay on track to reach their goals. Their work makes a big difference in the lives of students by helping them grow into strong, successful individuals.

We are so thankful for the hard work and care that our school counselors give every day. Their support helps students do their best, both in and out of the classroom. And, tonight, we are saying "thank you" to our counselors for everything they do to make our schools a better place for everyone.

Mr. Jeff Ramsey presented a plaque of recognition to the group.

Board of Education Recognition Month

Board Members were recognized individually as part of the "National School Board Recognition Month." Sincere appreciation was expressed to the members of the Gaston County Board of Education.

Each year, we take pride in recognizing and honoring the nine citizens who serve on the Board of Education. Our Board members are business professionals, community advocates, educators, and civic leaders who understand the importance of education and care about the children of Gaston County Schools and the future of our community.

Our Board of Education members epitomize service to others through their hard work, leadership, commitment, and expertise in guiding the public schools here in Gaston County. As a way to pay tribute to the Board of Education members and our Superintendent, we chose an elementary school and had a class at the school to "adopt" the Board member. This evening, representatives from the 10 schools are here to present a framed picture of the class to the Board member.

To honor Chairman Mr. Josh Crisp, who represents the Dallas Township, Harper Haywood, Alexander Low, and CT Messer, students in Renee Wright's fifth-grade class at Costner Elementary School, along with Principal Dr. Lorinda Brusie and teacher Renee Wright.

To recognize Vice Chairman Dot Cherry, who is an at-large Board member, Principal Dr. Jacob Barr, and first-grade teacher Hannah Sanchez from Sadler Elementary School.

Mr. Lee Dedmon, who represents the Gastonia Township, was honored next. From Chapel Grove Elementary, Peyton Lyerly, Reid Vogel, and Justice Sahms, students in Erin Fletcher's third-grade class, along with Principal Miriam Harvey and teacher Erin Fletcher, honored Mr. Dedmon.

With a presentation to Tod Kinlaw, who represents the South Point Township, are students Emma Foster, Sydney Scott, Owen and Lucas Griffin, Canaan Simmons, and David De Leon from Page Primary. They are in Jill Armato's first-grade class. Also present were Principal Dr. Bill Kessler and teacher Jill Armato.

To recognize Robbie Lovelace, who represents Cherryville Township, are Savannah Woods and Ali'yonna Hunter, students in Amanda Buchanan's fifth-grade class at W.B. Beam Intermediate. Also present were principal Lynn Whiteside and teacher Amanda Buchanan. Chairman Crisp accepted the plaque and gift from W.B. Beam Intermediate on Mrs. Lovelace's behalf.

From Tryon Elementary, we have Jadon Vang, who is a student in Davon Marshall's fourth grade class honored Mr. Brent Moore, who represents the Crowders Mountain Township. Also present was Principal Melissa Knick and teacher Davon Marshall.

Arianna Feemster from Pleasant Ridge Elementary recognized Jeff Ramsey, who is an at-large member. Arianna is a student in Clarissa Sanders' fourth grade class. With them were Principal Shawn Hubers and teacher Clarissa Sanders.

From Chapel Grove Elementary, Peyton Lyerly, Reid Vogel, and Justice Sahms, students in Erin Fletcher's third-grade class adopted Mrs. Janna Smith who represents the Gastonia Township

To recognize A.M. Stephens, who represents the Riverbend Township, students Maggie Hooks and Henry Rust, students in Dolly Williams' third grade class at Rankin Elementary School presented a gift of appreciation. With them were Principal Natalie LaRusch and third grade teacher Dolly Williams.

And, to honor Superintendent Houchard, Gabe Tull and Madison Hunter, students in Chassidy Maiers' third grade class at Brookside Elementary School expressed their appreciation. With them are principal Sierra Jennings and teacher Chassidy Maiers.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month Proclamation – Action

February is Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month and Mr. Todd Hagans recognized Dr. Rusty Parker, from our CTE Department. CTE helps students learn important academic, technical and job skills to prepare the, for their future careers. Students in our CTE programs take part in real-world, hands-on experiences that make learning more meaningful and exciting.

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month Proclamation was read:

WHEREAS, Career and Technical Education (CTE) is an important component of K-12 education that offers students many opportunities to gain academic, vocational, and employability skills that prepare them for career readiness and success in the workplace;

and WHEREAS, each February, schools across the United States observe Career and Technical Education Month to celebrate what CTE does to provide meaningful experiences, increase engagement and achievement, enhance the overall quality of public education, and prepare students to become qualified and contributing members of the local workforce;

and WHEREAS, Career and Technical Education creates pathways for students to explore careers and become involved in coursework, internships, and hands-on training in fields related to healthcare, engineering, technology, business and finance, construction, public safety, manufacturing, education, agriculture, and other areas;

and WHEREAS, we are extremely proud of the CTE programs that are available in Gaston County Schools, and we sincerely appreciate what our educators do each day to enrich the lives of students through Career and Technical Education. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gaston County Board of Education is proud to proclaim February 2026 as Career and Technical Education Month in Gaston County Schools and encourages everyone to show their support for CTE and acknowledge how CTE programs equip students to thrive both personally and professionally in specialized career fields as well as in college, the military, and our global society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this proclamation be made a part of the minutes of the Board of Education, adopted this the sixteenth day of February, 2026.

Chairman Josh Crisp presented a Recognition Plaque to the CTE staff, Dr. Rusty Parker, Beth Williams, Chassidy Stamey, and Diane Gibson

Motion

Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry, seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III, that the Board

Approve Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month Proclamation

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (8-0)

(View Resolution)

Classroom Moment – Information

Dr. Shannon Hullett, along with David Grimes and Samatha Reichard, presented the Classroom Moment about the roles of a Beginning Teacher Support Facilitator.

(View Presentation)

Public Expression – Information

Sandra (Sandy) Larson

3603 Furman Circle

Gastonia, NC 28056

Re: The implementation of LifeWise Academy in Gaston County

Gabriel Pdlayo

307 N.. Oakland Street

Dallas, NC 28034

Re: Students attending classes in pajamas.

Approval/Correction of Minutes – Action

Motion to adopt minutes of January 23, 2026, Regular Meeting and January 23, 2026, Board Retreat as presented was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III, motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

Acceptance of the June 30, 2025, Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) – Action

Chairman Crisp recognized Mr. Gary Hoskins, who introduced Mr. Josh Puryear from Forvis Mazars. Mr. Puryear reviewed the June 30, 2025, Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. The Board members each received a copy of the ACFR.

Motion

Motion was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Mr. Tod Kinlaw, that the Board

Approve the Acceptance of the June 30, 2025, Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (8-0)

(View Presentation)

Gaston Early College Calendars 2026-2027 – Action

Chairman Crisp recognized Mr. Kevin Doran, who presented a PowerPoint on Gaston Early College Calendars 2026-2027.

Motion

Motion was made by Mr. Brent Moore; seconded by Mr. Tod Kinlaw, that the Board

Approve the Calendar as presented for the 2026-2027 school year.

A vote was taken, and a motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (8-0)

(View Presentation)

Strategic Plan 2030 – Action

Superintendent Houchard presented the Strategic Plan 2030, which outlines Gaston County Schools' comprehensive plan that clearly defines our focus, informs and influences our decision-making, and

provides purposeful direction as we guide and lead the school system over the next five years. Board members were given a copy of the final draft of the strategic plan.

Motion

Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III, that the Board
Approve as presented the Strategic Plan for 2030

(View Presentation)

Consent Agenda – Action

The Board considered the Consent Agenda:

- A. Recommended Personnel
- B. Budget Amendments & Budget Transfers
- C. Construction/Repair Change Orders
- D. Town of Dallas Right-of-Way
- E. Chapel Grove Easement
- F. Policy Updates
- G. Contracts
 - Professional Design Services for Belmont Central Elementary School and New Hope Elementary School Additions and Renovations
 - Innovation Schools Year 2 UVA PLE Partnership

Motion

Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III ; seconded by Mr. Brent Moore. Motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

Superintendent's Comments

Superintendent Houchard thanked the Board of Education for helping navigate through the winter weather events. He also thanked Assistant Superintendent Bessie Harvey and her team for tirelessly working behind the scenes to make our schools safe and secure for students and employees. He expressed appreciation for the Gaston County partner agencies for supplying information to help with our decision making during inclement weather.

At this time, no school make-up days are required as a result of the recent winter weather events, due to the implementation of remote learning days and the additional instructional hours built into the school calendar.

Superintendent Houchard announced the deadline to submit an application for our 17 magnet schools and Academies is Friday, March 6 at 5:00 p.m. Applications and information on our School Choice Schools and open houses can be found online.

Pre-k registration is available now online, and Kindergarten registration will begin on March 23rd.

Superintendent Houchard reminded everyone that Thursday, March 12 is Parent Teacher-Conference Day and early dismissal. Friday, March 13 is an Optional Teacher Workday and no school for students.

Several events coming up are:

- All-County High School Band Concert will be on February 21st at 2 p.m. at Ashbrook High School.
- The Middle School Battle of the Books will take place on February 24th at 9 a.m. at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.
- Our Roadmap to CTE Careers Event will take place on February 24th from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Gaston College.
- Our High School Battle of the Books will take place on February 26th at 9 a.m. at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.
- The Middle School Math Elite will be on February 27th at 9 a.m.

Superintendent thanked the Gaston County Education Foundation for sponsoring the “Are You Smarter Than a Gaston County Fifth Grader?” competition last Thursday. Belmont Central and its business partner, Belmont Eye, were the winners in the competition, proving they are the smartest in Gaston County. Proceeds from the “Are You Smarter” competition are used by the Education Foundation to support the Ron L. Ensley grants for teachers.

Closing Remarks

Chairman Crisp thanked the Board members and the community for their support of our schools.

Chairman Crisp wished Janna Smith a “Happy Birthday.”

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. (8-0)

The Board went into Closed Session at 7:00 p.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 7:33 p.m.

Adjournment

All business having been conducted, a Motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Janna Smith, seconded by Mr. Jeff Ramsey, and the motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Approved:

Josh Crisp, Chairman
[Corporate Seal]

Morgen A. Houchard, Secretary

Date Approved: _____

Gaston County Schools
Board of Education
Monday, February 23, 2026

2026-2027 Budget Work Session Meeting

MINUTES

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a Budget Work Session on Monday, February 23rd, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at The Linda Rader Staff Development Center. Those Board Members in attendance were: Chairman Josh Crisp, Vice Chairman Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon, Tod Kinlaw, Brent Moore, Jeff Ramsey, Janna Smith, and A.M. Stephens III. Robbie Lovelace was excused.

Additional attendees include: Superintendent Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Associate Superintendent Tonya Kales, Assistant Superintendents Bessie Harvey and Rebekka Powers, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Executive Director of Human Resources Beth Suber, Chief of Staff Tom Nencetti, and Board Clerk Cindy Beck.

Chairman Crisp called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. and welcomed everyone and turned the meeting over to Superintendent Houchard.

Superintendent began the discussion of the overview of the 2026–2027 Budget, noting that every decision and action would be aligned with our Five Focus Areas which are:

Five Focus Areas

High Quality Teaching and Learning
Positive School Culture/Climate
Strong Communication Habits
Student and Teacher Retention & Recruitment
Focused Support for Leadership

Superintendent Houchard led a Presentation that included the timeline for 2026-2027 Budget process and outlined the Budget Funding Sources.

Funding Sources:

State
Federal
Other
Bonds
Local

The Board Members engaged in discussion regarding the 2026-2027 budget including clarifying questions about revenue sources and asking for information about additional cost saving measures throughout the District.

(View Presentation)

A follow-up meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 11th at 5:30 p.m. at The Linda Rader Staff Development Center in Cramerton.

Adjournment

All business having been conducted, a Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Jeff Ramsey, seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry and the motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

The Board Meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Approved:

Josh Crisp, Chairman
[Corporate Seal]

Morgen A. Houchard, Secretary

Date Approved: _____

Gaston County Schools
Board of Education
Wednesday, March 11 2026
5:30 p.m.
2026-2027 Budget Work Session Meeting

MINUTES

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a Budget Work Session on Monday, March 11, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at the Linda Rader Staff Development Center. The Board Members in attendance were: Chairman Josh Crisp, Vice Chairman Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon, Tod Kinlaw, Robbie Lovelace, Jeff Ramsey, and Janna Smith. Brent Moore and A.M. Stephens III were excused.

Additional attendees include: Superintendent Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Associate Superintendent Tonya Kales, Assistant Superintendents Bessie Harvey and Rebekka Powers, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Executive Director of Human Resources Beth Suber, Chief of Staff Tom Nencetti, and Board Clerk Cindy Beck.

Chairman Crisp called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. welcomed everyone, and turned the meeting over to Superintendent Houchard.

Superintendent Houchard began the follow-up meeting regarding the 2026–2027 Budget, noting that all initiatives should support teaching and learning and align with the District’s Strategic Plan and six priorities.

The presentation was led by Superintendent Houchard and included the following key points:

Timeline for 2026-2027 Budget

Funding Sources - Local

Impact of Inflation

2026-2027 Superintendent’s Budget Request

Board Members engaged in discussion regarding the 2026–2027 budget, including local and state funding sources and strategies to best meet the needs of the district.

The 2026-2027 Superintendent’s Budget Request will be presented to the Board for approval on Monday, March 16, 2026.

(View Presentation)

Adjournment

All business having been conducted, a Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Lee Dedmon, seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry and the motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

The Board Meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Approved:

Josh Crisp, Chairman
[Corporate Seal]

Morgen A. Houchard, Secretary

Date Approved: _____

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Operations Committee Report

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

The Gaston County Board of Education's Operations Committee meets regularly to discuss operations-related projects and issues. Brent Moore is Chair of the committee, and members are Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon and Tod Kinlaw. A report of the Operations Committee's actions and discussions will be made at the Board meeting by a member of the Committee.

Fiscal Implications:

As indicated in the report.

Recommendation:

Committee recommendations are reflected in the report.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 2230 Board Committees

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey,
Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Department: Operations

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Curriculum & Instruction Committee Report

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

The Gaston County Board of Education's Curriculum & Instruction Committee meets regularly to discuss curriculum and instruction-related topics and issues. Jeff Ramsey is chair of the committee and members are Robbie Lovelace, Janna Smith and A.M. Stephens III. A report of the Curriculum & Instruction Committee's actions and discussions will be made at the Board meeting by a member of the Committee.

Fiscal Implications:

As indicated in the report.

Recommendation:

Committee recommendations are reflected in the report.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 2230 Board Committees

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: C&I Committee

Department: Curriculum and Instruction

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Policy Committee Report

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

The Gaston County Board of Education's Policy Committee meets regularly to discuss policy updates and revisions. Dot Cherry is chair of the committee, and members are Janna Smith and A.M. Stephens III. A report of the Policy Committee's actions and discussions will be made at the Board meeting by a member of the Committee.

Fiscal Implications:

As indicated in the report.

Recommendation:

Committee recommendations are reflected in the report.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 2230 Board Committees

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Effective Communication and Partnerships

Submitted by: Policy Committee

Department: Legal

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Superintendent's Budget Request 2026-2027

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

The school district is required by G.S. §115C-425 to operate under an annual balanced budget resolution. The 2026-2027 budget process began with an accumulation of five years' worth of budget surveys to GCS stakeholders in December 2025. Data obtained from the budget surveys, along with other information, was presented to the Board at the Board Retreat in January 2026. Also, Fund Managers prepared a local budget request for their area of supervision in February and March 2026. The Superintendent's Budget Request is based on information received from our stakeholders and Fund Managers. The final budget request will be presented to the Board for approval at their regular April meeting and will be submitted to the County by May 15, 2026, as required by State law.

Fiscal Implications:

The 2025-2026 local operating budget for GCS is \$56.8 million, and the respective capital outlay for GCS is \$2.0 million. The Superintendent's Budget Request for 2026-2027 is \$68.4 million for operating funds and \$4.5 million for capital outlay.

Recommendation:

N/A

Policy Implications:

Board Policy 8100 – Budget Planning and Adoption

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Morgen Houchard, Superintendent **Department:** Superintendent

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Consent Agenda

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☒ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

Approval of the Consent Agenda by the Board for the following items:

- A. Recommended Personnel
- B. Budget Amendments & Budget Transfers
- C. Construction/Repair Change Orders
- D. 2026-2027 Calendar Change
- E. Reduction In Force (RIF)
- F. High School Exam Schedule
- G. ESS Contract
- H. Proposed Renaming of Memorial Stadium to Henry Jones Stadium
- I. Name Press Box at Fraley Field (Danny Eaker)
- J. Proposed Naming of the Basketball Court at North Gaston HS
- K. U-5821 051 (NCDOT) S. New Hope Rd. Widening
- L. Contracts
 - 2026-2027 Academic Resources
 - Google Workspace
 - Selection Process for General Contractor
 - Cherryville ES Lighting Conversion
 - Lawn Care Services Amendment
 - Ida Rankin Rooftop Unit Replacement
 - Page Primary Rooftop Replacement
 - Stadium Field Maintenance
 - Stuart Cramer Baseball/Softball Field Renovations

Fiscal Implications:

As stated in each Agenda item.

Recommendation:

Consent items will be adopted with a single motion, second, and vote, unless a request for removal from the Consent Agenda is heard from a Board member.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 1010 Board Authority and Duties.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 1. Every student will graduate prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

Submitted by: Dr. Morgen A. Houchard

Department: Superintendent

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Board Report/Human Resource Services

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☐ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

In accordance with the provisions of G.S. 115C-276(j), "It shall be the duty of the superintendent to recommend and the board of education to elect all principals, teachers, and other school personnel in the administrative unit." It is also within the powers of the board to hear requests for approved leave, retirement, and resignations or terminations in accordance with employment and dismissal regulations.

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

N/A

Policy Implications:

Necessary and appropriate personnel will be provided to assure successful administration of schools.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Morgen Houchard

Department: Human Resource Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Budget Amendments and Budget Transfers

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☒ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

Budget amendments are needed to adjust the approved budget to reflect actual changes in revenue and budget transfers are needed to transfer money to proper expenditure codes as requested by fund managers.

Fiscal Implications:

Makes adjustments to the 2025-2026 budget.

Recommendation:

Approval of the attached listing of recommended budget amendments and transfers.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 8300 Fiscal Management Standards

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: James Beckford

Department: Finance

Assistant Director of Finance • Business Services

Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations
2025-2026 Budget Resolution - February
Transfers Between Functions

State Public School Fund

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
51000	Regular Instructional Services	480,540	
52000	Special Population Services		30,000
53000	Alternative Programs and Services		5,500
54000	School Leadership Services	835	
58000	School-Based Support Services	14,125	
65000	Operational Support Services		460,000
		<u>495,500</u>	<u>495,500</u>

Explanation: These transfers adjust budgeted amounts per requests from fund managers/principals.

Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations
2025-2026 Budget Resolution - February
Transfers Between Functions

Local Current Expense Fund

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
51000	Regular Instructional Services		515,203
54000	School Leadership Services		1,410
58000	School-Based Support Services	1,761	
61000	Support and Development Services		29,470
64000	Technology Support Services	200,000	
65000	Operational Support Services	646,084	
66000	Financial and Human Resource Services		320,000
68000	System-Wide Pupil Support Services		1,761
69000	Policy, Leadership and Communication/Public Information Services	20,000	
		<u>867,845</u>	<u>867,845</u>

Explanation: These transfers adjust budgeted amounts per requests from fund managers/principals.

Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations
2025-2026 Budget Resolution - February
Transfers Between Functions

Federal Grants Fund

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
51000	Regular Instructional Services		70
52000	Special Population Services		66
53000	Alternative Programs and Services		77,348
58000	School-Based Support Services	43,824	
61000	Support and Development Services	4,013	
63000	Alternative Programs and Services - Support and Development Services	31,308	
65000	Operational Support Services	1,358	
66000	Financial and Human Resource Services		5,660
81000	Payments to Other Governmental Units	2,639	
		<u>83,143</u>	<u>83,143</u>

Explanation: These transfers adjust budgeted amounts per requests from fund managers/principals.

Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations
2025-2026 Budget Resolution - February
Transfers Between Functions

Restricted Grants Fund

Function	Description	Expense Increase	Expense Decrease
51000	Regular Instructional Services	988	
52000	Special Population Services	5,000	
65000	Operational Support Services		6,000
66000	Financial and Human Resource Services	12	
		<u>6,000</u>	<u>6,000</u>

Explanation: These transfers adjust budgeted amounts per requests from fund managers/principals.

Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations
2025-2026 Budget Resolution - February
Proposed Expenditures and Sources of Revenue

State Public School Fund

#	Function	Description	Expense Increase (Decrease)	Revenue Increase (Decrease)
1	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		40,078
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	8,040	
	52000	Special Population Services	784	
	53000	Alternative Programs and Services	100	
	58000	School-Based Support Services	6,261	
	65000	Operational Support Services	10,539	
	66000	Financial and Human Resource Services	14,354	
	This amendment adjust funds for the Non-Contributory Emp Benefits Allotment - FY26 (PRC0009)			
2	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		(411,452)
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	(411,452)	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Carrer Technical Education - Months allotment - ABC Transfer - DPI Allotment Revision # 48 & 52 - FY26 (PRC0013)			
3	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		794,632
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	794,632	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Carrer Technical Education - Dollars allotment - ABC Transfer - DPI Allotment Revision # 52 - FY26 (PRC0014)			
4	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		469,376
	53000	Alternative Programs and Services	469,376	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Summer Reading Camps allotment - DPI Allotment Revision # 50 & 54 - FY26 (PRC0016)			
5	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		16,496
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	16,496	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Disadvantage Students Supplemental allotment - DPI Allotment Revision # 54 - FY26 (PRC0024)			
6	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		97,030
	52000	Special Population Services	97,030	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Children with Disabilities allotment - DPI Allotment Revision # 54 - FY26 (PRC0032)			
7	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		15,372
	52000	Special Population Services	15,372	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Academically or Intellectually Gifted allotment - DPI Allotment Revision # 54 - FY26 (PRC0034)			

8	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		29,186
	52000	Special Population Services	29,186	
This amendment adjusts funds for the Limited English Proficiency allotment - DPI Allotment Revision # 54 - FY26 (PRC0054)				
9	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		39,993
	53000	Alternative Programs and Services	39,993	
This amendment adjusts funds for the At-Risk Student services allotment - DPI Allotment Revision # 48 & 54 - FY26 (PRC0069)				
10	31000	Revenue - State Public School Fund		130,555
	52000	Special Population Services	130,555	
This amendment adjusts funds for the Children with Disabilities - Special State allotment - DPI Allotment Revision # 47 & 54 - FY26 (PRC0089)				

Total State Public School Fund Amendments

1,221,266	1,221,266
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Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations
2025-2026 Budget Resolution - February
Proposed Expenditures and Sources of Revenue

Local Current Expense Fund

#	Function	Description	Expense Increase (Decrease)	Revenue Increase (Decrease)
1	41100	Local Sources - Restricted		3,200,000
	66000	Financial and Human Resource Services	3,200,000	
	This amendment budgets funds for the Non-Instructional Support allotment FY26 (PRC0003)			

Total Local Current Expense Fund Account

3,200,000	3,200,000
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Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations
2025-2026 Budget Resolution - February
Proposed Expenditures and Sources of Revenue

Federal Current Expense Fund

#	Function	Description	Expense Increase (Decrease)	Revenue Increase (Decrease)
1	36000	Federal Revenue		2,065
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	2,101	
	81000	Payments to Other Governmental Units	(36)	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Career and Technical Education - Program Improvement Grant - FY26 (PRC0017)			
2	36000	Federal Revenue		6,856
	53000	Alternative Programs and Services	6,856	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the McKinney - Vento Homeless Assistance Act Grant - FY26 (PRC0026)			
3	36000	Federal Revenue		2,080
	52000	Special Population Services	2,080	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the IDEA - Section 619 Preschool Grant - FY26 (PRC0049)			
4	36000	Federal Revenue		7,665
	53000	Alternative Programs and Services	7,665	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the ESEA Title I, Part A - Basic/Concentration/Education Finance/Targeted Grant - FY26 (PRC0050)			
5	36000	Federal Revenue		619,961
	52000	Special Population Services	647,265	
	62000	Special Population Support and Development Services	(27,304)	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the IDEA Title VI-B Handicapped -Children with Disabilities Grant - FY26 (PRC0060)			
6	36000	Federal Revenue		54,222
	61000	Support and Development Services	54,222	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the ESEA Title II - Supporting Effective Instruction Grant - FY26 (PRC0103)			
7	36000	Federal Revenue		2,814
	52000	Special Population Services	2,814	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the ESEA Title III, Part A - English Language Acquisition Grant - FY26 (PRC0104)			
8	36000	Federal Revenue		17,314

	81000	Payments to Other Governmental Units	17,314	
	This amendment budgets funds for the ESEA Title IV, Part A - Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grant - FY26 (PRC0108)			
9	36000	Federal Revenue		1,470
	52000	Special Population Services	1,470	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the ESEA Title III, Part A - English Language Acquisition - Increase Grant - FY26 (PRC0111)			
10	36000	Federal Revenue		77,618
	53000	Alternative Programs and Services	77,618	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the ESEA Title I-School Improvement-Competitive Funds Allotment - FY26 (PRC0115)			
11	36000	Federal Revenue		213,121
	52000	Special Population Services	213,121	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the IDEA - Special Needs - Target Assistance Allotment - FY26 (PRC0118)			
Total State Public School Fund Amendments			1,005,185	1,005,185

Gaston County Schools
Changes in Appropriations
2025-2026 Budget Resolution - February
Proposed Expenditures and Sources of Revenue

Restricted Grants Fund

#	Function	Description	Expense Increase (Decrease)	Revenue Increase (Decrease)
1	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		2,300
	72000	Nutrition Services	2,300	
	This amendment adjust funds for the Child Nutrition allotment - FY26 (PRC0035)			
2	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		5,000
	51000	Regular Instructional Services	5,000	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the Instructional/Student Support allotment - FY26 (PRC0216)			
3	48000	Local Sources - Restricted		9,167
	58000	School-Based Support Services	9,167	
	This amendment adjusts funds for the School Safety Grant allotment - FY26 (PRC0438)			

Total Restricted Grants Fund Amendments

16,467

16,467

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Construction/Repair Change Orders

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

There were no construction and repair change orders that were submitted since the last Board meeting. Any change orders that were less than \$100,000 were approved by the Superintendent or his designee in accordance with Board Policy 9030 – Facility Construction. Change orders greater than \$100,000 must be approved by the Board.

Fiscal Implications:

All change orders were prefunded prior to recommendation for approval.

Recommendation:

Approval of the attached listing of construction/repair change orders.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 9030 Facility Construction

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey, Assistant
Superintendent of Operations

Department: Facilities

GCS CHANGE ORDER NOTIFICATION

In accordance with GCS Board Policy 9030 - Facility Construction, all construction and repair change orders approved by the Superintendent, or his designee, shall be reported to the Board. In addition, any change orders that involve amounts over \$100,000 must be approved by the Board. This GCS Change Order Notification provides the required information for change orders \$100,000 or less that have already been approved by the Superintendent, or his designee, and change orders over \$100,000 that need Board approval.

Presented to BOE	Contractor's Name	Project name	Description of Change	Contract	Change
				Amount	Order Amount
3-16-26	Beam Construction Company	Artificial turf on the new football/soccer field at Grier Middle School	Increase the cost of the allowance for the cost to turf the football field. This is a part of the 4/15/24 committee approval that the City of Gastonia has agreed to pay \$750,000 to install artificial turf at Grier Middle School. The turf would meet the specs approved by GCS. This is a part of a City initiative to improve the Garrison Boulevard corridor and will enhance the athletic field for our students. Beam Construction would facilitate the project and a submission for reimbursement will be submitted to the City of Gastonia.	\$51,691,500	\$1,554,846

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: 2026-2027 School Calendar Modification

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☒ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

The Board of Education approved the 2026-2027 school calendar on December 15, 2025. Since then, the Payroll Department has realized the need to make a modification to the school calendar to keep the pay cycles within the mandated ten month requirement set forth by the state of North Carolina.

We are asking the Board of Education to change the optional teacher workday on Monday, June 1, 2026 to Tuesday, August 4, 2026. Making the change to these two days will keep payroll cycles in alignment with the ten months of the academic year. Modifying the optional teacher workdays in the 2026-2027 school calendar does not have an effect on students as the first day of school is Wednesday, August 14, 2026 and the last day of school is Wednesday, May 26, 2027. This information has been shared with the Gaston County Schools calendar committee, as well as the Operations Committee.

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the above modifications to the 2026-2027 school calendar.

Policy Implications:

None

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 3. Every employee is capable and committed to the education of the whole child.

Submitted by: Beth Suber,
Executive Director of HR

Department: Human Resources

*Updated to reflect the Operations Committee Report read during the March 16, 2026 regular meeting--A request was made to move the June 1, 2027, Optional Workday to August 4, 2026, for Payroll processing.

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Reduction in Force (RIF) — Strategic Planning

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☒ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

NC General Statute 115-325(e)(2) and Gaston County Schools' Board Policy Code: 7820 Reduction in Force: Teachers and School Administrators require the Superintendent to present to the Board of Education a recommendation for a possible reduction in force based on 1) system reorganization, 2) declining enrollment, and/or 3) financial exigency. Board Policy Code 7820 describes the required preliminary determination, criteria, and procedures for determining when a reduction in force may be implemented.

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

Approval by the Board to implement the Reduction in Force Policy, if the criteria documented in the respective Board Policy are met.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 7820 Reduction in Force: Teachers and School Administrators

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Beth Suber,
Executive Director of HR

Department: Human Resources

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 03/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: High School Exam Schedules — Spring 2026
Traditional High Schools and Gaston Early Colleges

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☐ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

High Schools are required by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to administer final exams for all courses. The NCDPI Accountability Department requires that state-required exams be taken during the last five days of the semester. The exam schedule covers the administration of state End of Course tests, Career and Technical Education exams, and teacher-made exams. The fall semester for the Early College high schools ends on May 19, 2026, and traditional high schools ends on May 20, 2026.

Early College High School exam schedule: May 13-19, 2026

Traditional High School exam schedule: May 14-20, 2026

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

Approve the final exam schedule as presented.

Policy Implications:

N/A

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 2. Every member of our diverse population has the opportunity for individualized instruction.

Submitted by: Dr. Bryan Denton & Kevin Doran, **Department:** Academic Services
Executive Directors, Secondary Schools

Gaston County Schools - Spring Semester – 2025-2026

Final Exam Schedule

(Traditional High Schools)

Teacher-made final exams will take place during May 11-13, 2026. Specific exam dates will be determined based on school needs.
School will dismiss at the regular time during those days.

Time	Thursday May 14, 2026	Friday May 15, 2026	Monday May 18, 2026	Tuesday May 19, 2026	Wednesday May 20, 2026
8:30 – 12:00	EOC and CTE Exams	EOC and CTE Exams Make-up Testing	EOC and CTE Exams Make-up Testing EOC Re-testing	EOC Re-testing	EOC Re-testing
12:00 – 1:00	Continuation of <i>Ample time EOC sessions</i>	Continuation of <i>Ample time EOC sessions</i>	Continuation of <i>Ample time EOC sessions</i>	Continuation of <i>Ample time EOC sessions</i>	Make-up EOC, CTE and teacher-made exams
1:00 – Regular Dismissal Time	Bag Lunch & Dismiss	Bag Lunch & Dismiss	Bag Lunch & Dismiss	Bag Lunch & Dismiss	Bag Lunch & Dismiss
*All times are approximations	Make-up EOC, CTE and teacher-made exams	Make-up EOC, CTE and teacher-made exams	Make-up EOC, CTE and teacher-made exams	Make-up EOC, CTE and teacher-made exams	Make-up EOC, CTE and teacher-made exams Teachers finalize grades, close out semester

Schools may not begin any exam administrations prior to the start of the exam schedule as printed above.

SPECIAL NOTES:

- Revise the times above to fit your school bell/class period schedule. Exam periods must be a minimum of 196 minutes for EOC's and 120 minutes for CTE EOC's.
- For students who ride a bus and who must do makeup testing, your lead driver or business manager should work with the students and drivers to determine bus transportation home.
- Alert feeder schools of dismissal times.
- Students who are in school for the exam period are to be counted present.
- Each teacher is expected to keep accurate student attendance records by class period for all exam days.

The following procedures are provided to guide the successful administration of high school final exams. They are in addition to the standard testing procedures provided by NCDPI, GCS Testing Office, and other applicable rules and procedures.

1. All subjects must administer a final exam, unless an exception is authorized by the Testing Department of GCS and/or the office of the Executive Directors of Secondary Instruction or the student meets the exam exemption criteria for teacher-made exams.
2. All final exams must be administered during the approved time period provided by GCS. By NC law that is the final five days of each semester.
3. Teacher-made final exams must be cumulative in nature. Specifically, a teacher-made final exam must cover the entire curriculum, as opposed to a "quiz-type" exam. However, there are no specific requirements regarding minimum length. As a practice, all teacher-made exams should be provided to the Principal prior to the first day of exams. This allows for review and adjustment, if necessary, to meet these requirements and expectations.
4. Performance-based courses may include a performance element as part, but not all, of the final exam grade.
5. Exceptions to these procedures must be approved by at least the School Principal and GCS Executive Directors of Secondary Instruction.

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Substitute Staff Placement Services – ESS Southeast, LLC

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

One of our focus areas is high quality teaching and learning. In order to accomplish that, we must have a qualified teacher in each classroom. When classroom vacancies occur we generally have a substitute teacher (sub) in the classroom. GCS contracted with ESS Substitute Staffing during the 2025-2026 academic year. During 2024-2025, our substitute fill rate was approximately 85%. Since December 2025, ESS has improved our fill rate to above 90% each month, with January 2026 having 95% of teacher vacancies filled. ESS is a company that specializes in recruiting and placing qualified staff in classrooms that need a sub at a higher fill rate than most districts can do on their own. ESS manages the entire program from hiring and training staff to calling subs to fill vacancies. All subs are employees of ESS and can become eligible for benefits. They are paid on a weekly basis.

Having qualified substitutes enables our schools to focus on the academic initiatives that benefit children. Teachers are not having to use their planning time to cover for absent colleagues and a reduction in dispersing students to other classes has been noted. Teachers are able to attend professional development within the district because substitutes fill their classrooms while they are away.

During the 2024-2025 school year, GCS spent \$4,900,974.07 to pay substitute teachers. At the end of February 2026, Finance reports that we have spent \$2,558,753.24 this year for substitute teachers through our partnership with ESS. Principals are appreciative that ESS staff begin calling substitutes at approximately 5:00 am. This fact alone allows our building level leaders to focus on the day ahead without worry about teacher absences. ESS has reported that we have had days where all jobs were filled and substitute teachers who wished to sub found no jobs available.

Fiscal Implications:

ESS will bill the substitute rate set by GCS (currently \$150/day certified and \$120/day non-certified) plus 30%. ESS will pay all fees related to payroll taxes (7.65%), ASEOP subscription (\$46,800), recruiting, hiring, onboarding, payroll management, workers compensation insurance and training of substitute teachers for GCS.

Recommendation:

Approval of the contract with ESS Southeast, LLC to provide substitute staff placement services for Gaston County Schools. The contract will be in effect through June 30, 2026.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 7430 Substitute Teachers

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or General Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Beth Suber,
Executive Director of HR

Department: Human Resources

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Rename Memorial Stadium to Henry Jones Stadium

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☒ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

The School Improvement Team (SIT) of Cherryville High school requested approval for a facility naming recommendation to rename Memorial Stadium to Henry Jones Stadium in honor of coach Henry Jones.

Coach Jones dedicated over 30 years of service to Cherryville High School and served as Head Baseball Coach for 34 years. Upon his retirement in 2005, he had accumulated 542 career wins and 6 State Championships.

His extraordinary career earned him induction into multiple halls of fame.

Cherryville Sports Hall of Fame

Gaston County Hall of Fame

Cleveland County Hall of Fame

NC Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame

NC High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame

Naming the stadium in his honor will ensure that Coach Jones' legacy continues to inspire future generations

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the renaming of Memorial Stadium to "Henry Jones Stadium" in honor of coach Henry Jones.

Policy Implications:

Board Policy 9300 – Naming Facilities

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey

Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Department: Operations

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/26

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Name Press Box at Fraley Field (Danny Eaker)

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

The School Improvement Team (SIT) of Cherryville High school requested approval for a facility naming recommendation to name the press box at Fraley Field after Danny Eaker.

Danny Eaker has operated the Fraley Field press box for over 30 years and is a member of:

- Cherryville Sports Hall of Fame
- American Legion Hall of Fame

He has provided extensive radio coverage of football, basketball, and baseball for WCSL, helping families stay connected during long playoff runs. He and his wife Judy modernized press box operations, including walk-up songs, music, announcements, and playoff coverage. He also frequently traveled with teams to ensure broadcasts could continue, demonstrating exceptional dedication.

Naming the press box after him honors “over three decades of service, dedication, and passion for Cherryville athletics and community pride.”

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the naming press box **at Fraley Field** after Danny Eaker

Policy Implications:

Board Policy 9300 – Naming Facilities

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey
Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Department: Operations

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Naming of North Gaston Basketball Court

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☒ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

North Gaston High School's School Improvement Team unanimously approved naming the school's basketball court the "Hal White Court." At its December 9, 2025 meeting, the SIT voted to support this action following a formal request from Athletic Director Jesse Martin, who outlined Coach Hal White's exceptional contributions to North Gaston High School.

Coach White is a 2021 Gaston County Hall of Fame inductee and a graduate of Dallas High School. He spent his career teaching, coaching, and serving as Athletic Director at North Gaston. Over 25 years of service (1976–1997; 2003–2005; 2016), he became the winningest basketball coach in school history, earning 327 victories and leading the program to 13 of the school's 16 all-time winning seasons. Community members, including school leadership and former coaches, strongly support honoring Coach White in this way.

Fiscal Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of naming the North Gaston Basketball Court- the "Hal White Court"

Policy Implications:

Board Policy 9300 – Naming Facilities

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey

Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Department: Operations

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/26

Agenda Item Title/Topic: U-5821 051 (NCDOT) S. New Hope Rd. Widening Project

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Gaston County Schools has received a request from the State Transportation to **sell and/or transfer ownership** of a specific property improvement to NCDOT.

The improvement being conveyed is a **brick and granite monument sign reading “New Hope School.”** associated with the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project U-5821 051. This project will upgrade N.C. 279 (South New Hope Road) from Union New Hope Road to Redbud Drive in Gastonia.

Fiscal Implications: N/A

Recommendation:

Approve the sell and/or transfer ownership of the brick and granite monument sign reading “New Hope School.”

Policy Implications:

Board Policy 9400 - Sale, Disposal, and Lease of Board-Owned Real Property

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey,
Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Department: Operations

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Contracts and Expenditures >\$100,000

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☒ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

The attached listing of contracts and expenditures more than \$100,000 was reviewed by staff and recommended for approval by the Board, or are contracts less than \$100,000 but recommended to the Board for approval.

Fiscal Implications:

All contracts and expenditures will be paid using bond funding, capital proceeds or operational savings.

Recommendation:

Approval of Contracts with the Board.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 8640 Contracts with the Board.

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Healthy, Safe, and Responsible Schools.

Submitted by: James Beckford
Assistant Director of Finance and Business Services

Department: Finance

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Academic Services - Instructional Resources 2026-2027

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☐ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

Academic Services will seek Board approval for contracts to be used during the 2026-2027 school year, ensuring staff members have the necessary research-based resources to support increased academic achievement and student growth. These resources will also support the continued implementation of the North Carolina academic standards. Each of these contracts are renewal of resources currently in use in our schools. They do not represent any additions.

ACT WorkKeys Curriculum/Test Prep (9-12) will support test preparation for the ACT WorkKeys at all high schools with Career and Technical Education programs. The program includes a placement screener, quizzes to assess mastery of content, and opportunities for learners to practice skills through embedded, interactive components. A one-year contract will be initiated, not to exceed \$20,000.

College and Career Promise (CCP) is North Carolina's dual enrollment program for high school students. This program allows NC high school students to enroll in college classes at Gaston College and earn college credit. Per the NC General Statute, GCS is required to pay curriculum fees for all eligible GCS students. In addition to the curriculum fees, GCS has opted to pay for students' college textbooks, workbooks, and access codes. A one-year contract will be initiated, not to exceed \$350,000.

Curriculum Associates iREADY Math Diagnostic Assessment for 1st-5th grade students & Ready Classroom Mathematics K-8. This includes the math core curriculum for grades K-8, the diagnostic assessment for grades 1-5, and the teacher toolkit for differentiated instruction in grades K-8. A one-year contract will be initiated, not to exceed \$520,000.

Discovery Education Streaming (K-5) and Science Techbook (5) are used by science teachers. Discovery Education provides standards-based digital curriculum resources for K–5 classrooms. The program is a K-5 curriculum resource to support the NC Science and Social Studies Essential Standards. A one-year contract will be initiated, not to exceed \$160,000.

EdPuzzle provides digital content for all secondary science and social studies subject areas. EdPuzzle enables teachers to create engaging learning experiences for their students while quickly and easily tracking student results. A one-year contract will be initiated, not to exceed \$65,000

Imagine Learning (6-12), formerly Edgenuity, is an online platform used to support students in Gaston Virtual Academy, provide additional elective opportunities, and deliver the curriculum for our High School students in credit recovery. A one-year contract will be initiated, not to exceed \$300,000.

Instructure/Canvas is the learning management system (LMS) for our secondary schools. An LMS is intended to support teaching and learning by providing equitable learning experiences for all students. Teachers can store course materials, grades, and communication in the LMS for easy student access. A one-year contract will be initiated, not to exceed \$107,000.

Learning A-Z/RazPlus for K-5 classrooms provides a robust collection of resources, lesson plans, activities, and quizzes to ensure students receive the differentiated standards-aligned instruction they need. This platform provides a student portal for independent reading. Texts also support the science and social studies units. A one-year contract will be initiated, not to exceed \$160,000.

LETRS training for New Staff Members (PreK-5 classroom, EC, EL, Instructional Coaches, and Curriculum Coordinators) is designed to target the needs of teachers who must understand the "what," "why," and "how" of literacy instruction. LETRS for teachers is a comprehensive, flexible, research-based, and relevant professional learning course of study. During our initial two-year cohort with LETRS, state funding was provided. We will sustain this training for our newly hired teachers with district funding. A one-year contract will be initiated, not to exceed \$150,000.

Schoology is the learning management system (LMS) for our elementary schools. An LMS is intended to support teaching and learning by providing equitable learning experiences for all students. Teachers can store course materials, grades, and communication in the LMS for easy student access. A one-year contract will be initiated, not to exceed \$64,500.

Schoolnet is an application from Pearson that enables educators to create lesson plans, develop instructional materials, and supplement their teaching with digital resources. This tool enables teachers to create and modify assessments and receive real-time results with relevant data for reporting. The assessment and reporting tools are complemented by a fully integrated materials bank for searching, storing, and editing lesson plans and curricular material. It can also support district-wide curriculum management with tools for creating and scheduling curriculum and district-wide pacing guides. A one-year contract will be initiated, not to exceed \$40,000.

Fiscal Implications: Total cost of contracts: Federal, state, and local funds will support instructional resources.

Recommendation: Approve contracts for the 2026-2027 school year to continue supporting instructional resources.

Policy Implications: N/A

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 2. Every member of our diverse population has the opportunity for individualized instruction.

Submitted by: Tonya Kales

Department: Academic Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Google Workspace

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

Gaston County Schools provides all staff and students with a Google Workspace account. In addition to Gmail, Google Docs, Meet, Forms, etc., this cost includes:

1. Advanced security center with additional security, controls, logs, and analytics;
2. Premium Google Meet, Google Slides, and Google Docs features; and
3. Priority response from Google specialists.

Fiscal Implications:

The cost of \$155,900.23 will be paid from the current TSS operational budget.

Recommendation:

The Operations Committee recommends approval of the purchase of the Google Workspace Education Plus.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 3220 Technology in the Educational Program

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 3: Every employee uses innovative practices to serve all students, parents, and other stakeholders.

Submitted by: Curtis Poplin, Chief Technology Officer

Department: TSS

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/26

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Selection Process for General Contractor

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

An RFQ for Construction Management At Risk (CMAR) services was issued on December 15th. Nine general contractor firms submitted proposals, and the review team narrowed the list to five firms for interviews and three firms advanced to committee interviews. After the final evaluation, **Edifice Construction** was selected as the recommended CMAR construction firm.

Fiscal Implications:

None

Recommendation:

Information only.

Policy Implications:

Board Policy #9020 – Facility Design

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey

Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Department: Operations

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Cherryville Elementary School LED Light Conversion

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

As we continue working our way through the Facilities Electrical Department's list of elementary schools that need LED Light Conversions, Cherryville Elementary is the next scheduled school to be completed. The existing lighting is outdated, fragile, and expensive to replace.

Fiscal Implications:

The project was awarded to Lightserv at a cost of \$115,136.28.

Recommendation:

Authorization to move forward with LED conversion at Cherryville Elementary School.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code 9200 – Care and Maintenance of Facilities

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey, Assistant
Superintendent of Operations

Department: Auxiliary Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: 2nd Amendment – Addition of lawncare services at Woodhill Elementary School

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☐ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

After a trial of the Facilities Department performing the lawncare services at Woodhill, it was deemed more prudent at this time to allow the Zone 3 contracted landscaper, Clean Cuts Lawn & Landscaping, to take this school back over until the end of the fiscal year.

Fiscal Implications:

The estimated cost for this project is \$6,557.78, for a grand total of \$103,757.78.

Recommendation:

Authorization to move forward with Clean Cuts Lawn & Landscaping to perform landscaping services at Woodhill Elementary School.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code 9200 – Care and Maintenance of Facilities

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey, Assistant
Superintendent of Operations

Department: Operations

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Ida Rankin 5 Rooftop HVAC Units Replacement

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☒ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

On December 4, 2025, 3 vendors were signed into the pre-bid meeting to replace 5 rooftop HVAC units at Page Primary. On January 9, 2026, all 3 vendors submitted bids: Skidmore Mechanical at \$136,960.00, Kirlin Way Mechanical at \$192,194.46, and Carolina Air Solutions at \$219,022.46. However, on January 29, 2026, Skidmore withdrew their bid.

Fiscal Implications:

The estimated cost for this project is \$192,194.46.

Recommendation:

Authorization to award the contract to Kirlin Way Mechanical.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code 9200 – Care and Maintenance of Facilities

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey, Assistant
Superintendent of Operations

Department: Auxiliary Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Page Primary 5 Rooftop HVAC Units Replacement

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☒ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

On December 4, 2025, 3 vendors were signed into the pre-bid meeting to replace 5 rooftop HVAC units at Page Primary. On January 9, 2026, 2 bids were received: Kirlin Way Mechanical at \$191,742.03, and from Carolina Air Solutions at \$242,770.74.

Fiscal Implications:

The estimated cost for this project is \$191,742.03.

Recommendation:

Authorization to award the contract to Kirlin Way Mechanical.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code 9200 – Care and Maintenance of Facilities

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey, Assistant
Superintendent of Operations

Department: Auxiliary Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Stadium Field Maintenance

Type of Item: ☒ **Consent** ☐ **Action** ☐ **Information**

Main Points:

This is for an annual contract to provide stadium football field maintenance at all grass fields in the district. This covers fertilization, weed prevention, and any soil amendments that may need to be done.

Two separate pre-bid meetings were held, January 21 and February 13 respectively, with Landmasters, Inc. the only contractor to sign in.

Fiscal Implications:

The estimated cost is \$6,605.00 per field, for a total of \$118,890.00.

Recommendation:

Authorization to move forward with Landmasters, Inc. to provide stadium field maintenance.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code 9200 – Care and Maintenance of Facilities

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey, Assistant
Superintendent of Operations

Department: Auxiliary Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Stuart Cramer Baseball & Softball Field Renovations

Type of Item: ☒ Consent ☐ Action ☐ Information

Main Points:

As repairs were made to retaining walls 3 and 4, it was determined that a total renovation of the baseball and softball fields would also be necessary.

Fiscal Implications:

The estimated cost for this project is \$489,270.00.

Recommendation:

Authorization to move forward with Stuart Cramer Baseball & Softball Field Renovations.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code 9200 – Care and Maintenance of Facilities

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Goal 5. Every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe school environment.

Submitted by: Bessie Harvey,
Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Department: Auxiliary Services

Agenda Item

Meeting Date: 3/16/2026

Agenda Item Title/Topic: Closed Session

Type of Item: ☐ Consent ☐ Action ☒ Information

Main Points:

Closed sessions shall be held when required to permit a public body to act in the public interest as permitted by law.

– N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel

– N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(3) Consultation with Attorney

In order to consult with the Board's attorney and protect the attorney client privilege, and to receive advice with respect to the lawsuits captioned:

—19-CVS-3893 McKinney et al. vs. Goins and The Gaston County Board of Education

—21-CVS-5018 Brittain vs. Beason and The Gaston County Board of Education

—3:23-CV-643-RJC-DCK Roger Perkins vs. The Gaston County Board of Education

—Any other legal matters.

Fiscal Implications:

TBD

Recommendation:

Board to consider information provided in Closed Session in accordance with G.S. §143-318.11.

Policy Implications:

Policy Code: 2610 Board Attorney

Strategic Goal Alignment:

Other: Policy or Gen Statute. See above.

Submitted by: Sonya McGraw, Attorney **Department:** Legal/Superintendent's Office

Last Name	First Name	Category	School	Position
Aiken	Patricia	Hire	Kiser Elementary School	EC Teacher Assistant
Aziz	Zainab	Rehire an Employee	School Nutrition	SN - Sub Cafeteria Assistant
Bost-Thompson	Bralicia	Resignation	Gaston Early College High School	Bus Driver
Bradshaw	Aikeem	Hire	South Point High School	Bus Driver
Bradshaw	Candy	Hire	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Manager Trainee
Brewer	Sharnise	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Lead
Bridges	Jamie	Resignation	Facilities	HVAC Mechanic IV
Cease	Anastasia	Resignation	Sherwood Elementary School	Advanced Teaching Roles - Lead Teacher 2
Clement	Tambrey	Retirement	John Chavis Middle School	Data Manager
Davidson	Kassandra	Transfer	Lowell Elementary School	EC Teacher - General Curriculum
Davis	Dorothy	Retirement	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Assistant, Bus Monitor
Davis	Jemeshia	Hire	East Gaston High School	Bus Driver
Edwards	Sara	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Manager Trainee
Flowers	Tina	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Manager Trainee
Floyd	Sherby	Resignation	School Nutrition	SN - Sub Cafeteria Assistant
Frye	Matthew	Hire	Forestview High School	Bus Driver
Funderburk	Roosevelt	Hire	Stuart W. Cramer High School	Bus Driver
Gonzales	Marisela	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Manager Trainee
Hamby	Toni	Resignation	Bessemer City High School	Data Manager
Harris	Jacquelyn	Resignation	Forestview High School	EC Teacher Assistant
Hartsoe	Janet	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Lead Cafeteria Assistant
Hoffarth	Jessica	Resignation	Department for Exceptional Children	Occupational Therapist
Jackson	Nicole	Hire	Transportation	Mini Bus Driver
Jenkins-Stephens	Khalisha	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Roving Cafeteria Lead
Johnson	Kimberly	Transfer	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Assistant
Kerr	Kenan	Resignation	Academic Services	Digital Learning Facilitator
Killian	Mary	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Lead Cafeteria Assistant
Lattig	David	Resignation	Bessemer City High School	English Teacher
Lindgren	Matthew	Resignation	East Gaston High School	Math Teacher
Lowery	Melanie	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Manager Trainee
Lynch	Kimberly	Retirement	Academic Services	Curriculum Coordinator-Secondary ELA
Markwith	Sean	Resignation	Technology Support Services	Oracle Technology Coordinator
McGee	Rhonda	Transfer	School Nutrition	Lead Cafeteria Assistant
Meshell	Lori	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Roving Cafeteria Assistant
Mesimer	Susan	Resignation	North Belmont Elementary School	Intervention Teacher - REA/MA
Mills	Brenda	Transfer	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Assistant
Moore	Patricia	Resignation	School Nutrition	SN - Sub Cafeteria Assistant
Myrie	Christopher	Resignation	Forestview High School	Science Teacher - EPI
Parker	Maven	Resignation	Transportation	Transportation Mechanic
Pimentel	Kelly	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Lead Cafeteria Assistant
Pitts	Shaun	Resignation	School Nutrition	SN - Sub Cafeteria Assistant
Propst	Heather	Hire	Pleasant Ridge Elementary School	Teacher Assistant
Reid Jr	Ronald	Resignation	Hunter Huss High School	Custodian
Remy	Stacy	Resignation	Hunter Huss High School	ESL Teacher
Reynolds	Erika	Rehire an Employee	Department for Exceptional Children	Pre K Specialist
Rice	Rachel	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Manager Trainee
Rice	Tamisha	Resignation	Springfield Elementary School	EC Teacher - General Curriculum
Rice	Tracy	Resignation	Woodhill Elementary School	Teacher Assistant - Kindergarten
Sampson	Terry	Retirement	Lingerfeldt Elementary School	Custodian
Silva	Oswaldo	Resignation	North Gaston High School	CTE - Business Education Teacher
Simon	Khalijah	Promotion	W.C. Friday Middle School	Sixth Grade Teacher - SS
Skillestad	Mark	Hire	Forestview High School	Bus Driver
Smith	Alessia	Resignation	Southwest Middle School	Social Studies Teacher
Smith	Alissa	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Assistant
Smith	Dimayquoaye	Resignation	W.C. Friday Middle School	School Counselor
Smith	Dwayne	Retirement	North Gaston High School	ROTC Teacher
Southard	Haley	Resignation	W.C. Friday Middle School	Sixth Grade Teacher - SS
Stewart	Rebecca	Retirement	Ida Rankin Elementary School	EC Teacher - Adapted Curriculum
Taylor	DaQuesha	Resignation	H.H. Beam Elementary School	Fourth Grade Teacher
Tracy	Tiffany	Transfer	School Nutrition	SN - Distribution
Vomacka	Morgan	Transfer	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Assistant

Last Name	First Name	Category	School	Position
Walker	Tony	Rehire an Employee	Elementary Instruction	A.S.P.I.R.E. After School Bus Driver @ Lingerfeldt
Warner	Crystal	Resignation	J.B. Page Primary School	Teacher Assistant
Washington	Sylvester	Transfer	Edward D. Sadler, Jr. Elementary School	Third Grade Teacher
Weatherford	Sarah	Transfer	Edward D. Sadler, Jr. Elementary School	Kindergarten Teacher
White	Michelle	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Manager Trainee
Williams	Craig	Resignation	Ashbrook High School	EC Teacher - General Curriculum
Wilson	Charles	Resignation	Cramerton Middle School	PE Teacher
Wilson	Thomas	Resignation	Stuart W. Cramer High School	Custodian

Last Name	First Name	Category	School	Position
Anderson	Sean	Resignation	Mount Holly Middle School	Eighth Grade Teacher - SCI/SS
Andrews	Melony	Retirement	South Point High School	Guidance Secretary
Arceo	Ashleigh	Resignation	Highland School of Technology	School Counselor
Atkinson	Tiffany	Transfer	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Assistant
Aziz	Zainab	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Assistant
Beaver	Amy	Resignation	Gaston Early College High School	Business Manager
Bermudez	Rasheed	Hire	School Nutrition	SN - Driver
Bradshaw	Candy	Demotion	School Nutrition	SN - Roving Cafeteria Lead
Camp	Kourtland	Transfer	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Assistant
Canipe	Dee	Retirement	Transportation	Work Orders/Energy Management Specialist
Crisp	Kristie	Hire	School Nutrition	SN - Roving Cafeteria Assistant
Dawkins	Angela	Rehire an Employee, Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Sub Cafeteria Assistant, Roving Cafeteria Assistant
Dawkins	Sharon	Hire	School Nutrition	SN - Roving Cafeteria Assistant
Dodge	Donna	Retirement	Pinewood Elementary School	Teacher Assistant
Fajardo	Hannah	Hire, Resignation	School Nutrition	SN - Roving Cafeteria Assistant
Faulkner	Linda	Hire, Resignation	School Nutrition	SN - Roving Cafeteria Assistant
Gale	Antoine	Hire	Elementary Instruction	A.S.P.I.R.E. After School Custodian @ Lingerfeldt
Glisan	Kelli	Resignation	New Hope Elementary School	Principal
Goff	Todd	Transfer	New Hope Elementary School	Principal
Good	Rosamond	Demotion	Bessemer City Central School	Sub Bus Driver
Graham	Blake	Resignation	School Nutrition	SN - Truck Driver
Grier	Cherelle	Hire	Carr Elementary School	EC Teacher Assistant - SAC
Hall	Dennis	Hire	Lowell Elementary School	Sub Bus Driver
Harris	Melissa	Hire, Transfer	School Nutrition	SN - Roving Cafeteria Assistant, Cafeteria Assistant
Hartsell	Jennifer	Rehire an Employee, Resignation	Carr Elementary School	EC Teacher Assistant - SAC
Hatten	Alexis	Hire	School Nutrition	SN - Roving Cafeteria Assistant
Hatten	Bridget	Transfer	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Assistant
Hemphill	Mary	Retirement	Webb Street School	Custodian
Holcombe	Alexa	Hire	W.C. Friday Middle School	EC Teacher Assistant
Hoskins	Gary	Retirement	Finance and Operations	Associate Superintendent- Chief Financial Officer
Hotz	Samantha	Transfer	Belmont Middle School	EC Teacher - General Curriculum
Houze	Kayla	Resignation	Holbrook Middle School	Assistant Coach - Cheerleading
Huff	Tamara	Hire	Cherryville High School	Bus Driver
Hux	Breanna	Hire	Mount Holly Middle School	Head Coach - Soccer - Girls
Jamison	Michael	Hire	Bessemer City Central School	Bus Driver
Key	Holly	Retirement	Bessemer City High School	Media Specialist
Koch	Kathleen	Resignation	Academically and Intellectually Gifted	Director of AIG
Laiweneek	Elizabeth	Transfer	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Assistant
Laughrun	Crystal	Promotion	Transportation	Transportation Manager
Leaders	Jeremy	Promotion	Transportation	Transportation Mechanic
Leigh	Kelly	Hire	North Gaston High School	EC Teacher Assistant
Lutz	Dana	Rehire an Employee	Department for Exceptional Children	Program Facilitator
Martin	Monet	Resignation	Stanley Middle School	Bus Driver
McConnell	Linda	Hire	Department for Exceptional Children	Pre K Specialist
McDowell	Laura	Transfer	Stanley Middle School	Sub Bus Driver
Means	Bridget	Rehire an Employee	Hunter Huss High School	EC Teacher Assistant
Mejia	Yvette	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Manager
Monge	Carlos	Resignation	Facilities	Groundskeeper II

Last Name	First Name	Category	School	Position
Moon	Ori	Resignation	Springfield Elementary School	Intern - Student Teacher
Nicholson	Sean-Michael	Resignation	Bessemer City High School	Campus Security Associate
Noles	Daniel	Transfer	Springfield Elementary School	ESL Teacher
O'Brien	Caroline	Retirement	School Nutrition	SN - Central Production Manager
O'Neal	Patrick	Hire	East Gaston High School	Assistant Coach - Football
Pagan	Tyiesha	Hire	North Gaston High School	Bus Driver
Paylor	Kelsey	Transfer	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Assistant
Pepper	Kellie	Demotion	School Nutrition	SN - Sub Cafeteria Assistant
Poag	Emily	Transfer	Bessemer City Primary School	Principal
Pritchett	KiShawn	Hire	Bessemer City Middle School	Head Coach - Basketball - Boys
Reynolds	Erika	Rehire an Employee	Department for Exceptional Child	Pre K Specialist
Rhom	Tammy	Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Roving Cafeteria Lead
Roberts	Courtney	Resignation	Elementary Instruction	A.S.P.I.R.E. After School Tutor - Non Certified @ Woodhill
Shaver	Cristal	Resignation	School Nutrition	SN - Sub Cafeteria Assistant
Shepherd Jr	Darrell	Hire	Cherryville High School	Bus Driver
Shirlen	Emily	Demotion	School Nutrition	SN - Lead Cafeteria Assistant
Stackston	Sharon	Resignation	Webb Street School	Bus Driver
Staley	Sandy	Hire	School Nutrition	SN - Sub Cafeteria Assistant
Strachan	Tammikko	Hire, Promotion	School Nutrition	SN - Sub Cafeteria Assistant, Roving Cafeteria Assistant
Sturgis	Danielle	Resignation	Chapel Grove Elementary School	Financial Secretary/Data Manager
Tate	Dennis	Resignation	Cherryville High School	Campus Security Associate
Thompson	Tkeyah	Transfer	School Nutrition	SN - Cafeteria Assistant
Watts	Jerry	Hire	South Point High School	Custodian
Wells	Kimberly	Retirement	Springfield Elementary School	ESL Teacher
Williamson	Manley	Retirement	Ashbrook High School	Custodian
Winzek	Maria	Hire	Department for Exceptional Child	Physical Therapist
Woodward	Sonya	Transfer	East Gaston High School	Sub Bus Driver