

Gaston County Schools
Operations Committee
Monday, May 4, 2026

MINUTES

The Operations Committee met in a regular session on Monday, May 4 at 12:30 p.m. at the Linda Rader Staff Development Center, Cramerton, NC. Those Board Members in attendance were: Committee Chair Brent Moore, Dot Cherry, and Lee Dedmon. Tod Kinlaw was absent.

Additional attendees included: Chairman Josh Crisp, Superintendent Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Assistant Superintendent of Operations Bessie Harvey, Executive Director of Human Resources Beth Suber, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Chief Technology Officer Curtis Poplin, Chief of Staff Tom Nencetti, and Board Clerk Cindy Beck.

Committee Chair Mr. Brent Moore called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Approval/Correction of Minutes

Motion to adopt minutes of the March 30, 2026 Operations Committee Meeting, as presented was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon. Motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

Feasibility Study - Action

Superintendent Houchard presented information regarding the district's Feasibility Study initiatives intended to maximize resources, reduce duplicated personnel, and achieve cost savings throughout the district. The presentation included proposed consolidation-related measures impacting Gaston Early College High School, Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences, Gaston Virtual Academy, McAdenville Elementary School, Stuart W. Cramer High School, Cherryville Elementary School, W.B. Beam Intermediate School, and John Chavis Middle School.

Superintendent Houchard stated that the measures are being considered in response to ongoing budget constraints and are intended to reduce expenditures, align staffing positions with state allotments, and utilize supplies and materials more efficiently.

The Board received information regarding the operational restructuring of Gaston Early College High School and Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences. Although both schools will continue to operate separately on the Gaston College campus, the schools will share resources and personnel in an effort to improve operational efficiency. Administration reported estimated annual savings of approximately \$120,000.

The Board also received information concerning the relocation of Gaston Virtual Academy resources. Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, grades K-5 will be housed at

McAdenville Elementary School, and grades 6-12 will be housed at Stuart W. Cramer High School. Students enrolled in Gaston Virtual Academy will continue to receive instruction online while participating in selected activities and events at their assigned host schools. A proposed arrangement will strengthen collaboration among staff members and reduce duplicated operational resources. Estimated annual savings associated with the proposal are approximately \$50,000.

Superintendent Houchard further presented three options related to the potential closure and consolidation of W.B. Beam Intermediate School.

Under Option A, W.B. Beam Intermediate School would close, with fourth-grade students reassigned to Cherryville Elementary School and fifth-grade students reassigned to John Chavis Middle School. Administration reported that both schools have sufficient capacity to accommodate the projected enrollment.

Under Option B, W.B. Beam Intermediate School would close, with fourth-grade students assigned to Cherryville Elementary School and fifth-grade students assigned to John Chavis Middle School. Parents who prefer not to have their rising fifth-grade student attend John Chavis Middle School would have the option for assignment to Tryon Elementary School for the fifth-grade year.

Under Option C, W.B. Beam Intermediate School would close, and both fourth- and fifth-grade students would be reassigned to Cherryville Elementary School. Administration noted that the pre-kindergarten classroom currently housed at Cherryville Elementary School would be relocated to Tryon Elementary School in order to provide additional classroom space.

Administration reported that the proposed closure of W.B. Beam Intermediate School would result in estimated annual savings of approximately \$288,000 through reductions in personnel, supplies, materials, equipment, and utility costs.

The Board was advised that the measures involving Gaston Early College High School, Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences, and Gaston Virtual Academy do not require Board approval and will be implemented for the 2026–2027 school year.

Administration further advised that the proposals involving Cherryville Elementary School, W.B. Beam Intermediate School, and John Chavis Middle School require a public hearing and formal action by the Board of Education due to the proposed closure of W.B. Beam Intermediate School. A date for the public hearing has not yet been determined. If approved by the Board of Education, W.B. Beam Intermediate School would close at the conclusion of the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

The Board was informed that the feasibility study information will also be presented during the Board of Education's regular monthly meeting on May 18, 2026.

(View Presentation)

Motion: The Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry, seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon, that the Board
Approve the Continuance of the Feasibility Study.

A vote was taken, and the item as presented carried unanimously. (3-0)

(View Presentation)

TSS Updates - Information

Chief Technology Officer Curtis Poplin reported the following TSS updates:

TSS Engineers developed a query designed to identify compromised online accounts, which has achieved a 100 percent success rate within the district.

The Board was further informed that TSS Technicians have repaired 1,406 Chromebooks since January 2026. Technicians will continue assessing and repairing all collected Chromebooks to ensure that devices remain functional, usable, and updated for student and staff use.

(View Presentation)

Human Resources Update - Information

A report on the Reduction in Force (RIF) was provided by Superintendent Houchard, outlining updates for the timeframe spanning July 2024 to July 2026. This presentation offered a comprehensive look at staffing modifications, the implementation schedule, and associated personnel measures intended to better synchronize district staffing levels with current operational requirements and financial constraints.

(View Presentation)

Operations Updates - Action

Assistant Superintendent of Operations Bessie Harvey presented the following:

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Status - Action

The Board received information regarding the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a federal, non-pricing meal service option available to high-poverty schools and districts participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Administration explained that the program allows eligible schools to provide breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge.

The Board was informed that 45 schools within the district currently participate in the program. Administration further noted that participation in CEP eliminates the need for individual household meal applications, removes the need for complimentary meal processes, and assists in reducing student meal debt across the district.

Motion: The Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry, seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon, that the Board
Approve the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Status

A vote was taken, and the item as presented carried unanimously. (3-0)

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Status will be presented on the Consent Agenda at the May 18, 2026 Regular meeting for consideration and approval by the full Board.

(View Presentation)

Non-CEP Student Meal Pricing - Action

Ms. Harvey presented a proposal to increase the Non-CEP Student Meal Prices by twenty-five cents to mitigate the rising costs of fuel and food.

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

Approve the Non-CEP Student Meal Pricing Increase

A vote was taken, and the item as presented carried unanimously. (3-0)

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Status will be presented on the Consent Agenda at the May 18, 2026, Regular meeting for consideration and approval by the full Board.

Contract Review – Action

The following contracts were reviewed and recommended for approval:

1. Ashbrook High School Hallway Ceiling Grid and Tile Installation
2. Grier Middle School Rock Change Order
3. Mt Holly Middle Chiller Replacement
4. Sadler Elementary Chiller Replacement
5. South Point HS and Bessemer City HS Baseball Stadium Press Box & Concessions Building Design
6. Zone 2 Lawn Care Amendment
7. Transportation Contract, Transportation Services Contract Amendment
8. American Alternative (AAT)
9. Carolina Specialty Transport (CST)
10. Primary Care Solutions (PCS)
11. Grier Middle School Rock Removal

Motion:

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

Approve the presented Contracts

A vote was taken and Motion to approve the items as presented carried unanimously. (3-0)
These items will appear on the Consent Agenda at the May 18, 2026 Regular meeting for consideration and approval by the full Board.

Superintendent's Comments

Superintendent Houchard announced that Teacher Appreciation Week is in progress and that National Teacher Day is on May 5, 2026.

Information was shared regarding the upcoming Middle School and High School Spring Sports Playoffs, and an email containing the playoff calendar listing will be distributed.

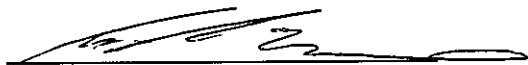
The next Operations Committee meeting will be held on Monday, June 1, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.

Adjournment

All business being conducted, Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

The Operations Committee Meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Approved:

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

Brent Moore, Chairman

Date Approved: 6-1-26