

Gaston County Schools
Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting
Monday, May 4, 2026

MINUTES

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee met on Monday, May 4, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at the Linda Rader Staff Development Center, Cramerton, NC. Those members in attendance were: Chairman Jeff Ramsey, who joined at 3:10, Robbie Lovelace, Janna Smith, and A.M. Stephens III.

Additional attendees included: Vice Chairman Dot Cherry, Superintendent Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services Rebekka Powers, Executive Directors Anarah Henderson and Tyler West, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Chief Accountability Officer Kelly Cunningham, Chief of Staff Tom Nencetti, and Board Clerk Cindy Beck.

Mr. A.M. Stephens III called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Approval/Correction of Minutes

Motion to adopt minutes of March 30, 2026, as presented was made by Mrs. Robbie Lovelace, seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith, motion carried unanimously. (4-0)

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)

DEC Contract - Action

Executive Director for DEC Chris Mills presented information regarding a Contract need for the increasing needs of students requiring higher levels of support, including nursing services, one-on-one assistance, related services, psychological services, and behavioral supports.

Motion:

The Motion was made by Mrs. Robbie Lovelace; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith, that the Board

Approve the Department For Exceptional Children Services Contract

A vote was taken and Motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (4-0)
This item will appear on the Consent Agenda at the May 18, 2026, Regular meeting for consideration and approval by the full Board.

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)

Student Support Updates - Information

Assistant Superintendent Rebekka Powers presented the updates from Student Support Services, **including:**

An updated list of Schools Closed to Transfers for the 2026–2027 school year was shared, which included the addition of Bessemer City Primary.

Dr. Powers shared an overview of the data collection process related to the Choice program survey, including information gathered through feedback sessions conducted with the Parent Advisory Council and the Student Advisory Council.

(View Handout)

Dr. Powers reported that only one bid was received in response to the bid process for the renewal of the Driver Education Contract. She asked the Board members to consider approval of the contract renewal.

Motion:

The Motion was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Mr. Jeff Ramsey, that the Board
Approve the Driver Education Contract

A vote was taken and Motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (4-0)
This item will appear on the Consent Agenda at the May 18, 2026 Regular meeting for consideration and approval by the full Board.

CTE Updates - Information

Executive Director Dr. Bryan Denton and CTE Director Dr. Rusty Parker shared highlights from the May CTE Connections Newsletter, including recognition of the CTE Teacher of the Year, Students@Work initiatives, and the Teamship Pilot program. Information was also

presented regarding the 2026–2027 Path Forward Future initiative, including Middle School Phasing module placements and High School Simulator placements.

Associate Superintendent Tonya Kales shared that as part of the Alignment to the Strategic Plan, an objective by 2030, would be to increase the ACT/WorkKeys Composite percentile from the baseline of 47% to the target of 62%. The CTE Program aims to improve high school student performance on the ACT WorkKeys Assessment by aligning academic skill-building, test-taking strategies, and career-contextual learning across all Gaston County Schools high schools.

(View Presentation)

2026-27 Federal Grant Application - Action

Associate Superintendent Tonya Kales presented information regarding the proposed 2026–2027 Federal Programs budget and the accompanying grant application details.

Motion:

The Motion was made by Mr. Jeff Ramsey; seconded by Mrs. Robbie Lovelace, that the Board
Approve 2026-27 Federal Grant Application

A vote was taken and Motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (4-0)
This item will appear on the Consent Agenda at the May 18, 2026, Regular meeting for consideration and approval by the full Board.

(View Presentation)

May Classroom Moment - Information

Ms. Kales announced the May Classroom Moment will be Star Teachers in Action.

Superintendent's Comments - Information

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.

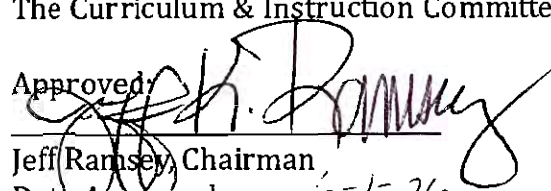
Next Committee Meeting Date/Time

The next Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2026, in the Central Office Board Room, beginning at 3:00 p.m.

Adjournment

All business being conducted, Motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Mr. Jeff Ramsey motion carried unanimously. (4-0)

The Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

Approved: 

Jeff Ramsey, Chairman

Date Approved: 5-1-26

Curriculum and Instruction Board Committee Meeting

June 1, 2026

Catawba County Schools
Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting
Monday, May 4, 2026

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May 4, 2026

Curriculum and Instruction Committee Minutes

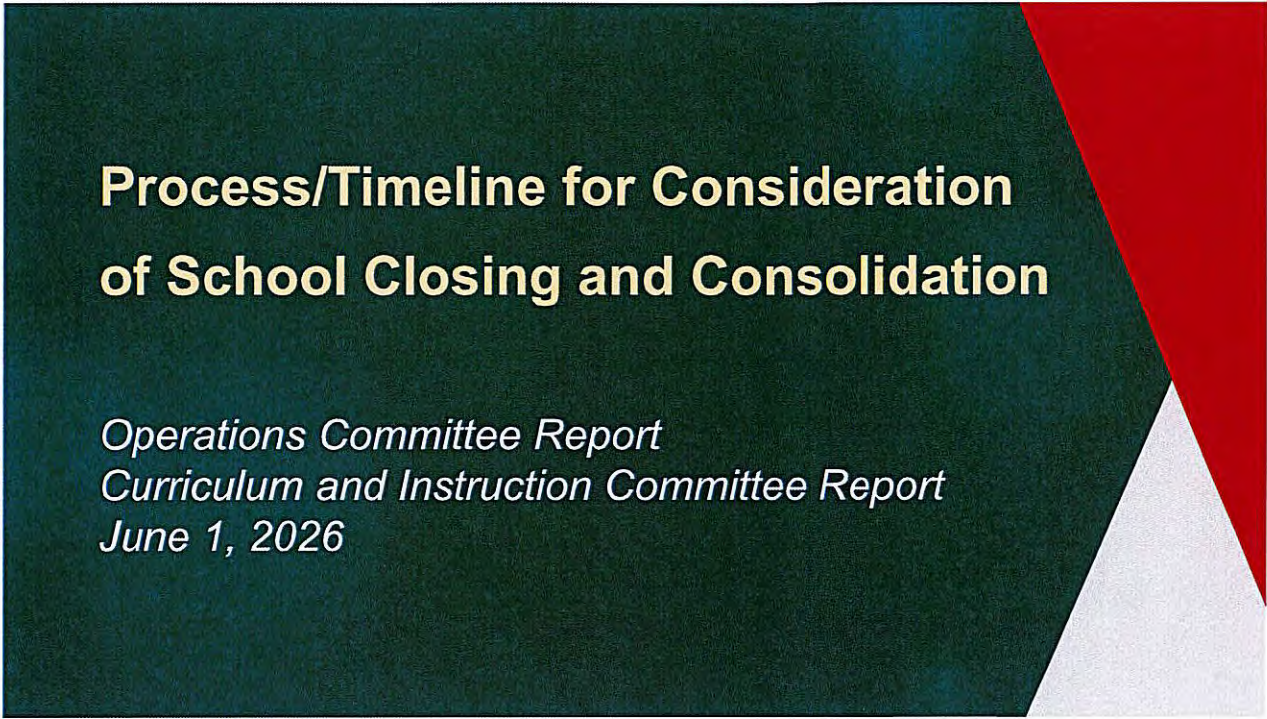
Recommendation

Approval of May 4, 2026

Curriculum and Instruction Committee Minutes

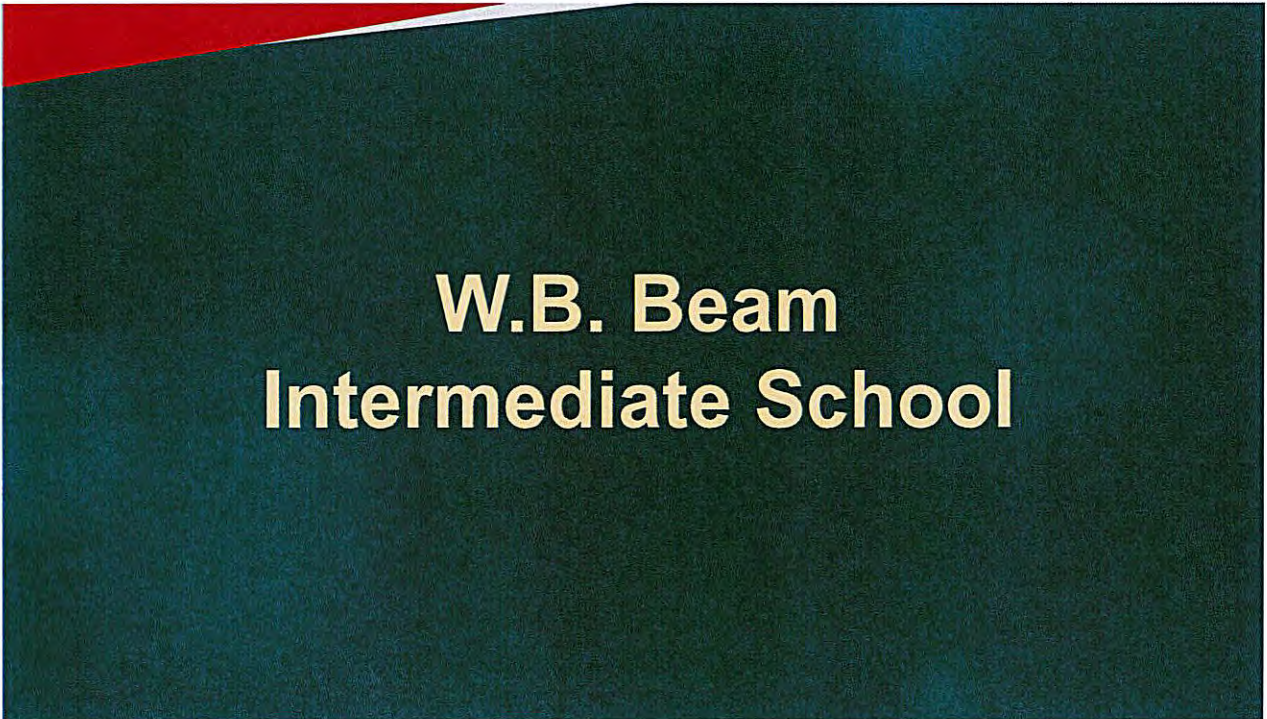
Human Resources Updates

Feasibility Study Updates



Process/Timeline for Consideration of School Closing and Consolidation

*Operations Committee Report
Curriculum and Instruction Committee Report
June 1, 2026*



W.B. Beam Intermediate School

Process for School Closing or Consolidation

Consolidation of districts and discontinuance of schools

General Statute 115C-72:

Local boards of education shall have the authority to close or consolidate schools located in the same district, and with the approval of the State Board of Education, to consolidate school districts or other school areas over which the board has full control, whenever and wherever in its judgment the closing or consolidation will better serve the education interest of the local school administrative unit or any part of it.

Process for School Closing or Consolidation

General Statute 115C-72 requires:

- ▶ Thorough study of a school closing or consolidation
- ▶ Having in mind the welfare of the students to be affected
- ▶ Geographic conditions
- ▶ Anticipated increase or decrease in school enrollment
- ▶ Inconvenience or hardship that might result
- ▶ Cost of providing additional school facilities
- ▶ School board must provide a public hearing

Process and Timeline

- ▶ Presentation to the Board of Education at May committee meetings
- ▶ Feasibility Study shared with all stakeholders (website and May Board Meeting)
- ▶ Option C findings presented to the Board of Education at June committee meetings
- ▶ Public Hearing
- ▶ Board of Education recommendation and decision

Capacity - Cherryville Schools

Gaston County Schools Utilization Forecast								
School Name	Capacity		2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Cherryville Elementary	500	Enrollment	366	354	342	336	339	347
		Utilization	73%	71%	68%	67%	68%	69%
W B Beam Intermediate School	221	Enrollment	191	186	186	195	183	175
		Utilization	86%	84%	84%	88%	83%	79%
John Chavis Middle	619	Enrollment	412	403	391	387	382	378
		Utilization	67%	65%	63%	63%	62%	61%

Source: Cropper GIS Study

Consolidation Option C

4th and 5th grade to Cherryville Elementary and pre-kindergarten being relocated to Tryon Elementary

- Projected 501 students with a capacity of 500 at Cherryville Elementary – 100.2% capacity
- One class of pre-kindergarten students relocated to Tryon Elementary School (space is available)
- Future attendance line adjustment

Consolidation Option C

- Cherryville Elementary would have similar enrollment numbers to Ida Rankin and Woodhill; 9 larger GCS elementary schools.
- The school's new enrollment would allow a full time Assistant Principal allotment.
- Rather than the current 26/27 plan to share Art, Music, and PE with WB Beam, Cherryville Elementary would keep its full time team.
- Title 1 funds, which are given based on enrollment, would increase at Cherryville Elementary.

Consolidation Option C

- Cherryville Elementary allotment for 26/27:
 - K - 4 teachers
 - 1st - 4 teachers
 - 2nd - 5 teachers
 - 3rd - 6 teachers
- With the addition of 4th and 5th grades:
 - 4th - 4 teachers
 - 5th - 3 teachers

Class sizes remain within the state's K-3 regulations.

Total = 26 Classroom Teachers

Consolidation Option C

- Floor Plan Considerations
 - 4th and 5th Graders would be housed on the same hallway and share a hall bathroom
 - K-2 classrooms would have individual restrooms in them
 - Art & Music teachers would have classrooms; PE remains in the gym
 - Spaces filled with classrooms: Speech, Computer Lab, Counselor's space, and Meeting space (all move to smaller rooms/offices)

Student Supports Updates

Student Support Services: Strategic Plan Goals

Goals	By 2030, Gaston County Schools will:
S1	Increase the daily average attendance rate from 92.9% to 95% or higher.
S2	Increase the number of schools at or above the threshold for implementation of tiered social-emotional and mental health support system (MTSS) from 67% to 100%.
S3	Expand access to support services

Excellence. Integrity. Community. Innovation

Choice Programs

Recommendation

Information

Choice Program Discussion

2025-2026 Lottery for 2026-2027 SY									
School	Total Applications	Denied - Did not Qualify	Number of Seats in Lottery	Parent Accepted Seat	Number that appear to live in district already	Seat Expired Without Decision	Seat Rejected By Guardian	Seat Removed By Staff	Seat Waitlisted By Staff
Ashbrook High	53	16	37	12	32	4	21	0	0
Costner Elementary	95	16	79	8	4	17	8	1	45
Cramerton Middle	99	53	46	0	19	0	0	3	43
East Gaston High	104	6	98	67	49	9	21	1	0
Forestview High	113	23	90	35	46	9	36	0	10
Gaston Early College High	224	74	150	40	NA	17	25	1	67
Gaston Early College Medical	113	38	75	46	NA	5	24	0	0
Gaston Virtual Academy	237	150	87	31	NA	36	7	3	10
Grier Middle	70	14	56	17	22	1	1	0	37
Hawks Nest STEAM	572	108	464	64	NA	9	4	1	386
Highland Sch of Technology	496	166	330	134	NA	15	26	0	155
Hunter Huss High	34	21	13	4	9	3	6	0	0
North Gaston High	32	0	32	14	3	11	7	0	0
Pinewood Elementary	92	19	73	5	10	2	9	1	56
Pleasant Ridge Elementary	150	85	65	14	23	8	5	0	38
Stanley Middle	57	13	44	11	3	1	0	3	29
W.C. Friday Middle	35	7	28	10	4	4	0	0	14

Career & Technical Education

Grant Application

CTE Impact & Reach



11,000+

CTE Enrollment
Students Impacted



2,100+

CTE Concentrators
Dedicated Students

CTE Success Stories in 25-26

7,423

Credentials Earned



Paxton Patterson

Continued installation
across facilities



Anatomage Tables Purchased

Deployed to Ashbrook, Hunter Huss, and
Stuart Cramer

Work-Based Learning in 25-26

19

Traditional Internships

1

Blum Pre-Apprenticeship

62

Early Childhood Ed
Internships

74

Nursing Clinicals

21

Caromont Pre-Apprenticeship

12

Pre-apprenticeship Advanced
Mfg

124

Advanced Studies (Shadowing)

159

Gaston Co. Govt Shadowing

975

Students@Work (Middle School)

Goals for for 26-27

Goals based on the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment

Engineering & PLTW

Expand high school Engineering courses offered through Project Lead the Way.

Manufacturing & Finance

Provide additional pathways in Manufacturing, Finance, and Trades.

Hospitality & Tourism

Develop pathways aligned with the Hospitality and Tourism industry needs.

Aviation & Logistics

Add Aviation, Aerospace, and Logistics pathways to the Transportation Career Cluster.

Goals for for 26-27

Career Development

- Partner with Xello to develop Career Development Plans
- Partnership with TransfrVR for grades 5-8 career support

Middle School Support

- Computer Science Focus
- Engineering - Project Lead the Way
- Paxton Patterson Exploration Modules

Strategic Focus Areas

Integrating Career Readiness Across Primary & Secondary Education

Goals for 26-27

The Misperception

There is a misperception that CTE is only for career-bound, not college-bound students.

Marketing Strategy

The CTE Department will create a marketing and communications plan that positions CTE as valuable for all students.

Parent Engagement

The communications plan will focus on parent communication to promote all CTE pathways as options for students.

Goal: Address the Perception Gap

2026-2027 CTE Budget

2026-2027
PRC 013 Projected Allotment
Months of Employment

Planning Allotment	1,391 Months of Employment
Carryover	0
Total	1,391

These Months of Employment represent approximately \$12,718,685 in salaries and benefits.

2026-2027 PRC 013 Projected Allotment

District CTE Staff Director Career Development Coordinator Special Populations Coordinator Instructional Technology Coordinator
School-based Staff MS Career Development Coordinator HS Career Development Coordinators CTE Classroom Teachers

2026-2027
PRC 014 Projected Allotment
State Support

Planning Allotment	\$478,685
Carryover	0
Total	\$478,685

**2026-2027 PRC 014 Projected Allotment
(District Expenses)**

CTE Budget Analyst
Contracted Services (repairs)
Computer Equipment & Software
Supplies & Materials
Workshop Expenses (Substitutes, Mileage, Registrations)

2026-2027
PRC 017 Projected Allotment
Federal Perkins Funds

Planning Allotment	\$510,838
Carryover	0
Total	\$510,838

**2026-2027 PRC 017 Projected Allotment
(School Expenses)**

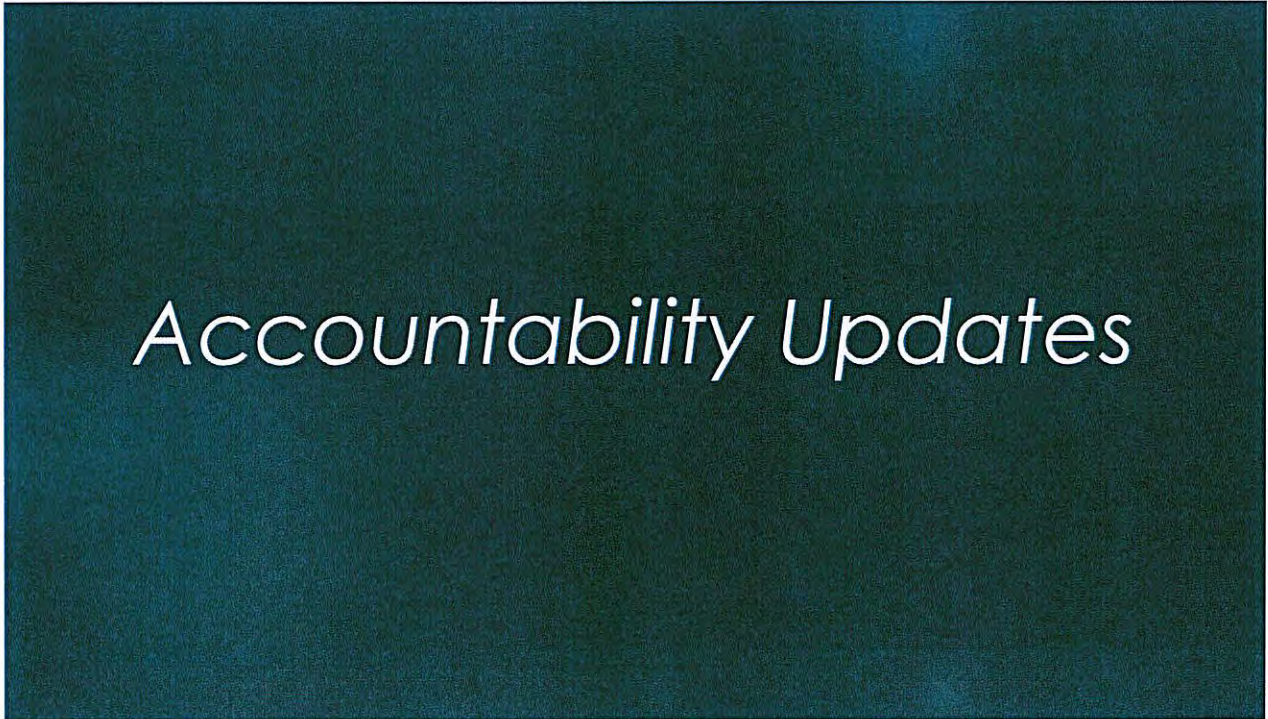
Computer Equipment & Software
Supplies & Materials



2026-2027 CTE Grant Application

Recommendation

Action and Consent at June Board Meeting



Accountability Updates

2025-2026 Preliminary EOG/EOC Results



Data is unofficial and embargoed until the State Board of Education meeting on September 2.

Results cannot be shared publicly until approved.

PSUs may use data internally for 2026–27 planning.

Early Indicators of Success

District-Wide

Strategic Milestone

Exceeded Strategic Plan 25-26 Goal for grade level proficiency

Proficiency Growth

Improved proficiency significantly in all focus areas: 3rd Reading, 4th/7th Math, Math 1, 5th/8th Science, and Biology



> 90%

Elementary and Middle Schools increased overall grade level proficiency



100%

High Schools increased overall grade level proficiency

Early Indicators of Success

District-Wide

District Overall Proficiency is ahead of 24-25 in the following subject areas:

Reading

- 3rd Reading
- 4th Reading
- 5th Reading
- 6th Reading
- 7th Reading
- 8th Reading
- English II

Math

- 3rd Math
- 4th Math
- 5th Math
- 6th Math
- 7th Math
- 8th Math Combined
- HS Math I

Science

- 5th Science
- 8th Science
- Biology

Early Indicators of Success

District focus area improvements

Science & Biology (All Levels)

Double digit gains in science 5 & 8 combined and biology

Math I (HS)

Double digit gain in Math I at the high school level

Reading (ES)

3rd grade reading achieved almost a 10 percent increase

Math (ES and MS)

Performance in 4th and 7th grade mathematics also showed improvement

Early Indicators of Success

Innovation Schools

Universal Improvement

All Innovation Schools improved in proficiency.

Double-Digit Gains

Two schools achieved double-digit gains in overall proficiency.

Top Performance

One school had the highest overall gain compared to all GCS schools at that level.

Subject Area Success

5th grade science, 8th grade science, and biology averaged double-digit gains.

4th Grade Math Excellence

One school achieved the highest gain in 4th grade math among all GCS elementary schools.

Discussion

Contracts

Student Supports Contract

Wolfe and Hometown

Recommendation

Action and Consent at June Board Meeting



Proposal for Math Intervention Services to Gaston County Schools SY 2026-2027

May 11, 2026



Proposal for Math Intervention Services to Gaston County Schools



Pricing

Supplemental services are a great option for school districts looking to provide students with additional learning opportunities beyond their core instruction. By choosing Catapult Learning for these services, you will receive:

- **Implementation of Services** – Planning, coordination, staffing, and all activities required to begin delivering services
- **Direct Services for Students** – Intervention services, delivered to students by a qualified staff member
- **Program Management** – Ongoing supervision, training, reporting and coordination required to ensure a successful engagement

We include our proposed pricing below for a minimum of 1947.5 service hours with schools to be determined in consultation.

Intervention (2 teachers- 30 hrs per week each)	
Number of Students:	Up to 192
Group Size:	1:6
Number of Groups:	32
Hours per Week per Group:	2x 45 mins (1.50 total)
Number of Weeks:	30
Curriculum:	Achieve Math K-8
Cost of Service:	\$155,800

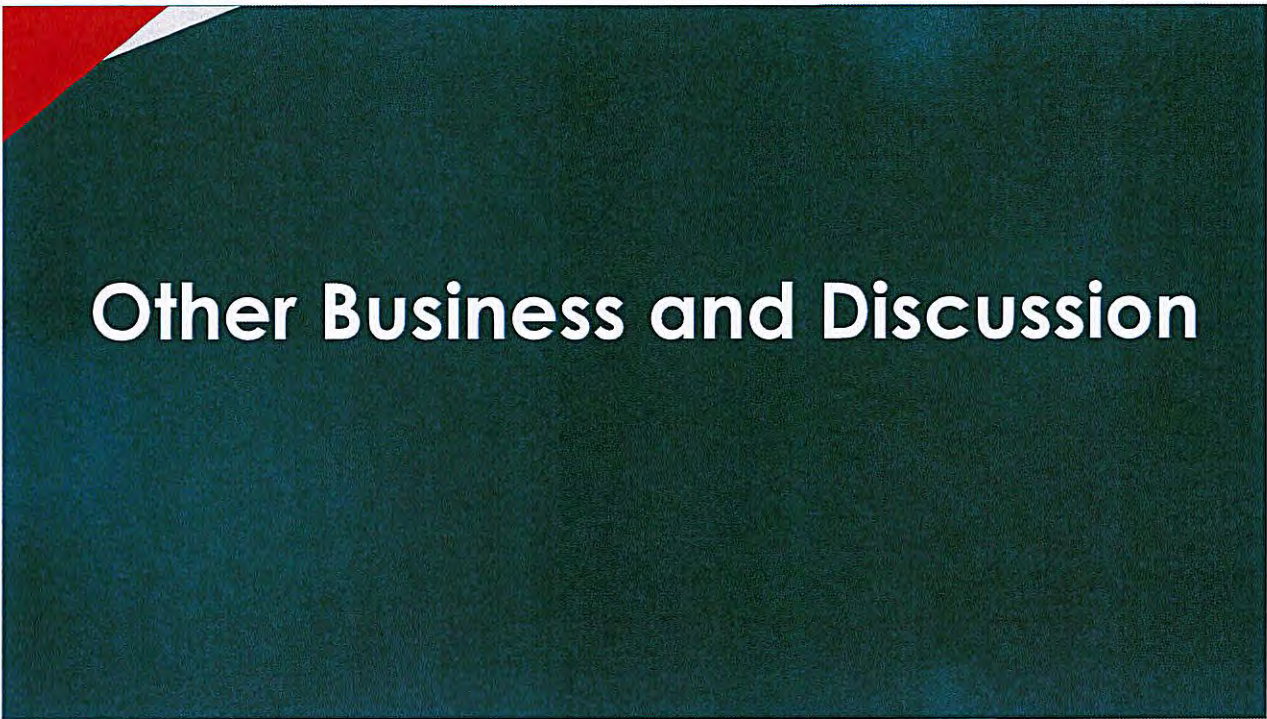
The quoted prices will be honored for 90 days from the date of this proposal (May 11, 2026).
The customer shall pay the provider on the following basis: an hourly rate of \$80.00 per program hour for the provision of services over the term.
Hourly rate is per scheduled program hour. Program hours include all hours required to operate the program including but not limited to direct service time with students, prep time, parent conferences, and school meetings. The quoted prices and services included in the proposal are subject to the execution of a mutually agreeable contract, exclusive of billing terms.

Academic Services Contract

Catapult Learning

Recommendation

Action and Consent Agenda at June Board Meeting



Other Business and Discussion



Thank you

Next Meeting: August 3 @ 3:00 pm
in the Boardroom