

**Gaston County Schools
Operations Committee
Monday, June 1, 2026**

MINUTES

The Operations Committee met in a regular session on Monday, June 1, 2026, 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, and Board Clerk Cindy Beck.

Committee Chair Mr. Brent Moore called the meeting to order at 12:31 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Approval/Correction of Minutes

Motion to adopt minutes of the May 4, 2026, Operations Committee Meeting, as presented, was made by Ms. Dot Cherry; seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon. Motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

Consolidation Updates - Information

Superintendent Houchard reviewed the Consolidation Updates in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 115C-72. The presentation covered the consolidation process and requirements for W.B. Beam in Cherryville.

Among the options presented last month, Option C received the most support. This option would move fourth-grade and fifth-grade students to Cherryville Elementary while relocating the pre-kindergarten program to Tryon Elementary.

Executive Director Tyler West also shared projections for student enrollment capacity under Option C and discussed the related teacher allotments anticipated for the upcoming school year under Option C.

A Public Hearing will be held on Thursday, June 11, 2026, at 6 P.M. at the Myers Center located at Gaston College.

The Board was informed that the Consolidation Proposal will be presented during the Board of Education's regular monthly meeting on June 15, 2026.

(View Presentation)

TSS Updates - Information

The TSS Team will continue Chromebook repairs throughout the summer, and preparations are being made for the upcoming school year.

Human Resources Update - Information

Executive Director of Human Resources Beth Suber updated the Board on current staffing, vacancies, and Reduction In Force (RIF).

Two Job Fairs have been scheduled at the Gaston Public Library on June 11 and June 18, 2026, to help recruit candidates for current vacant positions.

A Retirement Celebration will be held on June 24, 2026, at 6 PM at Camelot Meadows in Belmont. The event will have community sponsors to help facilitate the celebration.

(View Handout)

Accountability Updates - Information

Chief Accountability Officer Kelly Cunningham and Associate Superintendent Tonya Kales presented the early results and highlights of the 2025-2026 EOG/EOC. The preliminary data showed early indicators of growth and success.

Operations Updates - Information

Assistant Superintendent of Operations Bessie Harvey noted that the Operations Department is currently working throughout the summer months to ensure all facilities are prepared for the commencement of the next academic year.

Ms. Harvey provided an update to the Board regarding the ongoing sale process for the Teacher Resource Center (TRC). She noted that the formal appraisal agreement will be signed and finalized. As part of the next steps, the department plans to have a physical "For Sale" sign positioned on the property before the end of the current month.

To support students during the summer months, School Nutrition will manage the Summer Feeding Non-Congregate Meals program.

Key program details include:

- Daily bag breakfasts and/or lunches will be distributed through 50 community sites from June 1, 2026, to June 26, 2026, and from July 6, 2026, to July 31, 2026.
- Seven school locations will provide hot breakfast and lunch service between June 8, 2026, and June 25, 2026.
- Four specialized non-congregate sites located in Lowell, Dallas, and Cherryville will provide take-home meal bundles that include seven days' worth of breakfast and lunch.

Insurance Renewal - Action

Risk Management Specialist/Workers' Compensation Administrator Rebecca Dangler presented information on the Property & Liability Commercial Insurance Renewal, including overall costs and summary coverage information. The renewal will take effect on July 1, 2026.

Motion: A Motion was formally made by Mr. Lee Dedmon and seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry, proposing that the Board

Approve the Property & Liability Commercial Insurance Renewal as presented.

The Committee conducted a formal vote, and the motion carried unanimously with a 3-0 result.

The approved **Property & Liability Commercial Insurance Renewal** will be included on the Consent Agenda for the Board of Education's regular monthly meeting scheduled for June 15, 2026, for final consideration and approval by the full Board.

(View Presentation)

Out of County/Out of State Tuition - Action

Following this update, Superintendent Dr. Morgen A. Houchard presented the proposed tuition rates for students residing out-of-county and out-of-state for the 2026–2027 academic year. The presentation detailed the cost analysis required to maintain educational standards for non-resident students.

Motion: A Motion was formally made by Mr. Lee Dedmon and seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry, proposing that the Board

Approve the Out-of-County and Out-of-State tuition for the 2026–2027 school year as presented by the Superintendent.

The Committee conducted a formal vote, and the motion carried unanimously with a 3-0 result.

The approved Out-of-County and Out-of-State tuition rates for the 2026–2027 school year will be included on the Consent Agenda for the Board of Education's regular monthly meeting scheduled for June 15, 2026, for final consideration and approval by the full Board.

(View Presentation)

Contract Review -- Action

The following contracts were reviewed and recommended for approval:

1. School Nutrition Bid Approvals
2. Amendment to Zone 6 Lawncare
3. Belmont Central Intercom Replacement
4. Catawba Heights Intercom Replacement
5. Chavis Middle Chiller Replacement
6. Cherryville Elementary Intercom Replacement
7. Hunter Huss Upper B Abatement
8. Kiser Elementary Intercom Replacement
9. Landscaping Services Zone 4
10. Finalsite Website and Communication Platform

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 June 15, 2026, Regular meeting for consideration and approval by the full Board.

Superintendent's Comments

Superintendent Houchard commended the successful conclusion of the 2025-2026 academic year and expressed gratitude for the dedication of the district's teachers and staff.

An invitation to attend the Administrative Conference on June 3 and June 4 was extended to Board members.

Additionally, the district realized cost savings thanks to Ms. Kales and her team, who secured the requisite sponsorship for prizes, refreshments, and meals for the conference.

In conclusion, a follow-up meeting with Gaston County Staff is scheduled for Jun 2, 2026 . This follows a preliminary session regarding funding held on May 21, 2026 , which included two members of the Board and two County Commissioners.

The next Operations Committee meeting will be held on Monday, August 3, 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:



Brent Moore, Chairman

Date Approved: 8-3-26

Board of Education Operations Committee Meeting

Central Office Board Room
June 1, 2026

Operations Committee Agenda

- Call to Order
- Review and Approve Minutes
 - **May 4th Meeting**

Updates

Dr. Mogen Houchard
Superintendent

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)

Discussion

TSS Updates

Curtis Poplin
Chief Technology Officer



TSS Updates



Engineers

100% Developed a query that alerts when accounts are compromised, achieving a 100% success rate within our district.

- The query was later shared with Google, who tested it across some of the largest districts in the country and observed a 98% success rate. Due to its effectiveness, Google plans to incorporate this query into their training programs.
- From the alerts generated with the query, we've had quicker response times and have been able to mitigate threats to our district's systems and employees.

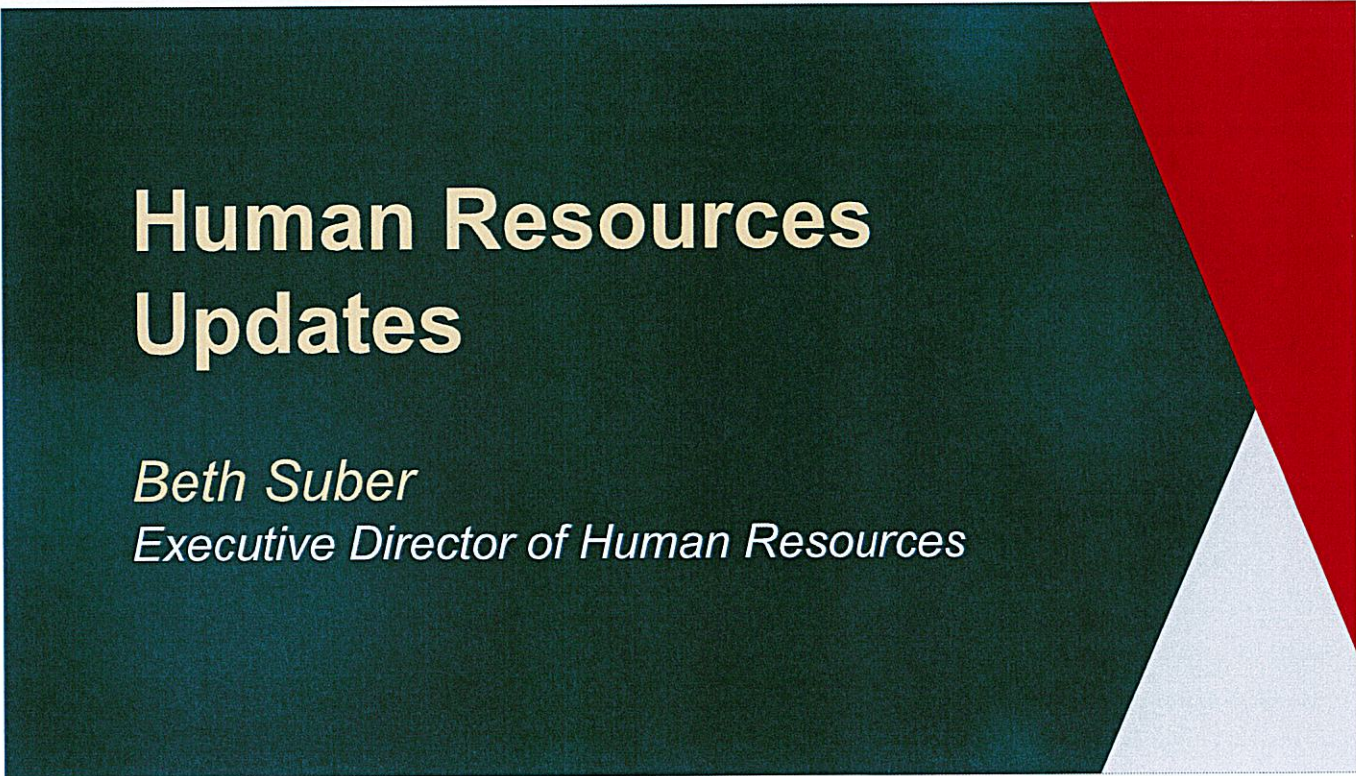
Technicians

1,406 Number of Chromebooks Technicians have repaired since January of this year.

- Techs will continue to assess and repair all of the chromebooks that were collected to confirm they are usable and up to date
- DLMI
 - Have asked schools to complete by 5/29
 - Inventory Audit in One to One Plus opened 4/1
 - Enter the data into DLMI dashboard and complete sign-off form
 - Principal verification
 - The state's firm deadline is 6/30



Discussion



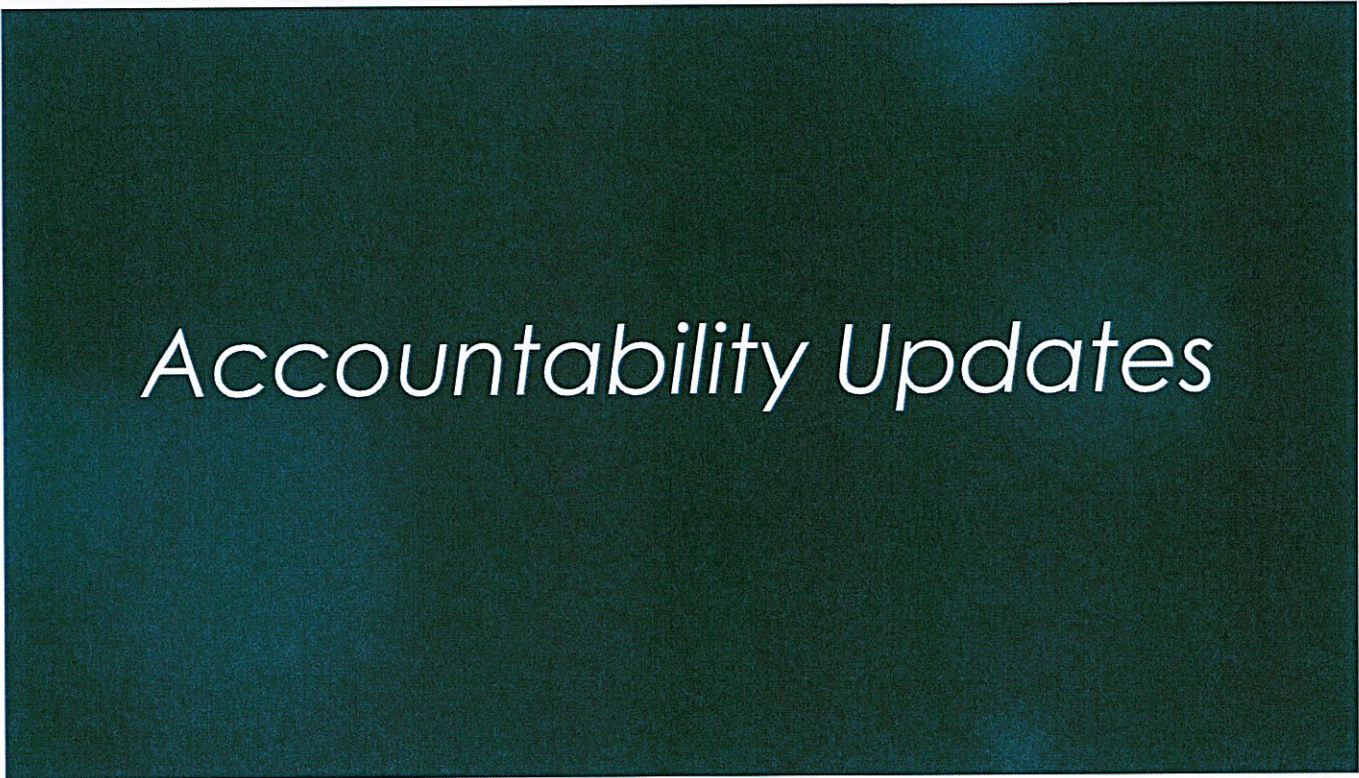
Human Resources Updates

Beth Suber

Executive Director of Human Resources



Discussion



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 1 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

Operations Updates

Bessie Harvey

Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Summer Feeding Non-Congregate Meals

50 Community Sites
Bag Lunch and/or Bag Breakfast
Daily Delivery
June 1-26, 2026
July 6-31, 2026

Summer Feeding

**7 School Sites
Hot Breakfast and Lunch
June 8-25, 2026**

Summer Feeding

**4 Non-Congregate Sites
in Cherryville, Dallas and Lowell**

**Meal Bundles containing 7 days of
Breakfast and Lunch to take home**

Insurance Renewal

Property & Liability Insurance Renewal 7/1/26

Line of Coverage	2025-26 Premium	2026-27 Premium	% Difference
General Liability	\$517,002.00	\$574,723.00	11.16%
Law Enforcement Liability	\$31,012.00	\$30,459.00	-1.78%
School Leaders E&O	\$191,654.00	\$200,924.00	4.84%
Automobile	\$156,613.00	\$162,603.00	3.82%
Umbrella	\$258,629.00	\$284,340.00	9.94%
Workers Compensation	\$414,990.00	\$545,374.00	31.42%
Property	\$1,007,435.00	\$999,704.00	-0.77%
Boiler & Machinery	\$49,667.00	\$38,717.00	-22.05%
Sub-Total	\$2,627,002.00	\$2,836,844.00	7.99%
Volunteer Accident	\$1,256.00	\$1,256.00	0.00%
Active Shooter	\$5,931.00	\$5,931.00	0.00%
AIG Sub-Total	\$7,187.00	\$7,187.00	0.00%
Job Shadowing Accident	\$2,455.20	\$4,312.00	75.63%
Cyber Liability	\$26,949.00	\$26,844.00	-0.39%
Crime	\$6,880.00	\$7,120.00	3.49%
Total	\$2,670,473.20	\$2,882,307.00	7.93%

Wind & Hail deductible decreased from \$250k to \$100k
Property coverage increased from \$350 million to \$500 million
No change in Workers Comp deductible (\$200k)



Discussion



Consent Agenda Items

Contract Consent Agenda Items

- 2026-2027 School Nutrition Bid Approvals
- Belmont Central Intercom Replacement
- Catawba Heights Intercom Replacement
- Chavis Middle Chiller Replacement
- Cherryville Elementary Intercom Replacement
- Hunter Huss Upper B Abatement
- Kiser Elementary Intercom Replacement
- Landscaping Services Zone 4
- Landscaping Services Zone 6

Contract Recommendation

- Motion to Recommend All Contracts for Approval at the Next Regular Board of Education Meeting

Other Business

- Superintendent Comments
- Next Operations Committee meeting will be on Monday, August 3rd at 12:30pm in the Central Office Board Room
- Motion to **Adjourn**

Adjourn