

**Gaston County Schools
Board of Education
Thursday, June 11, 2026
Public Hearing
Meeting 6:00 p.m.**

Minutes

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a Public Hearing on Monday, June 11, 2026, in the Myers Center Auditorium at Gaston College, 201 US-321, Dallas, NC. Those Board members in attendance were: Chairman Josh Crisp, Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon, Robbie Lovelace, Jeff Ramsey, and A.M. Stephens III, who joined the meeting at 6:32 P.M.

Chairman Crisp called the Public Hearing to order at 6 P.M. and welcomed those in attendance to the June 11, 2026, Special Meeting of the Gaston County Board of Education. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to conduct a Public Hearing regarding the Board's consideration of the closure of W. Blaine Beam Intermediate School and its consolidation with Cherryville Elementary School and John Chavis Middle School.

On behalf of the Board, Chairman Crisp thanked those in attendance for participating in the Public Hearing and for providing input regarding the proposed closure.

Agenda Adoption - Action

The Board considered Agenda Adoption – Action

Motion to adopt Agenda as presented was made by Ms. Dot Cherry and seconded by Mr. Lee Dedmon. The motion carried. (5-0)

Chairman Crisp introduced Superintendent Houchard who provided a brief presentation outlining the matter under consideration, including the possible closure of W. Blaine Beam Intermediate School and its consolidation with Cherryville Elementary School and John Chavis Middle School.

(View Presentation)

Chairman Crisp recognized Mr. Todd Hagans, who reviewed public hearing procedures.

Public Hearing - Action

Motion to open public hearing was made by Mr. Jeff Ramsey; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry. The motion carried. (5-0)

The following individuals signed up to speak:

Dawn Whitworth
1121 Jennifer Lane
Cherryville, NC 28021

Heather Holt
111 Woodvale Street
Cherryville, NC 28021

Susie Lewis
349 Whitesides Road
Bessemer City, NC 28016

Dawn Delk
715 N Washington Street
Shelby, NC 28150

Lara Britton
222 Mauney Farm Road
Cherryville, NC 28021

Hannah Garrett
113 Stonewood Estates Drive
Cherryville, NC 28021

Zachary Shuford
507 Mary's Grove Road
Cherryville, NC 28021

Elizabeth Shuford
315 Linwood Avenue
Cherryville, NC 28021

Kelly Brown
500 Queens Road
Cherryville, NC 28021

Wade H. Stroupe Jr.
101 C South Elm Street

Cherryville, NC 28021

Teresa McFarlene
124 W. Main Street
Cherryville, NC 28021

David Chee
1942 Sparkling Stream Drive
Belmont, NC 28012

Chairman Crisp thanked those in attendance for sharing their thoughts and concerns regarding the proposed school closure and consolidation. He stated that the Board would consider the information and public input received as part of its deliberations and final decision-making process.

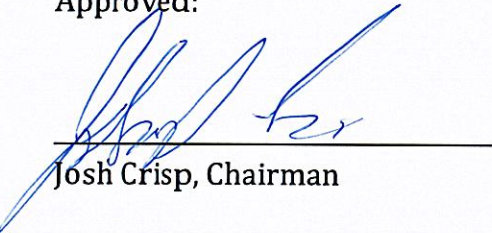
Chairman Crisp announced that the next meeting of the Gaston County Board of Education would be held on Monday, June 15, 2026.

Adjournment

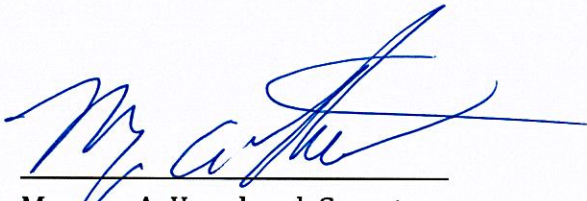
All business having been conducted, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry; motion carried. (6-0)

The public hearing adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Approved:



Josh Crisp, Chairman



Morgen A. Houchard, Secretary

[Corporate Seal]

Board of Education
Public Hearing - School Consolidation
W.B. Beam Intermediate School

Gaston College - Myers Center
June 11, 2026

Process/Timeline for Consideration
of School Closing and Consolidation

Public Hearing
Gaston County Board of Education
June 11, 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 adjustments

Consolidation Option C

- Cherryville Elementary would have similar enrollment numbers to Ida Rankin and Woodhill; 9 larger elementary schools in Gaston County Schools.
- The school's new enrollment would allow a full-time Assistant Principal allotment.
- Cherryville Elementary would keep full-time Art, Music, and PE.
- Title I funds, which are given based on enrollment, would increase at Cherryville Elementary.

Consolidation Option C

- Cherryville Elementary allotment for 2026-2027:
 - 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.

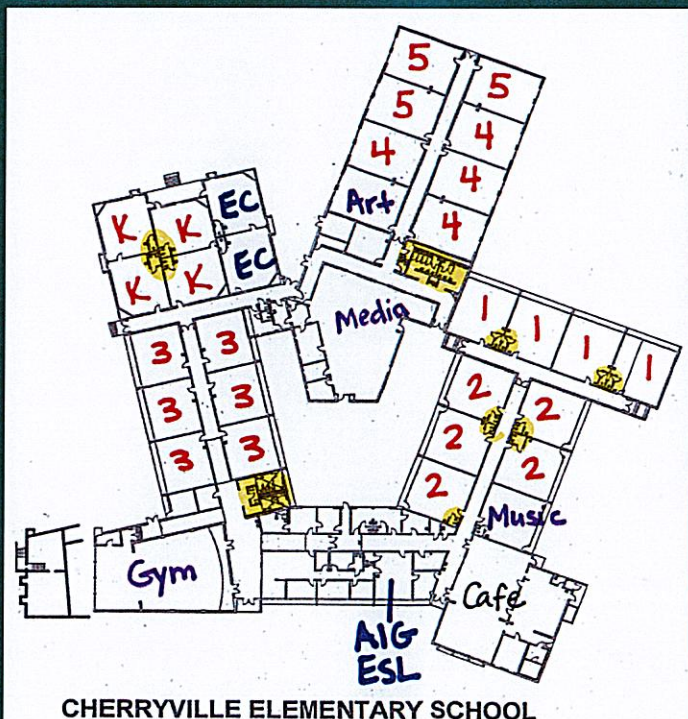
Total = 26 Classroom Teachers

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 the classrooms
 - Art and Music teachers would have classrooms; PE remains in the gym
 - Currently in classrooms: speech, computer lab, counselor's space, and meeting space (all would move to smaller rooms/offices)

Sample floor plan
for Cherryville
Elementary School
with grades K-5

*Enough space available
for regular classrooms
and specials*



Purpose of Consolidation

- Save money by maximizing resources, reducing duplicated personnel and services, and strengthening instructional programs.
- In Cherryville, the goals are to improve operational efficiency, maximize facility utilization, and enhance educational opportunities for students.

Consolidation - Pros

- Grades K-5 configuration eliminates transition of students to new school for grades 4-5.
- Keeping students at same school for grades K-5 helps maintain academic momentum, preserve student supports and intervention plans, and strengthen relationships among students, educators, and parents.

Consolidation - Pros

- Having grades K-5 at one school allows teachers to collaborate on student learning by focusing on early grades reading and math supports and interventions that carry through to higher grades.
- Social-emotional development for students and family engagement are more consistent.

Consolidation - Cons

- With grades K-5 at one school, the school must give consideration to schedules, school design, staff responsibilities, and logistics.
- With more students in the building, additional work would be necessary to ensure strong grade-level team structures and student support systems are in place.

Consolidation - Cons

- With grades K-5 at Cherryville Elementary, the school is reaching its instructional capacity.
- Bus routes would need to be revised to ease longer ride time for students as well as earlier pickup and later drop-off times.
- Adjustments would be needed for earlier start and later end times for meal service.

If Option C is approved

- Students in grades K-5 would be assigned to Cherryville Elementary beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.
- The pre-kindergarten class at Cherryville Elementary would be moved to Tryon Elementary beginning with the 2026-2027 school year (space is available at Tryon).

If Option C is approved

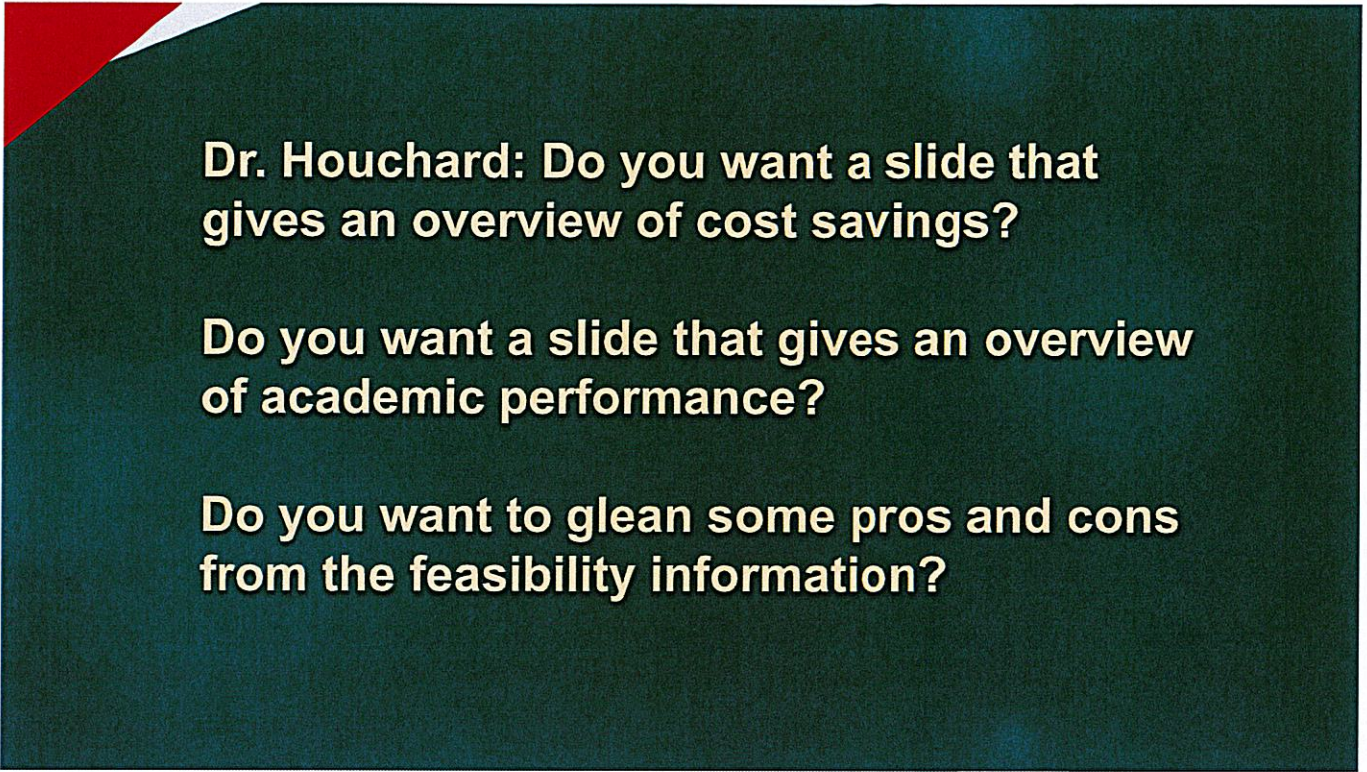
- Gaston County Schools would retain ownership of the W.B. Beam Intermediate campus and the adjacent athletic facilities.
- The W.B. Beam Intermediate campus would be maintained by Gaston County Schools and available for future use by the school system.

*Board
Discussion*

Decline in enrollment

- Cherryville Elementary School
 - 428 students in 2013-2014
 - 351 students in 2025-2026
- W.B. Beam Intermediate School
 - 232 students in 2013-2014
 - 185 students in 2025-2026

Information from Principal's Monthly Reports - Month 1



Dr. Houchard: Do you want a slide that gives an overview of cost savings?

Do you want a slide that gives an overview of academic performance?

Do you want to glean some pros and cons from the feasibility information?