

Gaston County Schools
Board of Education
June 15, 2026
Regular Meeting

MINUTES

The Gaston County Board of Education met in a regular session on Monday, June 15, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the 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 who joined via phone from 5:30 P.M. to 5:51 P.M., Tod Kinlaw, Robbie Lovelace, Brent Moore, Jeff Ramsey, Janna Smith, and A.M. Stephens III.

Additional attendees include: Superintendent Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Assistant Superintendent Bessie Harvey, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, and Board Clerk Cindy Beck.

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

Chairman Crisp requested a moment of silence in memory of Kemp Michael, who served on the Board of Education for 14 years from 1992–1996 and 1996–2008 and served as Board Chairman from 2000–2002.

It was noted that Mr. Michael's dedication to Gaston County, its schools, and the Mount Holly community. The Board expressed its deepest sympathy to Mr. Michael's family, friends, and colleagues.

A moment of silence was observed.

Invocation

Laura Aubreey from Ebenezer United Methodist Church, Belmont, NC. led the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Brady Hubers, from Highland School of Technology, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Adoption - Action

The Board considered Agenda Adoption – Action

Mr. A.M. Stephens III asked the Board to consider removing the School Closing/Consolidations item from the Agenda.

Motion to adopt the Agenda as amended without the School Closing/Consolidations item was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry, motion carried (7-2) Mr. Lee Dedmon and Mrs. Robbie Lovelace opposed.

Good News – Information

Mr. Todd Hagans presented the Good News for June:

School Nutrition

The following School Nutrition Employees were recognized for the Summer Meals Program, which is facilitated during the Summer months:

- Summer Dellinger, Sadler Elementary Cafeteria Manager
- Sheila Hoyle, Central Kitchen
- Stephanie Riddle, Bessemer City Middle Cafeteria Manager
- Margaret Cameron, School Nutrition

Ms. Dot Cherry presented a recognition plaque to the School Nutrition Team.

Scholar Athlete Teams

Two schools were recognized for earning team scholar-athlete state awards from the North Carolina High School Athletic Association. These awards honor excellence in both academics and athletics and recognize teams competing during the Spring 2025 through Winter 2026 sports seasons. Teams participating in the Spring 2026 season will be recognized next summer.

The NCHSAA Scholar-Athlete Program recognizes individual varsity student-athletes who achieve a weighted grade point average of at least 3.5 during the participating semester. Varsity teams earn scholar-athlete recognition by achieving an unweighted team GPA of 3.1 or higher. Schools receive team certificates, and individual student-athletes receive recognition for their academic achievements.

Additionally, the varsity team with the highest GPA in the state in its respective sport, regardless of classification, is recognized at the annual NCHSAA Awards Celebration. The awards are sponsored by the Governor's Highway Safety Program through its "Click It or Ticket" campaign. First-place teams receive \$250, second-place teams receive \$150, and third-place teams receive \$100.

Highland School of Technology earned first-place scholar-athlete team honors in baseball, boys' golf, boys soccer, volleyball, cheerleading, and girls swimming and diving. The school also received second-place honors in softball, girls' golf, and boys' basketball, as well as third-place honors in football.

Principal Susan Redmond, Athletic Director Cheryl Word, and the following Coaches and student representatives were recognized:

Volleyball

- Daniel Poole, Head Coach
- Madeline Helton
- Hazel Ritter
- Carsyn Redmond

Swim

- Kelly Tabor, Head Coach
- Tabatha Spake, Assistant Coach
- Kenzie Hollingsworth
- Sydney Falls
- Nate Miller

South Point High School earned first-place honors in boys' tennis. The school also received second-place honors in girls' soccer, boys' cross country, volleyball, girls' basketball, and boys' wrestling, along with third-place honors in cheerleading.

Principal Josh Allen and members of the boys' tennis team were recognized.

Mr. Tod Kinlaw presented the team with a plaque of recognition.

Hunter Huss High School Alumni Association

The Board recognized the Hunter Huss Alumni Association for its ongoing support of Hunter Huss High School. Over the past ten years, the association has contributed to student enrichment activities, athletic programs, teacher appreciation efforts, senior celebrations, college scholarships, and other initiatives benefiting students and staff.

The Board expressed appreciation for the Alumni Association's commitment to supporting Hunter Huss High School and enhancing opportunities for students through its continued service and involvement.

The members in attendance were:

- Chéz Adams, Founder/President
- Michael Meeks, Vice President
- Larrisha Smith, 2nd Vice President
- Cameron Hope, recent grad
- Jackie Crawford, Class of 82

Chairman Crisp presented a plaque of recognition to the group.

Class of 2026 Academic Honors and Scholarships

The Board recognized the 26 students in the Class of 2026 who earned valedictorian or salutatorian honors and were recognized during their high school graduation ceremonies for their academic excellence.

The Board also recognized Madison Watson of Highland School of Technology for achieving 13 years of perfect attendance.

In addition, the Board congratulated the Class of 2026 for earning more than \$36 million in scholarships from colleges and universities across North Carolina and the nation.

Leadership Conference

The Board received information regarding the two-day Leadership Conference for principals and assistant principals held June 3–4 at Stuart W. Cramer High School. Coordinated by the Academic Services Department, the professional development focused on academic performance and student proficiency and aligned with the district theme, "GAME ON, The GCS Playbook for Leading, Teaching, and Learning."

A video was presented featuring Principal Shawn Hubers, who shared his perspective on the conference and its impact on school leadership and student achievement.

Classroom Moment – Information

The June Classroom Moment was led by Dr. Shannon Hullett, who provided an overview of the ongoing Summer Reading Camp. This program is both required and funded by the NCDPI via the Fund/PRC 085 allocation.

(View Presentation)

Public Expression – Information

Brittany Elkin

3012 High Ridge Ct.

Gastonia, NC 28056

Re: Support for BOE to continue pushing for funds. Questions about decisions made thus far in this budget crisis.

Mekenzie Drum

1013 Clineview Dr.

Cherryville, NC 28021

Re: My time as a student at Cherryville Elementary, my work there, and relationships built with teachers and staff.

Heather Holt

111 Woodvale St.

Cherryville, NC 28021

Beam Intermediate proposed closure.

Jamie Sherrill

1340 Requa Rd.

Cherryville, NC 28021

Beam Intermediate potential closure.

Ella Sherrill

1340 Requa Rd.

Cherryville, NC 28021

Beam Intermediate potential closure.

Approval/Correction of Minutes – Action

Motion to adopt minutes as presented for the May 18, 2026, Regular meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Jeff Ramsey; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith, motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

Operations Committee Report – Information

Brent Moore is chair of the Operations Committee, and members are Ms. Dot Cherry, Mr. Lee Dedmon, and Mr. Tod Kinlaw. Ms. Dot Cherry provided a summary report of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.

(View report)

Curriculum & Instruction Committee Report – Information

Mr. Jeff Ramsey is chair of the Curriculum & Instruction Committee, and the members are Mrs. Robbie Lovelace, Mrs. Janna Smith, and Mr. A.M. Stephens III. Mr. A.M. Stephens III provided a summary report of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.

(View report)

Policy Committee Report - Information

Ms. Dot Cherry is chair of the Policy Committee, and the other members are Janna Smith and A.M. Stephens III. Mrs. Janna Smith provided a summary report of topics considered and discussed at the most recent meeting.

(View report)

Consent Agenda – Action

The Board considered the Consent Agenda:

Consent Agenda – Action

Consent Agenda Item (s) will be adopted with a single motion, second vote, unless a request for removal from the Consent Agenda is heard from a Board Member.

- A. Recommended Personnel
- B. Budget Amendments & Budget Transfers
- C. Construction/Repair Change Orders
- D. Board Policy Updates
- E. CTE Grant Application
- F. Insurance Renewal
- G. Out of County/Out of State Tuition
- H. Contracts
 - School Nutrition Bid Approvals
 - Amendment to Zone 6 Lawncare
 - 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
 - Renewal of Contract for Flower Bed Mulch Installation
 - Finalsite Web
 - Catapult Learning

Motion

Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Mr. Brent Moore; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith. Motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

Superintendent's Comments

Graduation Ceremonies

Superintendent Houchard recognized the successful completion of 15 graduation ceremonies held in recent weeks, during which more than 2,000 students received their high school diplomas. Congratulations were extended to the Class of 2026, with best wishes for their future endeavors.

Job Fair – June 18

Gaston County Schools will host a job fair on Wednesday, June 18, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Gaston County Public Library for prospective candidates interested in middle and high school teaching positions, school nutrition roles, and bus driver positions. The purpose of the job fair is to fill vacancies created through retirements and resignations for the 2026–2027 school year.

Summer Work Schedule

The district has transitioned to its summer work schedule. Schools and central office locations are open Monday through Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and closed on Fridays through July 31. The district will also observe the Independence Day holiday on July 2 and 3, during which all schools and offices will be closed.

Enrollment Reminder

Families are reminded that new student enrollment and kindergarten registration remain open throughout the summer. Online registration is encouraged to assist with the start of the school year, which is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12.

Closing Remarks

Chairman Crisp thanked everyone for their support of the Board of Education and Gaston County Schools. Congratulations were extended to the 2026 graduating class.

He wished students and staff a safe, enjoyable, and relaxing summer

The next scheduled Board of Education Meeting will be held on July 20, 2026.

Mrs. Janna Smith requested permission from Chairman Crisp to share her remarks. Mrs. Smith provided comments regarding the County budget and accountability.

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 Mr. Brent Moore; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith; motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

The Board went into Closed Session at 6:41 p.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 7:10 p.m.

Superintendent Houchard recommended the following Assistant Principals for 4-year contracts:

- Waheebah al-Uqdah McCray
- Alice Ballard
- Treva Boone
- Kelly Brown Thompson
- Katherine Cochran
- Stephanie Crump
- Stephanie Denton
- Charlotte Friday
- Shanti Hinkle
- Logan McGuire
- Emily Morton
- Akeria Patteson
- Gloria Powell
- Andrea Thompson
- Kathi Withers

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. Tod Kinlaw; seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III, that the Board Award a four-year Assistant Principals contract for the listed individuals.

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

Superintendent Houchard recommended the following Principals for 4-year contracts:

- Staci Bradley
- Glenn Cook
- Kelsey Elms
- Miriam Harvey
- Melissa Knick
- Nicole Lawson
- Anna Miller
- Allison Rhyne
- Matt Rikard
- Courtney Williams
- Rebecca Wilson
- William Winston

Motion

The Motion was made by Mrs. Janna Smith; seconded by Ms. Dot Cherry, that the Board Award a four-year Principal contract for the listed individuals.

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

Superintendent Houchard recommended the following Principal for a 2-year contract:

- Mary Clark

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. A.M Stephens III. ; seconded by Mr. Tod Kinlaw, that the Board Award a two-year Principal contract.

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

Administrative Placements

Superintendent Houchard announced that:

Mary Clark would be the Principal of North Belmont Elementary.

Stephainie Gust will be the Principal at Kiser Elementary.

Jennifer Lancaster will be retiring in October.

Adjournment

All business having been conducted, a Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Tod Kinlaw, seconded by Mr. A.M. Stephens III, and the motion carried unanimously. (8-0)

The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Approved:


Josh Crisp, Chairman
[Corporate Seal]


Morgen A. Houchard, Secretary

Date Approved: 8-17-26

