Gaston County Schools
Operations and Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meetings
(Joint Committee Work Session)
Monday, September 14, 2026

MINUTES

The Operations Committee and Curriculum & Instruction Committee met together in a joint session on Monday, September 14, 2026, at 12:30 p.m. at the Central Office Board Room, 943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC. Those Board Members in attendance were: Chairman Josh Crisp, Operations Committee Chair Brent Moore, Curriculum & Instruction Committee Chair Jeff Ramsey, Dot Cherry, Lee Dedmon, Tod Kinlaw, Robbie Lovelace. Janna Smith and A.M. Stephens III were absent.

Additional attendees included: Superintendent Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Associate Superintendent Tonya Kales, Assistant Superintendent of Operations Bessie Harvey, Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services Rebekka Powers, Executive Director of Human Resources Beth Suber, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Chief Technology Officer Curtis Poplin, Chief Financial Officer Bryan Denton, Executive Directors Kevin Doran, Anarah Henderson, Tyler West, CTE Director Rusty Parker, and Board Clerk Cindy Beck.

Chairman Crisp called the meeting to order at 12:32 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Presentation of 2025-2026 State Test Results - Information
Associate Superintendent Tonya Kales and Chief Accountability Officer Kelly Cunningham co-presented the Presentation of the 2025-2026 State Results. Growth percentages across Academic Services were represented by twenty-five principals.

District leadership and staff were commended by Board Members for their hard work, dedication, and the successful growth demonstrated across the district.

(View Presentation)

Following a recess beginning at 1:25 PM, the Committees resumed their session at 1:44 p.m.

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

Motion to adopt minutes of the August 3, 2026, Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting, as presented, was made by Mrs. Robbie Lovelace; seconded by Mr. Jeff Ramsey. Motion carried unanimously. (2-0)

Human Resources Updates - Information
Executive Director of Human Resources Beth Suber updated the Board on current staffing and vacancies across the district. The substitute fill rate so far for September is 96%.

Finance Update - Information
Chief Finance Officer Bryan Denton presented information on the Budget Resolution, noting the Guiding Principles, Revenue Sources, Expenses by Purpose, State, Local, Federal, and Factors that could impact the Budget. This item will be presented to the full Board for approval at the next Regular meeting.

(View Presentation)

Local Testing Report 2026-2027 - Information
Chief Accountability Officer Kelly Cunningham delivered a presentation detailing the 2026-2027 Local Testing Report, highlighting relevant legislative mandates and its alignment with the Strategic Plan. The presentation also covered the testing schedule alongside examples of local assessments. This item will appear on the Consent Agenda at the next Regular meeting for approval.

(View Presentation)

State Mental Health Plan - Information
Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services Rebekka Powers reviewed the State Mental Health Plan's compliance with Social and Emotional Learning and School Mental Health State Board of Education Policy SHLT 003. This policy requires each Public School Unit (PSU) to develop a local improvement plan for promoting student health and well-being. Dr. Powers outlined the support for social-emotional learning and school mental health. This item will appear on the Consent Agenda at the next Regular meeting for approval.

(View Presentation)

Contracts - Action
Assistant Superintendent of Operations Bessie Harvey presented information to the Board on the following contracts:

- Belmont Central Boiler Plant Replacement
- Amendment to Zone 2 Lawn Care Contract
- Amendment to Zone 3 Lawn Care Contract
- Amendment Lingerfeldt ES Lighting Contract
- Amendment to South Point HS and Bessemer City HS Baseball Stadium Press Box & Concessions Building Design
- Hawks Nest RTU Replacements
- WB Beam Multistage RTU Replacement

A presentation regarding the Xello CTE Contract was given by CTE Director Rusty Parker.

- CTE Contract - Xello

Motion:
The Motion was made by Ms. Dot Cherry, seconded by Mr. Tod Kinlaw, that the Board
Approve the presented Contracts

A vote was taken, and Motion to approve the items as presented carried unanimously. (7-0)
These items will appear on the Consent Agenda at the September 21, 2026, Regular meeting for consideration and approval by the full Board.

Superintendent's Comments
Superintendent Houchard reported on his ongoing visits to area schools. Additionally, he noted that details for the Armstrong Building Ribbon Cutting ceremony will be finalized shortly.

The next Operations Committee meeting will be held on Monday, October 5, 2026, at 12:30 PM.

The next Curriculum and Instruction Committee meeting will be held on Monday, October 5, 2026, at 3 PM.

Adjournment
All business being conducted, Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Jeff Ramsey; seconded by Mr. Tod Kinlaw; motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

The Joint Committee Work Session Meeting adjourned at 2:51 PM.

Approved:

Josh Crisp, Chairman

Date Approved: 10-5-26

Board of Education
Operations and Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meetings (Joint Committee Work Session)

Central Office Board Room
September 14, 2026

Joint Committee Work Session Agenda

- Call to Order
- Presentation of 2025-2026 State Test Results
- Review and Approve Minutes
  - **August 4th Meeting**

Human Resources Updates

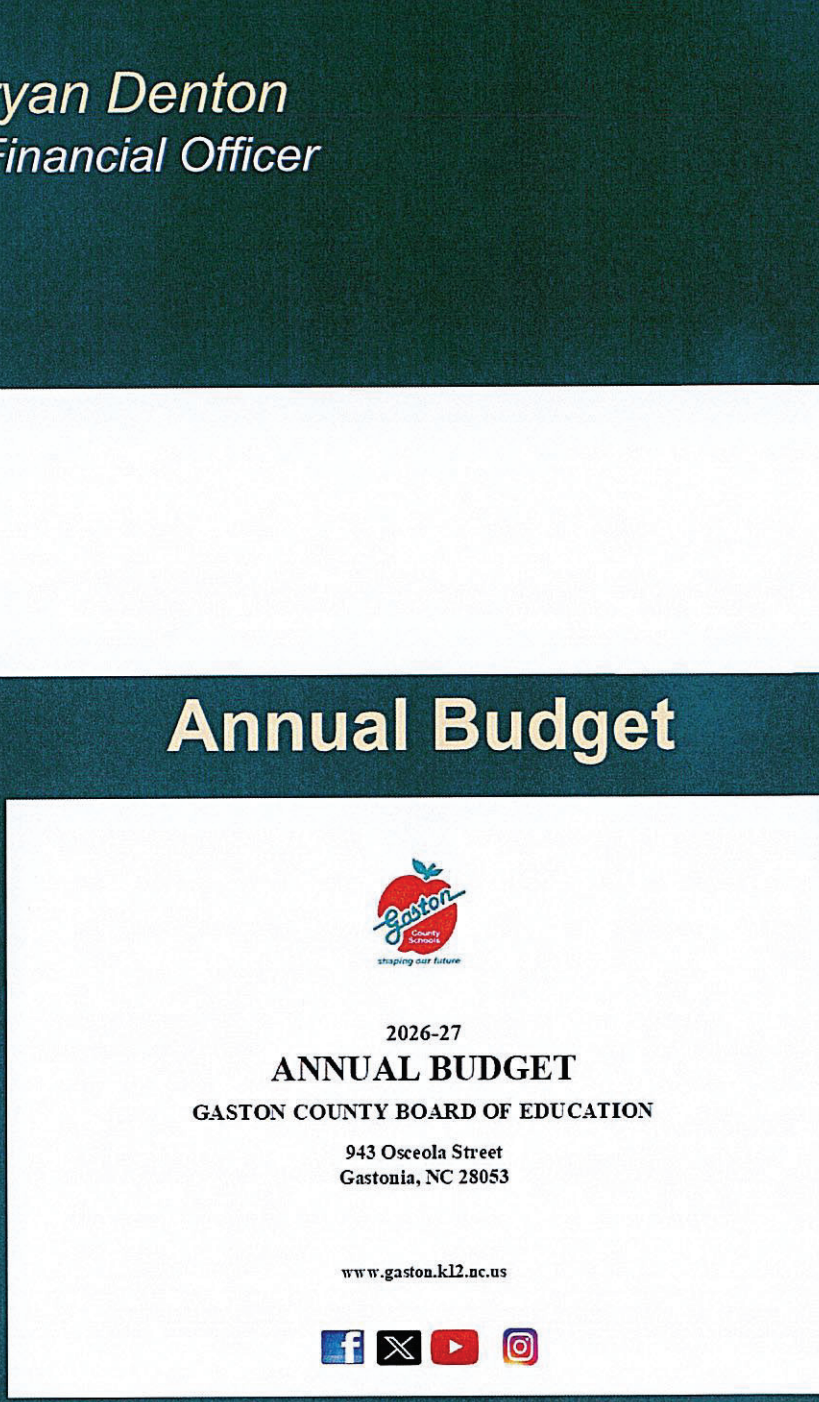
Beth Suber
Executive Director of Human Resources

Discussion

Finance Updates

Dr. Bryan Denton
Chief Financial Officer

Annual Budget



Annual Budget

Budget Resolution - Required by NC GS 115C-432

- **State Public School Fund** — Sections 1 & 2
- **Local General Fund** — Sections 3 & 4
- **Federal Grants Fund** — Sections 5 & 6
- **Capital Outlay Fund** — Sections 7 & 8
- **Child Nutrition Fund** — Sections 9 & 10
- **Other Special Revenue Fund** — Sections 11 & 12
- **Other Directions & Limitations** — Sections 13-16

Guiding Principles

Gaston County Schools

Strategic Plan 2030

Vision

To inspire success and a lifetime of learning.

Mission

To provide innovative educational opportunities for all students in a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Core Values

Excellence
We strive to create an outstanding educational experience for all students, thus generating pride in our community.

Integrity
We pledge to build trust through transparency, honesty, and respect.

Community
We commit to fostering connections grounded in trust where all feel like family, celebrate together, and thrive in high expectations.

Innovation
We embrace new solutions to address the challenges facing our students, staff, and community.

Academics that Build Pathways to Student Success

Empower all students to identify, explore, and achieve their career and life goals through high-quality instruction and individualized support.

Sustainable Financial Stewardship

Ensure the strategic and transparent use of financial resources to support meaningful education and maintain long-term fiscal sustainability.

Efficient and Responsive Operations and Technology

Maintain efficient and responsive operational systems and technology that provide a safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment for all students and staff.

Comprehensive Student Support

Foster a safe and welcoming school environment by expanding access to comprehensive services that promote students' academic, social, emotional, and physical well-being.

Talent and Workforce Development

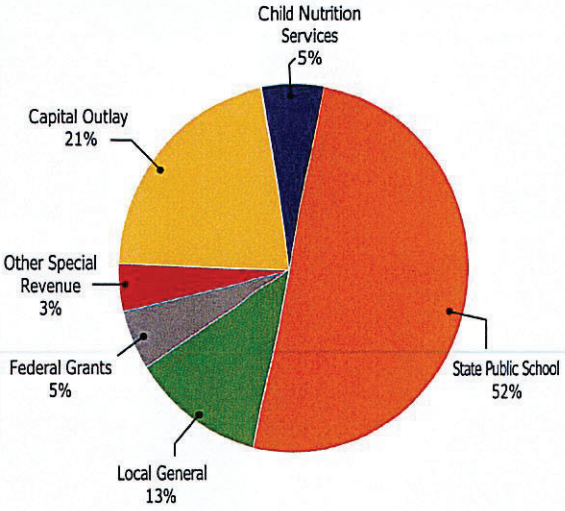
Attract, develop, and retain a talented and skilled workforce by cultivating a culture where every employee feels valued, supported, and empowered to grow professionally.

Effective Communication and Partnerships

Share clear, relevant, and timely information that fosters trust, encourages engagement, and strengthens connections across the school community.

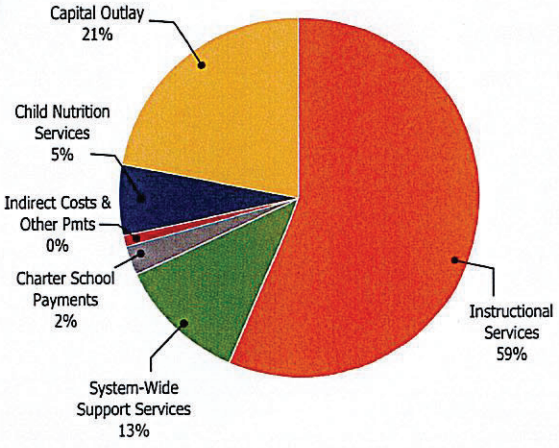
Revenue Sources

Revenues by Source	
State Public School	$244,884,243
Local General	$59,003,104
Federal Grants	$24,754,830
Other Special Revenue	$16,121,373
Capital Outlay	$99,135,113
Child Nutrition Services	$24,266,000
Total	**$468,164,664**



Expenses by Purpose

Expenditures by Purpose	
Instructional Services	$277,660,239
System-Wide Support Services	$62,794,525
Charter School Payments	$7,080,000
Indirect Costs & Other Pmts	$1,714,133
Child Nutrition Services	$23,471,605
Capital Outlay	$95,444,160
Total	**$468,164,664**



Budget Resolution

- State Budget
- Local Budget
- Federal Budget
- Special Revenue
- Factors that Could Impact Budget

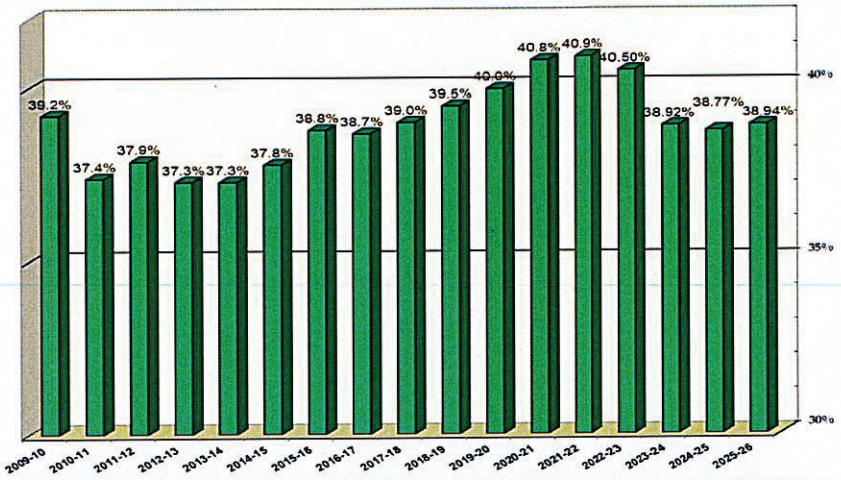


State Budget

- State Budget for 2026-2027 became law on July 7, 2026
- Technically the second year of the biennium; the adopted budget only funds the current fiscal year

State Budget

Percent of the North Carolina General Fund Public Schools Appropriations



State Allotments

- Most state allotments are based on the allotted Average Daily Membership (ADM)
- Gaston County Schools allotted ADM is 30,169 compared to 30,616 for the prior year. That is a 447 ADM decrease
- Classroom teacher allotments are differentiated by grade
- ADM caps for EC (13%) and AIG (4%) funding
- Three primary types of state allotments ….

State Allotments

1) Position Allotments

The State allots educator positions for a specific purpose. The local school system pays the educator according to the State salary schedule without being restricted to a specific dollar amount.

Examples include teachers, school building administration and student support personnel.



State Allotments

2) Dollar Allotments

School districts receive a dollar amount for non-certified employees and to purchase goods.

Examples include teacher assistants, central office administration, textbooks, and classroom materials/supplies.



State Allotments

3) Categorical Allotments

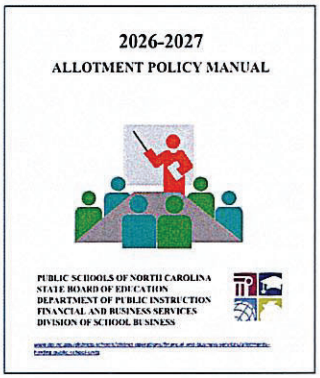
Funding to address differences in student and district characteristics. These funds are to supplement the base funding and provide additional resources.

Examples include at-risk student services, children with disabilities, AIG and Low Wealth Counties Supplemental Funding.



State Budget

- Classroom Teachers/Instructional Support
- Academic Programs (CTE, AIG, etc.)
- Principals and Assistant Principals
- Children with Disabilities
- Student Transportation
- Clerical and Custodial Support
- Restart Schools
- Teacher Assistants



State Budget

Top Five Budgeted State Expenses:

1) $119.0 million - Classroom Teachers
2) $ 25.4 million - Children with Disabilities
3) $ 12.6 million - Instructional Support Staff
4) $ 11.9 million - Career Technical Education
5) $ 10.2 million - Teacher Assistants

State Budget

Changes from Prior Year

- A lower ADM caused a decrease in State funding of about $3.1 million
- This was offset by a $2.7 million increase in Low Wealth County Supplemental Funding
- Our initial State allotment is $18.4 million more than last year, due primarily to salary increases

Budget Resolution

- State Budget
- Local Budget
- Federal Budget
- Special Revenue
- Factors that Could Impact Budget

GASTON COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

Local Budget

Gaston County Board of Commissioners:

- Operating Appropriation
- Capital Outlay
- Bond Debt Payments
- School Resource Officers
- Commissioners' School

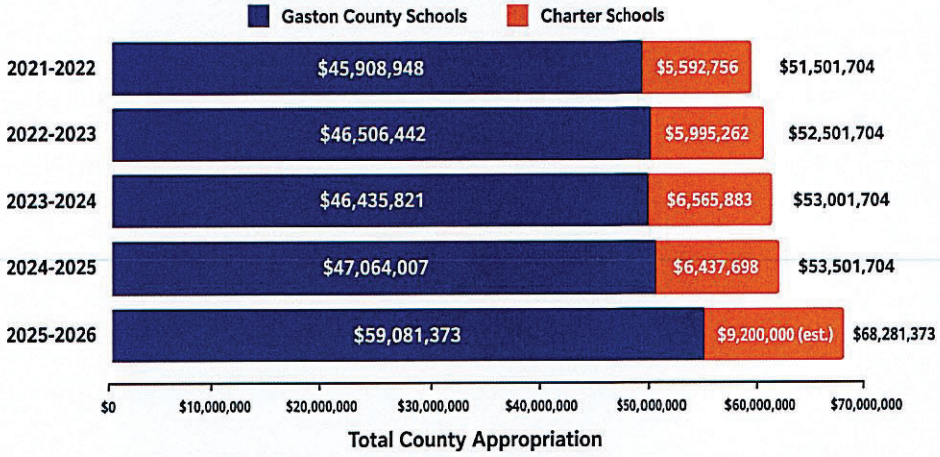
Fines and Forfeitures

Interest Earned on Deposits

GASTON COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

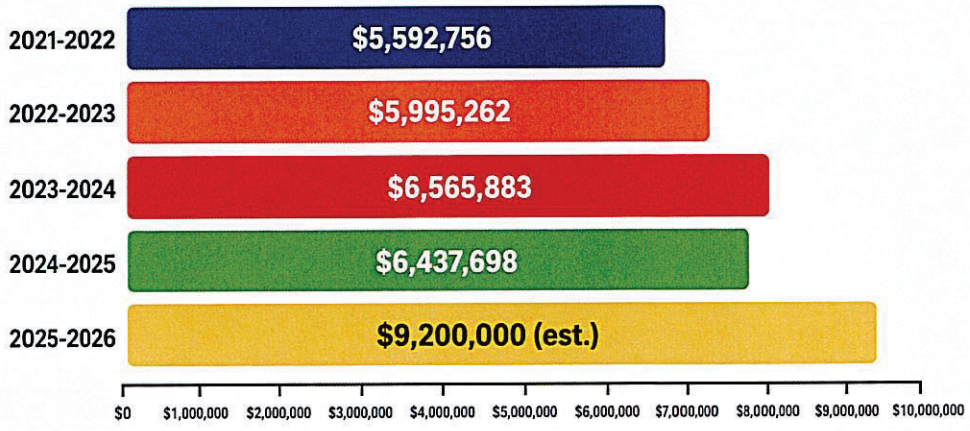
Local Budget

County Appropriation
5-Year History



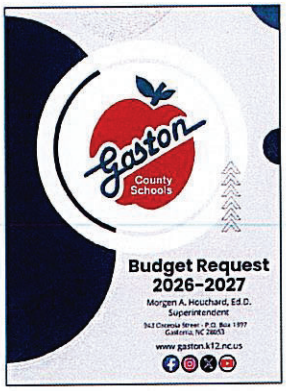
Local Budget

Charter School Payments
5-Year History



Local Budget

- Salary supplements - Teachers, Principals and APs
- Maintenance and clerical personnel
- System-wide supports
- Supplies and materials
- Student technology
- Utilities and insurance
- School Resource Officers
- Athletics and arts programs
- Charter school payments



Local Budget

Top Five Budgeted Local Expenses:

1) $ 14.3 million - Teacher Salary Supplements
2) $ 9.5 million - Utilities and Facility Contracts
3) $ 9.3 million - Maintenance/Non-Instr. Personnel
4) $ 7.1 million - Charter School Payments
5) $ 5.8 million - District Personnel Support

GASTON COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

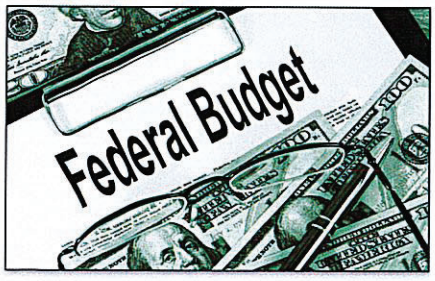
Local Budget

Changes from Prior Year

- A $5,000,000 increase in local operating funds that will be earmarked for teacher supplement increases and off-setting the increased cost of local employees' salaries and benefits
- $1.2 million in existing county capital was provided to GCS for capital maintenance. This is a decrease of about $3 million from last year.

Budget Resolution

- State Budget
- Local Budget
- Federal Budget
- Special Revenue
- Factors that Could Impact Budget



Federal Funding

- Fiscal Year October 1 - September 30
- Federal funds used to supplement not supplant
- Federal grants are audited by and requested through DPI
- The budget and any amendments is submitted to and approved by DPI
- The budget includes a narrative and financial component

Federal Budget

Top Five Budgeted Federal Expenses:

1) $12.5 million - Title I - Disadvantaged Students
2) $ 9.8 million - Title VI B - Children with Disabilities
3) $ 1.4 million - Title II - Improving Teacher Quality
4) $ 905 thousand - Title IV- Student Support
5) $ 501 thousand - CTE Program Improvement

Federal Budget

Changes from Prior Year

- Federal funding should be relatively flat compared to last year. The initial Federal budget is $24.8 million this year
- Federal funding continues to be at some risk of changes, which could include decreases

Budget Resolution

- State Budget
- Local Budget
- Federal Budget
- Special Revenue
- Factors that Could Impact Budget



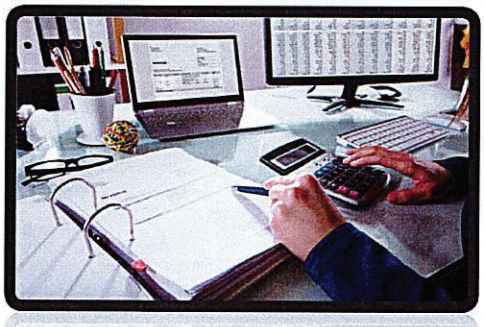
Special Revenue

- Revenues from reimbursements, indirect costs, sales tax refunds, tuition, fees for actual costs, etc.
- Beginning Budget of $16.1 Million
- Primary expenditures of special revenue:
  - Medicaid - $7.4 Million
  - NC Pre-K - $5.1 Million



Budget Resolution

- State Budget
- Local Budget
- Federal Budget
- Special Revenue
- Factors that Could Impact Budget



Factors that Could Impact Budget

Internal Factors

- Staffing and Compensation Levels
- Curriculum and Instructional Needs
- Changes in School Choice Options
- Investments in Technology
- Facility Maintenance and Upgrades
- Health and Safety Initiatives



Factors that Could Impact Budget

External Factors

- Changes in State and Federal Funding
- Changes in Local Demographics
- Economic Conditions Impacting Local Tax Revenues
- Legislative and Policy Changes
- Inflation and Cost of Living
- Student Population Trends



Discussion

Other Finance Updates

- Introduce Philip Stefen, Assistant CFO
- We had successful payroll runs for August (two bi-weekly and one monthly)
- External auditors visited September 1-4
- State Teacher Supplements will be included in September paychecks, including any applicable retroactive pay
- We will be communicating with employees about October state bonuses in the next few weeks
- At the October committee meeting, we will review the Classified Bonus that has traditionally been paid in November

Local Testing Report 2026-2027

Kelly Cunningham
Chief Accountability Officer

Legislative Requirements





Alignment to the GCS Strategic Plan



Academics that Build Pathways to Student Success

Priority

Empower all students to identify, explore, and achieve their career and life goals through high-quality instruction and individualized support.

Goal

By 2030, Gaston County Schools will increase student achievement and growth across all schools so that more students are prepared for college, career, and life success.

Why This Matters

Every student deserves access to strong engaging instruction, a supportive learning environment, and pathways that lead to success in school, college, careers, and life. When students achieve at higher levels, schools become stronger, the graduation rate increases, and the community benefits through a skilled, educated workforce. A focus on academics ensures access to rigorous learning, stronger post-secondary outcomes, higher student engagement, and improved overall school performance.

Objectives (by 2030)

Objective	Baseline	Target	Data Source
Increase Grade Level Proficiency (GLP)	48.4%	60%	EOG/EOC assessments
Increase schools meeting/exceeding growth	71%	75%	NCDPI accountability
Reduce low-performing schools	15	5 or fewer	NCDPI accountability
Increase four-year cohort graduation rate	88.8%	91%	NCDPI accountability
Increase English Language (EL) progress indicator	32%	48%	WIDA ACCESS Tests
Increase ACT/WorkKeys composite percentile	47%	62%	ACT/WorkKeys

Key Strategies

- Ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum across all content areas and schools
- Strengthen core instruction through implementation of aligned curriculum
- Develop curriculum feedback loops to continue to strengthen district curriculum resources
- Embed hands-on, project-based, inquiry-driven learning into units of study
- Embed project-based/inquiry-driven assessments into assessment strategy
- **Implement districtwide interim assessments and data protocols**
- Develop or procure a data dashboard to strengthen data-driven instruction
- Provide professional development to build staff capacity at all levels
- Strengthen instructional coaching systems
- Strengthen Tier 2 & 3 academic interventions
- Provide extended learning time (before/after school and summer)
- Ensure Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) meet frequently and have consistent protocols and processes to focus on teaching and learning
- Establish, implement, and monitor effective PLCs focused on student data, instructional planning, and student work
- Provide Instructional Leadership, Principals, Assistant Principals, and/or Instructional Coaches to guide and support weekly PLC meetings

Testing Calendar & Examples of Local Assessments

2026-2027 Testing Calendar

08.27.2026

Gaston County Schools
2026-2027 Test Administration Dates for State-Mandated Tests and Local Assessments

Test	Grades	Administration Dates	Assessment Type	Platform
WIDA Screener Placement Test	K-12	Aug. 12, 2026-May 26, 2027	State-Mandated	DRC Insight
mClass BOY Reading Benchmark Assessment	K-5	Aug. 19-Sept. 09, 2026	State-Mandated	Amplify
iReady Math Beginning-of-Year Assessment	Grades 1-5	Aug.19-Sept. 11, 2026	Local Assessment	iReady.com
Beginning of Grade 3 (BOG3) Reading Test	Grade 3	August 26, 2026	State-Mandated	NCTest
NC Math 1 Interim Assessment #1 (Fall Semester)	Grades 9-12	September 14, 2026	Local Assessment	SchoolNet
English II NC Check-In A (Fall Semester)	Grades 9-12	Sept. 14-15 & 17, 2026	Local Assessment	NCTest
NC Early Learning Inventory (ELI) Preliminary Rating	Kindergarten	September 18, 2026	State-Mandated	TC Grid
Grade 4 Math Interim Assessment #1	Grade 4	September 22, 2026	Local Assessment	SchoolNet
Credit By Demonstrated Mastery (CDM): September	Grades 9-12	September 22, 2026	State-Mandated	NCTest
Grades5-8 Reading Interim Assessment #1	Grades 5-8	Sept. 22-23, 2026	Local Assessment	NCTest
NC Check-In: Biology-Molecules to Organisms (Fall)	Grades 9-12	Sept. 24-25, 2026	Local Assessment	NCTest
Grade 5 Math Interim Assessment #1	Grade 5	September 25, 2026	Local Assessment	SchoolNet
Grades 6-8 Math Interim Assessment #1	Grades 6-8	September 25, 2026	Local Assessment	SchoolNet
NC Math 1 Interim Assessment #1	Grade 8	September 25, 2026	Local Assessment	SchoolNet
Grade 5 Science Interim Assessment #1	Grade 5	October 6, 2026	Local Assessment	SchoolNet
NC Check-Ins 2.0 Reading-A	Grades 3-5	Oct. 5-9, 2026	Local Assessment	NCTest
PSAT/NMSQT	Grades 10 & 11	October 13, 2026	Local Assessment	Bluebook
NC Check-In: NC Math 1-A (Fall Semester)	Grades 9-12	Oct. 13-14, 2026	Local Assessment	NCTest
NC Check-In: NC Math 3-A (Fall Semester)	Grades 9-12	Oct. 13-14, 2026	Local Assessment	NCTest

Examples of Local Assessments

CogAT

i-Ready

schoolnet

Gaston County Schools

GCS & NC Two-Year Averages

	2024–25	2025–26	Two-Year Total	Annual Average
Gaston County Schools	24 tests 34 min	105 tests 156 min	129 tests 190 min	64.5 tests 95 min
State of North Carolina	5,939 tests 6,820 min	6,279 tests 6,804 min	12,218 tests 13,625 min	53.1 tests 59 min

Summary of Rationale

Primary Driver

Expanded implementation of locally developed interim assessments between the 2024–25 and 2025–26 academic years.

Strategic Alignment

The increase in testing is **intentional** and connected to a stronger data-driven instructional approach, aligned to our Strategic Plan.

Next Steps

Local Testing Report Plan Submission

Office of Accountability has developed a Local Testing Plan .

The plan will be signed by the Superintendent and submitted to NCDPI by October 1st.

State Mental Health Plan

Rebekka Powers
Assistant Superintendent, Student Support Services

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

PSU School Mental Health Plan
(per NC SBOE Policy SHLT-003)

It is strongly recommended that a local needs assessment and resource mapping be conducted before completing the SMH plan below Completion of the SHAPE Quality Assessment and/or use of the needs assessment and resource mapping tools on the NCDPI SEL and Crisis Response Practice Guide will provide the data needed for the targeted improvement planning below. PSUs whose District MTSS teams have completed the Core SEL Practices course and developed a Core SEL implementation plan around instruction, curriculum, and environment will be well situated to develop a compliant local improvement plan for promoting student health and well being.

PSU Compelling Why & Vision for SEL and School Mental Health Improvement: Gaston County Schools (GCS) inspires success and a lifetime of learning for all students. We believe in supporting and fostering safe and nurturing learning environments to ensure that every student is ready for college, career, or any life-enhancing opportunities. As a result, our students thrive academically, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally. We will accomplish this through intentional tiered interventions to enhance the mental health, well-being, and social and emotional skills of all students, families, and staff.

Consent Agenda Items

Contract Consent Agenda Items

Operations

- Belmont Central Boiler Plant Replacement
- Amendment to Zone 2 Lawn Care Contract
- Amendment to Zone 3 Lawn Care Contract
- Amendment Lingerfeldt ES Lighting Contract
- Amendment to South Point HS and Bessemer City HS Baseball Stadium Press Box & Concessions Building Design
- Hawks Nest RTU Replacements
- WB Beam Multistage RTU Replacement

Academic Services

- CTE: Xello

Contract Recommendation

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

Other Business

- September Classroom Moment: Innovation Schools Highlight - High quality PLC's
- Superintendent Comments
- Next Operations Committee meeting will be on Monday, October 5th at 12:30 pm followed by Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meetings at 3:00 pm in the Central Office Board Room
- Motion to **Adjourn**

Adjourn

Thank You.

Gaston County Schools
2025-2026 Student Performance Results

Operations and Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meetings

September 14, 2026

Gaston County Schools — Strategic Goals

Academics that Build Pathways to Student Success

Strategic Priority: Empower all students to identify, explore, and achieve their career and life goals through high-quality instruction and individualized support.

GOAL A.1 GLP Target
Increase Grade Level Proficiency (GLP) from 48.4% to 60%*
Data: NC EOG & EOC Assessments

GOAL A.2 Growth Target
Increase schools meeting/exceeding growth from 71% to 75%
Data: NCDPI Accountability Model

GOAL A.3 Performance
Reduce low-performing schools from 15 to 5 or fewer
Data: NCDPI Accountability Model

GOAL A.4 Graduation Rate
Increase NCDPI 4-year cohort graduation rate from 88.8% to 91%
Data: NCDPI Accountability Model

GOAL A.5 EL Progress
Increase the percentage of students meeting EL progress from 33% to 48%
Data: WIDA Access (ELL Progress)

GOAL A.6 ACT/WorkKeys
Increase composite percentile from 47% to 62%
Data: ACT/Workkeys Composite

*Note: Goals will be revised based on new baseline numbers if new EOGs/EOCs are implemented based on revised standards.

North Carolina Accountability Model

Elementary/Middle School	High School
End-of-Grade (EOG) Test Proficiency • Reading Grades 3-8 • Math Grades 3-8 • Science Grades 5 and 8 **End-of-Course (EOC) Test Proficiency** • NC Math I **English Learner (EL) Progress** **EVAAS Growth**	**End-of-Course (EOC) Test Proficiency** • English II • NC Math 1 • NC Math 3 • Biology **English Learner (EL) Progress** **ACT/WorkKeys (combined)** **Math Course Rigor** **Cohort Graduation Rate** **EVAAS Growth**

Achievement Levels on State Assessments

<table>
<tr><td>NP</td><td colspan="2">NOT PROFICIENT</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 3</td><td rowspan="3">GRADE LEVEL PROFICIENT (GLP)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 4</td><td rowspan="2">COLLEGE AND CAREER READY (CCR)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 5</td></tr>
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Performance Overview

Math Grades 3-8, NC Math 1, and NC Math 3



End-of-Year Official Results and Key Performance Indicators.

Math Grades 3-8

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Level 3, 4 or 5 Grade Level Proficiency (GLP)	53.5	+3.7

Grades 3-8 Math

Levels 3, 4 or 5 (Grade Level Proficient/GLP)

Test	2024-2025 Percent Level 3, 4, 5	2025-2026 Percent Level 3, 4, 5	Pct. Pt. Change Level 3, 4, 5
Math 3	57.1	57.2	+0.1
Math 4	50.9	56.8	+5.9
Math 5	49.0	57.4	+8.4
Math 6	50.6	55.4	+4.8
Math 7	46.5	47.5	+1.0
Math 8	44.9	47.0	+2.1

Highlights: Increase Grades 3-8 Math Proficiency

Pleasant Ridge
Elementary School

John Chavis
Middle School

NC Math 1 Middle School

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Level 3, 4 or 5 Grade Level Proficiency (GLP)	>95	0.0

NC Math 1 High School

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Level 3, 4 or 5 Grade Level Proficiency (GLP)	49	+10.1

Highlight: Increase High School Math I Proficiency

Cherryville High School

NC Math 3 High School

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Level 3, 4 or 5 Grade Level Proficiency (GLP)	57.4	-1.7

Highlight: Increase Math 3 High School Proficiency

Stuart W. Cramer
High School

Math Course Rigor

High School



Math Course Rigor

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Percentage of 12th Grade Students who Take & Pass NC Math 3	>95	0.0

5th & 8th Science

& High School Biology



Grade 5 Science

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Level 3, 4 or 5 Grade Level Proficiency (GLP)	64.2	+ 8.8

Highlights: Increase 5th Grade Science Proficiency

Carr Elementary School

Lingerfeldt Elementary School

Grade 8 Science

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Level 3, 4 or 5 Grade Level Proficiency (GLP)	65.7	+ 12.7

Highlights: Increase 8th Grade Science Proficiency

W.C. Friday Middle School

MT HOLLY Hawks

Biology

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Level 3, 4 or 5 Grade Level Proficiency (GLP)	53.5	+ 12.3

Highlight: Increase Biology Proficiency

South Point High School

Performance Overview

Reading Grades 3-8 & English II

End-of-Year Official Results and Key Performance Indicators.



Grades 3-8 Reading

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Level 3, 4 or 5 Grade Level Proficiency (GLP)	49.2	+3.9

Grades 3-8 Reading

Levels 3, 4 or 5 (Grade Level Proficient/GLP)

TEST	2024-2025 Percent Level 3, 4, 5	2025-2026 Percent Level 3, 4, 5	Pct. Pt. Change Level 3, 4, 5
Reading 3	37.0	46.2	+9.2
Reading 4	50.6	51.3	+0.7
Reading 5	44.1	49.3	+5.2
Reading 6	44.9	48.5	+3.6
Reading 7	45.8	47.8	+2.0
Reading 8	49.9	52.0	+2.1

Highlights: Increase 3-8 Reading Proficiency

W.A. Bess Elementary School

Bessemer City Central Elementary School

English II - High School

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Level 3, 4 or 5 Grade Level Proficiency (GLP)	57	+5.2

Change in Grade Level Proficiency

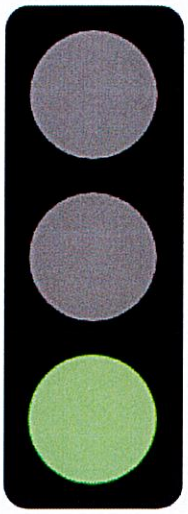
Composite all subjects and grades (2024-25 to 2025-26)

Alamance-Burlington **50%** ▲ Up 6.8	**Gaston** OUR DISTRICT **54%** ▲ Up 5.1	Charlotte-Mecklenburg **61%** ▲ Up 5.1
Durham **53%** ▲ Up 4.8	Cabarrus **68%** ▲ Up 4.4	North Carolina (State) **59%** ▲ Up 4.2
Johnston **61%** ▲ Up 3.8	Union **74%** ▲ Up 3.1	Onslow **56%** ▲ Up 1.3

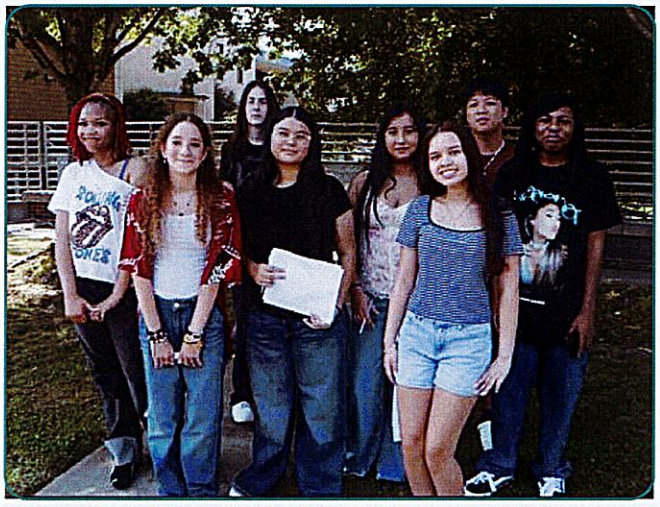
Strategic Plan Goal:

Increase Grade Level Proficiency (GLP)

2024-25 Baseline	2025-26 Target	2025-26 Actual	2030 Strategic Plan Target
48.4%	52.0%	**53.5%**	60%



Academic Growth



EVAAS Growth (Met or Exceeded) ★

EVAAS Growth Met or Exceeded
47 (92%) +21% from 25-26

2025-2026 Growth Status	Number (Percent) of Schools
Exceeded	25 (49%)
Met	22 (43.1%)
Not Met	4 (7.8%)
Total	51

In 2025-2026, five schools did not receive a growth designation on the traditional NC Accountability Model (Bessemer City Primary, JB Page Primary, Springfield Primary, Warlick, and Webb Street) and are not included in the denominator.

Schools that Met Growth ★

Elementary Schools (15)

- Bessemer City Central ES
- W.B. Beam Intermediate
- Brookside ES
- Catawba Heights ES
- Chapel Grove ES
- Cherryville ES
- Costner ES
- Hawks Nest STEAM Academy
- Kiser ES
- Lowell ES
- McAdenville ES
- New Hope ES
- North Belmont ES
- H.H. Beam ES
- Tryon ES

Schools that Met Growth

Middle Schools (4)	High & Academy (3)
• Bessemer City MS • Mount Holly MS • W.C. Friday MS • York Chester MS	• East Gaston HS • North Gaston HS • Gaston Virtual Academy

Schools that Exceeded Growth

Elementary Schools (11)	Middle Schools (7)	High Schools (7)
• Carr ES • Edward D. Sadler Jr. ES • Gardner Park ES • Lingerfeldt ES • Pinewood ES • Pleasant Ridge ES • Ida Rankin ES • Robinson ES • Sherwood ES • W.A. Bess ES • Woodhill ES	• Belmont MS • Cramerton MS • W.P. Grier MS • Holbrook MS • John Chavis MS • Southwest MS • Stanley MS	• Ashbrook HS • Gaston Early College HS • Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences • Cherryville HS • Stuart W. Cramer HS • Highland School of Technology • South Point HS

Highlight: Achieved 100% Growth

Southwest Middle School

Highlights: Achieved Exceeded Growth Status

Robinson Elementary School

Sadler Elementary School

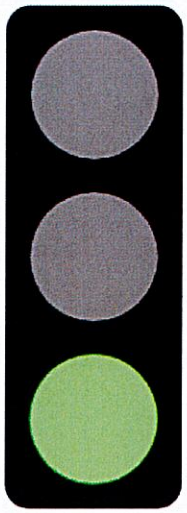
Cramerton Middle School

Stanley Middle School

Strategic Plan Goal:

Increase the percentage of schools meeting/exceeding growth

2024-25 Baseline	2025-26 Target	2025-26 Actual	2030 Strategic Plan Target
71%	72%	**92%**	75%





School Performance Grades

80% Proficiency

20% EVAAS Growth

A: 85-100
B: 70-84
C: 55-69
D: 40-54
F: Less than 40

School Performance Grades

A, B or C	D or F
69% (+6.0 from 24-25)	31% (-6.0 from 24-25)

Five schools are not included above. Three schools (Bessemer City Primary, JB Page Primary, Springfield Primary) receive the same letter grade as the school they feed the most students to. Two schools (Warlick and Webb Street) receive designations based on an alternative model.

School Performance Grade

13

Schools Improved Letter Grades

- Bessemer City Central ES
- Carr ES
- Lingerfeldt ES
- Pinewood ES
- Pleasant Ridge ES
- Rankin ES
- Sherwood ES
- Woodhill ES
- Belmont MS
- Cherryville HS
- Stuart Cramer HS
- East Gaston HS
- Forestview HS

School Performance Grades

A Journey of Continuous Improvement and Academic Excellence

2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
9	5	0
"F" Rated Schools	"F" Rated Schools	"F" Rated Schools

Goal Achieved: Zero "F" Rated Schools!

Highlights: Improved School Performance Grades

Rankin
Elementary School

Belmont
Middle School

Forestview
High School



EXCELLENCE & OPPORTUNITY

State Designations

State Designations

Low Performing Schools

School Performance Grade (SPG)

D or **F**

AND

School Growth Status

"Met"

or

"Not Met"

The **State Board of Education** identifies low-performing schools annually.

State Designations: Low Performing

A Journey of Continuous Improvement and Academic Excellence

2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
19	15	9

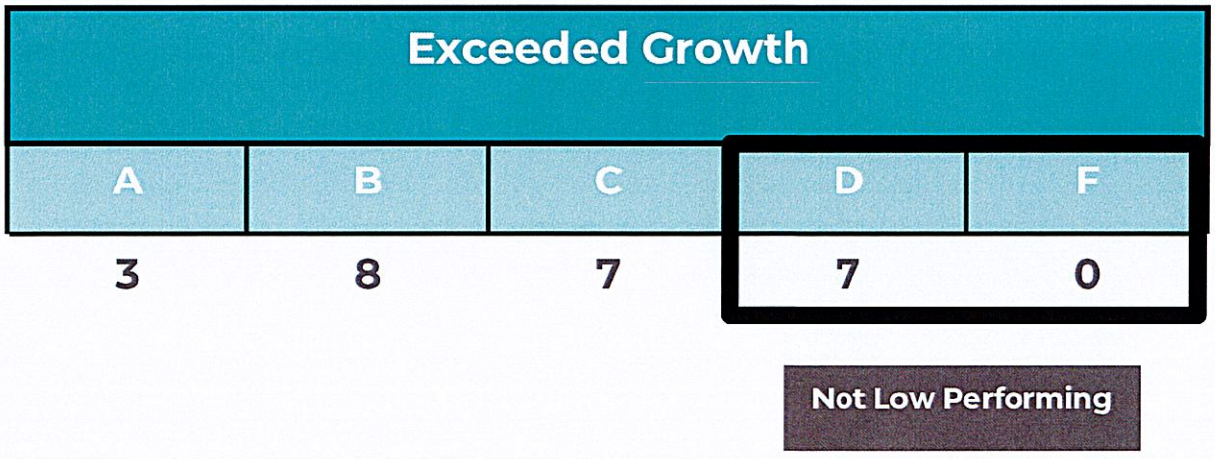
Moving in the right direction on our Strategic Plan goal **GOAL A.3 Performance**
Target: Reduce low-performing schools from 15 to 5 or fewer

State Designations

Removed from Low Performing School Designation

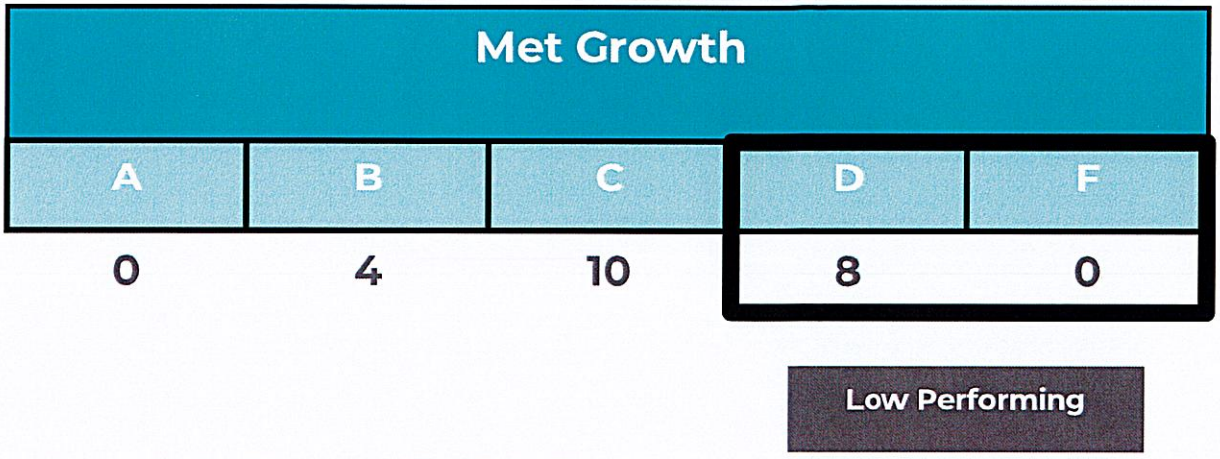
Elementary	Secondary
check_circleCare Elementary	check_circleBessemer City High
check_circleGardner Park Elementary	check_circleHolbrook Middle
check_circleLingerfeldt Elementary	check_circleSouthwest Middle
check_circlePleasant Ridge Elementary	
check_circleSherwood Elementary	
check_circleWoodhill Elementary	

EVAAS Growth and School Performance Grades



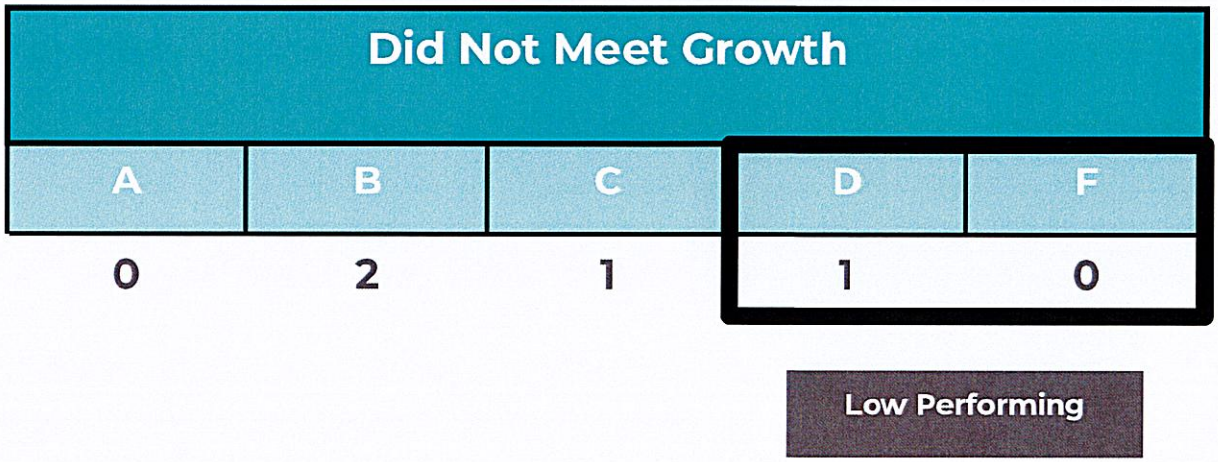
Note: In 2025-2026, two schools had an ALT_F school grade (Warlick and Webb Street).

EVAAS Growth and School Performance Grades



Note: In 2025-2026, two schools had an ALT_F school grade (Warlick and Webb Street).

EVAAS Growth and School Performance Grades



Note: In 2025-2026, two schools had an ALT_F school grade (Warlick and Webb Street).

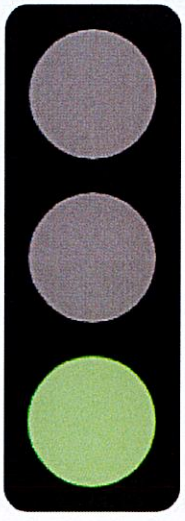
Highlight: Removed from Low Performance List

Woodhill Elementary School

Holbrook Middle School

Strategic Plan Goal:
Reduce the number of Low Performing Schools

2024-25 Baseline	2025-26 Target	2025-26 Actual	2030 Strategic Plan Target
15	13	**9**	5



STRATEGIC PLAN PERFORMANCE

4 & 5 Year Cohort Graduation Rate

Tracking our journey of continuous improvement and academic excellence for every student.



4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	90.1	+1.2

This data will become official after the next State Board of Education meeting on October 1, 2026

5-Year Cohort Graduation Rate

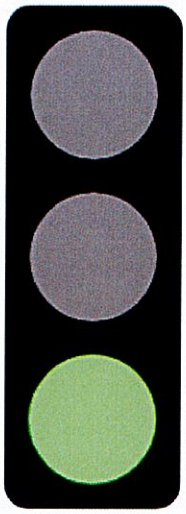
	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
5-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	89.8	+2.8

Highlight: 4 year Cohort Graduation Rate

North Gaston High School

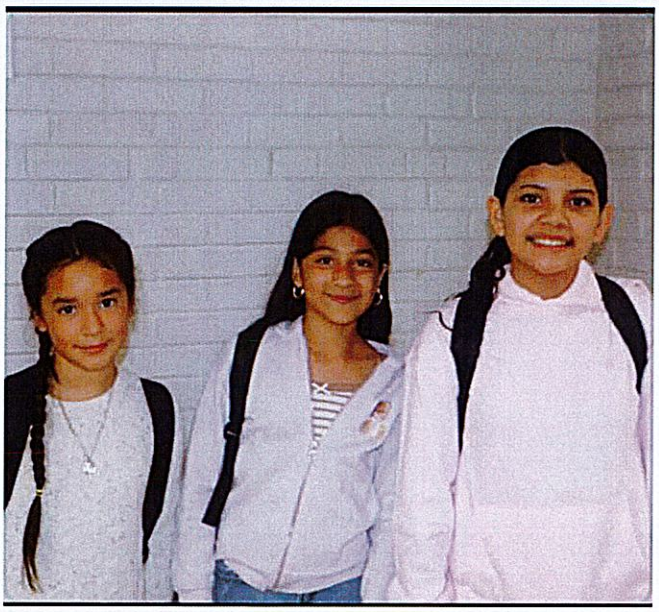
Strategic Plan Goal:
Increase 4 year Graduation Rate

2024-25 Baseline	2025-26 Target	2025-26 Actual	2030 Strategic Plan Target
88.8%	89%	**90%**	91%



Strategic Plan Goal

English Learner Progress



English Learner Progress

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
English Learner Progress	34.3	+1.3

Highlight: Increase English Learner Progress

Gardner Park
Elementary School

Strategic Plan Goal:
Increase EL Progress

2024-25 Baseline	2025-26 Target	2025-26 Actual	2030 Strategic Plan Target
33.0%	35.8%	**34.3%**	48%



Performance Metric

ACT & WorkKeys

High School Student Benchmarks and Strategic Plan Progress



ACT - High School

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Composite ACT Score of 17 or Higher	46.6	+0.8

WorkKeys - High School

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Silver Certificate or Higher	57.2	+1.3

ACT/WorkKeys - High School

	Percent of Students	Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Met Benchmark on ACT or WorkKeys	54.6	+7.4

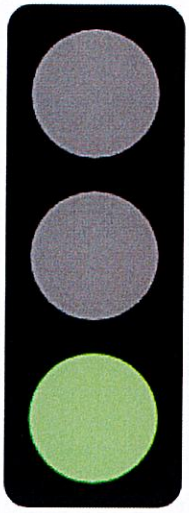
Highlight: Increase ACT/Workkeys in High School

East Gaston High School

Strategic Plan Goal:

Increase ACT/Workkeys Composite

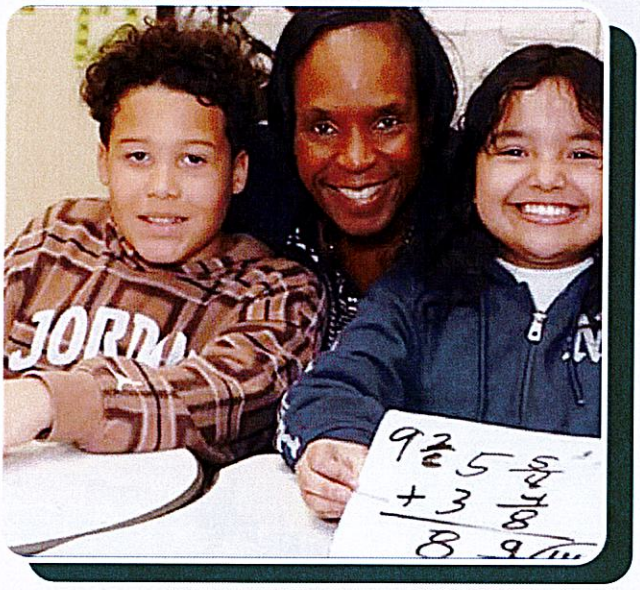
2024-25 Baseline	2025-26 Target	2025-26 Actual	2030 Strategic Plan Target
47.2%	50%	**54.6%**	62%



GCS TRANSFORMATION MODEL

Innovation Schools

Replicable Model for Student Success



Core Strategy Pillar

Innovation School Strategy

01

Data Driven Principal Initiative

02

NC Advanced Teacher Roles (ATR) Grant

03

High Quality Professional Development and Partnerships

Enrollment and Demographics

Innovation Schools Overview

7,240

Total Students Served

Enrolled across 10 schools spanning elementary, middle, and high school grades.

32.3% Hispanic/Latino

43.7% Black/African American

Representing a rich, racially and ethnically diverse student network.

1,520 students

English Learners

1,108 students

Exceptional Children Services

Instructional & Support Impact

Our reported gains occurred across this diverse network of schools, demonstrating progress in the communities with the greatest instructional and support needs.

INNOVATION SCHOOLS

A Journey of Continuous Improvement and Academic Excellence

Student Proficiency	**10 of 10 schools increased**	Sherwood +19.1; Ashbrook +12.4; Grier +8.2
Academic Growth	**9 of 10 met/exceeded**	7 schools exceeded growth; 2 highest growth scores in district (Southwest, Grier)
Overall School Performance Score	**10 of 10 schools increased**	Sherwood +20; Ashbrook +14; Lingerfeldt +12
School Performance Grades	**5 schools improved grade**	Sherwood: F to C; Ashbrook: 1 pt away from B
Low-Performing Designation	**5 schools exited status**	Lingerfeldt, Pleasant Ridge, Sherwood, Southwest, Woodhill

Highlights: Innovation Schools

Sherwood Elementary School

Grier Middle School

Ashbrook High School

Gaston County Schools — Strategic Goals

Academics that Build Pathways to Student Success

Strategic Priority: Empower all students to identify, explore, and achieve their career and life goals through high-quality instruction and individualized support.

GOAL A.1 GLP Target
Increase Grade Level Proficiency (GLP) from 48.4% to 60%*
Data: NC EOG & EOC Assessments

GOAL A.2 Growth Target
Increase schools meeting/exceeding growth from 71% to 75%
Data: NCDPI Accountability Model

GOAL A.3 Performance
Reduce low-performing schools from 15 to 5 or fewer
Data: NCDPI Accountability Model

GOAL A.4 Graduation Rate
Increase NCDPI 4-year cohort graduation rate from 88.8% to 91%
Data: NCDPI Accountability Model

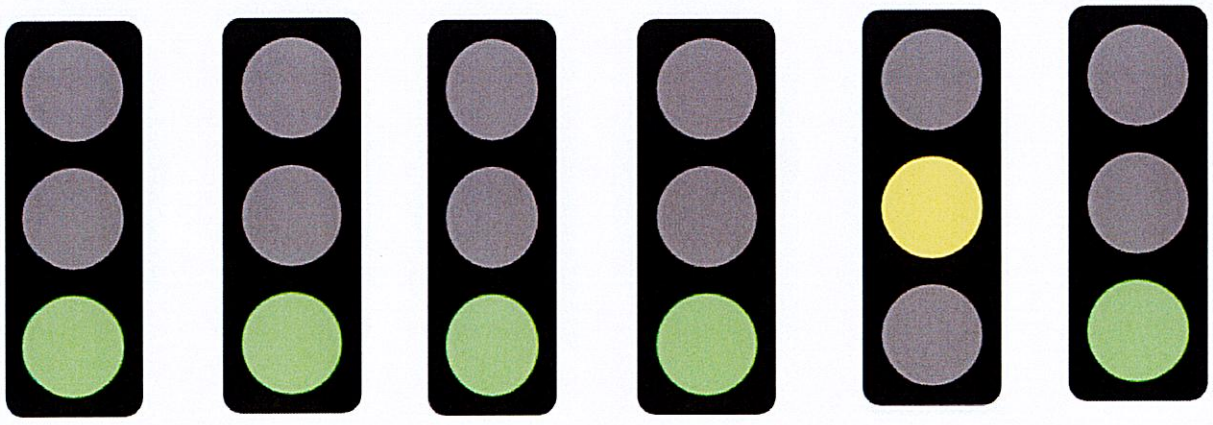
GOAL A.5 EL Progress
Increase the percentage of students meeting EL progress from 33% to 48%
Data: WIDA Access (ELL Progress)

GOAL A.6 ACT/WorkKeys
Increase composite percentile from 47% to 62%
Data: ACT/Workkeys Composite

*Note: Goals will be revised based on new baseline numbers if new EOGs/EOCs are implemented based on revised standards.

Strategic Plan Goals

Increase Grade Level Proficiency	Increase Schools Meeting/ Exceeding Growth	Decrease Low Performing Schools	Increase Graduation Rate	Increase EL Progress	Increase ACT & WorkKeys




Discussion


Thank you