WOODS CHARTER SCHOOL
BOARD MEETING AGENDA
Thursday, September 17, 2026

1. Welcome
   a. Reading of the board norms

2. Public Comment

3. Consent Agenda
   a. Principal's Report presented by Cotton Bryan
   b. Minutes from June 2026 meeting

3. Reports & Presentation of Committee Charters
   a. Student Update –
   b. Faculty Update – Rachel Lawrence
   c. Finance Committee Report – Courtney Cabe
   d. Foundation Report – Jessica Oliver
   e. Communications Committee Report – Doreen Messick
   f. Personnel Committee Report –
   g. Board Development Report – Charmaine Terregino

4. Business
   a. Old Business - None
   b. New Business -
      i. Approval of the Principal's Goals for 2026-2027 school year (vote needed)
      ii. Committee chair and member appointments (vote needed)
      iii. Preliminary discussion regarding WCS Charter Renewal and goals for Self-Study

5. Closed Session
   i. Confidential personnel matter

6. Adjournment Session
   Action Taken/Voted
   Adjournment

Principal's Report
September 17, 2026

There's a lot of work and a lot of joy in getting a new school year off the ground. We are lucky to have a team of adults at Woods who are smart, experienced, big-hearted, and creative. It's a heavy lift – but with all hands, heads, and hearts devoted to the shared task, we can make the lift without injury!

I'm feeling especially thankful for the new faculty members who have joined us this year. They've brought a really wonderful mix of insight and energy. We have four new faculty members and two "only-sort-a new" members (i.e., they've served at Woods in some capacity before). Bios attached at end of report.

Elementary
Autum Torain, 1st Grade
Jennifer Tuite, 2nd Grade
Kristen Gagné, 4th Grade

High School
Greg Hamer, Biology and AP Biology

School Counselor
Christine Park

Exceptional Children
Celia Newhart, E.C. Teacher

Admin Team Retreat 2026-27
The Admin Team went offsite for three days at St. Francis Springs, a retreat center north of Greensboro, for reflection, visioning, and planning. We have always gone offsite for our opening retreat, but this is the first time we've been overnight. It made for the strongest start we've experienced, and we all came away grateful for the time for deeper thinking and connection. It was especially helpful to have the extra time and focus given that we have Kelly Norris joining us as an administrative intern this year as part of her Principal Fellows Program.

The Admin Team recommitted to these shared norms for how we work together:

- Work from a shared vision and keep it at the center.
- Treat all people with respect.
- Communicate openly and honestly.

- Be open to giving and receiving feedback and pushback.
- Provide support without judgment.
- Work and play together.
- Be present when you're present.
- Listen deeply.
- Default to trust.
- Empower each other to take risks.
- Monitor air time.
- Freedom to venture non-fully formed ideas.
- No crud-talking behind backs.
- Lead with the positive. No skunking.

We agreed that we want to move conversations forward on these hot topics:

- Supporting new teachers for success in their first year(s) at Woods
- Academic honesty and intellectual authenticity in an AI world
- Matching high standards with high support
- Building whole-school communication that is direct, proactive, helpful, and humanized
- Carrying forward the work of the Faculty Growth and Evaluation Task Force

Community Work Day

On Saturday August 15th, we accomplished all of the indoor and outdoor items on our very large task list! Thank you volunteers for a day that was both fun and productive. We had about 130 volunteers in attendance.

There's an FAQ for That

We're putting together an ever-growing collection of FAQs to help families navigate the World of Woods. The ones we have on the website to date:

Community Work Day
Drop-Off and Pick-Up
Lunch Program
Woods Calendar
Community Campout
MS/HS Enrichments
Whom Do I Contact When . . .

Get Ready for These Fall Events

September

17 Senior Retreat
23 MS and HS Parent Orientation Night

30 College Night

October

3 Community Campout
7 Walk to School Day
16 Grandparent & Special Friends' Day
22-23 Fall Break
29 Harvest Day Parade
30 P/T Conferences

Faculty Roster for 2026-27

First name	Last name	Role	PT/FT	%
Liz	Andrews	High School Director	Full-Time	100
Margaret	Andrews	6th Grade ELA/Social Studies Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Vincent	Atkinson	Math Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Amber	Bates	E.C. Teacher, 504 Coordinator	Full-Time	100
Angela	Bell	Occupational Therapist	Full-Time	90
Paget	Blythe	Assistant Testing Coordinator	Part-Time	
Pascale	Bost	Elementary French Teacher	Part-Time	70
Jessica	Bowman	Testing Coordinator	Part-Time	
Jessie	Brown	MS/HS Art Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Cotton	Bryan	Principal	Full-Time	100
Ana Parris	Buckmaster	3rd Grade Teacher	Full-Time	100
Gwendolen	Bushek	MS Electives, MS French, MS Advisor, Yearbook Advisor, Journalism, ESL Coordinator	Full-Time	100
Craig	Carlson	Economics & Personal Finance	Full-Time	100
Mikayla	Castellano	E.C. Teacher	Full-Time	100
Lindis	Chetwynd	HS Science Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Ella	Clarke	English Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Trina	Cole	Interventionist	Full-Time	100
Vanessa	Costa	Spanish Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Stephanie	Derfeuil	French Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Shirley	Edwards	Front Receptionist	Part-Time	
Trudy-Ann	Elliott	3rd Grade Teacher	Full-Time	100
Sara	Fields	4th Grade Teacher	Full-Time	100
Rachel	Finkelstein	English Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Kristen	Gagne	4th Grade Teacher	Full-Time	100
Jordan	Gatcomb	Athletics Director, 9th Grade PE/Health	Full-Time	100
Lynne	Giguere	EC Teacher	Full-Time	100

Rosline	Grant	Admissions Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, Morning Receptionist	Part-Time	80
Becki	Green	Teaching Assistant/Driveline Coordinator	Full-Time	100
Gregory	Hamer	Biology Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Karen	Hawkins	History Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Aimee	Haygood	Math Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Deborah	Hoodiman	E.C. Teacher	Full-Time	100
Jamie	Horil	Lunch Program Coordinator	Full-Time	100
Kimberly	Houston	School Nurse	Full-Time	
Creighton	Irons	Music Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Heather	Jester	ES/MS Electives	Part-Time	40
David	Johnson	E.C. Teacher	Full-Time	100
Ann	Kaiyala	Director of Personnel, Director of Summer Program, Director of Special Services, Title IX Coordinator	Full-Time	100
Jessica	Knight-Pass	Movement/Dance Teacher, After-School Care Assistant	Full-Time	100
Tiffany	Langino	HS Civics Teacher	Part-Time	50
Rachel	Lawrence	Math and Computer Science Teacher, Advisor, Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Full-Time	100
Ashley	Lorusso	Elementary Art Teacher	Part-Time	50
Jim	Malone	Facilities Manager	Full-Time	100
Alexander	Massengale	History Teacher	Part-Time	50
Hannah	Mayalu	Teaching Assistant/Instructional Aide	Full-Time	100
Emily	Merletto	MS/HS Spanish Teacher	Full-Time	100
Alexa	Middlesworth	Teaching Assistant/Instructional Aide/Bus Driver	Full-Time	100
Jonathan	Moist	E.C. Teacher	Full-Time	100
Janet	Moody	Science Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Kimberley	Moody	Math Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Celia	Newhart	E.C. Teacher	Full-Time	100
Kelly	Norris	MSA Intern	Full-Time	100
Jamie	Nuss	Teaching Assistant, Bus Driver	Full-Time	100
Richard	Nuss	IT Technician	Full-Time	80
Denise	O'Gorman	HS Science Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Jessica	Oliver	Director of Advancement	Part-Time	80
Christine	Park	School Counselor	Full-Time	100
Kristen	Pass	Teaching Assistant, Bus Driver, Teaching Assistant Coordinator	Full-Time	80
Misty	Peeler	English/Social Studies Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Marie	Rape	Assistant School Nurse	Part-Time	20
Amy	Reams	MS PE	Full-Time	100
Kimberly	Rossi	Business Manager, Communications Coordinator	Part-Time	80
Kathi	Shaw	Front Receptionist, Assistant to Directors	Part-Time	90
John	Sheridan	Math Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Jeremy	Simons	Assistant Facilities Manager, Bus Driver	Full-Time	100
Grace	Siplon	7th/8th Grade ELA, Advisor	Full-Time	100

Cynthia	Sperry	Assistant Principal, K-8 Director	Full-Time	100
Kathleen	St. Lawrence	E.C. Coordinator	Full-Time	100
Anna	Thrower	Registrar, Data Manager	Part-Time	80
Jillann	Todero	Speech Language Pathologist	Full-Time	100
Autum	Torain	1st Grade Teacher	Full-Time	100
Taylor	Transue	1st Grade Teacher	Full-Time	100
Jennifer	Tuite	2nd Grade Teacher	Full-Time	100
Leah	Tyner	Kindergarten Teacher	Full-Time	100
Michelle	Valdes	MS Spanish	Part-Time	48
Ursula	Valgus	Reading Interventionist, MTSS Coordinator	Full-Time	80
Robin	Wagoner	Social Studies Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Jessica	Walden-Gray	MS Science Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Beverly	West	2nd Grade Teacher	Full-Time	100
Amanda	Westle	Kindergarten Teacher	Full-Time	100
Brittany	Wilson	MS Math Teacher, Advisor	Full-Time	100
Courtney	Wilson	EC Teacher	Full-Time	100
Carmen	Wood	Elementary P.E. Teacher	Full-Time	100

New Faculty Bios and Pics (attached)

Principal's Goals for 2026-27 Draft (attached)

DRAFT -- Principal Goals 2026-27 -- DRAFT

Overall goal: Let's keep moving Woods forward on the path to excellence in a way that's true to The Woods Way!

1. **Prioritize communication – to families, to our faculty – that is clear, direct, proactive, and humanized.**
   - Explicitly communicate when and how (through which media) we communicate to families.
   - Define ownership — who "owns" which communication so messages aren't duplicated, contradictory, or dropped.
   - Build a communications calendar mapped to the school calendar to avoid late and last-minute communications.
   - Close the loop directly on feedback received ("you said, we did").
   - Apply the same standards (clear, direct, proactive, humanized) to faculty-to-faculty communications (not just school-to-family). Let internal clarity drive external clarity.
   - Convey directly and explicitly to high school parents and students the ways the school supports the college admissions process.
   - Build a library of Woods F.A.Q.s to assist newcomers to our community.

2. **Support, retain, and develop our faculty.**
   - Evolve and implement the growth and evaluation recommendations from last year's Growth and Evaluation Task Force.
   - Provide regular and varied forms of constructive feedback for all faculty.
   - Hold one-on-one listening sessions with all teaching faculty 1x/semester.
   - Steward processes for reflective practice. (e.g., peer-to-peer observations, school visits, teacher book groups, instructional rounds, evaluations, Beginning Teacher Support Program, etc.)
   - Continue Project Marigold to build collegiality and to emphasize the need for faculty self-care.
   - Recognizing the overall teacher shortage in our region, boost our efforts at recruitment, ensuring that we're as proactive and thorough as possible in connecting prospective teachers to Woods.

3. **Strengthen and deepen the sense of community at Woods as experienced by students, faculty, and parents.**
   - Nurture the culture of Woods to make sure it continues to grow as a place that is inclusive, community-minded, and relationship-based where respect, civility, and a playful spirit thrive.
   - Foster a culture that supports diversity of thought and constructive, civil discourse.
   - Host community-building events for students, parents, faculty: e.g., Community Workday, All School Campout, Grandparents'/Special Friends' Day, Senior Retreat, 9th Grade Retreat, Into the Woods 5-K, 8th Grade Leadership Summit, Senior Dinner, etc.

4. **Practice Leadership-by-Walking-Around.**
   - Be present in classrooms, hallways, and at extracurricular/athletic events.
   - Make regular visits to all classrooms.

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5. Collaborating with the Board, Board Treasurer, and Finance Committee, effectively steward high-level initiatives particular to this school year.

- Given that our current financing on our building debt ends in August 2027, lead a process for refinancing the balloon payment on that debt that yields the best possible rate and terms for the school's long-term financial health.
- Enfold into the refinancing process a way to build a permanent structure in place of Butterscotch Basecamp and a new playground.
- Assist the Board in securing a ten-year renewal of our charter through the Office of Charter School's charter renewal process.

6. Diversify our student body by increasing the diversity of our lottery pool and by attracting more job applicants from teachers of color.

- Conduct a focused postcard campaign to boost enrollment in our Economic Diversity lottery.
- Organize a team of Woods parent ambassadors to help attract more families to admissions tours.
- Ensure that admissions materials are broadcast widely, strategically, and available in Spanish.

7. Oversee consistent, firm enforcement of our School Handbook.

- Articulate to Woods families and faculty our philosophy and procedures governing student discipline.
- Close the loop directly on disciplinary reports received ("you reported this, here's what we've done").
- Provide consistency and clarity to discipline processes and consequences. Lead faculty in being more unified and cohesive in how we respond to infractions. Be as transparent as possible with faculty and families around Code of Conduct issues.

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New Faculty 2026-27

We are thrilled – and grateful – to be welcoming these devoted educators to our faculty team this year!

Kristen Gagné, 4th Grade

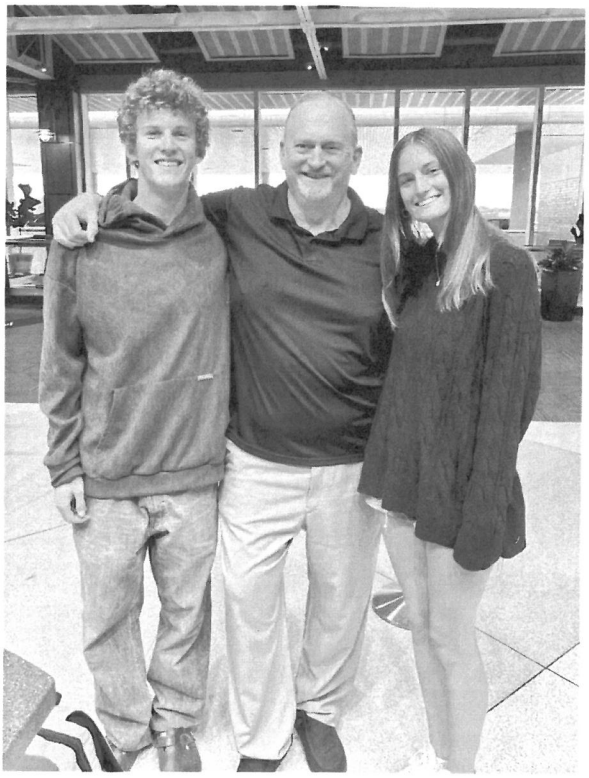


I was born and raised in Maine. If it involved the outdoors, I was all in—climbing trees, catching fish, playing sports, and disappearing into elaborate imaginary worlds. Curiosity was my constant companion, and my long-suffering parents patiently fielded approximately one million questions.

For years, I was convinced I would become a doctor. My favorite aunt is a physician, and I loved flipping through her enormous medical textbooks, confidently diagnosing myself with every fascinating disease I discovered. (Thankfully, I survived them all.) I aimed my education toward medicine. Then, at sixteen, everything changed. A high school French club trip to France turned my world into Technicolor. My love of science never disappeared, but my curiosity packed a passport and decided to see the world. Since then, I've hiked the breathtaking Nā Pali Coast in Kaua'i, watched the sun rise over Angkor Wat, parachuted above the Swiss Alps, wandered the historic streets of Mumbai, and collected countless adventures that have shaped the way I see the world.

That same spirit of exploration has carried me through life, education, and work in Montreal, Honolulu, New York, Singapore, Fairbanks, and beyond. Every place has taught me something new, but Chapel Hill is where my children and I have happily planted our roots. Along the way, I've taught children and adults in schools, coached professionals in businesses as a language consultant, and even started companies of my own. Now, as the parent of school-aged children, I appreciate more deeply than ever the power of a joyful, meaningful education. The classroom has always felt like the place where curiosity comes alive—and, after quite a few adventures, I've discovered it's exactly where I belong. I couldn't be more excited to be part of the Woods community with all of you!

Greg Hamer, High School Biology and AP Biology



I have 25+ years teaching in public and private schools in Australia, The United States, China, and Cameroon.

My son William was born in Perth (Western Australia), is currently a sophomore at App. State, and is one of the most considerate people I know. My daughter Matilda (a.k.a. Tilly) was born in Greensboro, is currently a senior at Greensboro Day School, and has one of the highest EQs of anyone I know.

Growing up in Perth I lived a mile or so from some of the best beaches in the world. In the summers, I was at the beach from sunup to sundown. When I wasn't at the beach, I was playing sport (football, cricket, soccer, tennis) from sunup to sundown. After serving in the Australian Army and graduating university, I traveled a lot. *A lot*. Eventually, I settled down, started teaching and came to the U.S. as part of the Visiting International Faculty program in 2000.

After some time teaching internationally, it was time to come back to NC. I'm excited about what Woods has to offer me as a professional teacher, and I'm excited to see what I can bring to the Woods community.

Celia Newhart, EC Teacher



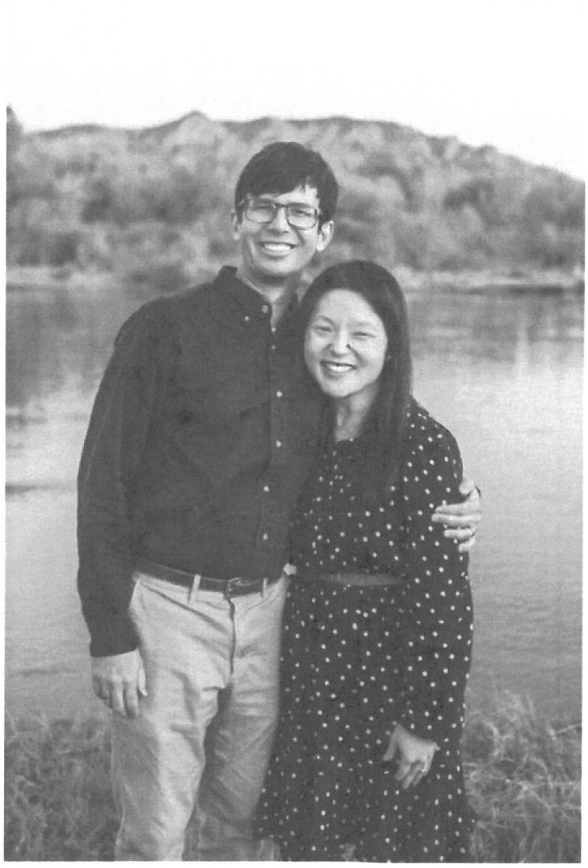
Hello Woods Charter families and faculty! I am excited to join your community as both a teacher and a parent. My journey in education spans 30 years in a variety of roles, including: special education teacher, program manager, coordinator of special programs, 504 Coordinator, and Educational Diagnostician. Having served in these roles, I've been fortunate to see education from almost every angle imaginable – and I still manage to learn something new every day. While I've worked with students in grades K-12 and enjoy them all, my favorite student groups are middle and high school.

For me, education is about the journey. Finding the route to help students express their capabilities is rarely a straight line or an easy road. Finding the route is what keeps me in education. The surprise of success when academics are challenging is a generous reward!

Three years ago my family relocated to Chapel Hill. We heard accolades about Woods almost immediately, from people whose judgement we trust. When we took a closer look we saw community, high academic standards, and a visible culture of positive learning environments. These are significant achievements, and they are also achievements that we value. My son will be starting 7th grade at Woods this year. I eagerly arrive as a teacher and a parent working with students, staff and families in 6th through 12th grades.

I look forward to joining the Woods team!

Christine Park, School Counselor



I'm excited to join Woods Charter School as the school counselor and to become part of such a wonderful school community. I have worked in education and school psychology for more than a decade, supporting students across elementary, middle, and high school. Throughout my career, I've loved getting to know students as individuals, helping them recognize their strengths, navigate challenges, build confidence, and feel supported as they grow. I believe that students thrive when they feel seen, heard, and valued, and I strive to create a welcoming and supportive space where students know they can come as they are.

I'm passionate about supporting the whole student—not only academically, but also socially and emotionally—and I look forward to partnering with students, families, and teachers throughout their time at Woods. I'm especially excited to get to know the Woods community and to support students as they discover their interests, develop their strengths, and think about the many possibilities ahead of them. Outside of school, I love spending time with my husband and four daughters, cooking, staying active, and reading. I'm looking forward to getting to know you and being part of the Woods community!

Autum Torain, 1st Grade



Hi Woods Community! My name is Autum Torain, and I am so excited to be joining Woods Charter School as a first-grade teacher! I earned my bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from UNC Greensboro and my master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Western Governors University. Before coming to Woods, I taught second grade, and I have truly loved growing as an educator and discovering more about the kind of classroom and learning environment I want to create for my students.

I have a heart for helping children grow both academically and socially. I want my classroom to be a place where every child feels seen, valued, loved, and encouraged to be exactly who they are. I believe some of the most meaningful learning happens when students feel comfortable taking chances, making mistakes, asking questions, and celebrating their growth along the way. I was drawn to Woods because I was ready for a new chapter in my teaching journey and wanted to be part of a community that values students as individuals, encourages meaningful learning, and gives teachers the opportunity to truly know and support their students. I'm especially excited to step into first grade and experience all of the learning, growth, and little moments that make this age so special!

Outside of the classroom, I love spending time with my family and friends, traveling, listening to music, and finding any reason to laugh and have a good time. I'm looking forward to getting to know my students, their families, my colleagues, and the entire Woods community. I'm incredibly grateful for this new beginning and so excited for everything this school year has in store!

Jennifer Tuite, 2nd Grade



Greetings! I'm excited to return to Woods after a move that took me away for around a decade. I was previously an EC teacher at Woods and helped with reading intervention. I have been in education teaching primarily second and third grade for over 20 years.

I grew up in Chapel Hill and earned my degree in Elementary Education at UNC-CH (Go Heels!), followed by a Master's in Education at Indiana University in Bloomington. After graduation, my husband, Ben and I returned to the Chapel Hill area to be closer to family and friends.

Our daughter, Sarah, was born in 2014 and our son, John, was born in 2016 (the last time I taught full time at Woods!) When I am not at school, you can probably find me swimming at the pool with my family in the summer and hiking the trails with Luna, our shih-poo (shih-tzu poodle) while listening to podcasts and all my favorite music. We also have two cats, Stardust and Coconut that are very attached to our daughter.

I am known for taking lots and lots of photos. I love photography and design and always find my camera roll overfull. I also love designing and creating social studies and science activities for my students. Finding ways to connect classroom learning to student's curiosity with real life connections is such a fun challenge. I love to continue to grow as a learner and recently started learning web design and digital creation techniques to enhance the activities I create for students.

I am passionate about helping students find the joy in learning as they build lifelong skills and confidence. I believe that all students can be successful and my job as a classroom teacher is to help and guide students to achieve their goals. I love teaching at Woods because of the supportive, kind, caring and safe environment for all!

Student Report

The school year is finally in full swing! Amidst becoming familiar with their classes and teachers, there are also a number of extracurricular activities starting up for students to discover new interests. With the club fair last Wednesday, both new and veteran students got to see a wide variety of student engagements. Some standout examples include: Psych Nerds, Mock Trial, and Nerf War Club. Student Council elections have also wrapped up this week, and the Council is set to meet next week for introductions, the voting of officer positions, and getting into planning for the year! Here are some notes on the high school grades that, however sparse before the Council's first meeting, are meant to contextualize and detail some of the events that are happening in high school.

The Seniors are on their Senior Retreat, coming together for a final year before heading into their futures. After having our Senior Sunrise last week, we are excited to be reflecting, playing, and relaxing to start these last nine months off right. However, the exciting (and slightly bittersweet) start of the year is accompanied by college applications, where students are also having to discern what specifically they want from their future.

Juniors are headed into a rather infamous year regarding intensity of study and proximity to important college decisions in the coming year. However, the class is taking it in stride; the Juniors are up to challenge. Regardless of whether it is starting a new club, using both elective slots to take AP Biology, or getting used to a higher workload, the Juniors are unabashed in taking on the new year.

Sophomores, now acquainted with high school, are taking on new responsibilities, similar to the Juniors. Today, they are seeing Playmaker's rendition of Oedipus, a book that they will study in English II for world literature. In a few cases, some have started a few clubs that they felt would add to the school atmosphere. Overall the sophomores are beginning to plan on a more long-term basis than they were when getting started in high school.

Freshmen are taking some of their first high school tests, getting to know teachers (and for new students: Woods as a school), and increasing their familiarity with high school life in general.

There is a theme between these grades in the first few weeks of the school year, and that is taking risks. This healthy knowledge that growth can only come with the possibility of failing is prevalent; it is being crystallized in the minds of Seniors, while the seeds of the idea are still taking root for underclassmen. In summary, it is great news that the students this year are unafraid of the year to come, and I commend the student body for the incredible learning and growth that is sure to take place.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: SEPTEMBER 2026

FOUNDATION BOARD

Last June, the Foundation Board welcomed three new directors: Jessica Griffiths, Victoria Harris, and Kaitlyn McKee. We are excited to have them join us! Each has served on the Auction Committee and they all have already made a significant impact on our fundraising efforts. We are also pleased to welcome Ashley Lorusso as our new faculty representative! We are grateful to all four for their willingness to share their time, talents, and enthusiasm in support of Woods and the Foundation. We look forward to the energy and ideas they will bring to our work this year! They join our team that includes President Maggie Borum, Vice President Ashley Abert, Treasurer Erin Grossmann, Secretary Nicki Schreiber, Directors Dana Crotts and Qiana Eaglin, along with Principal Cotton Bryan and me. Assistant Principal Cindy Sperry is not a voting member of the Board, but attends our meetings.

To kick off the year, we held a brainstorm last month, focused on how to improve our messaging around Annual Fund Week. We had a wonderful discussion and I am excited to launch the ideas we landed on!

ANNUAL FUND

Our Annual Fund goal this year is $585,000. Reaching $585,000 will mean we can support:

- $20,000 in Teacher/Director/Department Support ($17K last year)
- $9,500 in Faculty Appreciation
- $30,000 in Curricular Materials ($7.1K last year)
- $50,000 in Student Consumables ($24.4K last year)
- $40,000 in Professional Development ($31.5K last year)
- $338,500 in Faculty Supplement ($307.7K last year)
- $1,000 in Co-Curricular Club Matching
- $80,400 in Event and Operational Expenses

Of note, we are in the midst of our annual audit, again using the firm Sharpe Patel CPA.

As of August 31st, our Annual Fund stands just over $60K.

PARENTS WELCOME RECEPTION

We invited all parents of new Woods students to our Parents Welcome Reception last Thursday evening, here at Woods.

We had about 50 new parents and about 15 faculty members join us. We invited (via an email from Cotton) 72 new families, with 41 of those families being truly new to Woods. We also sent home a printed invite with all kindergarten students the first week of school and the kindergarten teachers included reminders last week in their weekly email to parents. I was happy with the turnout. Most of our Senior Sibs attended as well, and did a wonderful job introducing themselves to parents and inviting questions to be answered from a student perspective.

The first part of the night was spent socializing and enjoying a taco bar from Carolina Brewery. Then, we followed with the speaking portion of the event. Cotton, Rachel Lawrence, Amy King and myself spoke to the vision, culture, strengths, impacts, and needs of Woods.

The night is always a sweet one and leaves me inspired by and grateful for our superstar faculty who put so much into making Woods such a special place for our students.

ALL SCHOOL CAMPOUT

We have not had a full campout in two years, which I know some families really miss. This year's campout will be Saturday, October 3rd, and we are implementing a change which will allow us the flexibility to make a day-of call if we need to cancel instead of days in advance: everyone brings their own picnic this year.

Messaging has started going out and let's hope the tradition gets to live this year!

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

Our 6th Annual Walk to School Day will be on Wednesday, October 7th. We invite all school families to meet at the pavilion in Briar Chapel's Great Meadow Park before school. Cotton will again make the long trek from his house to meet us at the park! Our buses will drop students there, and then we'll head to school on foot together at 8:10am. Our Senior Sibs will be there to hand out participation bracelets to attendees and Chatham County Sheriff's Department will serve as our escorts.

ANNUAL FUND WEEK

As I mentioned, we had a super productive brainstorm around Annual Fund Week and we are definitely going to infuse some energy into the week!

This year, we are going to hold a raffle each day, and publicize the prizes leading into the week. If you donate or pledge by Monday, you will be entered into the daily raffle each and every day. If you donate on Tuesday, you'll be entered into Tuesday's raffle and every following raffle, and so on. In addition to the raffle, everyone will be working together to win whole school celebrations. So, the earlier you give, the more chances to win *and* every gift moves the entire school closer to the next celebration.

Raffle Prizes:

- Monday: 4 Wanderlust Tickets
- Tuesday: Family of special Woods shirts + Pet on Front Cover of School Calendar
- Wednesday: Basket of Needohs
- Thursday: $200 Kipos Gift Card
- Friday: Door Dash lunch for 1 week for 1 student + teacher of choice
- PLUS: We'll have breaking news mid-week (shhhh!), and promote at Grandparents Day, that a generous family has donated Thanksgiving Week at their Myrtle Beach Condo. All who donate at some point during the week will be entered into the drawing for this incredible prize.

Whole School Lunch Celebrations:

- 50% participation: Ice Pop for everyone
- 60% participation: "Woods Turns Up" DJ Dance Party
- 70% Participation: Alsies Ice Cream Truck
- 80% Participation: Inflatable Obstacle Course & Gaming Truck

In addition to new prizes, we have a robust communication plan for the week, which involves:

- Packets mailed home, Woods News and Woods social media messaging;
- Components of the packet will also go home in elementary folders at the end of the week before AFW;
- A video (inspired by Dolly Parton!!) promoting our Bridge the Gap messaging – just wait for this one!
- Giving Board up all week in lobby and Giving Board-esque signs lining the car line;
- Volunteers in the car line holding sings with QR codes to donate, plus handing out slips of paper with the QR code; and
- Facebook Lives all week!

We will end the week with Grandparents' & Special Friends' Day. This week, postcard invites went home with elementary students to send to their guests. We'll promote the morning to everyone else via Woods News and social media next week. Creighton Irons, Jessi Knight and Ashley Lorusso are putting together what I know will be an incredible show for our guests. Our 8th grade volunteers will again be our student ambassadors working the check-in table, leading tours and serving lunch. On the donation front, we have exciting news: an anonymous donor will match up to $25,000 in donations that come in that morning!

We are looking forward to a packed next month that hopefully has a big impact on our Annual Fund!

2026-27 EVENTS

SEPTEMEBER 10	NEW PARENTS WELCOME RECEPTION
OCTOBER 3	ALL SCHOOL CAMPOUT
OCTOBER 7	WALK TO SCHOOL DAY
OCTOBER 12-16	ANNUAL FUND WEEK
OCTOBER 16	GRANDPARENTS & SPECIAL FRIENDS DAY
DECEMBER 5	INTO THE WOODS 5K
DECEMBER 10	McINTYRE'S BOOKS SHOP-IN DAY
MARCH 18-19	BOOK FAIR
APRIL 23	BENEFIT AUCTION

2026-27 GRANTS TO WCS

Individual Teacher, Director & Dept Support	Up to $20,000.00

Faculty Appreciation Events	Up to $9,500.00
Curricular Materials	$10,640.37
Student Consumables	$44,408.94
Professional Development	$5,370.36

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

As of 08/31/26

Fidelity Bank Checking: $369,396 ($209,492 is designated)

Treasury Bill: $154,317

Woods Endowment: $94,450

LPL Financial: $55

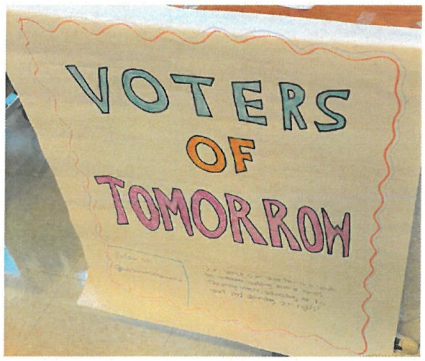
September 2026 Faculty Board Report
Prepared by Rachel Lawrence
September 17, 2026

The school year is off to a great start! Field trips are underway with 10th graders attending a play at PlayMakers in Chapel Hill today and Seniors away today and tomorrow on their yearly senior retreat.

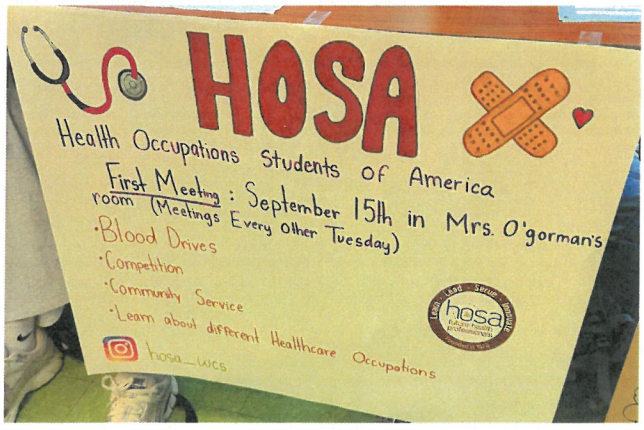
High School held their annual club fair with the usual wide array of new and returning student lead clubs.



Yearbook, the club and the class, won an award last year from the North Carolina Scholastic Press Association in their annual statewide media contest. This award acknowledged the growth and demonstration of journalistic standards by the Yearbook staff.









Student Council elections are complete with the following students elected (bolded names are at large reps). Baird will join us next month, as he is away on the senior retreat.

9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Poppy Protzman	**Nathan Dilworth**	**Sonia Messick**	**Baird Ritter**
Delilah Feickert	Kelsie Houston	Maya Hinkle	Eliza Elk
Neil Messick	Oliver Selleck	Sarah Ahmed	Dara Sudhir

Middle School Science

7th graders started out the year with kidney bean growth experiments. We are exploring experimental design, making observations, recording and organizing data, and graphing. We've also dissected kidney beans and are learning how plants grow and the functions of different plant parts. Next we'll be taking a close look at how plants transport water and nutrients from roots to leaves and hopefully will see these beans bloom.

8th graders are diving into physical properties of matter. We started the year with students designing their own length and volume measuring tools using a paint stirrer and a glass jar. We've been working hard to better understand why and how instrument precision matters. We've also spent a lot of time looking at class data to discuss how different people can get different measurements even using the same tools. We've then applied that knowledge to exploring the physical properties of four mystery minerals. This will launch us into a discussion of metals vs. non-metals and diving into the Periodic Table.

