

BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

DEPARTMENT: Communications/Public
Information Department

TOPIC: GOOD NEWS

FOR THE MONTH OF: December 2023

1. The following educators received grants offered by the Kines family in memory of Kay Searce, who taught for 31 years at **Bessemer City Primary School; Bryan Nichols, Holbrook Middle School; Amandah Graham, Chapel Grove Elementary; Marissa Cabrera, Page Primary; Allison Harbin, Chavis Middle School; Tiffany Pursley, North Belmont Elementary; Caletra Miller, Pleasant Ridge Elementary; Angela Greason, Chavis Middle School; Amy Jefferies, Southwest Middle School; Meg Richards, Belmont Middle School; Shandrai Silva, Hawks Nest STEAM Academy; Dr. Eileen Yantz, Lingerfeldt Elementary; Paula Castro, Warlick Academy, Kailey Galloway, East Gaston High School; Janice Khan, Chapel Grove Elementary; and Katie Johnson, Haley Hopper, and Amber Flowers; Hawks Nest STEAM Academy.**
2. The following financial secretaries successfully completed the North Carolina Association of School Business Officials (NCASBO) Treasurer's Academy: **Kellie Auten, Page Primary; Donna Bowman, North Belmont Elementary; Monika Galloway, Woodhill Elementary; Jamie Shepker, Chavis Middle School; and Shannon Wright, Mount Holly Middle School.**
3. The following players were named to the Big South 3A all-conference football team: **Trent Mitchell, Ashbrook High School, offensive lineman of the year; Letrasky Pressley, Ashbrook High School, defensive lineman of the year; and Charlie Birtwhistle, South Point High School, specialist of the year.** In addition, the following players were named to the Big South 3A first-team all-conference: **Patrick Blee, South Point High School; Chyance Ford, South Point High School; Gage Phalin, North Gaston High School; Hudson Spargo, South Point High School; Da'Montia Duff, Hunter Huss High School; Caleb Gordon, Ashbrook High School; Winter Kincaid, South Point High School; Jurnee Lattimore, North Gaston High School; Gene Neely, Hunter Huss High School; and David Howard, Forestview High School.**
4. **Lorena Ruis Cely of Stuart W. Cramer High School and Mattie Grace Branham of East Gaston High School** were awarded an \$8,000 scholarship at the UNC-Charlotte Invitational Honor Band Clinic. The scholarship will support their pursuit of music education at UNC-Charlotte.
5. The following schools won county sports championships: **Mount Holly Middle**, boys soccer; **Cramerton Middle**, volleyball; and **Belmont Middle**, wrestling.
6. **Pinewood Elementary** (first place) and **Cramerton Middle** (second place) won awards in the Festival of Trees competition sponsored by the City of Belmont.

7. The **Ashbrook High School** cheerleading team finished in first place in the junior varsity non-building D1 game day category at the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) Cheer Invitational.
8. **Bessemer City Central Elementary** won the “Hour of Code” challenge, which featured elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in Gaston County. The **Gaston County Schools** instructional technology facilitators organized the competition.
9. **Bessemer City High School** student **Abby Ratte** won the title of Miss Bessemer City High School 2024 and a \$500 scholarship. She also won the people’s choice award. **Maddie Smith** was named the first runner-up, **Cloey Hamrick** was named the second runner-up, and **Allison Weeks** was named Miss Congeniality.
10. **Cherryville High School** student **Emily Allen** was chosen for the North Carolina Volleyball Coaches Association 1A all-state team.
11. The **Cherryville High School** cheerleading team finished in first place at the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) Cheer Invitational in the performance cheer varsity small D2 category. In addition, the school finished in second place in the game day varsity small D2 category.
12. Students at **Cherryville High School** participated in a presentation by officers from the Cherryville Police Department that focused on what it is like to work in law enforcement and public safety. The officers shared information about the uniforms they wear and the equipment they use, staged a search demonstration involving the K9 dog, and answered questions. The police department’s presentation coincided with **Cherryville High School** being the home of Gaston County Schools’ Public Service Academy for grades 9-12.
13. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** senior **Drew Crotts** was named to the North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association boys all-state team. In addition, **Drew Crotts**, **JR Driggers**, **Carter Mammano**, **Luke Mingus**, and **Connor Smith** were named to the North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association Region 9 team.
14. **East Gaston High School** held a canned goods drive and collected 2,310 items for the food pantry at First United Methodist Church at Common Ground.
15. **East Gaston High School** conducted a fine arts showcase on November 30 that featured performances by the school’s band, chorus, and dance classes. In addition, students had various pieces of artwork on display.
16. The **East Gaston High School** cheerleading team finished in first place at the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) Cheer Invitational in the game day varsity medium D2 category.
17. **East Gaston High School** cheerleader **Madison Waugh** was selected to receive the 2023 North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) cheerleading scholarship.

18. The **Forestview High School** cheerleading team finished in fourth place at the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) Cheer Invitational in the game day varsity non-tumbling coed D1 category.
19. **W.C. Friday Middle School** student **Carson Britton** received a wooden trophy, certificate, and \$200 gift card for winning the 2023 Forest Products Week essay contest for middle schools.
20. **Angela Congelli**, a teacher at **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences**, and her students actively engage in Buddy Break sessions for Nathaniel's Hope every Saturday morning. During the sessions, the students join Mrs. Congelli in spending time with and offering respite care to children with disabilities. This valuable support program allows parents the opportunity to run errands or engage in self-care activities.
21. **Afiyah Raja**, **Alyssa Carpenter**, **Sadie Morton**, and **Marissa LeMoine**, with guidance from therapist Rose Planer, have established the first dating violence awareness club in Gaston County called "YOU-th." This 30-member club, led by **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences** students, aims to promote healthy relationships and boundaries. In February, during dating violence awareness month, they plan to launch an awareness campaign at school and Gaston College. **Desiree Lackey**, the school counselor, serves as the faculty adviser. Their goal is to extend their advocacy to other high schools.
22. Members of the **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences** National Honor Society delivered 10 handmade fleece knot blankets to CaroMont Health for cancer patients. Students worked in teams to make the blankets themselves during their December meeting. **Lisa Neisler** is the adviser.
23. Students in the **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences** Chick-Fil-A Leader Academy handmade and delivered 250 holiday cards to The Greens and Peak nursing homes. Students assisted staff with hanging December event calendars, playing games, and singing songs to the residents. Freshman **Rylan Cochran** played the piano for residents at The Greens. **Tommy Ramkissoon** and **Desiree Lackey** are the advisers.
24. **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences** freshman **Brooklyn Justice** was the only student from her school to submit an original piece of artwork and a 60-word description explaining how her artwork helped create hope in the world. Sponsored by the Rotary Club, the art contest was open to grades 9-12 students in 14 different counties.
25. **Highland School of Technology** has been recognized by the College Board as a 2023 AP (Advanced Placement) Honor Roll School. Out of 4,570 eligible high schools, Highland is in the top 6 percent of schools (914) that received the Gold Level AP Honor Roll School recognition.
26. **Highland School of Technology** students **Madison Darnell** and **Katelin Vaher** were named to the 2023 North Carolina High School Tennis Coaches Association's all-state team. Additionally, students **Alise Mayers** and **Madison Thompson** were named to the North Carolina Volleyball Coaches Association's all-state team.

27. **Holbrook Middle School** eighth-grader **Elijah Christenbury** was chosen as the Most Outstanding Wrestler at the 2023 Gaston County middle school wrestling tournament. He finished his three-year middle school career with a perfect record of 39-0, winning three straight county championships.
28. Art teacher **Erin Hirst** was able to secure a spirit rock for **Lingerfeldt Elementary**.
29. **Parker Stillwell**, a **Lowell Elementary** fourth grader, won the “Proudest Kid in Gaston County” essay contest sponsored by Gaston Together.
30. The following **North Gaston High School** student-athletes were named to the North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association Region 9 team: **Joan Bonilla**, **Andres Hawkins**, **Edison Pena**, **Donovan Reyes Lopez**, and **Bryson Stroud**.
31. **Pinewood Elementary** received a check for \$30,000 from National Gypsum, which will be used to enhance education with new resources and support various school activities.
32. The **Rankin Elementary** safety patrol hosted a food drive for the Mount Holly Community Relief Organization, and students donated a total of 3,123 items.
33. Office Max/Depot in Gastonia selected **Robinson Elementary** for its back-to-school donations drive, resulting in a generous contribution of more than \$5,000 in supplies.
34. **Stanley Middle School** inducted 44 band and chorus students into the Tri-M Music Honor Society on December 8.
35. **South Point High School** senior **Samantha Narcisso** was named a QuestBridge Scholar. Through the QuestBridge program, she will receive a full-tuition scholarship valued at nearly \$400,000 to attend Boston College.
36. The **South Point High School** cheerleading team finished in third place at the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) Cheer Invitational in the performance cheer varsity super D1 category.
37. **Southwest Middle School** held a food drive and collected 2,699 food items for the **Webb Street School** food pantry.
38. Students and staff represented **South Point High School**, **Belmont Middle School**, **Belmont Central Elementary**, and **North Belmont Elementary** in the Belmont Christmas parade on November 28. Gaston County Principal of the Year **Justin Beam** and Gaston County Teacher of the Year **Melissa Clemments** rode on a float. Among the school-related entries were the South Point marching band, JROTC, cheerleaders, Miss South Point **Lauren Arthurs**, and homecoming queen **Lochlan Triplet**, and students from Belmont Central riding on the classic school bus.