

## BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

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**DEPARTMENT:** Communications/Public  
Information Department

**TOPIC: GOOD NEWS**

**FOR THE MONTH OF:** June 2023

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1. **Gaston County Schools** had 26 students in the Class of 2023 to earn valedictorian or salutatorian honors. The students were recognized during high school graduation for their commitment to academic excellence.
2. **Gage Vernon of Cherryville High School** and **Karley Albanese of Forestview High School** achieved 13 years of perfect attendance. During their high school's graduation ceremony, they received a perfect attendance plaque from the Gaston County Board of Education in recognition of their outstanding accomplishment.
3. **Gaston County Schools** held a Career Signing Day program for 15 seniors to sign a "letter of intent" to accept a job offer with one of 10 companies: McGee Brothers, U.S. Army, Dixon Valve and Coupling, Gaston Emergency Medical Services (GEMS), GSM Services, Blum, Tindol Ford, Our Kids Learning, Steel Specialty, and Momentum Tire and Car Care. The following students were featured during the ceremony: **Edgar Rodriguez Perez, Forestview High School; Johnny Kbuor, Forestview High School; Seth Glance, Bessemer City High School; Karmyn Smith, Hunter Huss High School; Corey Wilson, Hunter Huss High School; Collin Wells, South Point High School; Vincent Latta, Highland School of Technology; Shandreona Rainey, Ashbrook High School; Jullien Davis, Ashbrook High School; Ragan Hovis, Cherryville High School; Dawson Aldridge, North Gaston High School; Jacquelin Perez Aguirre, North Gaston High School; Justin Hash, North Gaston High School; Dylan Polk, North Gaston High School, and Hunter Pressley, Stuart W. Cramer High School.**
4. **Whitney Marr of Robinson Elementary** was named the 2023 Linda Rader New Teacher of the Year, and **Belinda Lewis of Lowell Elementary** was chosen as the Teacher Assistant of the Year.
5. **Michael Nance**, director of safety and security, was selected as the GCAEOP (Gaston County Association of Educational Office Professionals) Administrator of the Year, and **Vicki Welch**, financial secretary at **Cramerton Middle School**, was selected as the GCAEOP Educational Office Professional of the Year. GCAEOP also presented its annual scholarship to **Sarah Kiser of Highland School of Technology**.
6. WSGE, Gaston College's radio station, conducted its annual spring fundraising drive. For every \$100 donation, the radio station made a commitment to purchase a pack of reeds for **Gaston County Schools** band programs. **Lisa Ratchford**, band director at **Cramerton Middle School**, participated in a promotional interview with the station to bring attention to the school district's band programs.

7. **Gaston County Schools** conducted its annual retirees celebration at CaroMont Health Park. More than 100 retirees and guests enjoyed food, fellowship, and the Gastonia Honey Hunters baseball game. It was a casual and relaxing atmosphere to recognize the school district's retirees and thank them for their service to Gaston County Schools.
8. **Gaston County Schools** recognized four outstanding bus drivers during the school district's annual transportation banquet. **Amy Giles** of **Beam Elementary**, **Tawanna Sanders** of **Bessemer City Central Elementary**, **Isaiah Sturgis** of **Holbrook Middle**, and **Sam Kaylor** of **Forestview High School** were presented the Tracey Lea Calhoun Award. The honor goes to school bus drivers who have made a significant contribution to the school transportation profession and bus safety. In addition, **Robby Kendrick** was recognized as the Transportation Department Employee of the Year.
9. **Aissatou Diouf**, a rising senior at **Ashbrook High School School**, and **Darlene Byers**, a fourth-grade teacher at **Pleasant Ridge Elementary**, were among the distinguished service award winners, who were recognized by the Gaston County Jaycees during a dinner and ceremony on June 7 at the Gaston Country Club.
10. Three **Gaston County Schools** students captured N.C. High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) state championships in track and field. **Ashbrook High School** junior **Camryn Massey** won an individual state championship in the girls 3A discus throw. She also set a new meet record with a throw of 148-02, besting her own record set in 2021 of 140-09. In addition, **Ashbrook High School** senior **Sincere Moss** placed first in the boys 3A 200-meter dash, and **Stuart W. Cramer High School** senior **Alexis Willis** repeated as the girls 3A triple jump champion.
11. The following students are recipients of the Albert G. Myers Scholarship, which is valued at \$20,000: **Kennette Bess**, **Ashbrook High School**; **Emily Corzine**, **Hunter Huss High School**; **Jaila Davidson**, **Hunter Huss High School**; **Jude Lomax**, **Ashbrook High School**; **Gabrielle McCorkle**, **Cherryville High School**; **Kaitlyn Russell**, **East Gaston High School**; **Angelo Sherrill**, **Highland School of Technology**; and **Alyssa Williams**, **Hunter Huss High School**.
12. The following students are recipients of the State Employee Credit Union "People Helping People" Scholarship, which is valued at \$10,000: **Abigail Riles**, **Gaston Early College High School**; **Alyssa Turner**, **East Gaston High School**; **Caroline Allred**, **North Gaston High School**; **Cayden Smith**, **Hunter Huss High School**; **Josefina Houchard**, **Highland School of Technology**; **Journie Armstrong**, **Ashbrook High School**; **Kylie Reynolds**, **Cherryville High School**; and **Owen Sloan**, **Stuart W. Cramer High School**.
13. **Ashbrook High School** senior **Sherry Martinez** received the Alfred W. Bohanan Scholarship and the Daniel C. Ragan Scholarship, and **Anna Gilchrist** received the Helen Rhyne Marvin Scholarship.
14. **Blake Splawn** of **Bessemer City High School** and **Lauren Moonie** of **Hunter Huss High School** are recipients of the George and Patricia Barnard Scholarship.

15. **Bessemer City High School** senior **Randall Pettus** was named to the N.C. Coaches Association East-West all-star basketball game. The game will be played on July 17 at the Greensboro Coliseum.
16. **Carr Elementary School** earned the Leader in Me Lighthouse School certification, which is presented by Franklin Covey Education. The certification recognizes the school's successful efforts to focus on the concepts of leadership and identifies Carr as a model school for the Leader in Me program. The school is planning to conduct a program in September to celebrate the recognition.
17. **Landon Hahn** of **Cherryville High School** is the recipient of the Alaina Abernathy Scholarship.
18. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** senior **Lydia Seagle** received the N.C. Teaching Fellows Scholarship in the amount of \$8,000 per year. She plans to attend UNC-Charlotte.
19. **Addison Gilbert** of **Stuart W. Cramer High School** is the recipient of the Maxine Porch Scholarship, which is presented by the McAdenville Woman's Club. The scholarship is valued at \$1,500.
20. Two **Stuart W. Cramer High School** graduates are gaining attention in the professional theater world. **Abigail Morrison**, Class of 2018, continues to work in theater in New York City, and **Alex Manley**, Class of 2020, was hired to play the lead in the world premiere of the musical, "The American Woodsman."
21. **Grace Doster** and **Ava Stillwell** of **East Gaston High School** were named to the N.C. Soccer Coaches Association's all-state team.
22. **Sarah Shiflet** of **Forestview High School** is the recipient of the Mary Armstrong Coffey Scholarship.
23. **Gaston Early College High School** student **Katherine Allen** is the recipient of the Honorable Ralph C. Gingles, Jr. Scholarship, which is valued at \$2,000. She also is the recipient of the Bess Chapel United Methodist Church-Brad Baxter Scholarship valued at \$750.
24. **Olivia Apple** of **Highland School of Technology** received the William G. and Hazel Hardin Educational Scholarship.
25. **Hunter Huss High School** senior **J'Shawn Leach** received the Paul Fuller Mentoring Scholarship, which is awarded annually to an outstanding high school senior who has been a part of the **Gaston County Schools** mentoring program. He plans to attend East Carolina University.
26. **Hunter Huss High School** alumnus **James Ijames** has written a play that is currently running on Broadway. His show, "Fat Ham," received five Tony Award nominations. The show is also in production at major regional theaters across the country.

27. The following students were recognized as the winners of the City of Mount Holly's signal box design contest, which was developed to enhance the aesthetics of the city's roadways through public art: **Skylar Oplinger, Mount Holly Middle School; Emily Edmonson, East Gaston High School; Lilyan Helms, East Gaston High School; Caroline Czekaj, Pinewood Elementary; Lucy Phan, Pinewood Elementary; Diego Gonzalez, Pinewood Elementary; Amber Champion, Catawba Heights Elementary; Samantha Escalante, Rankin Elementary; Madison Baruk, Mount Holly Middle School; Josie Bell, Catawba Heights Elementary; and Maddax Cobb, Rankin Elementary.**
28. **Karen Palomino's** ESL (English as a Second Language) class at **Sadler Elementary** made a special book titled "So...I Go to Sadler Elementary." The students dedicated the book to the memory of Dr. Ed Sadler and his mother, Mildred Sadler, to show their appreciation for the Sadlers' many years of service to public education and **Gaston County Schools**. The students also presented the book to the Sadler family.
29. The following **South Point High School** students received scholarships: **Jacob Kerber**, Tom Browne Scholarship; **Abigail Miss**, Perry Fewell Scholarship; **Ella Tynan**, Dr. William and Karen Hunter Scholarship and Theodore Drury Stowe Scholarship; **Gabryele Collins**, Jarman Family Scholarship; and **Noa Aviles**, Mildred Sadler Scholarship.
30. **South Point High School** senior **Grace Smith** was named to the N.C. Coaches Association East-West all-star soccer game. The game will be played July 18 at Macpherson Stadium in Browns Summit. She also was named to the N.C. Soccer Coaches Association all-state team.
31. **South Point High School** teacher **Kay Ziemer** has been named a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Scholar for 2023. She will participate in a NEH Summer Institute program titled "Tales from the Chihuahuan Desert: Borderlands Narratives about Identity and Binationalism" in July at the University of Texas at El Paso.
32. **South Point High School** finished as the 3A runner-up in the N.C. High School Athletic Association's girls state soccer championship. The team finished the season with an impressive 22-1-3 overall record and had a perfect 14-0 record in the Big South 3A Conference. In addition, senior **Peyton Decker** was one of eight recipients to receive the sportsmanship award.
33. **South Point High School** won the 2022-2023 Wells Fargo Cup for the Big South 3A Conference. The award recognizes the school's outstanding performance in athletics.
34. **Tryon Elementary School** is the recipient of a \$5,000 grant from the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries. The grant program is focused on ways to help students develop a love of reading and learning; the money will be used to update the school's library collection. Tryon is among only 300 schools in the United States to receive the grant this year.