

BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

DEPARTMENT: Communications/Public
Information Department

TOPIC: GOOD NEWS

FOR THE MONTH OF: May 2022

1. **Steven Loudon of W.C. Friday Middle School** was named the Gaston County Teacher of the Year for 2022-2023. The award is presented by Truist. The award finalists included **Alexandria Caughey, Bessemer City Primary; Britnee Reid, Gaston County Virtual Academy; Allie Kleinheinz, Hawks Nest STEAM Academy; and Heather Ulep Waters, South Point High School.**
2. **Kristin Kiser of Lowell Elementary School** was named the Gaston County Principal of the Year for 2022-2023. The award is presented by Truist. The award finalists included **Josh Allen, Gaston Early College High School; Justin Beam, North Belmont Elementary; Bryan Denton, Hunter Huss High School; and Lucretia Rice, Warlick Academy.**
3. **Aimee Tolleson of South Point High School** was named the Gaston County Assistant Principal of the Year for 2022-2023. The finalists included **Jennifer Bergerson, North Gaston High School; Laura Costner, Sadler Elementary; Ryan Hatley, Ashbrook High School; Janet Ramsey, Robinson Elementary; and Kimberly Reese, Holbrook Middle School.**
4. **Angela Calamia**, director of school nutrition, was named the **Gaston County Schools Central Office Administrator of the Year.** The award finalists included **Shannon Hullett, academic services; Alan Sprout, technology; Teresa Thomassen, technology; and Gina Waters, finance.**
5. **Woodhill Elementary and Cramerton Middle** were the overall winners at the annual RoboGASTON competition. Other school winners were **Chavis Middle**, middle school runner-up; **Bessemer City Central Elementary**, elementary school runner-up; **Holbrook Middle**, middle school first place robot performance; **Pinewood Elementary**, elementary school first place robot performance; **Tryon Elementary**, elementary school second place robot performance; **Mount Holly Middle**, middle school first place project presentation; **Gardner Park Elementary**, elementary school first place project presentation; **W.A. Bess Elementary**, elementary school second place project presentation; **Belmont Middle**, middle school first place teamwork; **Costner Elementary**, elementary school first place teamwork; **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy**, elementary school second place teamwork; **McAdenville Elementary**, judges award; **Mount Holly Middle**, gracious professionalism award; and **Chapel Grove Elementary**, spirit award.

6. The **Gaston County Schools** Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department held a virtual career fair over a two-week period. Seniors had the opportunity to discuss employment opportunities with 30 businesses.
7. **Gaston County Schools** had several school groups and PTO organizations participate in the annual Community Foundation Run in downtown Gastonia. The event featured a 5K run, a 2K fun walk, and other activities to help nonprofit organizations raise money.
8. The **Gaston County Schools** Poetry and Prose celebration was held on April 7 at **Highland School of Technology**. Each elementary school selected one representative for poetry and one representative for prose to be recognized during the program.
9. **North Belmont Elementary** (partnered with the Gastonia East Rotary Club) won the “Are You Smarter Than a Gaston County Fifth Grader?” competition. **New Hope Elementary** earned second place and **Pleasant Ridge Elementary** took third place. Sponsored by the Gaston County Education Foundation, the popular annual event pairs businesses and organizations with elementary schools in a fun game show format. Proceeds benefit the Ron L. Ensley grant program for teachers that funds innovative classroom lessons and projects.
10. **Jerry Bradley** of **South Point High School**, **Aaron Hollar** of **East Gaston High School**, and **Ruby Ruiz** of **W.C. Friday Middle School** performed at the all-state honors band concert, which was held at Memorial Hall Auditorium in Chapel Hill.
11. The following schools won county sports championships: **Belmont Middle**, baseball; **Belmont Middle**, girls soccer; **Holbrook Middle**, girls track and field; and **Belmont Middle**, boys track and field.
12. **Ashbrook High School** senior **Ya’Zarhi Mason** was awarded the Larry Rhodes Scholarship.
13. **Ashbrook High School** junior **Anaya Gilchrist** was accepted to attend the prestigious N.C. State College of Education Leadership Institute for Future Teachers. The LIFT program is an all-expense paid, residential summer leadership program at N.C. State University.
14. **H.H. Beam Elementary** teacher **Kathryn Eisel** is one of 50 inspiring teachers selected from more than 5,800 applicants to attend the Disney Imagination Campus celebration and workshop over Memorial Day weekend. Eisel will visit Walt Disney World to enjoy inspirational talks with Disney leaders and get an inside look into the reimagined Disney Imagination Campus.
15. The **W.B. Beam Intermediate** Falcon Radio Club (N2FRC) placed first in the elementary division of the School Club Roundup, which is an annual worldwide amateur radio contest where students across the United States compete against other school radio clubs. During the contest, fourth and fifth grade students made voice contact with radio operators in 29 different states, nine school radio clubs, two countries, and two Canadian provinces. School counselor Mark Reep is the club adviser.

16. **W.B. Beam Intermediate School** hosted a science night program that gave students and their families an opportunity to participate in hands-on science activities.
17. The **Belmont Central Elementary** PTO hosted an adventure run and raised \$44,230.60 for the school. In addition, the PTO held a spring beautification day where families and their children planted new flowers and replaced overgrown shrubs with azaleas.
18. The **W.A. Bess Elementary** PTO and Hurdt Homes sponsored an outdoor family movie night. “Spike the Bulldog,” the school’s mascot, invited “Bam” from the Gastonia Honey Hunters to meet and interact with the students.
19. **W.A. Bess Elementary** second grader **Henry Braxton** carried out the duties as “Principal of the Day” for selling tickets during the school’s BBQ fundraiser. He greeted students in the morning, led the Pledge of Allegiance during the morning announcements, assisted in the cafeteria during lunch, recognized students who had perfect attendance during the third nine weeks, and awarded classes who obtained their PBIS Silver PAW award.
20. **W.A. Bess Elementary** held a yearbook cover contest. More than 40 entries were submitted by students. The contest winner was **Baileigh Walker** and the runner-up was **Kenzleigh Blanton**.
21. The **Bessemer City High School** pep club delivered more than 150 Easter baskets to the kindergarten classes at **Bessemer City Primary School**.
22. **Bessemer City High School** senior **Kayla Becraft** is the recipient of the George and Patricia Bernard Scholarship valued at \$5,000 a year.
23. **Bessemer City High School** sophomore **Seth Samonds** participated in SATELLITE (Science and Technology Enriching Lifelong Leadership in Tomorrow’s Endeavors), which is a STEM outreach and leadership development program led by students from N.C. State University. The program is designed to introduce students from rural North Carolina high schools to science and technology-related educational and career paths through a five-day overnight camp on N.C. State’s campus.
24. **Carr Elementary** participated in the N.C. Science Festival through in-class, hands-on science activities. Each student received a free science book with activities to do at home with their families.
25. Classroom Central hosted a mobile store at **Carr Elementary**. Teachers from across Gaston County signed up to come shop for free supplies.
26. **Carr Elementary** held a Family Reading Night and provided a free book to every student and activities to go along with their new book.
27. **Cherryville High School** baseball coach **Scott Heavner** earned his 300th win.

28. **Costner Elementary** held a beautification day to spruce up the campus.
29. **Gaston Early College High School** senior **Allen Chen** was accepted to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and awarded the MIT Scholarship valued at \$75,000 each year. He also received three separate grants totaling \$10,000 each year.
30. **Gaston Early College High School** senior **Emily Rollins** is the recipient of the Albert G. Myers Scholarship.
31. The **Gaston Early College High School** Lorax Club was a finalist in the Pepsi recycling contest. Students developed the slogan, “Don’t be trashy; keep it classy.” Science teacher **Sarah Fink** is the school’s club adviser.
32. **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences** sophomore **Chandan Chahil** was selected to attend Summer Ventures through the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics. Sophomore **Savion Leacock** was selected for the Army Education Outreach Program at UNC-Charlotte this summer.
33. **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences** students and staff participated in the “Walk Your Way” mental health awareness campaign.
34. **Chapel Grove Elementary** had a community night at The Captain’s Cap restaurant. The event raised \$1,000 for the school.
35. The **Chapel Grove Elementary** “Girls on the Run” team participated in an event on March 15 at Whitehall Corporate Park.
36. Forty **Hunter Huss High School** seniors dressed in their cap and gown held a senior walk at **Chapel Grove Elementary School**.
37. **Chapel Grove Elementary** teacher assistant **Teresa LeCroy** was accepted into the **Gaston County Schools** Teacher Assistant to Teacher Program.
38. **Costner Elementary** second and fourth grade students received drumming lessons from the “Words of Wisdom Drum” team.
39. The Kintegra Dental Clinic visited **Costner Elementary** and provided dental care for 30 students over two days. School nurse **Macey Kennerly** arranged the visit.
40. **East Gaston High School** senior **Hannah Mullis** received the State Employees’ Credit Union “People Helping People” Scholarship, which is valued at \$10,000 over four years.
41. **East Gaston High School** soccer coach **River Hawkins** was named a finalist for the Stuart Scott Courage Award.
42. **East Gaston High School** competed in the SkillsUSA state competition and won the following awards: **Gavyn Jones**, gold, automotive beginner, and **Sierra Jordan**, bronze, automotive tool ID. **Shane Hawkins** is the school’s automotive teacher.

43. The **Forestview High School** baseball team raised \$1,000 for the ARC of Gaston County during a recent game to bring awareness to autism.
44. **Forestview High School** senior **Paige Thomas** was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship by the CaroMont Health Foundation Scholarship Advisory Board. She plans to attend UNC-Charlotte.
45. **W.C. Friday Middle School** teacher **Jennifer Bumgarner** is one of 20 teachers from across the United States to have been selected to participate in the professional development program, “Approaching Walden.” Sponsored by The Walden Woods Project, the Concord, Massachusetts-based seminar focuses on the tenets of Place-Based Education and an educator’s role in leading students in a study of their home community in order to become invested citizens and changemakers. The program supports the school’s Leader in Me initiative. Bumgarner will attend the program in July following her visit to France as an ambassador of American education through the Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms program.
46. The **Hawks Nest STEAM Academy** “The Greatest Showcase” robot circus fundraiser collected \$61,903.
47. **Highland School of Technology** senior **Travis Rainwater** is a National Merit \$2,500 Scholarship recipient. The \$2,500 scholarship winners are the finalists in each state judged to have the strongest combination of accomplishments, skills, and potential for success in rigorous college studies.
48. **Highland School of Technology** won several awards at the North Carolina Technology Student Association (NCTSA) state conference including first place animatronics, first place flight endurance, second place dragster design, second place music production, second place structural design and engineering; and second place video game design.
49. **Highland School of Technology** student **Noah Biggers** won first place in the Rotary “4-Way Test” scholarship competition.
50. **Holbrook Middle School** assistant principal **Jenny Carper** completed her master’s degree in school administration from UNC-Charlotte through the Principals Fellows program.
51. The **Holbrook Middle School** chorus received a superior rating at the Carowinds Chorus Festival.
52. **Hunter Huss High School** seniors **Daisy Lopez Saldivar** and **Ashley Mahboub** are recipients of the Albert G. Myers Scholarship. Daisy will attend UNC-Charlotte, and Ashley will attend Appalachian State University.
53. **Hunter Huss High School** sophomore **Ben Kimmel** was selected to represent Region 6 on the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) Student Athlete Advisory Council.

54. **Hunter Huss High School** students in the Creativing Writing II class attended the Foothills Poetry Day program at Gardner-Webb University and were finalists in the poetry competition among schools from Gaston, Cleveland, Lincoln, and Rutherford counties.
55. **Lowell Elementary** received a \$5,000 donation from Chad O'Brien and used the funds to purchase a "GaGa" ball pit. A PTO parent and his son completed the installation of the project.
56. **North Gaston High School** students **Olivia Conley** and **Cody Meares** were selected as nominees for the Blumenthal Performing Arts High School Musical Theater Awards. As a nominee, Olivia attended a three-day workshop focused on voice, acting, and dance.
57. The **Page Primary** PTO sponsored a spring carnival and raised more than \$10,000 for the school.
58. Several students from **Pleasant Ridge Elementary** were among the approximately 100,000 students worldwide to participate in the Math Olympiad Program. They were involved in a series of five monthly contests and practice sessions under the supervision and coaching of **Samantha Gower**. She taught the children to solve unusual and difficult problems and to think creatively. The embroidered felt patch is awarded to those students in the top 50 percent of all the participants worldwide, which included the following students: **Walter Throneburg, Martin Lawrence, Pablo Herrera, Lara Forstinger, Marshall Deal, Katherine Gray, Jimmy Lambirth, Carter Montgomery, Lena Sexton, Sophia Green, Thomas Rice, Harrison Davis, Eli Dunn, Madelyn Lowrance, Hayes Shepard, Abbie Harvard, Hysel Holbert, and Carman Johnson.**
59. The **Sherwood Elementary** PTO sponsored a fun run and raised more than \$9,000 for the school.
60. **Sherwood Elementary** teachers **Jennifer Ledford** and **Kimberly Queen** received grants from Gaston County STEM Education and Outreach.
61. **Sherwood Elementary** held an art show with student work displayed throughout the building for families to see.
62. The Beta Mu Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority "adopted" **Sherwood Elementary School**. Members of the sorority provided donations for the PTO fun run and end-of-grade testing snack packs for students in third, fourth, and fifth grades.
63. **South Point High School** senior **Emily Revels** received the State Employees' Credit Union "People Helping People" Scholarship, which is valued at \$10,000 over four years.
64. **South Point High School** senior **Trey Baker** received the Theodore Drury Science and Technology Scholarship. Senior **Garrett Ziemer** received the Perry Fewell Scholarship and Lester Carpenter Scholarship. Seniors **Caroline Beaty, Hayden Currier, and Delilah Pearson** received the Lester Carpenter Scholarship.

65. **South Point High School** junior **Avery Lester** earned the Congressional Gold Medal Award, which is awarded to young adults by the United States Congress for accomplishments in four program areas: voluntary public service, personal development, physical fitness, and expedition/exploration. The Gold Medal level requires a total of 800 hours over two years. Her activities included volunteering to lead programs for Holy Angels residents and delivering meals for Meals on Wheels, which was impactful because it was a critical service during the pandemic with a very limited staff capable of delivering meals. Her focus on swimming and diving met the requirements for physical fitness. Her expedition/exploration requirement included an exploration of national parks such as Painted Desert Petrified Forest, Grand Canyon National Park, Hoover Dam/Lake Mead, Death Valley, Sequoia, Yosemite and Arches.
66. The following **South Point High School** student-athletes signed a National Letter of Intent: **Sullivan Absher**, football, Notre Dame; **Jake Beaty**, baseball, Appalachian State; **Xarique Culbreth**, football, North Carolina Wesleyan; and **Jordan Webb**, cheerleading, Gardner-Webb University.
67. **Southwest Middle School** placed third in biotechnology design and third in video game design at the North Carolina Technology Student Association (NCTSA) state conference.
68. The **Stanley Middle School** Envirothon team placed eighth out of 43 teams at the North Carolina Envirothon competition held April 29-30 at Cedarock Park in Burlington. Teacher **Diana Baxter** is the club adviser.
69. **Stanley Middle School** teacher **Alice Ballard** was named the Gaston County Jaycees Outstanding Educator of the Year. **Carr Elementary School's Niyah Richardson** was named the Outstanding Student of the Year. The awards, which were presented on May 18 during a ceremony at the Gaston Country Club, recognize Ballard and Richardson for their commitment to service.
70. **Tryon Elementary** principal **Meghan LeFevers** was elected to serve on the Council for Exceptional Children's Board of Directors.
71. **Tryon Elementary** fifth grader **Elizabeth Briand** won second place in the Gaston County Heart Society's art contest.
72. **Tryon Elementary** art teacher **Elizabeth Gilmore** won \$1,000 worth of Crayola products. The supplies will be used to help build strong cognitive skills in daily learning.