

BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

DEPARTMENT: Communications/Public
Information Department

TOPIC: GOOD NEWS

FOR THE MONTH OF: May 2024

1. **Brandon Taylor** of **East Gaston High School** was named the **Gaston County Schools** Teacher of the Year for 2024-2025. The finalists included **Jennifer Hallman, North Gaston High School; Melissa Harris, Bessemer City Primary; Lisa Montgomery, North Belmont Elementary; and Cara Shelton-Harper, Bessemer City Middle School.**
2. **Chris Mills** of **Webb Street School** was named the **Gaston County Schools** Principal of the Year for 2024-2025. The finalists included **Mitch Allen, Chapel Grove Elementary; Lorinda Brusie; Kiser Elementary; Bryan Denton, Hunter Huss High School; and Jessica Mellon; Bessemer City Middle School.**
3. **Courtney Williams** of **Webb Street School** was named the **Gaston County Schools** Assistant Principal of the Year for 2024-2025. The finalists included **Stephanie Denton, York Chester Middle School; Chris Dixon, East Gaston High School; Charlotte Friday, W.A. Bess Elementary; and Tangela Hinton, Sherwood Elementary.**
4. **Kathleen D'Avria**, director of high school instruction, was named the **Gaston County Schools** Central Office Administrator of the Year. The award finalists included **Carolina Black, Human Resources; Melissa Buchanan, Human Resources; Sean Corcoran, Communications; and Steve Smith, Accountability.**
5. The following students are recipients of the Albert G. Myers Scholarship, which is valued at \$20,000: **Kenedi Armstrong, Hunter Huss High School; Lauren Arthurs, South Point High School; Kendal Boone, Hunter Huss High School; Chandandeep Chahil, Gaston Early College High School of Medical Sciences; Ella Hamilton, East Gaston High School; Anna Kate Robb, East Gaston High School; and Gabriella Tracy, South Point High School.**
6. The following students are recipients of the State Employee Credit Union "People Helping People" Scholarship, which is valued at \$10,000: **Chloe Buchanan, Cherryville High School; Aedan Corcoran, South Point High School; Lilyan Helms, East Gaston High School; Benjamin Kimmel, Hunter Huss High School; Amelia Matzke, Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences; Aileen Pena, Highland School of Technology; Cooper Towe, Stuart W. Cramer High School; and Faith Waelz, Gaston Early College High School.**

7. **Aedan Corcoran** of **South Point High School** and **Kieran Wood** of **Highland School of Technology** are recipients of the Annual Arrive Alive Scholarship Award presented by DeMayo Law.
8. **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.
9. The following **Highland School of Technology** students were nominees in the 2024 Blumey Awards: **Grey Radford** for Best Actor as Harry in *Mamma Mia!*; **Rebecca Hatton** for Best Actress as Donna Sheridan in *Mamma Mia!*; **Eric Cathey** for Best Supporting Actor as Sam Carmichael in *Mamma Mia!*; **Olivia Rushing** for Best Supporting Actress as Tanya in *Mamma Mia!*; and **Jace Walsh** for Best Featured Performer as Pepper in *Mamma Mia!*.
10. The following **North Gaston High School** students were nominees in the 2024 Blumey Awards: **Gavin Goff** for Best Actor as Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors*; **Lily Frazier** for Best Actress as Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors*; **Wesley Lawson** for Best Supporting Actor as Orin/Bernstein/Skip Snip in *Little Shop of Horrors*; **Dymond Moore** for Best Supporting Actress as Crystal in *Little Shop of Horrors*; and **Joshua Harris** for Best Featured Performer as Wino/Patrick Martin in *Little Shop of Horrors*.
11. **Sandie Rudisill** was named the recipient of the Gaston County Health and Human Services Hero Award for her exceptional dedication and impactful contributions to health education initiatives in **Gaston County Schools**.
12. In the 2024 Jostens Lookbook, **North Gaston High School** and **South Point High School** were highlighted and awarded a gold ranking. Additionally, **Highland School of Technology** received a silver award in the Yearbook Program of Excellence while **Stuart W. Cramer High School** and **Forestview High School** were honored with bronze awards for yearbook excellence.
13. The following students were recognized by the Gastonia City Council for receiving Student Achievement Awards: **Adrian Cutshaw**, **Grier Middle School**; **Camryn Massey**, **Ashbrook High School**; **Mauro Missael Maya Castro**, **Highland School of Technology**; **Ariyah Graham**, **Hunter Huss High School**; **Jakayla Price**, **Southwest Middle School**; **Samuel Long**, **Webb Street School**; and **Tytianna Lipscomb**, **York Chester Middle School**.
14. The following students received The Rotary 4-Way Test Scholarship presented by the four Rotary clubs in Gaston County: **John Williams**, **Highland School of Technology**, first place; **Kya Roorda**, **Forestview High School**, second place; **Faith Waelz**, **Gaston Early College High School**, third place; and **Hayes Kucera**, **Forestview High School**, honorable mention.
15. The following schools won county sports championships: **Stanley Middle**, baseball; **Belmont Middle**, girls soccer; **Belmont Middle**, girls track and field; and **Belmont Middle**, boys track and field.

16. The following students received the Paul Fuller Scholarship, which is presented to a student who has been a part of the **Gaston County Schools** mentoring program: **Mya Rivers, Highland School of Technology, and Jensine Vasquez, North Gaston High School.**
17. **Ashbrook High School** senior **Aissatou Diouf** is the recipient of the Wayne F. Shovelin Scholarship, which is valued at \$20,000 per year for up to four years.
18. **Ashbrook High School** senior **Camryn Massey** received the Carrie Barnett Top Female Athlete Award, which is named for a beloved physical education teacher at Ashley Junior High School and **Ashbrook High School**. In addition, Massey received the Piedmont Chapter of The Links scholarship in the amount of \$1,000.
19. **Ashbrook High School** senior **Kenneth Greene** received the Coach Larry Rhodes Athletic Scholarship, which is valued at \$2,000 and was established by NBA Hall of Famer and school alumnus James Worthy to recognize a senior who has lettered in a sport and plans to obtain a college degree.
20. **Ashbrook High School** senior **Qunlan Dean** received the Semper Fidelis Award for Musical Excellence. The award is given to a musician who displays traits that the Marine Corps considers essential to being a good leader.
21. The following **Ashbrook High School** students received the Dr. Michael Borchardt Scholarship valued at \$3,500: **Allison Archer, Sarah Bell, Kameron Kee, and Darriel Suggs**. Additionally, **Ranley Clayton, Josselyn Hernandez, and Keya Patel** received the Covenant Village Cares Youth scholarship valued at \$2,500.
22. **Ashbrook High School** seniors **Kimani Jacobs** and **Kameron Kee** received the Ashbrook Foundation Scholarship valued at \$2,000. In addition, Kee received the Piedmont Chapter of The Links scholarship in the amount of \$1,000.
23. **Ashbrook High School** seniors **Kenneth Greene** and **Devan Gilmore** received the Destiny Jones Memorial Scholarship valued at \$500. Students **Kindal Davis** and **Nehemiah Garcia** are the recipients of the Larry Carpenter Scholarship, which is awarded to a male and female student who best demonstrate achievement in athletics, academics, and attitude. Additionally, senior **Yohana Rendon** received the Helen Rhyne Marvin Scholarship valued at \$750.
24. The following **Ashbrook High School** students received the Scholastic Excellence Award: **Paxton York, Jayden Armstrong, and Isabella Ryne**.
25. **Sam Pruitt**, a teacher and coach at **Belmont Middle School**, achieved the record for having the most wins as a coach in Gaston County middle school baseball with an impressive tally of 174 victories and counting.
26. **W.A. Bess Elementary** second grader **Eleanor Spicer** received a new bicycle for winning the Kintegra Dental Health Poster Contest. In addition, fourth grader **Mia Lopez** placed second in the Art for Heart Contest sponsored by the American Heart Society.

27. **Bessemer City Primary** media specialist **Sarah Putnam** organized the “Give Five, Take Five” program, which has provided every student with five books to read over the summer. In addition, the school hosted its Spring Fling on April 26, which was enjoyed by 560 students and their families.
28. **Carr Elementary** was one of 200 schools to receive a \$5,000 grant through the Laura Bush Foundation for America’s Libraries. **Angela Newton** is the school’s media specialist.
29. **Cherryville High School** health science teacher **Nicole Golden** is the **Gaston County Schools** nominee for the prestigious North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT) 2024 Career and Technical Education Teacher of the Year award.
30. **Cherryville High School** senior **Caleb Hovis** received the 2024 Dr. Buddy Whitesides Gaston County Fellowship of Christian Athletes Athlete of the Year Scholarship.
31. The **Cherryville High School** girls’ soccer team held a ceremony during a recent game to recognize the three senior players: **Sarabeth Moyer** (team captain), **Lila Grace Sermersheim** (team captain), and **Alyssa Ibarra**. After graduation, Moyer plans to finish her cosmetology and associate degree; Sermersheim plans to attend Cleveland Community College to study sonography; and Ibarra plans to attend Gaston College to major in nursing.
32. The **Cherryville High School** softball team held a ceremony during a recent game to recognize three senior players: **Riley Bryant**, **Laila Davis**, and **Taylor Digh**. The seniors were instrumental in leading the softball team to a perfect 10-0 regular-season record in the Southern Piedmont 1A/2A Conference. After graduation, Bryant plans to attend college and become a pharmacy technician; Davis plans to attend Gaston College and pursue an associate degree in veterinary medicine; and Digh plans to attend UNC-Charlotte and major in nursing with a goal to become a nurse practitioner in pediatric oncology.
33. The **Cherryville High School** golf team captured the Southern Piedmont 1A/2A Conference championship with an 8-1 record. Senior **Tyler Stroupe** led the team in the conference tournament and was the runner-up for Conference Player of the Year honors. Additionally, **Blake Tedder**, **Colton Robinson**, and **Peyton Huffman** were named to the all-conference team, and coaches **Timmy Fleming** and **Chad Cash** shared Conference Coach of the Year honors. Stroupe, Tedder, Robinson, Huffman, and **Michael Griffin** represented Cherryville in the regional tournament; the team finished second at regionals in 2023.
34. The **Cherryville High School** baseball team recognized its senior players during the “Senior Night” home game on April 26. **Eli Newsome**, **Chance Hunt**, **Noah Hollingsworth**, **Brayden Reynolds**, and **Ryder Abernathy** were honored during a pre-game ceremony.

35. **Brian Mayhew**, an AIG/composer elementary itinerant teacher at **Gardner Park Elementary** and **Tryon Elementary**, received the Nathan Hensley “For the Love of the Game” Award at the Gaston County Sports Hall of Fame ceremony.
36. The following **Stuart W. Cramer High School** seniors received scholarship awards: **Ansley VanderMeer**, Stuart W. Cramer High School Academic and Booster Club Scholarship; **Eliana Phadke**, Legacy of Finer Womanhood Scholarship; **Ailliana Crawford** and **Karsyn Feemster-Jones**; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Scholarship; **Karsyn Feemster-Jones**, Rotary Club of Mount Holly Scholarship; **Brianna McGinnis** and **Michael Hunter**, Mount Holly Sports Hall of Fame Scholarship; and **Karsyn Feemster-Jones**, Alabama A&M University USDA Scholarship.
37. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** senior **Francess Ilevbare** is the recipient of the N.C. State University Goodnight Scholarship, which is valued at \$23,000 per year.
38. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** senior **Rich Wills** won the 3A individual state golf championship.
39. During Teacher Appreciation Week, **Stuart Cramer High School** partnered with Radio One Charlotte to kick off the Party to #EndALZ. Students from **Andrew Bradley’s** Adobe Visual classes and **Sarah Brady’s** health science class created a video to raise awareness and funds for the Family Dance Party CLT, which benefited the Alzheimer’s Association.
40. At the N.C. State Science and Engineering Fair, students from **Gaston Early College High School** received recognition: **Micajah Hanna** won the US Army Scientific Excellence in Chemistry Award while **Bannock Scott** and **Lizette Reyes-Lopez** took home the US Army Scientific Excellence in Engineering Award.
41. At the 2024 State Leadership Conference, **Highland School of Technology’s** HOSA club garnered numerous accolades. Notably, they achieved Gold Star Chapter status with more than 100 members, and academy coordinator **Waheebah al-Uqdah McCray** received the Gold Star Advisor distinction. Additionally, the students captured the Prevent Blindness Award and secured first place in HOSA Happenings (multimedia) alongside a \$1,000 Service Project Donation. In the competition, they excelled with first, second, and fourth place finishes in dental science, and commendable rankings in dental terminology, cultural diversities and disparities, health career display, clinical nursing, and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) categories. Competitors who placed in the top ten were honored on stage with first, second, and third place recipients receiving a medal and plaque.
42. **Highland School of Technology’s** TSA (Technology Student Association) members showcased their skills at the 45th N.C. TSA State Conference in Greensboro. They earned first place in the animatronics, flight endurance, music production, and technical problem solving categories. Additionally, the students earned second place in system control technology, and their second animatronics team also impressed the judges with a commendable performance.

43. **Highland School of Technology** senior **Avery Davis** received the William and Lee University Johnson Scholarship valued at \$376,000 over four years. The Johnson Scholarship is awarded to 44 incoming students each year.
44. **Lingerfeldt Elementary** received a donation of 32 pairs of shoes for students from Samaritan's Feet.
45. **East Gaston High School** freshman **Sunni Alford** was named a North Carolina Virtual Public School "Super Student."
46. **Forestview High School** senior **Riley Rouse** has been awarded the Strong Like AK Scholarship. To date, Strong Like AK has awarded \$25,000 to graduating seniors in **Gaston County Schools**. The scholarship program honors the legacy of Adam Kincaid by supporting students' futures.
47. **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences** ninth graders engaged in community service projects that focused on addressing global issues locally. They organized "everything" drives, canned food drives, community gardens, community outreach, and fundraising activities. The projects supported local cancer services, food pantries, Mira Via, and underserved families. In total, the students collected 972 cans, \$104,304 feminine products, 172 hygiene products, and 40 clothing items, thus enabling them to provide assistance to 500-700 families. The students received guidance from their research methods teachers, **Angela Congelli** and **David Jones**, as well as support from the N.C. State Friday Institute.
48. **Hunter Huss High School** seniors **Kendal Boone** and **Mya Hoover** have been awarded the prestigious U.S. Army ROTC Scholarship, which provides them with a full ride for three years. Boone also received the esteemed George and Patricia Barnard Scholarship. Boone will be attending UNC-Charlotte, and Hoover will be attending Winston-Salem State University.
49. **New Hope Elementary** raised a record-breaking \$20,793.38 for the American Heart Association as part of the Kids Heart Challenge. Students who raised more than \$250 took part in a dodgeball game with teachers.
50. Several **Pleasant Ridge Elementary** students competed at the regional math fair and have advanced to the state math fair. **Emily Kiser's** kindergarten class clinched first place, while in the first grade, **Anam Fatima** and **Esmeralda Miller** secured second place. **Golden McKinney** received an honorable mention, and **Naayab Berhane** earned third place in the third grade division. **Jericho Martin** took third place in the fourth grade, and in the fifth grade division, **Dylan Cook** and **Colton Martin** both earned honorable mention awards.
51. **Sherwood Elementary** received a \$1,000 donation from The Laurel East Community Watch.

52. **Sherwood Elementary** wrapped up its “One School, One Book” reading initiative, which engaged both students and parents. The initiative culminated with an ice cream celebration. School media specialist **Christa Workman** organized the reading effort.
53. **South Point High School** junior **James Dover** was one of four students nationally to receive the Coolidge Scholarship. The Coolidge Scholarship, sponsored by the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation, offers a small number of full-ride merit scholarships that cover tuition, room and board, books, and fees for four years of study at any accredited college or university in the United States.
54. **South Point High School** senior **Dawson Tobin** received an appointment to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point valued at \$250,000.
55. **South Point High School** senior **Jacob Echevarria Logan** received a scholarship valued at \$157,000 to attend Howard University.
56. The following **South Point High School** seniors received scholarships during the school’s awards ceremony: **Lauren Arthurs**, Lester Carpenter Scholarship; **Aedan Corcoran**, Lester Carpenter Scholarship; **Colin McAllister**, Lester Carpenter Scholarship; **Elle VanGastle**, Lester Carpenter Scholarship; and **Genevieve Ziemer**, Lester Carpenter Scholarship. In addition, **Jacob Echevarria Logan** was awarded the Delta Sigma Theta Scholarship; **Gabrielle Tracy**, Horatio Alger Scholarship; **Jay Crawford**, Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizen Award; **Aedan Corcoran**, Theodore Drury Stowe Science and Technology Scholarship; **Genevieve Ziemer**, Perry Fewell Honorary Leadership Award; and **Makenna McCuen**, Christopher Marshall Stowe Scholarship.
57. **Stanley Middle School** had three teams place in the top nine in the state Envirothon competition. The students were among the top three highest scoring public school teams in the state. Teacher **Diana Baxter** coaches the team.
58. The Southwest Middle School Technology Student Association (TSA) performed well at the N.C. Technology Student Association State Conference under the theme “Evolution of Excellence.” They earned second place in the middle school tech bowl competition with team members **Kolaiah Grant**, **Kaydence Guy**, and **Naomi Ramirez** and took third place in the data science and analytics competition with **Ayanna Bernard**, **Tristin Grier**, and **Daira Elizabeth Vasquez Gonzalez** leading the way.
59. **Webb Street School** raised more than \$7,000 from the school’s annual plant sale. The money will be used to invest in the school’s transition academy. In addition, more than 500 people attended the school’s second annual art and auto show on April 27.