

## BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

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**DEPARTMENT:** Communications/Public  
Information Department

**TOPIC: GOOD NEWS**

**FOR THE MONTH OF:** October 2024

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1. **Gaston County Schools** has 43 high school students who earned academic honors from the College Board National Recognition Program. They are **Jamila Lewis** and **Kevin Olvera Morales**, **Ashbrook High School**; **Riley Oxendine** and **Aiden VanderMeer**, **Stuart W. Cramer High School**; **Nevaeh Dover**, **Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences**; **Geo Touvell**, **Gaston Early College High School**; **Chloe Fair**, **Molly Forgan**, **Savannah Grubs**, **Alayna Janik**, **Sarena Nguyen**, **Amor Polanco**, and **Madison Ladin**, **Forestview High School**; **Emma Saiter**, **Hannah Thovtrup**, **Jasmine Boyd**, and **Spencer Baker**, **South Point High School**; and **Nii Abbey**, **Emmanuel Berry**, **Sha’Hirah Black**, **Jorel Breeden**, **Leah Brooks**, **Annette Carrillo**, **Grace Cera-Isbell**, **Chauncey Collins**, **Catherine Coronel-Nava**, **Ryan Cruz Trujillo**, **Ayden Dellinger**, **Saliou Diouf**, **Sofia Dorantes**, **Gabriela Gadani-Gutierrez**, **Jayden Hastings**, **Yuchieh Hung**, **Regis Lu**, **Alise Mayers**, **Kendall McPhatter**, **Claire Melton**, **Lynabel Mercado**, **Daniel Sanchez**, **Erica Tetteh-Ocloo**, **Kendall Tyler**, **Tatianna Villalobos**, and **Thien Vu**, **Highland School of Technology**.
2. The following **Gaston County Schools** teachers completed the year-long “Gaston County Schools AIG Local Endorsement” (G.A.L.E.) training program to work with academically and intellectually gifted students. They are **Jennifer Amato**, **Jennifer Clark**, **Sarah Payne**, **Kaitlyn Speas**, **Allie Walsh**, and **Sarah Williams**, **Page Primary**; **Amanda Becker** and **Sidney Cole**, **Cramerton Middle**; **Alicea Bigby Smart**, **Anna Branch**, **Stacy Craig**, **Destiny Crocetto**, **Stephanie Fox**, **Amy Groves**, **Ashley Ramkissoon**, **Sarah Stilwell**, and **Abigail Taylor**, **Belmont Central Elementary**; **Matthew Florence**, **Cheryl Morris**, and **Laura Pearson**, **Belmont Middle**; **Emily Johnson**, **Chapel Grove Elementary**; **Kaela Lipscomb**, **David Vanier**, and **Christygay Waisome**, **Grier Middle**; **Verlia McLaughlin**, **Andrea Moore**, **Halie Russell**, **Sue-Ann Taylor-Folkes**, and **Sarah White**, **Pleasant Ridge Elementary**; **Kylie Mucci**, **Mount Holly Middle**; and **Felicia Nath**, **Shelbie Setzer**, and **Julieta Tabieros**, **W.C. Friday Middle**.
3. **Gaston County Schools** had the opportunity to show off its classic 1950-model school bus during the Touch-A-Truck event on September 24 at Stinger Park in Bessemer City. The bus may have been the most popular “truck” there as its bright orange color scheme attracted plenty of attention, and kids (of all ages) enjoyed climbing aboard to check out a school bus from years ago.
4. Congratulations to the following for winning middle school county championships: **Cramerton Middle**, golf; **W.C. Friday Middle**, softball; and **Holbrook Middle**, football.

5. Students from **South Point High School** and **Holbrook Middle School** designed and created scarecrows that are part of Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden's "Scarecrow Hollow" exhibit.
6. The following students received awards in the Mount Holly Plein Air art contest: **Anna Broome, Stuart W. Cramer High School**, second place; **Ava Hoerst, Cramerton Middle School**, third place; and **Briana Banuelas Ibarra, Highland School of Technology**, honorable mention.
7. **Amber Spargo**, math curriculum facilitator for **Gaston County Schools**, was elected to serve a three-year term as a board member at-large for the North Carolina Association for Middle Level Education.
8. The **Ashbrook High School** marching band received several awards at the East Lincoln High School Carolina Classic, including third place for drum major and third place for percussion. Additionally, at the **North Gaston High School** Wildcat Invitational, the band earned first place in color guard, percussion, visual performance, and music as well as second place in general effect, first place in Class 2A, and the 1A/2A grand champion title. **Josh Westbrook** is the band director.
9. **H.H. Beam Elementary** partnered with Metrolina Mobile School Pantry to host a drive-up food giveaway for families and distributed more than 300 boxes and packs of food.
10. The Rotary Club of Gastonia volunteered at **H.H. Beam Elementary** to assist in the organization of classroom libraries.
11. **H.H. Beam Elementary** raised \$14,600 at its Fun Run program to purchase a digital sign for the front of the school.
12. **H.H. Beam Elementary** received a \$4,500 grant from First United Methodist Church of Belmont for its "One Book, One School" program. The entire school will read "The World According to Humphrey."
13. **H.H. Beam Elementary** received a grant from the N.C. Beautiful Azalea Celebration, and 50 azaleas will be planted around the school.
14. The **Belmont Central Elementary** student council sponsored a collection drive for people affected by Hurricane Helene. Students and staff gathered eight full car and truckloads of items, including clothing, medicine, pet food, baby formula, and water.
15. **Belmont Middle School** held a pie fundraiser to support Hurricane Helene relief efforts. Students donated money in advance and had the chance to "pie" a teacher, administrator, or coach. The fundraiser collected more than \$4,000.
16. **Bessemer City Central Elementary** received donations from business partner Livent to support students and families.

17. The **Bessemer City High School** band performed “The Star-Spangled Banner” at a recent Gastonia Baseball Club game.
18. **Carr Elementary School and John Chavis Middle School** sponsored collection drives for people affected by Hurricane Helene.
19. The **Cherryville High School** marching band received several awards in Class 2A at the East Lincoln High School Carolina Classic: first place for drum major, third place for general effect, and third place for music. **Cole Crawford** is the band director.
20. The **Stuart W. Cramer High School** Raging Storm Marching Band received several awards at the Cox Mill Charger Cup, including second place in Class 2A, second in music performance, second in visual performance, second in general effect, and second in percussion. **Kameron Radford** is the band director.
21. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** tennis player **Olivia Michael** won the Big South 3A Conference tournament championship.
22. The **East Gaston High School** marching band received several awards in Class 3A at the **North Gaston High School** Wildcat Invitational competition, including first place overall and first place in general effect, music performance, visual performance, drum major, percussion, and color guard. **Brandon Taylor** is the band director.
23. The **East Gaston High School** JROTC won first place in the unarmed squad competition at the Nation Ford High School Falcon Meet. Additionally, the JROTC collected and delivered several hundred pounds of donated food and clothing to benefit people affected by Hurricane Helene.
24. **East Gaston High School’s** athletes and band members were invited to greet students at **Pinewood Elementary** as part of the school’s “Start the Day with a Hello!” program.
25. **Aruzhan Suleimenova** of **East Gaston High School** was chosen for the BigFuture Ambassadors program by the College Board.
26. In partnership with Keep Gastonia Beautiful, the **Forestview High School** AP (Advanced Placement) Environmental Science class picked up nearly 300 pounds of trash and debris around the school grounds. **Sam Braxton** is the teacher.
27. **Forestview High School** doubles players **Olivia Hensley** and **Lily Cabe** placed second in the Big South Conference tournament to advance to the regional tournament.
28. **Gaston County Board of Education** member **Lee Dedmon** visited **Forestview High School** at a student’s request for a biography project interview. He answered questions and gave the student a basketball trading card from his days as a player at UNC-Chapel Hill.
29. On September 11, the **W.C. Friday Middle School** band performed patriotic songs before the start of school to commemorate Patriot Day.

30. **Gaston Early College High School** held a leadership luncheon to connect students with local professionals. Students were paired with experts in their chosen career fields, and both students and professionals enjoyed the chance to connect and learn from each other while enjoying lunch.
31. **Kiser Elementary** received a \$1,000 grant for being a finalist in the Carolina Panthers spirit rock competition.
32. **Lingerfeldt Elementary** received a donation of teacher supply bags from Loray Baptist Church. Additionally, Officer Jamar Kendrick with the Gaston County Police Department held a back-to-school drive and donated school supplies and other necessities to teachers.
33. The **Mount Holly Middle School** seventh-grade chorus performed the national anthem and “God Bless America” at a recent Gastonia Baseball Club game. The school chorus teacher is **Amy Carpenter**.
34. **New Hope Elementary School** received a donation of school supplies from Seven Oaks Church. In addition, the church provided gift cards to teachers and served a delicious meal during parent-teacher conferences.
35. The **North Gaston High School** JROTC collected supplies for people affected by Hurricane Helene and delivered them to the Linville Land Harbor distribution site. In addition to delivering their supplies, the cadets helped unload donations, load supplies, sort items, and interact with local residents.
36. **Page Primary School** raised more than \$44,000 during its recent dance-a-thon fundraiser. The funds will be used to purchase books and science materials.
37. **Pinewood Elementary School** celebrated a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new outdoor mural created by artist Jake Summerour. The mural is a collaboration between **Gaston County Schools** and the City of Mount Holly and is inspired by students’ artwork. In addition, the ceremony featured a musical performance by the fifth grade under the direction of **Heather McKoy**.
38. **Pinewood Elementary’s** assistant principal, **Carmin Adams**, was nominated for Assistant Principal of the Year by the North Carolina Principals and Assistant Principals Association.
39. **Sadler Elementary** celebrated “Start With Hello Week,” which is a national call to action dedicated to making new social connections and creating a sense of belonging among youth.
40. **Sadler Elementary** launched phase one of its multilingual initiative by offering English as a Second Language opportunities to parents and foreign language classes to select fourth and fifth-grade students.

41. The **South Point High School** marching band received several awards at the **North Gaston** Wildcat Invitational. In Class 1A, the band earned first place overall, along with first place for drum major, second place for color guard, and first place for percussion, general effect, visual performance, and music.
42. The following **Stanley Middle School** students placed in the “Design a Classroom” challenge: **Martha Tobiasson**, front office, first place; **Abigail Summey**, library, second place; **Diego Summey**, second place, auditorium; and **Ailany Kaskay**, science room, third place. The following teacher classrooms also placed in the competition: **Renee Withers**, first place; **Kennedy Ballard**, second place; and a tie for third place: **Kristy Summey** and **Susan Tobiasson**.
43. **York Chester Middle School** hosted an International Music and Art Festival that showcased the school’s band and chorus and included a display of student artwork. The program was designed to celebrate cultural awareness and diversity through the fine arts.