

## BOARD AGENDA INFORMATIONAL ITEM

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**DEPARTMENT:** Communications/Public  
Information Department

**TOPIC: GOOD NEWS**

**FOR THE MONTH OF:** March 2023

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1. **Gaston County Schools** received the Spirit of North Carolina Award, which is presented by the United Way of North Carolina. The recognition honors businesses, organizations, **Todd Hagans**, chief communications officer, and **Valerie Yatko**, director of business and community partnerships, accepted the award, which recognizes the school district for its outstanding annual fundraising efforts for the United Way of Gaston County. Over the past three years alone, employees, students, and parents have worked together to contribute more than \$287,000.
2. The five finalists for Gaston County Principal of the Year 2023-2024 are **Justin Beam, North Belmont Elementary; Bryan Denton, Hunter Huss High School; Jessica Steiner, Stuart W. Cramer High School; Jaime Wallace, Brookside Elementary;** and **Sheila Wyont, Bessemer City High School.** The winner will be announced on May 2 at

7. Students, teachers, and staff in **Gaston County Schools**

17. **Madison Cole** of **Ashbrook High School** was named Big South 3A Basketball Player of the Year.
18. **Rex Dover** of **Belmont Middle School** finished third in the Carolina Panthers Regional Spelling Bee and is one of four students to qualify for the National Scripps Spelling Bee.
19. The **Belmont Middle School** kindness club, spirit club, and scrapbooking club made
20. **Bessemer City High School** senior **Randall Pettus** was selected for the 2023 Carolinas Classic all-star basketball game. The game is scheduled for March 25 at Hoggard High School in Wilmington. Pettus also was named South Piedmont Conference 1A/2A Player of the Year.
21. Members of the National Technical Honor Society at **Bessemer City High School** wrote 400 Christmas cards that were delivered to four area nursing homes during the holidays.
22. **W.A. Bess Elementary** second grader **Chloe Thompson** received second place in the Keep Gastonia Beautiful Arbor Day Contest. Her art will be displayed in the Gastonia main library through April. Her art teacher is **Michelle Curnhow**.
23. **Carr Elementary** principal **Dr. Rebekah Duncan** and assistant principal **Thomas Plecnik** sponsored a service project for students attending the Dallas Boys and Girls Club. Staff provided cupcakes for the students to decorate and a craft project for them to complete.
24. **Chapel Grove Elementary** partnered with Keep Gastonia Beautiful on a service project that involved students collecting more than 100 pounds of litter around the school. Fourth grade teacher **Victoria Brown** organized the service project.
25. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** junior **Alan Whitley** (alto saxophone) received the Martha Kendrick Scholarship to attend the Cannon Music Camp at Appalachian State University. The scholarship valued at \$3,000 is funded through the Gaston Music Education Foundation.
26. **Stuart W. Cramer High School** had three students win individual 3A wrestling state championships. **Matt Karagias** won his first individual state championship in the 160-pound weight class. **Charlie Sly** won his second individual state championship and was named the most outstanding wrestler in the 3A classification. This year, Sly won in the 132-pound weight class; he won his first state championship last year in the 113-pound weight class. Additionally, ninth grader **Bentley Sly** won his first individual state championship in the 120-pound weight class.
27. **East Gaston High School** cheerleaders **Trinity Brown**, **Ally Codgill**, and **Davanee Crisp** were chosen for the 2023 North Carolina all-state cheerleading team. The all-state

28. **East Gaston High School** **Eugene Farrar** was named Southern Piedmont 1A/2A Coach of the Year.
29. The **Forestview High School** Beta Club, Student Council, and Red Cross Club donated \$1,270 in gift cards for the Destiny Lives On Foundation to present to transplant recipient **The donation coincided with the February Heart Tree** community project. In addition, the Red Cross Club members collected coats, jackets, hats, gloves, and pants for the winter clothing drive and donated these items to local families and charities.
30. **Forestview High School** sophomore **Nana Eshun** received the Margaret Alexander McArver Scholarship to attend the UNC-Greensboro music camp.
31. **Gaston Early College High School** alumnus **Allen Chen** spoke at the February N.C. State Board of Education meeting to report that the **Gaston Early College High School** gave him the opportunity to take rigorous and advanced courses while also teaching him life lessons.

38. **Hunter Huss High School** senior **Justin Ross** was named the Big South 3A Basketball Player of the Year. **Bobby Lipscomb** was named the Big South 3A Coach of the Year.
39. **Lingerfelt Elementary** welcomed a special visitor on March 1. **Forestview High School** alumnus and LIV professional golfer **Harold Varner III** visited with students to talk about his time as a professional golfer and the importance of staying in school. In addition, he spent time with students involved in the First Tee program, which focuses on teaching students about golf and character education.
40. **Leah Ammons** of **New Hope Elementary** was named the **Gaston County Schools Media Specialist of the Year**.
41. **Page Primary School** hosted an open house for incoming kindergarten families. The event included guided tours of the school, an expo of information about the school, a visit  
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The More than 100 families attended the open house.
42. **Pinewood Elementary** fourth grader **Caroline Czekaj**

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48. **South Point High School** junior **Lauren Arthurs** was crowned Miss South Point during scholarship. Runner-ups were **Nicole Allen**, first, and **Maci Norton**, second. **Kayla McMorris** was named Miss Congeniality.

49. **South Point High School** **Kody Kubbs** was named Big South 3A Coach of the Year.

50. **Stanley Middle School** teachers **Amber Reeves** and **Diana Baxter** partnered with Angie Bittle from Duke Energy to bring the Students@Work to the school. Eighth grade students were involved in interactive presentations that highlighted careers at Duke Energy in the following areas: aviation/drones, electric vehicles, and solar power.

51. **Debbie Will** of **Webb Street School** was named **Gaston County Schools** Service Provider of the Year. 02 683.74 Tm0 g0 G[C]-2(ong)10(e)4(nialit)-3(y)30(.)JTJETQ. h41. u27.23 Tm0 g0