

October 22, 2025, MB#57
Special Meeting-Workshop

Special Session, October 22, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in Special Session on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., at Hickory Metro Convention Center, 1960 13th Avenue Drive, SE, Hickory, North Carolina. The purpose of this Special Meeting was to hold Schools Community Conversations to share information on county-wide school facility needs and to receive community input.

Present were Chair Randy Isenhower, Vice-Chair Austin Allran, and Commissioners Robert C. Abernethy, Jr., Barbara G. Beatty and Cole Setzer.

Also present were County Manager Mary Furtado, Assistant County Manager Paul Murray, Assistant County Manager Justin Merritt, County Attorney Jodi Stewart, Assistant County Attorney Josh Teague, and County Clerk Dale Stiles. County.

1. Chair Isenhower called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., noting a quorum was present.

2. Chair Isenhower welcomed everyone present.

3. Presentations.

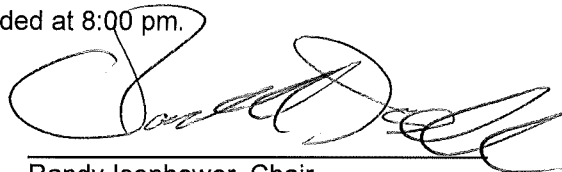
Chair Isenhower provided an overview of the County-wide perspective including what matters of fact brought the Commission to the point of evaluating a potential school merger as a responsible policy approach.

County Manager Mary Furtado presented a more detailed look at these matters, including an overview of how enrollment drives school budgets, which drive classroom opportunities; implications of divergent enrollment over time; enrollment history for Catawba County, Hickory City and Newton Conover City School systems; school capacity pressures and plan to address school growth; and merger statutory process.

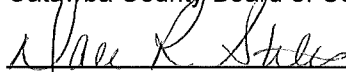
After the presentations, five break-out stations were available for citizens to have an opportunity to share feedback on the following: student achievement and success, student logistics, financial, governance and frequently asked questions. Individual Board members were available for conversation during break-out sessions.

4. No action was taken.

5. The presentation and discussion concluded at 8:00 pm.



Randy Isenhower, Chair
Catawba County Board of Commissioners



Dale R. Stiles
County Clerk