

## REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

GADSDEN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD  
MAX D. WALKER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
35 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BLVD.  
QUINCY, FLORIDA

March 25, 2025

6:00 P.M.

The meeting was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Leroy McMillan, Chairman; Ms. Cathy S. Johnson; Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon; Mr. Steve Scott; and Mr. Charlie D. Frost. Also present were Mr. Elijah Key, Superintendent and Secretary to the Board; Mrs. Deborah Minnis, Attorney for the Board; and others.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Leroy McMillan, at 6:00 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Elder Lakendric Green, Pastor of Mt. Calvary Primitive Baptist Church.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. RECOGNITIONS

Ms. Hannigon recognized Justin McNealy, a student at James A. Shanks Middle School for writing a Black History essay. She stated that Justin wrote the essay on the Honorable Judge Kathy Garner, and told why she was an inspiration to him. Justin read his essay to the Superintendent and Board members because he did not get a chance to submit it for the Black History Essay Contest. Justin was thanked for his accomplishment in writing the essay. He received unexpected gifts from the Board members, and his certification certificate from Mr. Cornelius Pace.

Major Willie Jackson, Principal of Gadsden Technical College, recognized the following CTE teachers: Mr. Eric Toussaint – Gadsden County High School; Mr. Jamaal Holt – Gadsden County High School; Mr. James Bradwell, Gadsden County High School; Mr. Willie Brown, Gadsden County High School; Ms. Alesia Grimsley, Gadsden County High School; Mr. Cornelius Pace – James A. Shanks Middle School; and Mr. Johnson Granerson – Crossroad Academy Charter School. The CTE teachers received a monetary stipend for their performance.

Mr. Frost stated that the 7 on 7 tournament was hosted by the district this past weekend. He thanked the Superintendent, Gadsden County High School coaches and staff for their work in making the 7 on 7 tournament a success.

5. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

None.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mr. McMillan entertained a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda. The motion was made by Mr. Charlie D. Frost, seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

6. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- a. February 25, 2025, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Financial Workshop
- b. February 25, 2025, 6:00 p.m. - Regular School Board Meeting
- c. March 4, 2025, 6:00 p.m. – Student Hearing

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

7. PERSONNEL MATTERS (resignations, retirements, recommendations, leaves of absence, terminations of services, volunteers, and job descriptions)

- a. Personnel 2024– 2025

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Personnel 2025 – 2026

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. AGREEMENTS/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

- b. PAEC Contract Agreement – Actuarial Services

Fund Source: General Fund

Amount: FY 24-25 - \$19,793.00 FY 25-26 - \$3,100.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to accept the Superintendent’s recommendation to approve agenda item #’s 6a – 7b and 8b. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

9. STUDENT MATTERS

- a. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #042-2425-0231

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- c. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #084-2425-0051

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- d. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #087-2425-0051

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- e. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #088-2425-0051

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- f. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #089-2425-0051

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- g. Student Expulsion - See back-up material

Case #090-2425-0051

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- i. Student Expulsion – See back-up material  
Case #092-2425-0051  
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- j. Student Expulsion – See back-up material  
Case #093-2425-0051  
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- k. Student Expulsion – See back-up material  
Case #094-2425-0051  
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- l. Student Expulsion – See back-up material  
Case #096-2425-0051  
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- m. Student Expulsion – See back-up material  
Case #098-2425-0051  
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- n. Student Expulsion – See back-up material  
Case #099-2425-0051  
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- o. Student Expulsion – See back-up material  
Case #100-2425-0052  
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- r. Student Expulsion – See back-up material  
Case #103-2425-0051  
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- s. Student Expulsion – See back-up material  
Case #106-2425-0051  
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- t. Student Expulsion – See back-up material  
Case #107-2425-0051  
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #'s 9a, 9c – 9g, 9i – 9o, and 9r – 9t. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

## 10. SCHOOL FACILITY/PROPERTY

- a. Board Approval of the District Five-Year Work Plan  
Fund Source: N/A  
Amount: N/A  
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

## ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Items preceded by an asterisk (\*) were removed from the consent agenda at the beginning the meeting and acted upon during the discussion portion of the agenda.

### \*8. AGREEMENTS/CONTRACT PROJECT APPLICATIONS

- a. Board Approval of the Execution of FEMA Contract 4680-013-R to Replace Havana Magnet School Generator

Fund Source: FEMA Grant: \$52,215.00 (75%) and General Fund: \$17,405.00 (25%)

Amount: \$17,405.00

Ms. Johnson asked Dr. Sylvia Jackson what was the timeline to receive the generator, and if it would be received before hurricane season? Dr. Jackson stated that most likely not. She stated that the process could take up to 9 months or more. She stated that the award letter has been received to start the process.

Following discussion, Ms. Cathy S. Johnson made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #8a. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

### \*9. STUDENT MATTERS

- b. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #082-2425-0051

The mother of student #082-2425-0051 requested a hearing.

Following discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to defer action on agenda #9b.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- h. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #091-2425-0051

The mother of student #091-2425-0051 addressed the Board to request a hearing.

Following discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to defer action on agenda #9h.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- p. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #101-2425-0051

The mother of student #101-2425-0051 addressed the Board to request a hearing.

Following discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to defer action on agenda #9p.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- q. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #102-2425-0051

The mother of student #102-2425-0051 addressed the Board to request a hearing.

Following discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to defer action on agenda #9q.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

## 11. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key stated that the Board need to have a brief executive session to discuss collective bargaining issues following the meeting. He stated that the Board would receive monthly updates from academic services and support services. He asked Dr. Loietta Holmes to address the Board to answer questions regarding the graduation rate. He stated that the district's graduation rate has improved.

Dr. Holmes stated that the total adjusted cohort numbers are 318 students. She stated that of the 318 students 242 are currently enrolled. She stated that 15 students are ready to graduate early, 51 are negative withdrawals, 174 students have met the State reading requirement for passing the ACT, SAT, CLT, or the State test for reading. She stated that 174 students have met the Algebra I requirement, and 196 students are on track with their GPA of a 1.9 or higher, they have 17 or more credits and have passed both assessments. She stated that means (196) 62% of the district students are graduation ready. Mr. McMillan asked if the number was expected to increase? Dr. Holmes responded yes. She stated that the student negative withdrawals are hurting the district. She stated that any student with attendance issues or those no longer in the district, the State count that against the district. She stated that the State consider those students' non-graduates. She stated that there are 23 students with attendance issues, they stopped coming to school within the school year. She stated that the district is currently trying to engage with those students. She stated that 17 students did not come to school within the school year, which could mean that they moved away. She stated that the students must be tracked to find out. She stated that 7 students are with adult education obtaining their GED. She stated that 3 students have been expelled and one student withdrew due to medical reasons. She stated that they are working with the Family & Community Engagement Office and others to make sure there are positive withdrawals, and have exit interviews. She stated that the district is also establishing a partnership with Graduation Alliance, who specialize in re-engaging students and provide educational support. She stated that the district is updating student withdrawal codes based on new information. Mr. McMillan stated that at the beginning of the school year, Mr. Russ was working on a truancy plan. He stated that it is alarming to know that there are 10<sup>th</sup> grade students who do not come to school. Dr. Holmes stated that the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students were already not coming to school before Mr. Russ took his position. She stated that the numbers have significantly dropped this year. She stated that the district numbers are decreasing. She stated that once the student gets to the age of 16, there is nothing that could be done to make them attend school. She stated that we could try to save them at the age of 15. Mr. Russ stated that the State law is very broad. He stated that we are doing all we can and using all avenues to help students. He stated that it is a major problem, but will continue to work and get it done. Mr. Frost wanted to know if there was a time limit on getting the students back in school in order to receive credit for them. Dr. Holmes stated that as long as the coding is put in the system by August 31, 2025 credit can be received. She stated that we are doing all we can with tutoring, engaging with parents, and using other programs with Varsity Tutoring to help students meet the testing requirements and keep in touch with them on a weekly basis. She stated that 82% of active students are graduation ready.

Mr. Key stated that the main issue is to clean up the data before submitting to the State. He asked Ms. Robinson and Mrs. McGriff to share information on progress monitoring.

Mrs. Robinson stated that progress monitoring 1 and 2 is taking place, and progress monitoring 3 will begin soon. She stated that currently based on PM2 data the district has 17% of the students scoring a Level 3 in math and in ELA reading 27% of students scoring at Level 3. She stated that in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade 231 students scored Level 1. Out of 357 boys and girls that took PM2; 4<sup>th</sup> Grade 23% - Math 14% ; ELC 5<sup>th</sup> Grade 26% - Math 16%, ELC 12%; 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade 28% - Math (6<sup>th</sup> - 14%) (7<sup>th</sup> - 30%) (ELC 6<sup>th</sup> - 10% and 7<sup>th</sup> - 12%); 8<sup>th</sup> Grade 27% - Math 10%; ELC 6%; 9<sup>th</sup> Grade 36% - ELC 14%; and 10<sup>th</sup> Grade 33% - ELC 12%. Mr. McMillan questioned whether it was safe to say that the PM1 scores were low and the PM2 scores increased, and are expecting PM3 scores higher in numbers. Ms. Robinson responded yes, the district is doing its own

progress monitoring through STAR. She stated that there are learning gains. She stated that the numbers may seem small but there is a lot of progress.

Mrs. McGriff stated that the summer school program will begin June 2<sup>nd</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. She stated that the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading camp will be at all the elementary schools. She stated that Gadsden Elementary Magnet School and Greensboro Elementary School will share the same site. She stated that beyond the school year activities will be funded through UniSIG, Title I, Title III, or Title IV. She stated that there will be a mandatory extended school year (ESE) to support SWD as required in IEPs. She stated that there will be a mandatory summer bridge program for 4-year-old prekindergarten students (VPK) who score below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile on PM3. She stated that community sponsored programs are currently in place that will continue through the summer (Boys & Girls Club).

Mr. McMillan stated that we often here bad things about Gadsden County, but this is a good thing. He applauded the Superintendent. He stated that the district has some good kids here.

## 12. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Ms. Johnson stated that during the last meeting it was brought to the Board's attention by Superintendent Key, that an employee requested a hearing before the Board. Mrs. Minnis stated that the employee has requested a hearing with the Division of Administrative Hearing with a separate body. She stated that the School Board will be represented with counsel to present the case on behalf of the Superintendent. She stated that the Board has a different role in this matter. She stated that the attorney is handling the case with the Division of Administrative Hearing. Ms. Johnson reminded the Board that she previously suggested a meeting with law enforcement and other county leaders. Mr. McMillan asked Ms. Johnson if she was requesting a special meeting, Mrs. Johnson responded yes, and that it is important for the students to sign the back of the Code of Conduct books. Ms. Johnson stated that there need to be some kind of accountability. Mr. McMillan stated that the Board will be advised by the attorney on what to do regarding the employee hearing. He stated that accountability needs to be on every level.

Ms. Hannigon stated suggested the Board schedule a retreat. She stated that dates needed to be identified to schedule the retreat to discuss discipline in the schools. She stated that she wanted to invite the principals to attend the retreat. She stated that we need action sooner rather than later. During the discussion Ms. Hannigon made a motion to schedule a series of dates by the end of April for the retreat. The motion was seconded by Ms. Johnson. Further discussion was held on discipline. Mr. Frost questioned if the retreat was to discuss Board policies. Mr. Key stated that no one has asked him what has been done regarding the February 20<sup>th</sup> fight at the high school and discipline. He stated that action has been taken on the students and personnel changes have been made at the school. Mr. McMillan stated that we are working together and getting where we need to be. Ms. Hannigon stated that her concerns are not regarding the incident on February 20<sup>th</sup>, but want to discuss future plans. Mr. McMillan stated that a motion and a second has been made. Ms. Hannigon and Ms. Johnson voted "aye". Mr. McMillan, Mr. Frost, and Mr. Scott voted "nay". Mr. Key stated that he understands the concern.

Ms. Hannigon requested that the Board vote to approve the agenda first at the meetings. Mr. McMillan stated that he was concerned about the statute on approval of agendas. Mrs. Minnis shared comments regarding the approval of the agenda first at the meetings. Ms. Hannigon stated that Carter Parramore Academy was hosting a parent meeting this Thursday (March 27<sup>th</sup>) from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. She requested a workshop to further discuss the old Quincy High School with Quincy Main Street. She also requested a presentation on the CTE program at the next meeting.

Mr. Key stated that the Board meetings can be viewed on the district's website.

## 13. The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

The Board convened in an executive session at 8:13 p.m. to discuss collective bargaining issues; and adjourned at 8:30 p.m.