

SPECIAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

October 10, 2023

5:00 P.M.

The meeting was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Leroy McMillan, Chairman; Mrs. Karema D. Dudley; Ms. Cathy S. Johnson; 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 5:00 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Mr. Leroy McMillan.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

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

4. AGREEMENT/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

b. Purchase Order Request for Shaw Integrated Solutions

Fund Source: ESSER 2 Lump Sum

Amount: Gadsden County High School - \$44,072.00
 Building #7 at 655 South Stewart Street - \$25,941.16

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

c. Contractual Agreement between Gadsden County District Schools and Ethica, LLC

Fund Source: Title I

Amount: \$21,000.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

5. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

a. Gadsden County High School Agriculture Students Field Trip Request

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. 2023 - 2024 Code of Student Conduct

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Items preceded by and (*) asterisk were removed from the consent agenda and moved to the discussion portion of the agenda.

*4. AGREEMENT/.CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

a. Purchase Order Request for Pro Playgrounds

Fund Source: ESSER 3
Amount: Bold Step Infant Care - \$103,999.00
Chattahoochee Elementary - \$179,999.00
Gadsden Elementary Magnet - \$169,999.00
George Munroe Elementary - \$195,999.00
Greensboro Elementary - \$193,999.00
Havana Magnet - \$199,999.00
Stewart Street Elementary - \$203,999.00

Ms. Johnson stated that for the record that she wanted the playground equipment from the schools that will be closed to be placed at the new location or other sites in the district.

Mrs. Dudley stated that it is important to have a facility plan in place. She stated that it is a blessing to be able to use ESSER funds to pay for the playground equipment. She stated that the Board needed to be proactive.

Mr. McMillan stated that the Board must consider age appropriate for replacing playground equipment.

Following discussion, Ms. Cathy S. Johnson made a motion to accept the Superintendent’s recommendation to approve agenda item #4a with the stipulation to have all playground equipment remain in the district. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

6. ESSER II & III Funding Update

Dr. Sylvia Jackson shared with the Board an update on the ESSER II funding. She stated that the ESSER II Lump Sum funding was \$10,517,947.00. She stated that COVID-19 has had and continue to have a negative impact on the district’s ability to safely and effectively meet the educational needs of children in the Gadsden County community. She stated that enduring the pandemic has made it painfully clear that in order to provide the best possible learning opportunities for our students, improvements are needed in the areas of (1) academics, (2) technology, and (3) environmental safety. She stated that allowable activities authorized under the Coronavirus Relief and Response Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act for ESSER II included: **Activity 1:** Improve the Academic Performance of Students – the district seeks to establish afterschool and summer intervention programs to address learning loss; the district seeks to offer a summer STEM program to expose students to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics positive learning experiences; the district seeks to address learning loss by increasing training opportunities for instructional staff on BEST standards, ESOL instruction, Reading Endorsement, and additional beginning teacher support; the district

seeks to address learning loss by placing reading and math coaches at each school and hiring a district science specialist to serve all schools; the district seeks to increase wireless capacity and safety by replacing the current wireless system to create a security fabric that allows safe wireless access and extends the School Board Network to all areas of Gadsden County; the district seeks to install Tru-touch smart boards in every classroom and maintain one to one devices for students; and the district seeks to hire a project manager to ensure all areas of the ESSER II grant is implemented with fidelity. She stated that the allowable ESSER expenses included: purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for all students who are served by the local educational agency that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low income students and children with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment; planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental after school programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care; addressing learning loss among students, including low-income students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care, of the local educational agency, including by a) administering and using high quality assessments that are valid and reliable, to accurately assess students' academic progress and assist educators in meeting students' academic needs, including through differentiating instruction; implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students; providing information and assistance to parents and families on how they can effectively support students, including in a distance learning environment; tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education; and other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in local educational agencies and continuing to employ existing staff of the local educational agency. **Activity 2** – Increase Access to Adult Career and Technical Education; Career and Technical Education is a viable option for students seeking to complete high school with certified skills that will allow them to transition into high wage employment opportunities. In addition, Gadsden is increasingly becoming a community of multilingual individuals who have limited English speaking skills. Parents who speak English are better able to support their students' instruction. The district seeks to increase access to Adult Career and Technical Education by offering at least one ESOL adult education class, expanding an existing CTE program, and piloting one new CTE program. **Activity 3** – Address Needs of Individual Schools – The district recognizes each school community has unique instructional, technological and environmental safety needs. The district seeks to provide principals with additional funds to address the unique needs of their school campus. The funding would allow for materials and supplies beyond those provided by the district to enhance the learning experiences and safety of students. Principals and other school leaders were provided with the resources necessary to address the needs of their individual schools. **Activity 4** – The district recognizes that many of our students have needs that are unique to low-income, learning disabilities, and language acquisition. The district seeks to provide additional support for these needs by 1) funding para support in classrooms that have ESE and ESOL students; 2) ensuring students have technology support devices such as headphones and translators; 3) ensuring students have sufficient PPE as needed; and 4) providing additional mental health services and support. **Activity 5** – Make improvements to Minimize the Spread of the Virus – simply put, face-to-face instruction is in the best interest of Gadsden County children. Significant effort need to be made to improve learning environments to minimize the spread of COVID and other infectious diseases. Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of a local educational agency, including buildings operated by such agency. School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmissions and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs. Inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities, including mechanical and non-mechanical heating,

ventilation, and air conditioning systems, filtering, purification and other air cleaning, fans, control systems, and window and door repair and replacement. Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in local educational agencies and continuing to employ existing staff of the local educational agency.

Ms. Johnson stated that she was concerned about upgrading the fieldhouse at Gadsden County High School. Mrs. Dudley stated that she was concerned about taking care of the students first. She stated that all employees are important. She stated that carpet can cause infectious diseases. She stated that the Board is responsible for the district's finances.

Mrs. Minnis stated that the funds have been encumbered for ESSER II funds and the lockers were not part of the funding.

Ms. Johnson amended her motion to find funds to purchase and install lockers for the fieldhouse at Gadsden County High School. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley.

In response to Mr. Scott's concern about funding to purchase and install the lockers, Mr. Key stated that the funds could not be from ESSER III. He stated that he will look into a funding source.

The Board voted unanimously for the Superintendent to find funding to purchase and install lockers at Gadsden County High School.

In response to Mr. McMillan's concern regarding how much funding was left of ESSER II, Mr. Mays stated that ESSER II funding undisbursed balance was \$1,687,234.06.

Board members asked questions, shared their concerns and made comments during the discussion of the ESSER II funding update. Mrs. Dudley requested a workshop be scheduled to further discuss ESSER funding.

7. Educational Items by the Superintendent

Mr. Key encouraged everyone to support the schools. He announced the passing of Ms. Allysun Davis' mother and services were scheduled for this Saturday (October 14th).

8. School Board Requests and Concerns

Mr. Frost requested a copy of the district's five-year facilities work plan. He stated that he agrees with Board member Johnson that the locker room need an upgrade.

Mr. McMillan stated that the Board has to lay aside personalities and their own agenda. He stated that everyone has to work together. Ms. Johnson stated that students are always first. She stated that the Board should have ready available posters of all games for each school. Mr. McMillan asked the Superintendent to work on getting game posters. Mr. Key stated that in the past sponsors did the game posters for the schools.

Mrs. Dudley stated that she was concerned about the teachers and district staff. She stated that the leaders need to find ways to cultivate staff. She stated that a few months back she asked if the Superintendent's Annual Financial Report (AFR) had been completed. Mr. Key stated that the AFR will be filed the end of the month. Mrs. Dudley stated that workshops are a way of knowing what is happening in the district. She stated that she wanted to schedule a workshop to discuss Gadsden Technical College and the district's budget.

The Board scheduled a workshop on Monday, October 16th at 5:00 p.m. to review Board agenda items for the regular meeting.

Mr. Scott stated that he visited schools and some of the teachers are talking about the school supply money. He stated that he did not ever want the district to disburse the teacher supply money the way it was done this year. Mr. Key stated that if issues are talked about they can be addressed. Mr. McMillan stated that he did not need the Superintendent to decide when teacher supply money is disbursed. He stated that was a Board's decision. He asked Mrs. Minnis to give the Board some guidance on teacher supply money.

In response to Mr. Scott's concern regarding the pool acquisition from the City of Quincy, Mr. Key stated that he has had conversation with the City Manager.

Mr. McMillan requested a balance of all the district's accounts at the next Board meeting. He stated that a replacement for a School Crossing Guard was needed at Greensboro Elementary School. He stated that Mr. Murray the previous School Crossing Guard retired. He asked that the Agriculture Expo's and Field Trips be combined. He requested an update on the student hearing previously held. Dr. Holmes stated that the student will return to school tomorrow (Wednesday, October 11th). Mr. McMillan asked if the bus driver had the authority to put students off the bus for fighting. Mr. Key stated yes, if they are violating the policies.

9. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

The Board convened in an executive session at 6:43 p.m. to discuss collective bargaining issues; and adjourned at 7:13 p.m.