

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

October 24, 2023

6:00 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 6:02 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

Mr. Elijah Key led the opening prayer.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Key recognized all staff for their continued hard work and the students for their well behavior.

Mr. Frost recognized Board Member Johnson for focusing on taking care of the students. Ms. Johnson thanked Mr. Frost.

Mrs. Dudley thanked Mrs. Davis for the reminder to wear pink for breast cancer awareness month. She encouraged everyone to continue to support and fight cancer. She acknowledged FAMU's homecoming.

Mr. McMillan recognized Ms. Camry Floyd for having a general store at school allowing students to earn points for good behavior and shop at the store. He thanked Mr. Mays for attending the FSBIT conference and working on the district matters. He thanked him for representing Gadsden County.

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 Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

5. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- a. September 26, 2023, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Financial Workshop
- b. September 26, 2023, 6:00 p.m. – Regular School Board Meeting
- c. October 3, 2023, 3:30 p.m. – School Board Workshop
- d. October 3, 2023, 6:00 p.m. – Student Hearing

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

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

a. Personnel 2023 - 2024

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

7. AGREEMENT/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

a. Request Approval of Bid/Contract

Fund Source: ESSER II
Amount: \$65,280.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. Purchase of School Buses

Fund Source: Capital Outlay
Amount: \$437,193.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

c. Vehicle Purchase from Coggin Toyota at the Avenues and Gadsden County School Board

Fund Source: K-12 American Rescue (IDEA)
Amount: \$52,013.74

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. STUDENT MATTERS

a. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #33-2324-9106

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

10. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

a. Gadsden County High School Marching Band and Dancers Field Trip Request

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. School Safety-Reunification Plan

Fund Source: No Cost to the District
Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

c. 2023 – 2024 School Improvement Plans

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 and moved to the discussion portion of the agenda.

*9. SCHOOL FACILITY/PROPERTY

a. Discretionary One-half Cent Capital Outlay Surtax Ballot Resolution

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

Mr. Scott expressed his opposition to the discretionary one-half cent capital outlay surtax ballot resolution at a previous workshop. He stated that it is about raising taxes. He stated to vote for additional taxes is bad. He stated that taxes are increasing homeowners' insurance and bills in general. He stated that this resolution is for 15 years and the district will only lose capital outlay money for 3 years. He stated that the Board is also shutting down schools so those will not need to be maintained. He stated that he does not see additional property taxes coming in that will create more resources from capital outlay funding after the 3-year period. He stated that constituents are concerned with the length of time for the tax. He stated that he feels that with an additional sales tax citizens will go to Tallahassee for lower cost. He stated that he is in favor of a 5-year tax but not 15 years. He stated that he would not vote for the current proposal.

Mr. Frost stated that every time someone purchase something in Tallahassee, they support Leon County Schools. He stated that he wants people to shop in Gadsden County to support the schools. He stated that he supports the one-half cent sales tax 100%.

Mrs. Dudley asked if there has been enough money in capital outlay in the past to sustain and improve the schools. She stated that our students and the community deserve the best. She stated that she wants to see Gadsden County grow and do better. She stated that it starts with how we educate our students. She stated that this could be our opportunity to turn things around. She stated that she supports the one-half cent sales tax.

Ms. Johnson stated that you could not put a price on the children's education.

Mr. McMillan stated that capital outlay funding has not be able to maintain the district schools. He stated that the Board is not approving the one-half cent capital outlay surtax, the citizens would do that.

Mr. Scott proposed to change the length of time from 15 to 5 years. He stated that in the past the district operated 14 schools. He stated that he was concerned about how much money would be needed to maintain the current schools.

Following discussion, Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to amend the length of time from 15 to 5 years. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #9a. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley. The motion carried with Mr. McMillan, Mrs. Dudley, Ms. Johnson and Mr. Frost voting "aye". Mr. Scott voted "nay".

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

11. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key stated that Allstate provided a brief presentation on the new school update. He stated that they now have a draft contract and after the Board's approval, the preconstruction services of the design phase will begin. Allstate representatives (Mr. Scott Brewer and Mr. Scott Watson) shared with the Board the five deliverable phases in the contract. Mr. McMillan stated that he was not interested in saving money on the design of the new school. He stated that he wants the original design of the new

school. He stated that students deserve better. Mr. Brewer stated that they are ready and prepared to inform DOE that more money is needed. Mrs. Dudley stated that Allstate needed to find a way to make it happen. She stated that the seed needed to be planted that more money was needed. Mr. Key stated that Dr. Sylvia Jackson attended a meeting with the City Commission regarding the pool property. Dr. Jackson stated that the only discussion was they wanted to have a workshop to discuss other options. She stated that the City wants Mr. Key to attend their November 14th workshop. She recognized Mr. Norman McMillan who attended the City Commission meeting in support of the district acquiring the pool property. Mr. Key stated that if the Board did not get the pool property, the new school would be set back for about 3 years. He stated that the 2021 – 2022 FTE audit is being conducted. He shared with the Board an invitation from the Kiwanis Club for a golf tournament on October 22nd.

12. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

There were no requests and concerns from the Board members.

Mr. Leroy Reed addressed the Board with concerns regarding the district's truancy policy. He stated that he was concerned about his niece and nephew not attending school. He stated that the staff at James A. Shanks Middle School and Stewart Street Elementary School are doing a good job. He stated that he came to the Board to get help. He stated that he wants his niece and nephew to attend school. Mr. Key stated that he would ask Mrs. Farlin to get the names of Mr. Reed's niece and nephew and follow-up with him. He stated that he would review the district's truancy.

Mrs. Mandela addressed the Board and asked what was the expected date of completion for the new school. Mr. Key stated approximately 18 months after they get started but moving in depends on which buildings are built first. Mrs. Mandela stated that she was concerned about the dirtiness at the current schools and asked if the Board was going to continue allowing students to remain at those schools. She stated that she wants the Board to consider having the schools cleaned and look nice while the new school is being built.

Mrs. Dahlia Bibb-Mitchell addressed the Board regarding a workshop to discuss pay raises for office managers.

Mrs. Kecia Hills, Head Start Program Specialist, addressed the Board to express her concerns regarding accountability, communication and collaboration. She stated that she wants the Board to help her with PreK and the fact that she is not a part of decisions being made. She thanked Mrs. Dudley for inviting her to the meeting. She stated that she sent a letter to each Board member. Mrs. Dudley stated that she agrees with some of the things in the letter and disagrees with some of the things. Mr. McMillan asked Mrs. Hills to speak with Mr. Key. Mr. Key stated that he has met with Mrs. Hills every year and since this a Head Start issue she should have started with the Head Start Policy Council.

13. The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.