MINUTES

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

May 26, 2026

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 6:05 P.M.

2. OPENING PRAYER

   The opening prayer was led by Reverend Mark Moore, Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

   Recited in unison.

4. RECOGNITIONS

   Mr. Fert Richardson from HCDC (Havana Community Development Corporation) Sports Division addressed the Board to share information on the New Sports Division Junior NBA/Junior WNBA League for youth in the surrounding communities. He stated that the program is designed for boys and girls ages 7 to 14. He stated that the league will be divided into three divisions, rookie age 7 to 8, starters age 9 to 11, and all stars age 4 to 14. He stated that the Junior NBA and Junior WNBA League are designed to provide a structured environment to learn the core values of basketball and other sports. He stated that the Junior NBA and the WNBA League is in many cities all over the world, however, the closest league program to Havana is Albany, Georgia. He stated that the league uses basketball to build character on and off the court by teaching players teamwork and respect. He stated that the league is designed to ensure that each team member will have an opportunity to play in every game. He stated that the Sports Division is a 501-C3 organization and will humbly accept donations which will help defray the cost of uniforms and any accessories that are needed. He stated that the official youth basketball program offers a stable curriculum for players, coaches and parents. He requested that everyone help them make the program successful by volunteering to be a coach, assistant coach, referee, scorekeeper, concession worker, etc. He stated that details regarding. dates, times and locations will be shared as soon as possible regarding the games.

   Mr. Key thanked Mr. Richardson for sharing this information to the Board. He thanked the staff for doing a great job. He stated that tomorrow he would dress down for work to assist with getting James A. Shanks Middle School campus cleared. He stated that there was a time capsule from 1969 that contained 2 newspapers, a Flag, Bible, minutes of a meeting, and a picture of the people that were a part of the committee in the early days of James A. Shanks High School.

   Ms. Johnson recognized her cousin, Mr. Fert Richardson, and thanked him for all the things that he is doing for the Havana community.

   Ms. Hannigon stated that hats off to our teachers, staff and also our students for a great year. She stated that she enjoyed the graduation and progression ceremonies. She stated that hats off to everybody in leadership here at the Gadsden County School District. She recognized the principal and assistant principal at James A. Shanks Middle School for managing a touchy situation. She offered condolences to the family of Ms. Pauline Betsey who had passed. She stated that Ms. Betsey worked at Chattahoochee Elementary School.

   Mr. Frost recognized staff for working with all of the graduation ceremonies this year. He stated that he never smiled so much at one time during the graduations ceremonies. He appreciated all the staff for their hard work.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mr. Key stated that Mr. Amari Jackson, transportation mechanic, requested that his resignation be rescinded. He requested that he be pulled from the Board packet.

Mr. McMillan entertained a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda. Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #'s 5a – 7k with the exception of item #6a. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

5. REVIEW OF MINUTES

   a. April 14, 2026, 4:30 p.m. – Special School Board Meeting

   b. April 28, 2026, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Financial Workshop

   c. April 28, 2026, 6:00 p.m. - Regular School Board Meeting

   ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

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

   a. Personnel 2026 – 2027

   ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

7. AGREEMENTS/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

   a. TRIM Timetable

   Fund Source: N/A
   Amount: N/A

   ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

   b. Direct Purchase Orders

   Fund Source: Special Facilities Construction Funds
   Amount: $1,250,078.89

   ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

   c. Invoices Outside GMP

   Fund Source: Special Facilities Construction Funds
   Amount: $851,932.63

   ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

   d. The Learning Liaisons

   Fund Source: Title II (Pending Grant Allocation)
   Amount: $16,200.00

   ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

   e. Beacon Educator

   Fund Source: Title II (Pending Grant Allocation)
   Amount: $17,500.00

   ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

   f. Instructional Empowerment

   Fund Source: Title II (Pending Grant Allocation)
   Amount: $30,000.00

   ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

g. East Coast Technical Assistance Center

Fund Source: Title II (Pending Grant Allocation)
Amount: $4,840.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

h. MHarts Consulting Agreement

Fund Source: Title II Grant (Pending Grant Allocation)
Amount: $75,000.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

i. Achieve3000

Fund Source: General Fund
Amount: $102,614.75

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

j. Edgenuity

Fund Source: Title I
Amount: $35,310.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

k. Approval of Erate Bids and Contracts

Fund Source: USAC/ERATE/District
Amount: $644,600.00 Erate Portion of Funding: $547,910.00
District Portion of Funding: $96,690.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

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

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

a. Personnel 2025 – 2026

Mr. McMillian stated that the Superintendent made some changes to item #6a in the form of telling the Board that Mr. Amari Jackson, transportation mechanic, requested his resignation be removed from the agenda. He stated that agenda item #6a will be amended to remove his name from the resignation list.

Following discussion, Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon made a motion to approve agenda item #6a with the deletion of Mr. Amari Jackson's name from the resignation list. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Ms. Judith Mandela, President of the Gadsden County Classroom Teachers Association (GCCTA), addressed the Board regarding Senate Bill 1296 referencing the TSIA fund and the new law. She stated that the union want the same thing last year to make sure that all of the financial information that we need is available, so that we can make a decision quickly. She stated that from her understanding, the legislature has a tentative budget that they've approved and they should be finished with it within the next week. She stated that the union is trying to make some plans to bargain to keep from going to impasse. She stated that during the meeting there was a comment made that one of the first things you have to do for next year's budget is to confirm the staffing plan. She stated that one of the comments made was that there is going to be a hold on teachers. She wanted to know are we talking about a reduction or just that we're not hiring anyone else. She stated that with regard, when will teachers know where they will be assigned? She wanted to know if there was a reduction for teachers, will there be a reduction of any other group of employees. She stated that the third comment was from the Superintendent regarding spending insurance money, and the idea that she has asked this question before about could the money be spent for facilities, and the answer was yes. She wanted to know who was responsible for making that decision in terms of spending it, because that would make more funds available in the general fund if you're spending some of the insurance money on facilities. She stated that it seemed like there was a question or concern from the Superintendent in terms of why the money was or was not spent. She stated that she was just curious in terms of who makes that decision. Mr. McMillan stated that was the Board's decision. Ms. Mandela stated that in regards to the school supply funds, the statement was made that in August of last year that as one of the incentives, we're making sure that the week that the funds go out in terms of Class Wallet as opposed to teachers receiving checks. She stated that this was because any money not spent that funds would go back to the SAC committee at the school. She wanted to know when would the SAC committee at each school receive the money that was not spent. She stated that there were teachers at several schools who did not spend all of their money. Mr. McMillan stated that the Superintendent will provide an answer.

9. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key stated that the teacher supply money will be available July 1 through Class Wallet. He stated that the State has adopted Class Wallet. He stated that funding for the Amazon portion has already been paid. He stated that he talked out of ignorance to Mr. Reginald James when not understanding what makes up the rankings of school districts. He stated that he apologized to Mr. James. He stated that teachers have the greatest impact on learning, not the Superintendent. He stated that teachers are turning this story, they are turning it around. He stated that it's just not fast enough like people want it to be. He stated that the data speaks to that. He stated that we are 81% or 82% at our graduation rate. He stated that's the highest it's ever been since we've been in testing. He stated that the cohort number which is probably going to knock that rate lower because those are kids that may have dropped out or moved to another school. He stated that high school is actually doing a great job of graduating kids and we're doing a better job of building a foundation.

Ms. Hannigon stated that in regards to Ms. Mandela's initial statement regarding finance working on checks, we'll get the checks to the schools, not the individuals the way that you see that. She wanted to know was that a new process. Mr. Key stated that this is actually the first time that we were able to do this. He stated that it's never been done. He stated that because of the process, we're going through Class Wallet, it tells you what is leftover per school and now the checks can be disbursed to schools. He stated that July 1st is new funding.

Ms. Lisa Robinson, Assistant Superintendent, addressed the Board and started by echoing what Superintendent Key and Board Member Hannigon said about the faculty and staff of our school district. She stated that they have worked extremely hard. She stated that she believes that we can find many people to come into our district and do what they have done. She stated that our data shows significant growth. She stated that there was significant growth in all tested areas except for U.S. history. She stated that overall, our district went from 40% to 49% of the students scoring on Level 3, up and above. She stated that science has been a difficult challenge for us as well, but this year, with the implementation of some new programs, our boys and girls in 8th grade went from 9% to 31%. 5th grade went from 25% to 28%. She stated that is a slight gain, but we're moving in the right direction of what we have done in academic service. She stated that there's some discussion, collaboration with the Superintendent and I with changes in academic service that will be made for the next school year. She stated that each school was asked to calculate their school grade projection. She stated that George W. Munroe Elementary School gained 43 points, Havana Magnet School gained 82 points. She stated that overall for this year we have seen significant growth.

Ms. Johnson stated that the principals work very hard. She stated that she was impressed with what she saw at Havana Magnet School. She stated that we are working hard and congratulations to our teachers. She stated that everyone need to just keep pushing forward.

Ms. Hannigon stated hats off to our students because they're the ones who had to take these tests. She stated hats off to our teachers, because they had to teach these students. She stated hats off to our principals for motivating our teachers, and hats off to our parents for all that you do. She also gave hats off to Ms. Robinson and her team for all the hard work put into the data side. She stated that she can only imagine how much Ms. Robinson and her team has invested in looking at these numbers and really working with these schools to reach their goal.

Mr. Frost echoed with the Superintendent and thanked Ms. Robinson. He stated that each time we score good on the tests, the State change the brackets and we have to work harder. He stated that we have to do what we can with what we got.

Mr. McMillan stated that he appreciates Ms. Robinson, Ms. Davis and Ms. Cummings for their hard work. He stated that he is seeing a different culture and kids are motivated in the schools he visits. He stated that he was really happy about that. He stated that at some point and time we are going to be the model school district for the State of Florida, if we continue on the route we're going. He asked that teachers who are in the district to stay with us. He stated that he was thankful for everybody here and keep up the good work. He stated that Gadsden County is the place to educate your children.

10. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Ms. Johnson congratulated all of the graduates in the Class of 2026. She stated that the parents did an awesome job with making sure our children came to school.

Ms. Hannigon stated that she had been contacted earlier by the Apalachee Regional Planning Council requesting her presence to serve on their Technical Advisory Committee as it relates to a grant for their Safe Streets and Roads. She stated that they are working on a grant and want input from municipalities, counties, as well as the school district. She stated that they are requesting that we establish an alternate person. Mr. McMillan agreed to serve as the alternate for the Apalachee Regional Planning Council Techinical Advisory Committee. She thanked Mr. Key for sharing information regarding the release of the teacher supply monies. She stated that the good book says a soft answer turns away wrath and I think at some point in time all of us may get frustrated with one another. She stated that at the end of the day we are in a public forum and individuals are allowed to come and address this Board or the Superintendent or staff with questions or concerns. She stated that we are at liberty to answer now or wait until later, or give the Superintendent guidance or direction to respond to the individual off record to gather whatever information is needed. She stated that she was hopeful moving forward, even in our frustrations, that we don't get to a place where our actions discourage others from coming and utilizing the rights that they are entitled to. She apologized to Ms. Mandela for what happened earlier because, you know, as we're going to get put into some tight situations and ask some questions that may put us in a tight situation. She stated that she was hopeful that we can get past that and just have a wonderful working relationship between our Board, our Superintendent, and our union representatives.

Mr. Frost stated that he will try to get things done before he gets to the meeting in regards to questions being answered. He stated that in his position as a Board member, he is not going to be disrespected. He stated that he is there to represent the people.

Mr. Key stated that a special board meeting needed to be scheduled to talk about some things regarding finances. He stated that a recommendation was needed based on the way that we have to do things with the State. He stated that you have to inform the State that the district might potentially fall below 2%. He stated that a plan has to be given to the State.

Ms. Hannigon wanted to know if there was a transition plan for the students who are going to the new school, just to help them get acclimated for the upcoming school year. Mr. Key stated that our students get along well with each other.

11. The meeting adjourned at 7:08 P.M.