

SPECIAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

June 12, 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; Mr. Steve Scott; Mrs. Cathy S. Johnson; 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 Mr. Charlie D. Frost.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. NEW K-8 SCHOOL BIDDING PROCESS FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGER

Mr. Jack Baker, DAG Architects, Inc., shared information with the Board regarding the bidding process for hiring a construction manager for the new K-8 school. He stated that DAG will do the preconstruction service, develop a guaranteed maximum price (GMP) for Board approval, the contractor will work with them to build the school if the GMP is acceptable, if not, and a different bidder will be selected. He stated that the construction manager will manage the budget, provide advice, etc. for the Board. He stated that the request for qualifications (RFQ) process will be advertised, the selection committee will screen the information and rank no more than three firms to make formal presentations to the Board for final approval.

Mr. McMillan stated that what the Board has seen with the schematic design of the new school is how they want the new school built. He stated that the district has special facilities dollars.

Mr. Baker stated that the legislature gave a break to the student station costs but not to special facilities. He stated that the new school will be built more economical. He stated that the special facilities money will be spread out over a number of years. He recommended the Board select someone who has special facilities funding experience.

Mr. Stuart Wiggins, DAG Architects, Inc., shared with the Board information on his experience with the construction manager bidding process. He stated that the district's facility director will work very closely with the construction manager to build the new school. He handed out information outlining the timeline for hiring a construction manager. He stated that it is a team effort, a two-part process.

In response to Mr. McMillan's question if advertisement was needed for a construction manager, Mr. Baker stated yes, and handed out a suggested advertisement for the Board's review to make sure it met Board policy. He stated that the Board needed to vote whether they wanted to bid for a construction manager.

Mrs. Judith Mandela addressed the Board to ask about the 4th grade students moving from James A. Shanks Middle School during this process, Mr. McMillan stated that was not mentioned by the Board.

Mr. Key stated that he was in favor of hiring a construction manager to build the new school.

Mr. McMillan added to the agenda the bidding process for a construction manager. The motion was made by Mr. Steve Scott to move forward on the bidding process for a construction manager. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

5. AGREEMENTS/CONTRACTS

a. Purchase of School Buses and Passenger Vans

Fund Source: ESSER (Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief) Funding
Amount: \$1,750,254.00

Mrs. Karema D. Dudley made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #5a. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. Purchase of Server and Services from RB Systems, Inc. to House and Access Historical Skyward Student Data

Fund Source: ESSER Funding
Amount: \$16,050.00

Mrs. Dudley made a motion to defer action on agenda item #'s 5b and 5c to allow more time to get clarity and address her concerns. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

c. Purchase of Server and Services from Progress Software Corporation to House and Access Historical Skyward Student Data

Fund Source: ESSER Funding
Amount: \$20,660.00

Deferred Action.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

6. Educational Items by the Superintendent

Mr. Key stated that the 3rd Grade Reading Camp began today (June 12th) with 118 students attending.

7. School Board Requests and Concerns

Mr. Frost stated that the Board is responsible for the district and the Superintendent supervises and is responsible for the day to day operation of the district. He requested the following items be addressed in writing by the next Board meeting: 1) list of staff not being recommended back; 2) State of the District (financial and academics); 3) fill vacant positions prior to the beginning of school; 4) the need for a deputy superintendent to communicate with when the superintendent is not available; 5) fill the vacant food service director position which has been vacant since June;

6) fill the maintenance director position which has been vacant since the previous director retired in December; 7) how effective and highly effective staff cannot be recommended back; 8) begin the process to hire a transportation director, the current director is retiring at the end of this month; and 9) how the district has to send money to private and charter schools for students who attend. He stated that he wants the district to be great.

Ms. Johnson requested a copy of the information from Mr. Frost's concerns.

Mrs. Dudley stated that she is concerned about the assistant superintendent for finance and the family and community engagement coordinator positions. She stated that the position for the facilities director need to be filled. She stated that she wants to know who is in each department (organizational chart). She stated that the information on the district's website need to be updated. She stated that she wants a copy of the assessment data showing the student outcome for this school year. She asked when would the teachers receive their VAM money, Mr. Key stated that on or before June 30th.

Mr. Scott stated that the Board requested an independent audit on the district finances, and he would like to see a copy of the advertisement and where it was advertised. He stated that he finds it hard to believe that no one had bid for the independent audit.

Mr. McMillan requested a presentation from the staff development coordinator to show what is being doing to help teachers get certification. He stated that Greensboro Elementary School have teacher mentors and all of their teachers will be certified. He stated that some of the 11 month custodians do not want to be 12 month employees. He stated that now is the time to do deep cleaning in the district so that a company will not have to be hired to do deep cleaning only. He asked for the status of filling the lawn and maintenance vacant position. He stated that he is concerned about the audit requested by the Board.

Mrs. Judith Mandela addressed the Board and asked if they had received a copy of the recruitment and retention plan. She stated that negotiations need to take place if the 11 month custodians will become 12 month. She stated that the change requires negotiations. She stated that the GCCTA contract outlines the grievance process and one of the processes is if a grievance is filed after May 15th the Board can expedite the process. She stated that she has received several grievances concerning certified teachers that are not being recommended back. She stated that one of the teachers was notified the last day of school that she was not being recommended back, one has a highly effective and effective evaluation that is not being recommended back, the Teacher-of-the-Year at one of the schools is not being recommended back and has a highly effective and effective evaluation. She stated that the performance pay is based on evaluation, so evaluations must follow guidelines, or there will be unfair labor practices. Mrs. Minnis stated that grievances have to go through the process. Mrs. Mandela stated that the evaluation process has to be done with fidelity.

Mr. McMillan stated that the Board must follow the grievance process.

Mrs. Minnis recommended that Mrs. Mandela let the grievance process work, and everyone go through the steps to provide the Board with information. She clarified that the grievance must still go through the process and the May 15th date in the contract is for the Board to expedite the process along.

Mrs. Dudley suggested the Board get familiar with the grievance process.

Mr. McMillan asked Mrs. Jane Butler to provide the Board with a copy of the grievance process. He stated that the Board will follow the process.

Mr. Davonta Knight addressed the Board and stated that he is the new elected President of GCCTA. He stated that from a union standpoint he wants to discuss deep cleaning, and make sure teachers know what they need to do. He stated that GCCTA is eager to work with the Board as a team.

Ms. Johnson stated that she wants the Board to walk through the schools and take notes of what need to be done. Mr. McMillan stated that the Board has to be careful not to get in the day to day operation. Mrs. Minnis stated that there should be no more than one Board member at a time on the same campus.

Mr. McMillan stated that he received a call from Senator Corey Simon who wants to tour Gadsden Technical College. He requested that the planning process begin for Senator Simon to tour Gadsden Technical College.

Mrs. Dudley stated that there is a training scheduled in September for collective bargaining and it would be a good idea for the Board to take interest and attend. She stated that the training will be provided by the Florida School Boards Association. She stated that she will share the training information with the Board. She stated that she and Ms. Johnson attended the Florida School Boards Association Summer Conference in Tampa last week.

Mr. McMillan stated that he read the contract between the School Board and Faith Apostolic Christian Tabernacle, and it is embarrassing to know that they are far behind in payments. He stated that he will provide the information to the Board.

In response to Mrs. Dudley's request for the Board to receive a copy of the recruitment and retention plan, Mr. Key stated that it needs to be discussed in an executive session.

8. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.