

SCHOOL BOARD WORKSHOP

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

January 27, 2015

4:30 P.M.

This workshop was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mrs. Audrey D. Lewis, Chairwoman; Mr. Isaac Simmons; Mr. Charlie D. Frost; and Mr. Steve Scott. Also present were Mr. Reginald C. James, Superintendent of Schools and Secretary to the Board; Mrs. Deborah Minnis, Attorney for the Board; and others. Mr. Roger P. Milton was absent.

1. Call To Order

The workshop was called to order by the Chairwoman, Mrs. Audrey D. Lewis, at 4:34 p.m.

2. Financial Data Report

Mrs. Ferree stated that nine teachers were eligible to receive the CTE bonus pay. She stated that principals have been notified that school recognition funds will be disbursed soon.

Mr. James stated that primarily "A" schools receive school recognition funds. He stated that Carter Parramore Academy would also receive school recognition funds.

3. Discussion Items

a. List of contractors and notifications to Board regarding vendors with total payments greater than \$15, and other payment issues.

b. Miscellaneous finance department items:

1. Notification to Board of claim settlement and anticipated claim deductible.

2. UCAC Unemployment Compensation Cost Control Annual Report.

Mrs. Ferree stated that the periodic report of the UCAC's administration of claims and audit of benefit charges relative to the district's unemployment tax rate(s) has been prepared for personal viewing in a secured internet environment.

3. Approval of the FNW grant award. Will provide \$207,391.58 in much needed food service equipment. Many thanks to our Board Chair for her instrumental efforts in researching this grant possibility and helping to make it a reality for the District.

4. Discussion of an agenda item regarding Cash Management.

Mrs. Ferree stated that cash management provides guidance to help ensure the accountability and safeguarding of the district's cash and cash equivalents. She stated that the policy has been established to provide a framework for guidance and coordination in this area, and for establishing minimum control standards relative to cash handling.

5. Updates concerning charter schools – Title I implementation; getting bus riders.

Mrs. Ferree stated that the district has received notification for DOE allowing the expansion of the Title I project to add the district's charter school (Galloway Academy) in conversations with DOE, Department of Agriculture, and Gadsden County.

6. Forecast for 2015-16 and projected funding trend upward.

7. Presentation and discussion of Crossroad Academy Charter School Financial Report. (Excerpt attached full report available for review in the Business office).

8. Presentation and discussion of Internet Accounts Audit Report. (Excerpt attached full report available for review in the Business office)

9. Discussion of an agenda item – Engagement letter from Ashmore and Ashmore (no price increase still charging a fixed rate for the contracted services; provides excellent service and enhances internal controls; synergy developed from the familiarity with school systems, with continuing their contract; entity is a bargain when compare their hourly rate to rates of other similar contractors on state contracts (cheaper than state contracted rate offered.)

10. Updated status on student learning workstations – these are being processed and implemented moving the District forward.

Mr. Ronte Harris, President GCCTA, and Mr. Michael Monroe, Chief Negotiator, shared with the Board a power-point presentation updating the 2014 – 2015 Collective Bargain Agreement between The School Board of Gadsden County School and The Gadsden County Classroom Teachers Association.

Mr. Monroe presented to the Board a predication of the fact that there was no new money attached to Senate Bill 736 and the belief that there will be limited improvement in the Gadsden County financial conditions over the next several months. He stated that GCCTA believes their proposal does meet the letter of the law, is financially responsible for the district and is required by the current contract. He stated that however, should financial conditions improve and significant monies are made available, a more rewarding and deserving compensation plan can and should be negotiated and developed. He stated that history shows the following: a) traditional salary schedule that showed credited years of service on one axis and salary amounts on the other; b) “Roll up or steps” (movement based on another year of service) at the beginning of a new school year has been eliminated in anticipation of a new salary schedule; c) because salaries were “reopeners” for negotiation each year, the published salary schedule was never honored for the future; d) the “slope” on a graph shows salary progression varied slowly and greatly, with annual increases ranging anywhere from \$235 to nearly \$2,661; e) over the past eight bargains, salary amounts were adjusted only once, except for those employees who were eligible for a step movement; f) the passage of Senate Bill 736 changed everything, requiring performance pay and statutory advances for a growing majority of teachers; g) facing a challenge to comply with the new law while protecting the interests of veteran, loyal teachers who hold PSC and CC status; and h) facing a challenge to develop a salary schedule that accurately reflects current salary amounts and is attractive to current and future employees. He stated that the following are issues to be addressed by Senate Bill 736: a) teacher evaluations – ranges/weights/levels; b) timelines; c) salary schedules; d) funding; e) resources; f) capacity; g) fairness; h) non-FCAT subjects and employees; i) Value-Added Model (VAM); j) roster verification; k) appeals process (IP and student growth portions); l) advanced degrees; m) transfers; and n) reduction in force (RiF). He shared different scenarios with performance pay, algebraic and fractional steps as a means to formulate a salary schedule. He stated that the solution would be to use fractional steps to place the 2013 – 2014 returning employees to receive the \$1,900 raise, but will not be collapsed together in an unfair way. He stated this would recreate differentiation in the early years and reward loyalty to the district. He stated that employees in the middle of the scale would face a different problem, as they had labored hard in the district for years and were just moving in the range of “big steps”, thus getting more by placement. He stated that those employees at the top of the scale had been “topped out”, had benefitted from those bigger steps for a while, and thus their placement increases would drop back down closer to the minimum target. He stated that without an updated and accurate salary schedule recruitment and retention will become even more difficult, morale will continue to be low among employees, future salaries will be hard to predict and unstable, each teacher will be on an outdated salary schedule, the current agreement will have been violated and not complied with, the district will continue to be out of compliance with numerous state mandates and subject to sanctions and penalties, no reachable agreement for the 2014 – 2015 year, and time / money will be wasted.

Mr. Monroe stated that in conclusion, the School Board and the GCCTA will be able to smooth out the salary schedule with fractional steps such that it: could be implemented now and meets the requirements of SB 736 for 2014 – 15 and beyond; could be funded with help from the Governor’s special allocation of recurring revenues; is fair to all teachers regardless of contract status; does not unnecessarily entice PSC/CC teachers to give up their right to “due process”; makes sense in showing career earnings potential for prospective hires over the long haul; and is scalable to accommodate changes in district revenue; he

stated that by labeling the fractional (1/3) steps, the Board maintains a salary schedule that can be published and makes it easy for payroll and HR to track where employees are. He stated that maintaining the original placement plan guides the assimilation of new hires that bring experience. He stated that ultimately, GCCTA wants all employees and Gadsden families to have more opportunities to pursue their dreams. He stated that this means more high wage and high skilled job opportunities. He stated that it is impossible to connect more Gadsden residents with great jobs and higher wages without a strong education system that supports student achievement.

Board members thanked Mr. Monroe for his presentation.

Mr. Emanuel Sapp proposed the consideration of a ½ cent sales tax. He stated that the ½ cent sales tax was much needed for the district, and would not affect property owners.

The Board thanked Mr. Sapp for his proposal regarding the ½ cent sales tax. The Board also thanked the teachers for attending the workshop.

c. Facilities update from Wayne Shepard.

d. Collegiate High School

Removed from workshop agenda and added to Regular Board meeting.

4. School Board Requests and Concerns

None.

5. The workshop adjourned at 5:45 p.m.