

## SCHOOL BOARD FINANCIAL WORKSHOP

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

October 22, 2024

4:30 P.M.

This workshop was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mrs. Karema D. Dudley, Chairwoman, Mr. Leroy McMillan, 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 workshop was called to order by the Chairwoman, Mrs. Karema D. Dudley, at 4:30 p.m.

2. Facilities Update

Mr. Hudson stated that there were some issues with the playground equipment. He stated that when there is a lot of digging you can run into some things. He stated that there was a little issue at West Gadsden Middle School today, but everything was under control. He stated that the district is working with BNT Fencing to get the proper fencing for the playground areas in order to be in compliance with safe schools. He stated that the track and field work at Gadsden County High School is back on the table for discussion. He stated that staff at the maintenance department is working to find ways on how to be more efficient and provide the service that the district need. He stated that a selection committee has been assembled for the Carter Parramore Academy renovation project. He stated that FEMA and Ralston Insurance Consultants are assisting with the CPA renovation project. He stated that the maintenance staff is putting in a lot of work to make sure the high school has a proper presence for homecoming. He stated that it is very important to have a shield fencing for privacy of students at the schools. He stated that there are places where you can directly see the playground from the road. He stated that the fencing is needed for the protection of the students. Ms. Johnson wanted to know why the shelter at Havana Magnet School was not open during the hurricane. Mr. Key stated that there is not a generator that is currently working at Havana Magnet School. He stated that a grant has been filed and the district has been awarded grant monies to replace the generator. He stated that a lot of those things are run through emergency management with the county. Dr. Sylvia Jackson stated that the district has received notification that the grant has been approved and the specialist assigned to the grant distribution sent an email stating that they would follow up with the district at a future date.

3. Financial Information

Mrs. Bruner shared with the Board a draft of the expense summary report. She stated that the general and federal fund reports were still in draft form. She stated that the SBA, SBE, Bonds, Loans, and PECO funds are not in draft form and are current. She stated that the Annual Financial Report (AFR) and the Cost Report are due November 29th. She stated that additional support might be needed to meet the November 29th deadline. Mrs. Dudley thanked Mrs. Bruner for the revenue report. She asked about an agenda item that had a funding source from ESSER 3 Learning Loss and was for \$50,800. She stated that she did not see anything in the financial report for ESSER 3. Mrs. Bruner stated that the finance department is still in the process of working through ESSER 3 funds. She stated that they are trying to clarify and clean up everything. Mrs. Farlin stated that the funds requested has been approved and this is the payment for it. She stated that the purchase order has been completed and approved. She stated that the monies should have been obligated on the

incumbent side. Mr. Frost asked where the district was with general funds. Mrs. Bruner stated that the general fund balance has not been calculated yet. Mr. Key stated that the district is actually in good standing at a 4% fund balance. He stated that the district will not have an accurate account until the 23-24 audit and the AFR is complete.

#### 4. Educational Items by the Superintendent

- Recruitment and Retention Incentive

Mrs. Farlin stated that the intent of the Recruitment and Retention Incentive was to retain teachers at our schools that the district and DOE identify as in need of improvement or BSI schools. She stated that however, the list that is shown, shows schools that were in need of improvement. She stated that this year some of them are not in need of improvement or BSI schools. She stated that it is hard to get teachers in our schools, especially effective or highly effective teachers. She stated that this was the district's attempt to attract teachers. Mrs. Dudley stated that reflecting back to the last Board meeting, it seems that the teacher's union was thrown under the bus as to why the changes were made to the recruitment and retention bonus. She stated that she became privileged to other information and found that was not the case. She stated that there was talk about unfair labor practice. She stated that if she had been privy to the information prior to the meeting, the meeting would have gone in a different direction. She stated that she was still receiving phone calls and messages from teachers with their concerns and what their expectations were. She stated that the plan should have been posted along with the flyer when it went out on social media. She stated that the plan should have stated subject to change. She apologized to the union on behalf of the Board. She requested information on the teachers that did not qualify for the incentive.

Mr. Key stated that there are things being talked about. He stated that the union is not talking about the \$2,500 that was mentioned in the recording that he heard today. He stated that the union asked that every teacher that did not meet the requirements of the recruitment and retention plan receive \$2,500. He stated that this was not available to pay because he didn't know if there was any funding for the \$2,500 per employee. He stated that he said that the issue had not been discussed in an executive session with the Board. He stated that in reference to the flyer. He stated that he is not a part of the negotiation meetings. He stated that if one would go back and listen to the two videos put out by one of the union members, the statement regarding unfair labor practice was made. He stated that when that kind of statement is made, it puts the district on hold. He stated that a MOU would have presented the language, but they wanted to include the \$2,500 for every employee that did not meet the qualifications.

Mrs. Dudley stated that she did not see what was on social media. She stated that she had the actual audio that was for the public and it was recorded. She stated that it wasn't agreed on but was put out there. She stated that she knows that Mr. Key is the Superintendent, and he would make sure finance ensure that the district has adequate funding. She stated that the issue never came for discussion in an executive session. She stated that initially the district agreed to the plan and it is water under the bridge now. She stated that she wants to make sure that information is clear when put out.

Mr. Scott stated that he hoped that this issue could end tonight. He stated that he was still not happy about the fact that the district put the flyer on social media and was misleading. He stated that this was not the teacher's fault nor the union's fault.

Mr. Key stated that it was not like all of a sudden that the district made up their minds to say we are only going with the D and F schools. He stated that this was never the intention. He stated that the district's intention was to meet every school that was on the list, even though they may not be a D or F school. He stated that the district need to retain teachers. He stated that everything began to stall when the union asked for \$2,500 for every teacher that did not meet the requirements. He stated that he did not know if the district could afford it. He stated that is where the funding issue came and when they made the statement that if the district pay the teachers that are not D and F schools, I reserve my right to file. He stated that is when I said all right, we are putting it on hold, and only paying the teachers at D and F schools. He stated that he called the union president and stated that if you want these schools to be paid let's come up with a MOU. He stated that the district should do what we can to retain and recruit teachers.

Mr. Scott stated that a mistake was made. He stated that if the district does not have funding for something then it cannot be done. He stated that the teacher's union did not make a mistake, a mistake was made.

Mr. Key stated that the tiers have changed but the qualifications have not changed. He stated that his conversation has been with the union president. He stated that he has to come up with a plan to recruit teachers to Gadsden County to present to the State Board next month. Mrs. Dudley asked if a teacher has been assigned to a field they're not certified in by their principal, would they qualify? Mr. Key stated that most of the teachers that we have been made aware of have been corrected. He stated that as long as they meet the qualifications of infield and data point, they would qualify. Mrs. Farlin stated that there are incentives for teachers to get certain certifications as well, and because of the federal portion of recruitment and retention, teachers could be moved from one school to another.

- The Teacher Evaluation Model

Mr. Frost asked for an explanation of the Marzano Model. Dr. Holmes stated that last year the Board received a full presentation on the Marzano Model. She stated that some revisions were required based on the Florida Accomplished Educator Practices from the State. She stated that changes required by law have been completed and the district is in the process of revising the model to be in accordance. Mrs. Dudley stated that the district needed to make statutory revisions. Dr. Holmes stated that yes, those changes would not require Board approval. Mrs. Minnis stated that the district is resigning to the wisdom of DOE since it is their documentation. She stated that it depends on where the changes need to appear, and if DOE is okay with the process, and the district is okay then Board approval is not needed. Dr. Holmes stated that what generally happens is that the State provides some approved models of what they will accept and then from those approved models each district has the option to adopt those models. She stated that if the district wants to deviate from those models the district would have to submit it to the State for approval. Mr. Scott requested the Board be provided an updated version of the Teacher Evaluation Model when received from the State.

- CTE Funding

Mr. Key requested that Major Jackson address the Board at the regular meeting. He stated that an executive session was scheduled to discuss school safety.

5. School Board Requests and Concerns

None.

6. The workshop adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

The Board convened in an executive session at 5:32 p.m. to discuss information on the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool report, findings, strategies and activities for the 2024 – 2025 year; and adjourned at 5:55 p.m.