

## SCHOOL BOARD WORKSHOP

STEWART STREET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAFETERIA  
749 SOUTH STEWART STREET  
QUINCY, FLORIDA

March 8, 2017

6:00 P.M.

The workshop was open to the public and electronically recorded.

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

The workshop was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Isaac Simmons, at 6:00 p.m.

2. DISCUSSION OF RECONFIGURATION OF SCHOOLS

Mr. Simmons stated that the community meeting was being held to share information with the community regarding the proposed school reconfiguration. He turned the meeting over to Mr. Milton.

Mr. Milton shared a power-point presentation with the community outlining his school reconfiguration proposal. He stated that there was a need to make changes to the schools in the district. He stated that the district currently has thirteen (13) schools. He stated that there are fewer than 5,400 students and 860+ employees in the district. He stated that the district has aging facilities that are in dire need of major repairs. He stated that there is a need to reduce the number of facilities and staff. He stated that the district needs additional funds in order to provide better wages for its employees. He stated that most schools in the school district are not positioned to offer a wider variety of courses to meet the needs of students. He stated that schools slated for closing are very old and do not meet modern day standards for schools. He stated that classrooms are too small to provide for active learning environments. He stated that in essence, the district must have recurring revenue streams, improved academic opportunities for our students, more up-to-date school facilities to provide wholesome environments that are conducive to teaching and learning, and the opportunity to "Move Gadsden County Public Schools from Good to Great". He stated that the majority of the district schools are old with failing equipment and infrastructure, which provides a less than desirable learning environment for students and working environment for staff. He stated that eight of the district schools are years behind current code requirements. He stated that there is no way to solve these issues without major renovation or replacement with new

construction. He stated that the longer these issues remain unaddressed, the greater the likelihood of HVAC system failures. He stated that with so many schools in the same shape, the likelihood of multiple failures challenges the district to reconfigure schools and relocate before failures occur. He stated that being proactive by reconfiguring and/or replacing the old schools puts the best interest of the students and staff in the forefront of planning. He stated that the proposed action for the 2017 – 2018 year includes the movement of grades 4 and 5 from Chattahoochee Elementary School to what will become West Gadsden Middle School; movement of grades 1 thru 3 from Chattahoochee Elementary School to Greensboro Elementary School; and keep grades PK and KG at Chattahoochee Elementary School where it will become an early learning center. He stated that as a result of the schools reconfiguration proposal, there will be no earlier school starting times than the district currently have; no loss of certified teachers as they will be reassigned to other schools which will in turn afford the district to a more highly qualified staff, and no loss of non-instructional staff that received satisfactory evaluations and who were recommended back for employment. He stated that other proposed actions for the school year 2017 – 2018 include discontinuing operations at Gretna Elementary School by moving grades PK thru 3 to Greensboro Elementary School and grades 4 and 5 to West Gadsden Middle School; discontinuing operations at St. John Elementary School by moving grades PK thru 3 to Greensboro Elementary School and moving grades 4 and 5 to James A. Shanks Middle School; movement of grades 4 and 5 from Greensboro Elementary School to what will become West Gadsden Middle School; movement of grades 9 thru 12 from West Gadsden High School to East Gadsden High School; the School Board applying for Special Facilities Funding from Florida Department of Education. He stated that other proposed actions for the school year 2020 – 2021 include discontinuing operations at Gadsden Elementary Magnet School and move all grade levels to the newly constructed K-8 facility. He stated that the district want to be able to offer courses such as dual enrollment, advanced classes, and IB programs. He stated that he want to build other academic and athletic programs, along with performing arts, band, music and dance.

Mr. Smith stated that he was a former student and parent of Stewart Street Elementary School. He stated that he would make the better decision for the people in the community. He encouraged everyone to come and share their comments and concerns. He stated that the district needs the support of the citizens of Gadsden County. He stated that there are many new ideas from the Board and Superintendent.

The following individuals from the audience participated in the discussion and shared their comments and concerns regarding the proposed school reconfiguration plan: Ms. Samonyia Robinson, Mrs. Jennifer McGhee, Mrs. Ti-‘Ara Smith, Mrs. Frances Brown, and Ms. Errin Hill.

### 3. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

None.

#### 4. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Frost stated that he was glad to see everyone. He stated that the district must have the support of parents. He stated that the school reconfiguration proposal was presented to the Board by the Superintendent. He solicited the community to bring students back to the schools.

Mrs. Lewis thanked everyone for coming out and sharing their ideas. She stated that she will share her proposed school reconfiguration plan at the March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr. Scott stated that he loves the Gadsden County Public School System. He stated that parents want the best education for their children. He stated that he is concerned about the future of Gadsden County.

Mr. Simmons thanked everyone for their input. He stated that there has been some progress in the district. He stated that reconfiguration does not solve all problems. He shared his sentiments regarding the school reconfiguration.

In closing, Mr. Smith again thanked everyone for coming out to the workshop. He encouraged everyone to share their ideas with the Superintendent and Board. He stated that everyone needed to take part in improving the Gadsden County School District.

5. The workshop adjourned at 7:35 p.m.