

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

September 22, 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; Ms. 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 6:01 P.M.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Pastor Clarence M. Jackson, II, of Destiny Church in Tallahassee, Florida.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

Mr. McMillan stated that this evening's meeting may seem a little unorganized; however, we need to make a few amendments to the agenda. He stated that first, we need to amend Item 10d, regarding a field trip, to include an additional school, Gadsden Technical College. He stated that since everyone has received the necessary paperwork, he will entertain a motion to amend Item 10d.

Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon made a motion to approve agenda item 10d with the inclusion of students from Gadsden Technical College. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

Mr. McMillan stated secondly, we need to amend Item 7c to correct the funding source. He stated that the agenda currently identifies the funding source as the Mental Health Allocation. He stated however, the funds will not come from the Mental Health Allocation but rather from the General Fund. He entertained a motion to amend Item 7c to reflect the correct funding source.

Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon made a motion to amend Item 7c to reflect the correct funding source, general fund. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

Mr. McMillan stated that in regards to Item 7b, DISC Village, the required license documentation was not included with the agenda materials. He stated therefore, he was requesting that this item be removed from the agenda.

Ms. Cathy S. Johnson made a motion to remove agenda Item 7b from the agenda due to the absence of the required documentation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost.

Ms. Hannigon wanted forgiveness for if this information is included in the materials and she overlooked it, but wanted to know if the license was a requirement of the agreement. Mr. McMillan stated that we want to ensure that the Board is not exposed to any potential liability. He stated that we also need to verify that the individual or organization is properly licensed to perform the services outlined in the contract. Ms. Hannigon stated that if she may offer a friendly amendment, she would suggest that the Board table this item until the next meeting rather than remove it from the agenda entirely. Mr. McMillan stated that since there is no difference in the immediate outcome, Item 7b will be removed from the agenda.

The motion was approved and carried unanimously.

Ms. Kesandra Brown, ESE Director, addressed the Board and recommended that the Board not remove Item 7c from the agenda because it is only a proposal at this stage. She stated that the district is simply seeking the Board's consideration to determine whether there is an interest in moving forward with the proposed services. She stated that if the Board is receptive to the proposal, we will return at a future meeting with a formal contract for the Board's review and consideration before any final action is taken. Mr. McMillan stated that since this is only a proposal and not a contract for approval, there is no need to amend the item at this time.

CITIZEN COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Ms. Bonnie Francis, a 1977 graduate of James A. Shanks High School and family member of the late Rosalyn West Smith, appeared before the Board to recommend that the new Gadsden County K-8 School be named the Rosalyn West Smith School of Excellence. Ms. Francis explained that Ms. Smith was her first cousin and that she was appearing on behalf of Ms. Smith's son, James Smith III, who was unable to attend the meeting because he resides out of state. Ms. Francis read the following statement on his behalf:

James Smith III strongly recommended that the new Gadsden County K-8 School be named the Rosalyn West Smith School of Excellence in recognition of his mother's lifelong dedication to education, leadership, and service to the Gadsden County community. He described his mother as an exceptional educator and leader who consistently demonstrated the highest standards of excellence throughout her career, both in the classroom as a teacher and at the district level as an Assistant Superintendent. He emphasized that Ms. Smith's strong Christian faith, unwavering commitment to academic achievement, and genuine concern for others positively influenced countless students, educators, and families throughout Gadsden County and beyond. Reflecting on his personal experiences, Mr. Smith shared that he witnessed his mother's dedication to academic excellence throughout his life. She encouraged him to strive for success and never settle for simply getting by. He recalled struggling academically and sometimes believing that earning a passing grade was sufficient. However, his mother's determination, encouragement, and high expectations motivated him to work harder and ultimately earn a doctoral degree. He stated that the same commitment to excellence she demonstrated in raising her children was reflected in her classroom instruction, school leadership, and district administration. Ms. Smith further explained that his mother believed academic success should be accompanied by strong Christian character, compassion, and service to others. He referenced the familiar saying, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care," noting that his mother exemplified this principle throughout her life. He described Ms. Smith as a compassionate educator and community leader who genuinely cared about her students, staff, and the families she served. Her leadership inspired others to recognize their potential and strive to achieve their goals. Ms. Smith noted that, throughout his life, he could hardly recall a time when his mother was not involved in education in some capacity, whether professionally or through her personal commitment to helping others learn and succeed. He concluded by stating that naming the new school in her honor would be a fitting tribute to her remarkable life, distinguished career, and lasting contributions to education in Gadsden County. On behalf of his family, he expressed sincere appreciation to the Board for considering the name Rosalyn West Smith School of Excellence and shared his hope that her legacy of educational excellence would continue to inspire future generations of students.

Ms. Pauline West addressed the Board and shared that she has dedicated approximately 45 years of service to education in Gadsden County. She explained that Rosalyn West Smith played a significant role in inspiring her to pursue a career in education. She recalled Ms. Smith initially encouraged her to serve as a substitute teacher. Through that experience, she developed a passion for teaching and ultimately changed her field of study at Florida State University from nursing to education. Ms. West expressed her continued love for teaching and proudly shared that she remains employed at Stewart Street Elementary School, where she considers herself a proud Mighty Mustang. She then informed the Board that she would read a letter submitted by Ms. Smith's daughter, Constance Cornelius Smith Holt, who was unable to attend the meeting.

Statement from Constance Cornelius Smith Holt – Daughter of Rosalyn West Smith.

In her letter addressed to the members of the Gadsden County School Board, district leaders, educators, families, students, and community members, Constance Cornelius Smith Holt expressed her family's heartfelt gratitude and pride that their mother, Rosalyn West Smith, was being considered as the namesake of the new Gadsden County K-8 School. Mrs. Holt reflected on the importance of Gadsden County to her family, describing it as the community where they were raised, where their values were shaped, and where dedicated public school educators provided the knowledge, encouragement, and foundation necessary for success in college, careers, and life. She emphasized that generations of Gadsden County graduates have made meaningful contributions in medicine, business, law, athletics, education, entrepreneurship, government, and numerous other professions. She stated that the new K-8 school presents an opportunity to prepare future generations of students to continue that proud tradition of achievement. Mrs. Holt highlighted her mother's distinguished career in public education, noting that from 1972 to 2015, Rosalyn West Smith devoted more than four decades of service to the students, families, educators, staff, and schools of Gadsden County. Throughout her career, Ms. Smith served in several educational leadership positions, including teacher, assistant

principal, and principal, working with students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Her service included assignments at Gretna Elementary School, Chattahoochee High School, and Carter-Parramore Academy, among other schools. She later served as Deputy Superintendent, where she helped shape instructional practices, educational opportunities, and student achievement throughout the district. Mrs. Holt explained that family and faith remained central to her mother's life, while the Gadsden County School District held a particularly special place in her heart. She fondly recalled that when she needed to locate her mother, she would often contact a school or the district office before calling her home because her mother could frequently be found working long hours, sometimes well into the evening. She stated that her mother's dedication extended far beyond the responsibilities of her position and reflected her genuine love for children, education, and the Gadsden County community. Mrs. Holt described her mother as a strong, compassionate, and gracious woman who used her voice to encourage kindness, her hands to serve others, and her heart to demonstrate love. She shared that former students remembered Ms. Smith as someone they could approach with concerns, knowing she would listen and make every effort to address their needs. Her colleagues respected her leadership, while community members remembered her welcoming smile, encouraging words, and sincere concern for others. Mrs. Holt emphasized that her mother's influence was not limited to a single school, position, or title but extended throughout the entire Gadsden County community. She also acknowledged the importance of the community's involvement in selecting the name, mascot, and colors of the new school, recognizing that these decisions will become an important part of the school's identity, traditions, and history. She expressed that the strong community support for the name Rosalyn West Smith School of Excellence was especially meaningful to the family. Mrs. Holt stated that the proposed name would honor not only her mother's legacy but also the many dedicated educators who served before her, worked alongside her, and will continue serving future generations. She explained that the name would represent an unwavering belief in every student's potential, the essential role of parents and families, the dedication of school employees, and the importance of strong partnerships throughout the community. She further emphasized that the phrase "School of Excellence" reflects the high standards her mother consistently pursued throughout her career and the level of achievement the family hopes every student entering the new school will be encouraged to attain. In closing, Mrs. Holt stated that her family would be deeply honored if the Board selected the name Rosalyn West Smith School of Excellence for the new Gadsden County K–8 School. She expressed her hope that the school would become a place where the potential, promise, and future contributions of every child are recognized, nurtured, and celebrated.

Bonnie Francis and Pauline West appeared before the Board in support of naming the new Gadsden County K–8 School the Rosalyn West Smith School of Excellence. Ms. Francis presented a statement from Mrs. Smith's son, James Smith III, while Ms. West presented a letter from Mrs. Smith's daughter, Constance Cornelius Smith Holt. Both statements highlighted Mrs. Smith's more than four decades of dedicated service to the Gadsden County School District, her leadership in education, her commitment to academic excellence, and her lasting influence on students, educators, families, and the community. The family respectfully requested that the Board consider naming the new school in her honor as a lasting tribute to her educational contributions and legacy of service.

4. RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Key acknowledged the challenges faced by the Gadsden County School District during the current school year, particularly those resulting from the consolidation of schools and other significant changes implemented over the summer. He noted that West Gadsden, the district's second-largest school, has experienced considerable challenges and currently requires additional support. He also referenced the closure of Carter-Parramore Academy (CPA) due to the lack of a functioning air-conditioning system. He stated that despite these challenges, he commended district employees for their dedication, perseverance, and continued efforts to provide students with a quality education in a safe and supportive learning environment. He shared that considerable time is being spent at West Gadsden each week to provide hands-on assistance, address concerns, and support school administrators, teachers, and students. He stated that special appreciation was extended to all district employees, including teachers, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, school administrators, and support staff, for their hard work and willingness to adjust to the numerous changes implemented throughout the district in a short period of time. He emphasized that while district leadership establishes the vision and direction for improvement, it is the dedication and commitment of employees at the school level that bring those plans to life. He further stated that the district still has significant work ahead and will continue providing direct support to schools to maintain and improve school performance grades. He stressed that continued progress will require teamwork, accountability, and the collective efforts of all employees. In closing, he expressed sincere gratitude to all Gadsden County School District employees for their contributions thus far and encouraged everyone to remain committed to moving the district forward and ensuring a successful school year.

Ms. Hannigon expressed appreciation to the Superintendent for recognizing the dedication and hard work of district employees. She shared that, through conversations with several teachers, it was evident that many were already experiencing fatigue as a result of the adjustments and additional responsibilities associated with the current school year. She publicly thanked teachers and staff for their continued commitment, flexibility, and perseverance despite the

challenges they have encountered. She also commended employees for remaining dedicated to their positions and continuing to serve the students of Gadsden County during this period of transition. She stated that appreciation was also extended to district-level administrators and school-based leadership for their efforts in supporting employees and ensuring that school operations continue as effectively as possible. She concluded by thanking all employees for their service and commitment to the district.

Mr. Frost began by addressing a previous exchange with Ms. Cathy Johnson regarding a schedule she had requested. He explained that when Ms. Johnson indicated that she needed a schedule, he responded that he already had one. He acknowledged that his response may have appeared dismissive and offered a public apology, emphasizing that he did not intend to disregard or minimize her request. He expressed his respect and appreciation for Ms. Johnson, particularly recognizing her dedication and advocacy for students with special needs and her strong support of the Special Olympics. He commended her willingness to go above and beyond to ensure that students with disabilities receive the attention, opportunities, and support they deserve. He clarified that although he already had a schedule, he understood that Ms. Johnson still needed one and wanted to ensure that his earlier remarks were not misunderstood. Ms. Johnson thanked Mr. Frost for his comments and humorously pointed out that he is retired while she is still working, which makes a difference in their schedules and responsibilities. Mr. Frost continued with his remarks, he reflected on the pride and strong sense of community shared among graduates of Gadsden County schools. He referenced graduates of Greensboro, Chattahoochee, Havana, and James A. Shanks High School, noting that alumni from different schools and graduating classes often proudly proclaim that their class was the best. He specifically mentioned the Class of 1977 and acknowledged the friendly competition that has existed among generations of Gadsden County graduates. He explained that much of this pride stems from the dedication of former educators who treated their students as their own children, established high expectations, and genuinely cared about their success. He referenced the late Rosalyn West Smith as an example of the many educators whose commitment and influence helped shape the lives of students throughout the county. He emphasized that the lasting impact of these teachers continues to be reflected in the accomplishments, confidence, and pride of their former students. He also acknowledged the reputation of Gadsden County graduates for being knowledgeable, confident, and proud of their educational backgrounds, including those who continued their education at Florida A&M University. He encouraged the community to recognize and celebrate the contributions of educators and graduates from all Gadsden County schools rather than focusing solely on individual schools or graduating classes. He emphasized the importance of unity, shared responsibility, and community pride, stating that everyone must work together to support the district and its students. He concluded by expressing his confidence that, through continued cooperation and commitment, the Gadsden County School District will overcome its challenges and achieve success.

Mr. McMillan reflected on the Superintendent's remarks concerning school improvement and the district's efforts to raise academic performance. He expressed hope that Greensboro Elementary School would eventually achieve an "A" school grade, while also emphasizing that progress and improvement should be recognized even when a school has not yet reached the highest performance level. To illustrate his point, Chairman McMillan shared a conversation he once had with a physician who explained that he had not been among the highest-achieving students in his graduating class and had completed his studies with a "C" average. He stated that the physician recalled that several of his classmates had earned straight A's and eventually became doctors. However, despite his own average grades, he also went on to become a doctor. He used this example to emphasize that academic success should not be measured solely by grades but also by determination, perseverance, continuous improvement, and eventual achievement. He stated that the district should take pride in the progress its schools are making, even as they continue working toward higher performance standards.

Mr. McMillan also recalled an encounter with a community member who questioned what the Gadsden County School District had to be proud of regarding its schools and academic performance. He explained that he responded by emphasizing the importance of recognizing improvement, celebrating accomplishments, and remaining committed to achieving greater success. He encouraged district leaders, employees, students, and the community to continue working diligently toward academic excellence. He expressed his hope that Gadsden County schools would one day return to the level of academic achievement and educational pride historically associated with Carter-Parramore. He concluded by emphasizing that continued hard work, dedication, and a shared commitment to improvement will help the district achieve its educational goals.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mr. McMillan entertained a motion to approve the minutes, agenda items 5a – 5d. The motion was made by Mr. Steve Scott. The motion was seconded by Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon and carried unanimously.

Mr. McMillan entertained a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda items 6a – 10d with the exception of 7c, 7b was removed from the agenda. The motion was made by Mr. Steve Scott. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

5. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- a. August 25, 2026, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Financial Workshop
- b. August 25, 2026, 6:00 p.m. – Regular School Board Meeting
- c. September 1, 2026, 4:00 p.m. – School Board Workshop
- d. September 3, 2026, 5:01 p.m. – Final Budget Hearing

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. 2026 – 2027 Cafeteria Prices

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Contractual Agreement Between DISC Village and the Gadsden County School Board

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

Removed from the agenda.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- d. Contractual Agreement Between The School Board of Gadsden County and Sandy Thermidor, M.S. SLP-CCC

Fund Source: FEFP Dollars (General)

Amount: \$60.00 per hour (for actual hours worked) Speech Language Pathologist

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- e. Amendment No. 1 to Renewal Contractual Agreement – PAEC ESOL/ELL Services

Fund Source: General Revenue

Amount: \$20,000.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- f. Florida A&M University and Gadsden County Schools Articulation Agreement 2026 – 2028

Fund Source: FEFP Dollars

Amount: Undetermined – Based Upon Student Dual Enrollment

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. STUDENT MATTERS

- a. Student Expulsion – Case #0001-2627-0052

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Student Expulsion – Case #002-2627-0051

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

9. SCHOOL FACILITY/PROPERTY

- a. Approval of Revised Plant Survey that Excludes Properties Intended for Sale

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Approval of Resolution 2026 – 05 Sale of Certain Property

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

10. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

- a. Panhandle Area Educational Consortium Professional Learning Catalog 2026 – 2027

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. 2026 – 2027 Controlled Open Enrollment Plan

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- c. District Comprehensive Evidenced-Based Reading Plan

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- d. Gadsden County High School Out-of-State Field Trip

Fund Source: CTE

Amount: \$30/student (admission) -\$2,300 (charter bus)

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.

*7. AGREEMENTS/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

- c. Proposal Between The School Board of Gadsden County and Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare, Inc.

Ms. Hannigon requested that Item 7c be pulled for discussion. She stated that with the Superintendent's permission, she asked Ms. Kesandra Brown, Director of Exceptional Student Education (ESE), to provide an overview of the proposed Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Ms. Hannigon explained that her request was consistent with comments she made during the Board workshop regarding the importance of informing the public about the positive initiatives being implemented by the district to support its employees.

Ms. Kesandra Brown explained that the district had been working for some time to secure an Employee Assistance Program to provide mental health and wellness support to district employees and their families. She acknowledged the challenges and demands placed on teachers and staff, noting that many employees were already experiencing fatigue before the conclusion of the first nine weeks of school. She emphasized that the district recognizes the importance of supporting employees' mental and emotional well-being and wants to ensure that staff members feel valued, empowered, and motivated to continue serving the students of Gadsden County. She stated that the proposed program would be provided through Tallahassee Memorial Hospital and would offer a variety of counseling, wellness, consultation, and crisis intervention services. She outlined the following components of the proposed Employee Assistance Program: a) Counseling Services: Employees and eligible family members would have access to an eight-session counseling model. Additional sessions could be authorized through the appropriate supervisor

or the district's Human Resources Department when further services are needed; b) Family Eligibility: Services would be available to employees and eligible family members, including children ages 10 and older; c) Employee Coverage: The proposal would provide coverage for up to 700 employees. Ms. Brown explained that the district currently employs approximately 634 to 640 individuals, with the potential to increase to approximately 670 employees. Selecting coverage for 700 employees would allow for future growth without requiring the district to renegotiate the agreement; d) Assessment and Referral Services: The program would provide up to eight problem-assessment and referral services per employee, with appointments generally scheduled within three to five business days; e) 24-Hour Telephone Support: Employees would have access to free telephone assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including support outside regular office hours for mental health concerns, emotional distress, or crisis situations; f) Program Utilization Reports: The district would receive reports regarding employee participation and overall program utilization to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the services provided; g) Dedicated EAP Director: A designated program director would work directly with the district to coordinate services and ensure consistent, effective implementation; h) Employee and Leadership Training: The program would provide up to 12 hours of leadership and employee training, including orientation sessions, wellness seminars, mental health awareness, and information regarding available services and resources; i) Supervisor and Human Resources Consultation: Unlimited ongoing consultation services would be available to school administrators, supervisors, and Human Resources personnel to assist with employee concerns and workplace-related issues; j) Management and Performance Referrals: The program would offer unlimited management and performance-related referrals, including monitoring and follow-up services to help determine whether employees are benefiting from the assistance provided; k) Return-to-Work Consultation: Unlimited consultation services would be available to assist the district in addressing employee readiness to return to work following circumstances requiring additional support; l) Critical Incident and Trauma Response: Unlimited on-site crisis intervention and trauma debriefing services would be available following serious incidents, including workplace violence, suicide, natural disasters, robberies, or other traumatic events. These services could also support the district's emergency response and reunification procedures; m) Monthly Supervisor Newsletters: The program would provide 12 monthly newsletters containing mental health information, workplace wellness strategies, and resources addressing topics such as suicide prevention and mental health awareness; n) Financial Literacy Resources: Employees would receive unlimited access to electronic financial literacy programs designed to promote financial wellness and reduce financial stress; o) Financial Counseling: Telephone counseling services would be available to assist employees experiencing financial difficulties; and p) Fitness-for-Duty Evaluations: The proposal would include up to three fitness-for-duty evaluations to assist in determining whether employees experiencing significant mental health concerns are able to safely return to work or require additional services.

Ms. Brown explained that this additional component contributed to a slight increase in the proposed cost. She concluded her presentation by emphasizing that the program would provide valuable resources to support employees' mental health, financial wellness, and overall well-being.

Ms. Hannigon thanked Ms. Brown for the detailed presentation and expressed her strong support for the proposed Employee Assistance Program. She stated that she was familiar with EAP services, having personally utilized such a program during previous employment. She noted that Employee Assistance Programs are commonly offered by governmental agencies and other organizations. She explained that her initial discussions with the Human Resources Department began after learning that the district did not have a comprehensive Employee Assistance Program agreement in place to support its teachers and staff. She commended Ms. Brown, the Human Resources Department, and district administration for their efforts in bringing the proposal forward. She emphasized that teachers and staff carry significant responsibilities and that access to free counseling and wellness services for employees and their families would be a tremendous benefit. She also stressed the importance of ensuring that employees are fully informed about the program and encouraged the district to work with the employee union and other appropriate organizations to communicate the availability of these services. She further noted that, in her previous employment experiences, Employee Assistance Programs were sometimes incorporated into disciplinary procedures involving matters such as drug or alcohol violations. She questioned whether the district's Human Resources policies would need to be revised to allow employees involved in certain disciplinary matters to participate in EAP services as a condition of returning to work.

Dr. Sonya Jackson, Human Resources Director, clarified that the district already has provisions within its existing Human Resources policies addressing such circumstances. Ms. Hannigon acknowledged the clarification and reiterated her appreciation for the program. She expressed hope that the employee union would recognize and support the district's additional efforts to provide meaningful assistance to teachers and staff.

Ms. Brown offered an additional clarification, explaining that some employee assistance services are currently available through Amwell for employees enrolled in Capital Health Plan (CHP). She stated however, the proposed program would provide broader assistance and additional resources for district employees.

Mr. McMillan asked Ms. Hannigon how she wished to proceed with Item 7c, since she had requested that the item be pulled for discussion.

Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item 7c. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost.

During the discussion, a question was raised regarding which of the two proposals the Board would approve, as one proposal provided coverage for up to 650 employees and the other provided coverage for up to 700 employees.

Ms. Brown recommended approval of the proposal covering up to 700 employees, explaining that the district currently has approximately 640 employees and that the higher coverage level would accommodate potential increases in staffing.

Following discussion, the Board agreed to proceed with the proposal providing coverage for up to 700 employees.

The motion was carried unanimously to approve agenda item 7c, the Employee Assistance Program proposal through Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, with coverage for up to 700 district employees.

Fund Source: Mental Health Allocation

Amount: \$18,400.00 – Annually up to 700 Employees

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

11. EDUCATIONAL ISSUE

a. Selection of the New K-8 School Name, Colors, and Mascot

Ms. Moody presented the recommendations for the name, colors, and mascot of the new Gadsden County K-8 School. She explained that the district conducted a community engagement process to gather input regarding the identity of the new school, which will combine four existing learning communities into one new educational institution. She stated that a community meeting was held at Stewart Street Elementary School in February, during which participants were invited to complete a survey and provide recommendations for the school's name, mascot, colors, and motto. In addition to community participation, input was received from district-level personnel and students to ensure that various stakeholders had an opportunity to contribute to the selection process. Following the collection of survey responses, a steering committee reviewed and evaluated the recommendations submitted by the community, district employees, and students. The proposed names and other recommendations were also made available on the district's website. Ms. Moody presented the results of the survey and the steering committee's recommendations to the Board for consideration.

Following a review of the survey results, the Board acknowledged that Rosalyn West Smith received the highest level of support among the proposed school names. Board members expressed agreement with the recommendation to honor Ms. Smith's legacy and contributions to education in Gadsden County by naming the new K-8 school after her. The Board also considered the recommended school colors and mascot.

Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item 11a, establishing the name, school colors, and mascot for the new Gadsden County K-8 School. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

The Board approved the following:

- School Name: Rosalyn West Smith School of Excellence
- School Colors: Navy Blue, Teal, and Silver
- School Mascot: Warriors

The Board's approval establishes the official name, colors, and mascot for the new K-8 school, recognizing the educational legacy of Rosalyn West Smith and reflecting the input received from students, district personnel, and the Gadsden County community.

b. Student Code of Conduct – Meta Smart Glasses

Mr. Key informed the Board that a question had been raised regarding whether the district's Student Code of Conduct should be amended to specifically prohibit Meta Smart Glasses on school campuses. He explained that the purpose of the discussion was to determine whether the existing language in the Student Code of Conduct adequately addressed these devices or whether additional language was necessary.

Attorney Minnis recommended that Meta Smart Glasses be specifically identified in the Student Code of Conduct due to their increasing popularity and technological capabilities. She explained that although the district's existing policy addresses cellular devices, smart glasses may not fall clearly within that classification because they function primarily as Bluetooth-enabled devices rather than independent cellular devices. She expressed concern that individuals could challenge enforcement of the existing policy by arguing that smart glasses are not technically cellular devices. She stated that to avoid confusion and potential disputes, she recommended revising the policy to include specific language prohibiting Meta Smart Glasses, regardless of whether their recording features are activated. She further suggested incorporating the phrase "including, but not limited to" to ensure that the policy covers other similar wireless and recording devices that may become available in the future.

Mr. Scott questioned how school personnel would be able to identify Meta Smart Glasses, noting that he had seen the devices but was uncertain how to distinguish them from ordinary eyeglasses. During the discussion, a district employee presented an example of Meta Smart Glasses to the Board. The demonstration included an explanation of an indicator light located near the upper-right portion of the glasses, which may illuminate when the device is recording.

Board members raised questions regarding whether the glasses could record when the indicator light was not illuminated and expressed concerns about the potential for unauthorized recording on school campuses. The Board emphasized the importance of protecting students and staff and ensuring that school personnel have clear guidelines for addressing these devices.

Attorney Minnis reiterated that the existing policy could create enforcement challenges because Meta Smart Glasses operate through wireless or Bluetooth technology and may not technically qualify as cellular devices. She explained that specifically identifying smart glasses in the Student Code of Conduct would help eliminate ambiguity and strengthen the district's ability to enforce the policy.

Mr. McMillan asked whether the general consensus of the Board was to specifically identify Meta Smart Glasses as prohibited devices in the Student Code of Conduct. Ms. Hannigon suggested that the district consider replacing the term "cellular devices" with "wireless devices" to provide broader coverage. She explained that the term wireless devices would more appropriately address modern technology, including smart glasses and other devices capable of recording, communicating, or transmitting information. She also recommended that smart glasses be specifically identified in the policy to ensure clarity for students, parents, and school personnel.

Attorney Minnis agreed with the recommendation and suggested using language such as "wireless devices, including, but not limited to", followed by specific examples, including cellular phones and Meta Smart Glasses. She explained that this wording would provide the district with broader authority to address additional wireless devices without requiring the policy to be amended each time new technology becomes available.

Following further discussion, the Board emphasized the importance of clearly communicating the revised policy to parents and guardians. Board members agreed that parents should be informed of the restrictions regarding Meta Smart Glasses and other wireless devices to prevent misunderstandings and ensure that students and families are aware of the district's expectations. The Board also stressed that the revised Student Code of Conduct should contain clear and specific language to support consistent enforcement across all district schools.

Attorney Minnis recommended that the Board authorize the Superintendent to amend the Student Code of Conduct by replacing the term "cellular devices" with "wireless devices." She further recommended that the revised language specifically identify cellular or wireless phones and Meta Smart Glasses and incorporate the phrase "including, but not limited to" to provide broader coverage for similar devices.

Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon made a motion to authorize the Superintendent to amend the Student Code of Conduct to replace the term "cellular devices" with "wireless devices," specifically include cellular phones, wireless phones, and Meta Smart Glasses, and incorporate the phrase "including, but not limited to" to address other similar devices. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

The Board authorized the Superintendent to proceed with the recommended revisions to the Student Code of Conduct to provide clearer restrictions regarding wireless devices and smart glasses on school campuses.

Mr. McMillan informed the Board that he had received three offers for the purchase of approximately 20 acres of property located on Telogia Creek Road in Greensboro, Florida, formerly associated with the Greensboro High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) program. He noted that the matter was not included on the agenda and questioned whether it could be addressed under another agenda item.

Attorney Minnis clarified that the other two related agenda items concerned only a resolution and the district's plant survey.

Mr. McMillan explained that the 20-acre parcel, which has frontage along Telogia Creek Road, was originally donated to the Greensboro High School FFA program around 1960. He stated that the Board had previously reviewed the necessary information and determined that the property could be sold, with the proceeds benefiting the FFA chapter at the high school. He further explained that an additional 20-acre parcel, located directly behind the School Board's property, had been donated to the 4-H program around the same time. He expressed concern that selling the School Board's 20-acre parcel separately could create access issues for the adjoining 4-H property, which would potentially become landlocked.

Attorney Minnis confirmed that the rear parcel could become landlocked and explained that legal access through a right-of-way would need to be addressed.

Mr. McMillan informed the Board that Robert Jones, the County Extension Agent, had contacted him the previous week regarding the adjoining 4-H property. According to Mr. McMillan, Mr. Jones indicated that the County was interested in selling its parcel but was awaiting legal guidance from its attorney before making a final decision. He suggested that it would be beneficial if both 20-acre parcels could be purchased by the same buyer, eliminating potential complications involving access and right-of-way requirements. He recommended delaying action on the School Board's property until the County determined how it intended to proceed with the adjoining parcel.

Attorney Minnis cautioned that there was no guarantee that any of the individuals who submitted offers for the School Board's 20-acre parcel would also be interested in purchasing the adjoining property. She expressed concern that delaying the sale while awaiting the County's decision could unnecessarily prolong the process.

Mr. Scott questioned whether the adjoining 20-acre parcel belonging to the 4-H program could legally be sold, noting the program's affiliation with the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS).

Mr. McMillan responded that IFAS had agreed to the proposed sale of the adjoining property. During the discussion, Board members clarified that the property currently under consideration was the 20-acre parcel owned by the Gadsden County School Board, not the adjoining 20-acre parcel associated with the 4-H program. Although members acknowledged that selling both parcels to a single purchaser could be beneficial, the Board expressed its continued interest in proceeding with the sale of its own property.

Attorney Minnis recommended that the Board refrain from voting on the offers during the meeting. She advised that the individuals who had submitted offers should be given an opportunity to appear before the Board and present their proposals before a final decision was made. She stated that the recommendation was intended to ensure that the Board had an opportunity to consider the offers thoroughly and act in the best interest of the public.

Dr. Sylvia Jackson reminded the Board that the offers had been submitted in response to its previous request that all bids be received by a specified deadline. She clarified that the information was being presented to the Board for discussion and consideration.

Ms. Hannigon stated that the individuals who submitted offers had done so based on the Board's previously established deadline and the understanding that the matter would be addressed at the current meeting. She suggested that the Board consider amending the agenda to include the property sale and proceed with a vote, since the interested parties had complied with the Board's earlier instructions. However, she acknowledged that the Board could also choose to postpone action on the matter.

Mr. McMillan asked whether the Board wished to accept Attorney Minnis' recommendation.

Following discussion, the Board agreed to accept the attorney's recommendation and postpone a final decision regarding the sale of the 20-acre Greensboro High School FFA property. The Board determined that no additional bids would be accepted and that the individuals who had already submitted offers would be given an opportunity to present their proposals before the Board. The Board agreed that this approach would allow for further consideration of the existing offers and help ensure that any final decision regarding the property would be made in the best interest of the public.

The Board accepted Attorney Minnis' recommendation to defer action on the proposed property sale, consider the offers already received, and provide the prospective purchasers an opportunity to make presentations before a final decision is reached.

No vote to approve the sale of the property was taken at this meeting.

12. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Moved to the beginning of the agenda.

13. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key informed the Board that members had received two informational newsletters, including the Academic Newsletter containing student performance data from the first Progress Monitoring Assessment (PM1). He explained that PM1 testing was still underway and that the reported data may change as additional students complete their assessments. Board members were reminded that PM1 measures students' academic performance at the beginning of a new grade level, before they have received instruction on much of the material being assessed. Mr. Key noted that students who previously demonstrated high levels of academic achievement, particularly those who scored at Level 4 or at the higher end of Level 3 during the previous school year, would generally be expected to perform well on the initial assessment and remain within the higher performance categories. He encouraged Board members to consider these factors when reviewing the PM1 results and evaluating student performance. He also referenced the informational updates provided regarding the district's Facilities and Support Services departments. He announced that Gadsden County High School's Homecoming celebration and parade are scheduled for October 30. Board members interested in participating in the Homecoming Parade were encouraged to contact the school regarding participation arrangements. Mr. Key noted that parade participation applications had not yet been received by the district but indicated that accommodations are typically made for School Board members. Board members wishing to participate were asked to submit their names to Ms. Davis, who would coordinate and communicate the information to the school.

14. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Ms. Hannigon stated that she had several matters she wished to discuss and would follow up with the Superintendent regarding those concerns. She identified the following topics for further discussion:

1. Electric School Buses: Requested an update on the status of the district's electric school buses.
2. Student Discipline Workshop: Suggested that the Board consider scheduling another workshop to further discuss student disciplinary matters and related policies.
3. Succession Planning: Expressed concern regarding employee departures and the importance of developing a succession plan to ensure continuity in key district positions.

Ms. Hannigon acknowledged that some employee departures are unexpected and cannot always be anticipated. However, she emphasized that the district should take a proactive approach when upcoming retirements or participation in the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) are known in advance. She suggested that, when financially feasible, the district consider overlapping positions to allow incoming employees to receive training and guidance from outgoing personnel before their departure. She explained that such planning could help prevent vacancies in critical positions, minimize disruptions in district operations, and ensure a smoother transition of responsibilities. She indicated that she would discuss these matters further with the Superintendent and the Human Resources Department.

Mr. McMillan addressed the Board regarding financial support for students interested in pursuing careers in corrections. He challenged fellow Board members to contribute \$1,800 to the Morris A. Young Foundation to help provide financial assistance to students enrolling in the Correctional Officer Training Program. He emphasized the importance of supporting students who may face financial challenges in completing the required training and obtaining certification. He shared that approximately 30 students had expressed interest in participating in the program during the upcoming year. He again encouraged Board members to support the initiative and announced that he would personally contribute \$1,800 toward the effort.

15. The meeting adjourned at 7:23 P.M.