

SPECIAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

May 12, 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; 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 6:35 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

Ms. Cathy S. Johnson made a motion to add item #5b – James A. Shanks Middle School Out-of-State Field Trip Request to the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

Citizen Concerns

Dr. Tracey Stallworth addressed the Board with questions regarding clarity and understanding about FSBIT insurance that deals with SAM (Sexual Abuse & Molestation). He stated that he believe that the coverage has jumped to \$300,000. He wanted to know why the cost jump a lot. He stated that he was not opposing it. He asked if any other insurance groups were compared with different quotes. Mr. McMillian stated that the district was once insured by the Florida League Cities, and we were dropped by them after Hurricane Michael. He stated that no one else wanted to insure us because of the losses. He stated that the first bid accepted us was FSBIT.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

4. AGREEMENT/CONTRACT

a. 2026 – 2027 FSBIT Renewal

Fund Source: General Fund / Capital Outlay (property)

Amount: \$1,373,867

Mrs. Bruner stated that FSBIT has four meetings a year, one is a Risk Manager only meeting, and the other three are financial components. She stated that at the winter meeting in January or February, a review of all coverages and comparison with other districts and universities was done. She stated that FSBIT has beaten all those categories. She stated that this was the renewal plan, a total decrease of \$36,000. She stated that the SAM coverage is an additional \$25,000 per \$1,000,000. She stated that no member of the FSBIT collective group has had to go into these excess coverages yet, but that does not mean that we're not open to risk. She stated that it is up to the Board to state how much risk they want to incur. She stated that we can keep the coverages at the top as is and then it would be the \$1,340,227 amount, or we can go into the additional coverages even with the cost savings from the prior year. She stated that her recommendation would be to just do the \$1,000,000 with the \$1,000,000 SAM coverage for \$33,640.00. Mr. McMillan wanted to know if the \$1,373,867 was for the added coverage. Mrs. Bruner stated yes, that was for the added coverage. She stated that it is the regular base coverage and the additional \$1,000,000. Mrs. Bruner stated that what is recommended for approval is the base amount of \$1,340,227 plus the additional \$33,640, which is the excess \$1,000,000 in liability coverage that includes sexual abuse and molestation coverage. Mr. McMillan stated that the Superintendent has recommended to the Board item #4a, the 26-27 FSBIT

(Florida School Board Insurance Trust) renewal. He stated that the cost of \$1,373,867 would come from the general fund and capital outlay.

Ms. Hannigon requested a presentation on the 2026 – 2027 FSBIT Renewal Insurance. She stated that she understand that FSBIT has run its numbers and it's given us a comparison between the current year and upcoming year. She stated that Mrs. Bruner mention that staff has gone over all of our policies. She stated that she wanted to know if the district has gone through these coverages to ensure that what is covered is needed to be covered. She stated that everything listed on our property coverage should be there. She stated that because of the financial situation that we are in, she did not want to look at blanket numbers from FSBIT. She stated that her primary areas of concern are automobiles and property because again, a lot of times that's where we don't see updated coverages. Mrs. Bruner stated that she would expect more conversation regarding each of these policies that we're looking at renewing. She stated that FSBIT has a pool of entities. She stated that this is not a grocery shopping pick and choose what you want. She stated that we get the better discount because we pool as a group collectively. She stated that if the entire pool had picked up SAM coverage collectively we would have only been able to get \$10,000 coverage and not \$25,000, She stated that since certain districts didn't want to pick it up, that's why it's at the higher amount. She stated that our rate in is the pool. She stated that when FSBIT does their market analysis, she will present it to the Board. She stated that despite all things happening in the market, FSBIT is still the most competitive in their comparisons. Ms. Hannigon stated that she understand insurance pooling similarly CHP health insurance, yes, we are part of a pool, but at the end of the day that carrier does look at us as an individual in determining overall what our rates are. She stated that it's not just pool. She stated that at the end of the day, they look at each individual entity that they're carrying to ensure whether or not it's a risk worth taking. She stated that depending on what the history is within that entity, we can find ourselves in a situation where they're like, we can't carry you anymore. She stated that she realize that beyond pooling, those carriers look at us as an individual entity and what has taken place over the past year, the past three years and determining then what they're going to do now. She stated that property is an area where there is not enough, there is an oversight. She stated that she was concern about not having just a blanket conversation, but everything within our property policy and taking a look at each of the policies. She stated that she appreciates the premium being less than it was last year because of what's happening at FSBIT, but she is talking about Gadsden County School District. She stated that considering the shortfall that we're faced with the things that we're looking at moving forward, is there any wiggle room. She wanted to know have we done what we needed to do to ensure that there's nothing included here that really and truly we don't have to have going into this next fiscal year. She stated that the finances of the district is a big deal right now. Mrs. Bruner stated that when FSBIT go out to market they're going for the pool. She stated that Alliant, which is our middleman, our broker, they're the ones that take that cost and say what is your share of this pool? She stated that at the FSBIT's winter meeting they discuss all these line items and budgets. She stated that everything is evaluated and discussed. She stated that we have done comparisons to the outside market and FSBIT is giving us the best rate and that's why we've dropped those other carriers over time and picked it up with FSBIT. She stated that at one of our facilities we were able to reduce our workers compensation. She stated that although we are still the highest in the pool, we have been reducing our workers compensation which is what probably gave us some of this good leverage.

Following discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #4a. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried with Mr. McMillan, Mr. Frost, Mr. Scott and Ms. Johnson voting "aye". Ms. Hannigon voted "nay".

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

5. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

a. Student's Placement for 2026 – 2027 School Year With the Closure of James A. Shanks Middle School

Mr. Key stated that the student's placement for the 2026 – 2027 school year with the closure of James A. Shanks Middle School was because of the construction on that site, and to ensure that we are on that campus hopefully on August of 2027 if there are no delays. He shared the following two options with the Board:

Students Placement Options for the 2026–2027 School Year

Superintendent recommends Option A.

Each option presents unique operational, financial, and logistical considerations. My recommendation is based on facility readiness, student capacity, transportation efficiency, instructional continuity, and overall impact on students, staff, and families.

Option A – Temporarily relocate students to Havana Magnet (182), Greensboro Elementary (25) and West Gadsden Middle (207) Schools. George W. Munroe Elementary School loses approximately 113 students to Havana Magnet.

Proposal

Transfer all middle school students and selected elementary students to Havana Magnet School and West Gadsden Middle School based on their address.

Student Assignment

Havana Magnet – Scottown, Dogtown, St. Hebron, Jamieson, Hillside, Shaw Quarters, East (90) Quincy.

West Gadsden – Robertsville, St. John, Friendship, High Bridge, West (90) Quincy, Shiloh, Joe Adams, Lake Talquin (all students) and central Quincy.

Greensboro – Lake Talquin

Considerations

1. Personnel at these targeted schools will be consolidated to maximize administrative oversight.
2. Brings relief to our strained budget due to decrease in enrollment.
3. Transportation adjustments will minimize transportation costs required for reassigned students.
4. Coordination with receiving schools will be necessary to ensure adequate staffing, scheduling, and classroom capacity through the District Staffing Plan for 2026-27.
5. School Choice is still an option with parents/guardian being responsible for transportation.
6. Temporary reassignment will help underutilize facility concerns and cost.
7. Stakeholders' communication will be essential for a successful transition.

Option B – Relocate to Carter Parramore Academy

Proposal

Move all assigned students from James A. Shanks Middle School to Carter Parramore Academy.

- * Repair air conditioning issues at Carter Parramore Academy with an estimated cost between \$250,000 and \$300,000, not including the cafeteria.
- * Repair and construct fencing at CPA with an estimated cost of \$60,000 to \$90,000 (Hardening Grant).
- * Utilize available space at Gadsden County High School, specifically the west side of the 400 wing, to house Gadsden Central Academy and one class for Carter Parramore Academy.

Considerations

1. Facility repairs must be completed prior to student relocation.
2. Shared campus operations at Gadsden County High School will require scheduling coordination and safety adjustments.
3. Transition planning should include student support services and parent communication.
4. Facility readiness, including HVAC functionality, and cafeteria operations must be evaluated

Mr. McMillan stated that he needed an understanding with the location of the students. He wanted to know if the students that are being sent to Greensboro Elementary School are coming from George W. Munroe Elementary School in the 1st through 3rd grade. Mr. Key stated yes. He stated that there are very few students from George W. Monroe Elementary School that would be impacted that will go to Greensboro Elementary School. He stated that his recommendation would be Option A - to temporarily relocate students to Havana Magnet (182), Greensboro Elementary (25) and West Gadsden Middle (207) Schools. George W. Munroe Elementary School loses approximately 113 students to Havana Magnet. Mr. McMillan wanted to know whether the Board could vote on the item because it was under educational issues. Mrs. Minnis stated yes that the Board could vote on agenda item #5a.

Mr. Scott stated that he was disappointed that the students have to move out because initially when we previously discussed the issue, no student was going to have to move. He stated that they were going to operate building the school in the back, keeping the students up front before moving things around. He stated that this has apparently fallen by the wayside. He asked were the staff was moving to these schools with the students. Mr. Key stated that staff was going to follow the students based on where the students were going. Mr. Scott wanted to know if we are going to keep all staff members from James A. Shanks Middle School. Mr. Key stated pretty much those that have been recommended back and are returning. He stated that staff will be placed where needed to help deal with the increase in enrollment from James A. Shanks Middle School. He stated that Carter Parramore Academy needs a lot of work to its air conditioning unit to make it an option. He stated that it would take a lot of money to repair and the district does not have the budget for it. He stated that we would have to bid out and put in the upcoming year's budget. He stated that the school has to be maintained if we are going to use it.

Ms. Johnson wanted to know if the district has the capacity to hold the students. She stated that 182 are going to Havana Magnet School. Mr. Key stated yes, there is capacity at both schools. He stated that the principal at Havana Magnet School stated that she could hold an additional 300 students. He stated that this will help the district address the issue of un-utilized campuses and classrooms. Ms. Johnson wanted to know how it would be for the principals, if they were going with the students. Mr. Key stated that there will be some adjustments with administration. He stated that public input was done through different programs in the evening time at George W. Munroe Elementary School, Stewart Street Elementary School and Shanks Middle School via survey. He stated that 30 percent wanted to do the split, 40 percent wanted the students to go to Carter Parramore Academy, and the other percentage wanted to stay at Shanks Middle School. Ms. Hannigon stated that as for as big of a decision as this is, she mentioned that she wanted to have more engagement in this conversation. She stated that one thing that she keeps saying over and over again is bringing attention to isolated conversations. She stated that she appreciate the summation. She stated that she understands the difference between Board responsibilities and day-to-day operations, however, as a Board member, she has to consider day-to-day operations in my Board decisions and in her vote. She stated that the information she has in front of her does not paint a complete enough picture for her. She stated that she think that it would be beneficial as a Board to have an understanding. She stated yes, these things are considered, but tell us specifically what the impact is going to look like, not just a bullet point. She stated that she was not okay with just a blanket high-level presentation. She stated that this decision we're about to make is going to impact hundreds of people, hundreds of students, hundreds of parents, and staff. She stated that there was not enough detail for her to make a decision. Mr. Key stated that all of those things are currently being worked on, and people are being talked to that are being impacted. He stated that with option #2 some of the classrooms are not efficient. He stated that we must maximize the classrooms. He stated that we cannot continue to operate with eight students in a classroom. He stated that we have tried to keep all of these schools open, but those small schools are a burden to the district's budget. He stated that aged facilities have been taking a lot of money out of our budget as well. He stated that salaries are costing our budget. He stated that to get some kind of cushion there, we have to deal with staff. He stated that with people leaving because of certification issues, and for other reasons, this would be the time to start filling in those gaps and to ensure that we're operating efficiently. Mr. McMillan stated that he had some of the same concerns. He stated that when you got a principal and her assistant out at James A. Shanks Middle School and you were telling me that they're going to follow the students. He stated that the Superintendent stated that he has got to have someone that's going to create a master school plan for the new school, and I need a principal to do that. He stated that when asked about how you were going to do the janitorial staff or the custodial staff, and the cafeteria staff, you stated that there are a lot of positions at different schools, people who are leaving and we could fill those positions with people from James A. Shanks Middle School. He stated that by having a conversation with the Superintendent gave me comfort and understanding of what was going on and not be over staffed. Ms. Hannigon wanted to know what impact performance would have on the district. Mr. Key stated that performance should actually improve. He stated that we are currently looking at the data. He stated that there was a lot of improvement in reading. He stated that they are currently completing math. He stated that when you start filling positions with certified teachers, there should be some improvement. He stated that the number of kids per grade level that are going to each one of these schools will also assist us with determining how many teachers or what teachers need to go to Havana Magnet School. He stated that Havana Magnet School is picking up grades PreK through 8. He stated that the number of students will decrease at George W. Munroe Elementary School. He stated that we are moving forward so it should improve our academic standing and data at the end of the year. Ms. Hannigon stated that once we prepare to transition to the new school and even as it relates to school grades, Mr. Key you mentioned certified teachers having those extra students on campus will show us some improvement when it comes to school grades, but then are you concerned about the transition out of this relocation plan and what impact that will have on those individual schools if any. Mr. Key stated that his concerns were if it was just West Gadsden Middle School only. He stated that he did not think that was a good option because if the majority from Shanks Middle School were transferred to West Gadsden, then when the time comes to transition the teachers back to the new K-8 school, it will have a major impact on West Gadsden Middle School. He stated that Shanks staff will be split between West Gadsden and Havana Magnet. He stated that when the time comes, those individuals have the option to come back to the new K-8 school. Ms. Hannigon wanted to know what the process would look like to say what teachers are going where. She wanted to know whether there would be joint principals. Mr. Key stated that would be a principal's conversation along with conversations with those teachers. He stated that one of the biggest factors to consider would be where those individuals live. Ms. Hannigon wanted to know if these conversations should be a part of the union regarding moving staff around and so forth. Mr. Key stated no, that was closing a school. Ms. Hannigon asked how much can be done from a projection stand point regarding the staffing plan for the new school. She wanted to know if this was part of the master plan to begin looking at the 2027 – 2028 school year. Mr. Key stated that there was a massive schedule that was actually put together to ensure that we had the spacing that we needed. He stated that we would have to have an individual to work on the master schedule and everything else for the new school. He stated that there are a lot of other components with scheduling, special areas and lunch times. He stated that master scheduling of classes is a strength of his. He stated that he will help give input where it's needed to the individual that is assigned to the K-8 School. Ms. Hannigon wanted to know what the transition to this relocation would look like externally for students and parents. Mr. Key stated that he was working with transportation as well as MIS to gather a list of the students that will be impacted. He stated that notices will be sent to

parents via mail about what location their child has been assigned to or whatever the Board decides. Ms. Hannigon stated that she was hopeful that there is a true savings in the midst of this transition. Mr. Frost stated that we need to move these kids safely and comfortably.

Dr. Tracey Stallworth addressed the Board with the concern that if every student and their family will actually remain in the district after they are moved. He stated that parents have school choice. He stated that every student that we lose, we lose FTE funding. He stated that this funding impacts the budget for the next cycle. He stated that he hopes that the Board can figure out the best course of action to place the students. He stated that he feed about 300 people weekly in the community, and is always talking to these parents. He stated that he tell them to participate in these meetings with the Superintendent. He stated that he would tell them to share their concerns with the Superintendent. He stated that decisions have to be made that will push the district forward.

Following discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #5a. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

Mr. McMillian stated that this was a hard decision, but as Mr. Frost stated, at the end of the day, we've got to send these kids somewhere. He stated that he don't know if there was anything we can do, but what he do know is that when that new school is open, we'll have something that we can be proud of and I think our kids will want to come back. He stated that they will attend a state-of-the-art school and it's going to be nice.

b. James A. Shanks Middle School Out-of-State Field Trip Request

Following discussion, Ms. Cathy S. Johnson made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #5b. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leroy McMillan and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommends approval.

6. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr., Key stated that he want the community to understand how we ended up here. He stated that the original plan to build the school was delayed by the district, because we were trying to choose where we're going to build the new school. He stated that there was a plan in place but currently right now to leave the kids there. He stated that we won't get into that school until 2028. He stated that was the reason why we have to make tough decisions and to move forward so that the school can be built, and they can go ahead and demolish the current James A Shanks Middle School campus. He stated that without the rain delay things have been moving along very well. He stated that hopefully our parents have a conversation with their kids. He stated that was one of the things he did last week while he was at Shanks, talked to the kids. He stated that everyone should give the opportunity a chance. He stated that he thinks everyone will be satisfied as we move forward. Lastly, he stated that the reading scores have been looking good, and learning gains in the reading area has been looking good. He stated that he has not received any updates on math. He thanked the parents and asked them to stop him wherever they see him to have a conversation about whatever choice that we've made here tonight concerning their child or any other questions that they may have, please feel free to stop me.

7. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Scott stated that he was concerned about staff. He stated that he has a real concern about people losing their jobs when it's not because of anything they do. He stated that if he was a parent looking at public school district and the only options are to move my kids around various places around the county, gives me a perfect opportunity to use school choice. He stated that he thinks that student enrollment is likely to drop for the next year. He stated that more public input was needed on some of the decisions being made, especially when it comes to closing schools and to selling property. So we need to do a better job to improve our image because that image is what goes out to parents, students and the public.

Ms. Johnson stated that this week was teachers' appreciation week. She thanked all our teachers, our staff and faculty here in Gadsden County. She stated she was honored to have the privilege of working along with One Foundation to serve Havana Magnet School teachers, faculty and staff waffles.

Ms. Hannigon stated that she echoed everything Board member Scott said at the meeting. She stated that we can be hopeful and continue to have the conversations that we're having with our constituents, and hope that they would be patient with us and stick around for the grand finale, which is the new K8 School. She stated that the issue of transitioning is not a student problem, it's an adult problem. She stated that the adults are charged to make the tough decisions. She stated that there are a lot of variables that are at play. She stated that she can honestly say that some of them have not been considered. She stated that there are people who chimed in on the survey who don't even have students in our school system. She stated that there are people who have property in our county who have come to this very boardroom. She stated that they asked why I am paying property taxes to the school district when I don't have a

child in the school district. She stated that she could not sit here and be hush mouth or close minded regarding concerns that are real. Concerns that will impact how much support we get from the community regarding the work that each of us are up here trying to do. So yes, I do agree it is an adult problem. It's a problem that we've been charged with finding a solution for, but I refuse to do it in an uninformed manner. She stated that here we are part of an education system that includes children from pre-K all the way up to 12th grade. She stated that it's only fair and right that we as Board members respect the fact that they have the right to ask the questions, whether we like the questions or not the best. She stated that the best response is that we have a response for the questions that people bring before us. She stated that she has heard some great feedback from our teachers. She stated that she was hopeful and prayerful that the feedback that she has heard will manifest itself in some very great scores from our students. She stated that she received a positive feel from the schools regarding the performance of our students, so hats off to our teachers and our administration for the great work. She stated that she visits some schools and see the AP's at the school working hard. Hats off to your administration as well for everything. She stated that she cannot begin to imagine how much effort has been put into supporting the principals and the students. She commended all of them for the great work that they are doing. She thanked every parent who recognize the importance of what we're doing at our schools and ensuring that your sons and daughters show up. She stated that she attended the historical preservation meeting last Monday (May 4th) at the City of Quincy. She stated that there were a lot of concerns voiced. She stated that a greater concern, unfortunately, was that there were people in the room who were not informed. And as she shared, this process had been going on for several months. She stated lastly, congratulations on myself and Mr. Tyrone Davis from Direct Auto Exchange, they visited Gadsden Technical College on yesterday to recognize our April recipients for their influence on education. She thanked Major Jackson for his assistance with that. She stated that the teacher recognized was Mr. Hassan Jones, support staff Ms. Mildred Sheffield, and student Mr. Johnny Winbush. She stated that she had the pleasure of touring the tiny house.

Mr. Frost thanked Ms. Hannigan and Mr., Tyrone Davis for recognizing staff and students for their great work. He stated that when we say that this is an adult problem, we're saying that is not the position of the parent. He stated that we are saying that the move is not bothering the students. He stated that the problem is with the adults.

Mr. McMillian reminded Board members that we are elected officials. He stated that he understands that every decision made will not make everyone happy in your district. He stated that Board members have got to make good sound decisions, and your constituents will support you. He stated that someone on Facebook asked the question why are you building a new school. And you could have used that money to make repairs to the old schools. He stated that the State of Florida do not give district's money to make repairs to schools, but they will fund building a new school.

8. The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.