REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

October 27, 2026

6:00 P.M.

The meeting was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Leroy Mr. McMillan, Chairman; Ms. Cathy S. Johnson; Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon; Mr. Steve Scott; and Mr. Charlie D. Frost who arrived at 6:47 P.M. 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 6:02 P.M.

2. OPENING PRAYER

   The opening prayer was led by Pastor Greg McSwain of First Elizabeth Missionary Baptist Church in Quincy, Florida.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

   Recited in unison.

4. RECOGNITIONS

   Mr. Key opened the recognition portion of the meeting by informing the Board that Mr. Frost would be late due to a family emergency but had indicated that he was on his way. He also expressed appreciation to the citizens of Gadsden County for their participation in several community meetings concerning the proposed half-cent sales tax. He acknowledged the community's engagement, thoughtful questions, and willingness to participate in discussions regarding the proposed tax. He thanked everyone who attended and contributed to the dialogue. He announced that several students from various schools throughout the district had earned perfect scores on State assessments, including the End-of-Course (EOC), Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST), and English Language Arts (ELA) assessments. He invited Ms. Lisa Robinson, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services, to recognize these outstanding students.

   Ms. Robinson congratulated the students on their exceptional academic achievements. She emphasized that their perfect scores placed them among the highest-performing students in the State of Florida within their respective grade levels. She commended their dedication, hard work, and academic excellence, noting that their accomplishments were deserving of special recognition. The following students were recognized: Gadsden County High School - *U.S. History EOC Assessment* - Travis Herring, Cu'Riyah Sweet and Char'Lesya Yon; West Gadsden Middle School - Mireya Molina Gabriel – Civics EOC Assessment, and Damian Martiniz – Grade 8 FAST Mathematics Assessment; Havana Magnet School - Daylin Hernandez – Grade 4 FAST Mathematics Assessment, Jennebith Perez – Grade 7 FAST ELA Reading Assessment, Darianna McGriff – Florida Alternate Assessment, Grade 8 Mathematics; James A. Shanks Middle School - Jaikobe Young – Civics EOC Assessment and Jaikobe Young – Grade 7 FAST Mathematics Assessment. In recognition of their outstanding accomplishments, the students received tickets for themselves and their families from Skate World in Tallahassee. Additionally, Ms. Cheryl Moody and Ms. Thelma Hickman of the FACE Department invited the students to attend a complimentary ice cream social. Additional recognition gifts and contributions from local businesses were also anticipated. Mr. Key thanked the parents for entrusting their children's education to the Gadsden County School District. He also congratulated the students for their hard work, commitment to academic excellence, and outstanding performance on the State assessments.

   The Superintendent invited Major Willie Jackson to introduce students participating in the Culinary Arts Program at Gadsden Technical College (GTC). Major Jackson proudly introduced the students enrolled in the Culinary Arts Program, describing them as future chefs with unique abilities. He explained that the program is supported through grant funding provided by the University of Central Florida (UCF). He stated that the grant has allowed the district to

add three staff positions at no additional cost to the Gadsden County School District. He stated that the program staff members include: Coordinator**:** Shayla Lightfoot-Brown, Culinary Instructor: Chef Fe (Felisha Nicholson), and Assistant Instructor**:** Rebecca Dobbins. Major Jackson explained that the program was initially allocated two student slots. He stated that however, by its third year, enrollment had increased to eight students, exceeding the original expectations. He further explained that students participating in the program must have at least one qualifying unique ability. He stated that the program provides students with valuable culinary training and opportunities to develop skills that can prepare them for future employment. He commended Ms. Shayla Lightfoot-Brown for going above and beyond to secure additional resources for the students. He stated that although the students receive financial assistance through Pell Grants, Ms. Lightfoot-Brown also obtained scholarships through the University of Central Florida to cover the cost of uniforms, shoes, and other necessary supplies. He stated that transportation for participating students is provided through Big Bend Transit. The following students were recognized: Barkley Lewis, Brandon Laws, Ari'Monie Lumpkin, Tyler Williams, Iyana Young, Sheneria Young, Kendrick McCroy, and Alexis Ford (unable to attend). Major Jackson expressed pride in the students and staff for their dedication and the continued success of the program.

Mr. Key concluded his recognitions by honoring School Board Member Steve Scott for his 12 years of dedicated service on the Gadsden County School Board and his many years of service as an educator. He reflected on his first meeting with Mr. Scott in 2008 while assisting with the school's master schedule. He explained that Dr. Jackson subsequently encouraged him to remain at the school as an assistant principal, which allowed him to develop a professional relationship with Mr. Scott. He described Mr. Scott as a trusted colleague and a voice of reason, someone he could depend on for thoughtful advice and guidance throughout the years. He expressed sincere appreciation for Mr. Scott's contributions to the school district, both as an educator and as a School Board member. He stated that although Mr. Scott had requested that no special celebration be held, the Superintendent arranged for cake and punch in his honor, along with flowers for Mrs. Scott. A presentation of appreciation was made to Mr. Steve Scott in recognition of his outstanding service and commitment to public education in Gadsden County.

Mr. Scott thanked everyone for the recognition and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve 12 years on the School Board and more than 40 years in education.

Ms. Johnson expressed appreciation for Mr. Scott's friendship, guidance, and support throughout their years of service together. She shared that Mr. Scott had helped keep her focused and accountable and stated that his presence on the Board would truly be missed.

Ms. Hannigon congratulated Mr. Scott on completing 12 years of service on the School Board. She thanked him for his contributions to the district and expressed her hope that he would enjoy the years ahead without the responsibilities associated with serving on the Board. She recognized several individuals for their outstanding contributions to the Gadsden County School District. She explained that, through a partnership with Direct Auto Exchange and the Ivy Shop Florist, three individuals are recognized monthly for their achievements and dedication to education. She stated that the September recognitions were presented at Stewart Street Elementary School: Teacher of the Month: Martha Ross-Thomas; Support Staff of the Month: Veronica Bouie; and Student of the Month: Naijhia Smith. Each recipient received a plaque and a monetary award of $250. She announced that the October recognitions were scheduled to take place at Havana Magnet School and that she would provide an update at the following month's meeting. She also acknowledged Major Willie Jackson, Ms. Karen Wilson, and everyone involved in organizing Build Fest. She stated that although she was unable to attend because she was out of town, she expressed appreciation for their efforts and hoped the event had been successful. She introduced a representative of Safe Families for Children, a nonprofit organization expanding its services into Gadsden County. She explained that she recently met with representatives of the organization and learned about its mission to support children and families experiencing difficult circumstances. She stated that recognizing the importance of the initiative, she invited the representative to share information about the program with the Board and community.

Ms. Tammy Dixon thanked the School Board, community leaders, and residents for the opportunity to speak. She stated that as a native of Gadsden County, she expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to give back to the community that helped shape her life. She explained that Safe Families for Children is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening families, protecting children, and providing support to parents experiencing challenging circumstances. She emphasized that families sometimes encounter unexpected difficulties, including financial hardship, personal crises, and a lack of adequate support systems. She stated that no family should have to face these challenges alone and that every child deserves to feel safe, supported, and loved. She stated that the organization's mission is to help families before difficult situations develop into more serious crises. She stated that services offered through Safe Families for Children include:

- Temporary hosting arrangements for children when families need additional support.
- Family coaching and guidance.

- Connections to community services and resources.
- Support networks designed to help parents navigate difficult circumstances.
- Partnerships with schools, churches, businesses, and community organizations.

Ms. Dixon emphasized that the organization seeks to support families while prioritizing children's safety and well-being. She explained that early intervention and community partnerships can reduce stress within households and improve children's opportunities for success in school and beyond. She encouraged schools to identify and refer families who may benefit from the program. She also invited churches, businesses, and community residents to become partners, volunteers, and supporters of the initiative. She concluded by emphasizing that strengthening families ultimately strengthens children, schools, communities, and the future of Gadsden County.

Ms. Hannigon thanked Ms. Dixon for the presentation and expressed strong support for the program. She stated that, considering the challenges facing young people in Gadsden County and throughout the nation, programs such as Safe Families for Children are especially important. She noted that although the program is newly launching in Gadsden County, it already has a statewide presence. She also discussed a similar initiative, the Faith Community Network, associated with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). She referenced a recent meeting held at Gadsden County High School and encouraged collaboration between the two organizations. She emphasized the importance of organizations working together rather than independently, stating that partnerships can create greater opportunities to serve students and families. To illustrate the need for these services, Ms. Hannigon shared a recent personal experience while visiting a local urgent care facility. She stated that during her visit, she observed a young boy displaying challenging behavior while accompanied by his grandmother. She stated that after speaking with the grandmother, she learned that the children's mother was deceased and that the grandmother was responsible for raising the children while facing significant challenges of her own. She explained that families in similar circumstances could greatly benefit from the services and resources offered through Safe Families for Children. She expressed appreciation for the organization's efforts and stated that she looked forward to helping connect the program with the Department of Juvenile Justice's Faith Community Network and other community partners.

Mr. McMillan expressed his sincere appreciation for Mr. Scott's wisdom, leadership, and dedicated service to the Gadsden County School Board. He acknowledged Mr. Scott's experience as a former Board Chairman and thanked him for the guidance he had provided on numerous occasions. He recalled that when he first became Chairman, Mr. Scott provided him with information on parliamentary procedures and encouraged him to follow those guidelines in conducting Board meetings. He also recognized Mr. Scott's many contributions to education throughout Gadsden County, including his involvement in naming the football field in honor of Coach Jackson. He commended Mr. Scott for his years of service as both an educator and a School Board member, emphasizing the lasting impact he has made on the district and community. He concluded by thanking Mr. Scott for his leadership, kindness, and commitment to the educational success of Gadsden County students.

Mr. Scott again expressed his gratitude to the Board, Superintendent, district staff, and community for the recognition and support he had received throughout his tenure. He reflected on his 12 years of service on the School Board and his more than 40 years in education, noting that teaching had always been especially meaningful to him. He stated with humor, he remarked that it was sometimes easier to guide students than adults. He praised the district office staff and employees throughout the school system for their professionalism, cooperation, and willingness to assist whenever needed. He shared that one of his greatest sources of pride has been witnessing the success of former students and colleagues who have gone on to serve in important roles throughout the district and beyond. He mentioned several former students and colleagues, including Dr. Sonya Jackson, Mr. Stephen Pitts, Ms. Nancy Sierra, and Ms. Cheryl Moody, while reflecting on the many relationships he developed during his career. He also shared that he frequently encounters former students throughout the community and across the State, which continues to remind him of the lasting impact of his years as an educator. He concluded by thanking everyone for their kind words, support, and dedication to the students and families of Gadsden County.

CITIZENS COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. McMillan announced that the meeting would proceed to the Citizens Comments and Concerns portion of the agenda. He recognized Mr. Michael Brown, who had requested an opportunity to address the Board regarding school property.

Mr. Michael Brown addressed the Board regarding property owned by the Gadsden County School District in Greensboro, Florida. He thanked the School Board members, Superintendent Key, and district staff for the opportunity to speak. He stated that this was approximately his third appearance before the Board concerning the property. He explained that the property is adjacent to Telogia Creek Road, property he manages that is involved in livestock operations, wildlife management, forestry, and farming. He expressed his continued interest in acquiring the property and emphasized that, if the property were donated or granted to him, it would remain in Gadsden County and be used

for agricultural, educational, and community purposes. He shared his previous involvement with the Gadsden County Soil and Water Conservation District and his experience working with students, particularly those participating in Future Farmers of America (FFA) programs under the direction of Mr. Toussaint. He proposed providing educational opportunities for students throughout Gadsden County by allowing them to visit the farm at least twice annually. He stated that these visits would give elementary and other participating students hands-on experience with livestock, agriculture, wildlife management, forestry, and responsible land conservation practices. He emphasized that his intention was not simply to acquire the property for resale or personal financial gain, but to serve as a responsible steward of the land while creating meaningful learning experiences for students. Additionally, Mr. Brown proposed a community outreach initiative through which a processed deer harvested from the property would be donated annually to a family in need during hunting season. He noted that this effort would provide a source of food for a local family while demonstrating the benefits of responsible wildlife management. He further explained that the farm currently follows best management practices to preserve and maintain the land. Although future development of the property may occur over time, he stressed that its use would remain focused on responsible land management, agriculture, education, and community service. He acknowledged that the School Board must follow an established process for determining the disposition of district-owned property, including any applicable bidding or approval requirements. He stated that he respected whatever process the Board determined was necessary. In closing, Mr. Brown reiterated that he would personally oversee the property and remain accountable for its management. He assured the Board that the property would continue to benefit Gadsden County residents, particularly students and families, through educational programs, agricultural experiences, and charitable contributions. He thanked the Board for its time and consideration of his proposal.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mr. McMillan announced that the Board would proceed with the Consent Agenda. He requested a motion to approve Items 5a, 5b & 5c.

5. REVIEW OF MINUTES

   a. September 3, 2026. Immediately Following Final Budget Hearing at 5:01 p.m., Special Board Meeting

   b. September 22, 2026, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Financial Workshop

   c. September 22, 2026, 6:00 p.m. – Regular School Board Meeting

   ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

   Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon made a motion to approve agenda item #'s 5a, 5b & 5c: The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

   Approval of Consent Agenda Items 6a–9b

   Mr. McMillan stated that the Board could consider Consent Agenda Items 6a through 9b and asked whether any Board members wished to pull an item for discussion.

   Ms. Hannigon initially requested that Item 8a be pulled but asked permission to raise a question before formally removing the item from the Consent Agenda. She referenced language contained in the supporting documentation regarding statutory requirements for school safety assessments. She noted that the Statute requires the District School Safety Specialist to provide recommendations to the Superintendent and School Board based on assessment findings. She stated that these recommendations should identify strategies and activities necessary to address deficiencies and improve school safety and security. She further explained that the Statute requires the School Board to receive the findings and recommendations during a public meeting, allowing the public to hear Board members discuss and take action on the findings and recommendations. She questioned whether Item 8a should be included on the consent agenda, considering the statutory requirement for public discussion. She acknowledged that certain confidential details of school safety reports could not be disclosed publicly, as previously discussed during the Board workshop. However, she requested clarification regarding whether approving the item without public discussion would satisfy the statutory requirements.

   Attorney Minnis advised that the item should be discussed at a general level without disclosing confidential or sensitive school safety information. She also noted that the public should have an opportunity to provide input when appropriate. Ms. Hannigon asked whether the Board should entertain a motion to amend the agenda and move Item 8a from the consent agenda to the discussion portion of the agenda or whether the item could remain on consent. Attorney Minnis explained that, under the Board's established procedures, an item pulled from the consent agenda becomes available for discussion. She also raised the question of what information had been made available to the public through the summary provided. Mr. Key explained that the statutory language specifically addresses findings

and recommendations identified through school safety assessments. He stated that the current submission involved school safety best practices and that no new findings or recommendations had been identified as part of the current report. He further explained that the District School Safety Specialist is responsible for conducting compliance reviews at district schools and addressing any deficiencies identified during those assessments. He indicated that, based on his interpretation of the Statute, the requirement for public discussion applies when findings or recommendations are presented for Board consideration.

Ms. Hannigon requested that Attorney Minnis provide a recommendation regarding the appropriate procedure. Attorney Minnis stated that based on the Superintendent's explanation that there were no new findings or recommendations associated with the current submission, she advised that there was no additional information requiring public discussion at that time. She explained that the purpose of the statutory requirement is to provide an opportunity for public discussion when findings or recommendations have been identified.

Lieutenant Tiffany Buckhalt provided additional clarification to ensure transparency regarding the school safety reporting process. She explained that the recommendations referenced in the current agenda item involved the school safety best practices that the district is required to submit annually for the 2026–2027 school year. However, she clarified that findings had been identified during the previous school year when the Florida Office of Safe Schools conducted inspections. She explained that the findings were entered into the FSSAT (Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool) and forwarded to the district. She stated that the district was then required to respond within an established timeframe and develop corrective action plans to address the identified deficiencies. She confirmed that the district had completed the required corrective action process and that the previous year's findings were included in the Board members' meeting packets.

Mr. Key clarified that all findings identified during the previous school year's inspections had been corrected within the required timeframe. He explained that State safety requirements mandate that classroom doors remain locked and that designated safe areas within classrooms be properly identified. Even minor deficiencies, such as a fallen safety sign, are documented as findings and must be corrected. He emphasized that although the district could discuss the general nature of the findings, specific school locations and other confidential security information could not be disclosed publicly. He further explained that the district had strengthened its policies and procedures to address school safety concerns. He stated that employees are required to comply with classroom security protocols, including keeping classroom doors locked and refraining from propping doors open. He stated that deliberate violations of these safety requirements could result in disciplinary action, including written reprimands and possible termination. He also noted that school personnel receive annual reminders and training regarding safety expectations and compliance requirements. He reiterated that all deficiencies identified during the previous school year had been addressed and that, to his knowledge, no outstanding corrective actions remained.

Ms. Hannigon referenced information shared during the Board workshop regarding quarterly school safety submissions and the expectation that reports be presented to the Board before submission. She expressed concern that the Board should have an opportunity to review and discuss any deficiencies or findings identified through school safety inspections, as required by Statute. She questioned whether findings should be presented to the Board following each inspection rather than waiting until the annual or quarterly reporting process. She also requested clarification regarding whether State school safety inspections occur quarterly or are conducted without advance notice. Lieutenant Buckhalt explained that the Office of Safe Schools has statutory authority to conduct school safety inspections.

Ms. Hannigon reiterated that her primary concern was ensuring that the Board fulfills its statutory responsibilities by reviewing and discussing school safety findings and recommendations whenever they are identified. She emphasized that regardless of whether a deficiency is considered minor or significant, the Board should have an opportunity to review the findings, understand the corrective actions taken, and ensure compliance with State requirements. She stated that she wanted to ensure the Board would be provided with future inspection findings for appropriate review and discussion.

Following the clarification provided by Mr. Key, Attorney Minnis, and Lieutenant Buckhalt, Ms. Hannigon indicated that she no longer needed to pull Item 8a from the consent agenda. She then moved to approve consent agenda Items 6a through 9b.

Ms. Hannison made motion to approve consent agenda items 6a – 9b. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

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. Renewal of Capital Health Plan, Inc., World Class Schools of Leon County, Inc., and Titus Sports Academy, LLC

      Fund Source: N/A
      Amount: N/A

      ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

   b. Contractual Agreement Between the School Board of Gadsden County and Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare, Inc.

      Fund Source: General Funds
      Amount: $18,400.00 – Annually up to 700 Employees

      ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

   c. Unified School Improvement Grant (UNISIG) 2026 – 2027

      Fund Source: UniSIG
      Amount: $454,860.00

      ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. SCHOOL FACILITY/PROPERTY

   a. 2026 – 2027 Required FASST Report, 2025 – 2026 Office of Safe School's Inspection Reports, and District School Safety Specialist Beginning of the Year Inspection Report

      Fund Source: N/A
      Amount: N/A

      ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

9. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

   a. Approval of the 2026 – 2027 School Advisory Council (SAC) Membership Rosters

      Fund Source: N/A
      Amount: N/A

      ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

   b. Approval of the 2026 – 2027 School's Title I Parent and Family Engagement Plans (PFEP)

      Fund Source: N/A
      Amount: N/A

      ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

10. EDUCATIONAL ISSUE

   a. Sale of District Properties

      Fund Source: N/A
      Amount: N/A

      Mr. McMillan stated that Item 10a was concerning the proposed sale of district-owned property located on Telogia Creek Road in Greensboro, Florida. He explained that the Facilities Department was requesting that the Board review the offers received for the property and determine which proposal would be in the best interest of the district and the public. He presented the following offers received for the Telogia Creek Property:

- Larry Edwards – $44,000: Proposed purchasing the property to preserve it as a generational asset to be passed down to family members.
- Adam Walker – $80,100: Proposed purchasing the property for hunting purposes.
- Townsend Tarapani – $60,000: Proposed utilizing the property for agricultural and educational purposes, including providing learning opportunities for Gadsden County students.

Mr. McMillan also referenced the earlier presentation by Mr. Michael Brown, who spoke on behalf of the proposed agricultural and educational use of the property. He stated that Mr. Brown outlined plans to provide students with hands-on experiences involving farming, livestock, wildlife management, and land conservation.

Mr. Scott stated that, to his understanding, the Board was not required to accept the highest monetary offer when disposing of district-owned property. He explained that the Board could consider the proposed use of the property and the potential benefits to the community when making its decision. He expressed his opinion that Mr. Townsend Tarapani's proposal appeared to be in the best interest of the public because of its intended agricultural and educational purposes.

Attorney Minnis confirmed that the applicable Statute requires the Board to dispose of property in the best interest of the public. She explained that the Board, acting collectively, must determine which proposal best serves the public interest. She stated that therefore, the Board was not necessarily obligated to accept the highest offer.

Ms. Hannigon raised a question concerning the financial proceeds generated from the sale of district-owned properties. She explained that, with the district constructing a new school, she would like to explore whether funds received from property sales could be designated specifically for maintenance of the new school or for facility maintenance needs throughout the district. She asked whether any legal restrictions governed the use of proceeds from the sale of district property and whether those funds could be earmarked for specific maintenance or capital improvement purposes.

Mr. McMillan explained that he had previously researched the matter and contacted the Florida Future Farmers of America (FFA) Association. He stated that he spoke with the Association's Executive Director, who advised that the district could sell the property and direct the proceeds to the FFA Chapter at Gadsden County High School. He further expressed his preference that the proceeds be placed in an interest-bearing account, allowing the FFA Chapter to benefit from the interest earned while preserving the principal amount.

Attorney Minnis provided additional clarification regarding the legal requirements governing the proceeds from the sale. She explained that when property has been deeded or granted to an educational entity for a designated purpose, consideration must be given to the original intent and conditions associated with the conveyance. She noted that the Telogia Creek property had originally been deeded to the School Board for FFA-related purposes. She further explained that the applicable restrictions required the funds to be used for capital outlay purposes. She clarified that capital outlay projects are not necessarily limited to fixed capital outlay expenditures. She stated that based on the property's original designation for FFA purposes, she advised that it would be appropriate to direct the proceeds from the sale to the FFA Chapter at Gadsden County High School for eligible capital outlay projects.

Ms. Hannigon thanked Mr. McMillan and Attorney Minnis for their explanations. She stated that she had similar questions regarding the use of proceeds from other district-owned properties being considered for sale and would address those concerns when the respective items were presented. She indicated that she had no additional questions concerning Item 10a and would reserve her position until the Board considered the motion.

Mr. Frost, who arrived after the meeting began, explained that his late arrival was due to family emergencies. He shared that his mother had been released from the hospital that day and that his granddaughter had become ill at school, requiring emergency medical transportation. He emphasized the importance of placing family responsibilities first and thanked those present for their understanding. He stated that regarding Item 10a, he expressed his support for Mr. Townsend Tarapani's proposal, stating that it would be his preferred choice among the offers presented.

Mr. McMillan reiterated Attorney Minnis' clarification that the Board was not required to accept the highest offer but could select the proposal determined to be in the best interest of the public. She stated that after asking whether there were any additional questions or comments regarding Item 10a, Mr. McMillan requested a motion.

Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon made a motion to accept the offer submitted by Mr. Townsend Tarapani in the amount of $60,000 for the purchase of the Greensboro Telogia Creek property.

Mr. McMillan noted that although Mr. Tarapani had offered $60,000 for the property, the Board had not discussed the closing arrangements or determined which party would be responsible for the associated closing costs. He requested clarification regarding how those matters would be addressed.

Attorney Minnis explained that the responsibility for closing costs and other terms of the transaction would be negotiated and addressed in the formal sales contract. She further advised that the completed sales contract would be presented to the School Board for review and approval before the transaction could be finalized.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

The Gadsden County School Board approved the offer submitted by Mr. Townsend Tarapani in the amount of $60,000 for the purchase of the Greensboro Telogia Creek property. The Board's decision reflected consideration of the proposed agricultural and educational uses of the property and the anticipated benefits to Gadsden County students and the public. The terms and conditions of the sale, including responsibility for closing costs, will be addressed in a formal sales contract to be brought back before the Board for review and approval.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. Old Quincy School Property

Mr. McMillan stated that Item 10b was concerning the proposed sale of the Old Quincy School property located on King Street in Quincy, Florida. He informed the Board that an offer of $100,000 had recently been received for the property, either the previous day or the preceding Friday. He directed Board members to review the Letter of Intent submitted by the prospective purchaser. He identified an error in the document, noting that the offer was incorrectly addressed to the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners rather than the Gadsden County School Board, which he understood to be the property owner. He stated that the error would need to be corrected. He also expressed concern regarding the purchaser's proposed use of the property. He referenced language on the second page of the Letter of Intent indicating that the purchaser's long-term vision was to restore the property, where reasonably feasible, to its original purpose as an educational campus, potentially serving as a private educational facility for multiple groups. He stated that the proposal also acknowledged that some existing structures might be beyond reasonable repair, structurally compromised, or contain hazardous materials that could make restoration impractical or unsafe. He stated that any restoration would therefore depend on the condition, suitability, and economic feasibility of the property. He expressed reservations about selling district-owned property to an entity that might establish a private educational facility in direct competition with the Gadsden County School District.

Mr. Scott acknowledged Mr. McMillan's concerns and explained that, historically, the Board had considered whether prospective purchasers intended to use former school properties for purposes that might compete with the district. However, he noted that the educational landscape had changed significantly, with the continued growth of charter schools, private schools, academies, and educational facilities serving homeschool families. He questioned whether the Board could realistically prevent the establishment of competing educational institutions, particularly once property was transferred to a private owner, provided the proposed use complied with applicable laws and regulations. He emphasized that the Old Quincy School property had remained vacant and deteriorating for many years. He stated that during his 12 years on the Board, he had advocated for approximately nine years that the district take action to dispose of the property. He stated that the buildings had deteriorated to the point of becoming dangerous and represented an increasing liability to the district. He further explained that the district had previously advertised the property for sale and had even explored donating it to a nonprofit organization. He stated that despite those efforts, there had been little or no interest from prospective purchasers. He noted that the current $100,000 offer represented the first significant interest in the property of which he was aware. He also recognized that restoring or redeveloping the property would require substantial financial resources, possibly including private funding or grants. He concluded that the district should move forward with selling the property to eliminate the ongoing liability and financial burden associated with maintaining the deteriorating structures.

Ms. Johnson indicated that she had no additional comments and was prepared to proceed with the vote.

Ms. Hannigon acknowledged Mr. Scott's comments and agreed that the School Board could not necessarily prevent the continued growth of charter schools, private schools, and other educational alternatives. However, she expressed concern about the district actively participating in a transaction that could facilitate the establishment of an educational institution competing with Gadsden County public schools. She explained that although she generally supported disposing of surplus district properties and generating revenue for the school system, she was hesitant to approve the current proposal because of the purchaser's stated intentions. She presented two possible alternatives for the Board's consideration. First, she suggested extending the timeframe for receiving offers to determine whether other prospective purchasers might be interested in acquiring the property for purposes that would not directly

compete with the district. Second, she proposed exploring the possibility of donating the property to a qualified organization, provided legally enforceable restrictions could be included in the deed to limit the property's future use. She referenced the district's previous donation of Ward's Lot to the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners, during which certain deed restrictions were identified. She suggested that a similar approach might allow the district to transfer the Old Quincy School property while establishing conditions to prevent further deterioration and restrict uses that could negatively affect the school district. She requested guidance from Attorney Minnis regarding whether such restrictions would be legally permissible. She emphasized that her preference would be either to extend the opportunity for additional offers or consider a donation arrangement that would allow the Board to establish appropriate restrictions on the property's future use.

Mr. Frost expressed his support for selling the property. He referenced his recent attendance at a Florida A&M University parade, where he observed numerous academies and other educational organizations participating. He stated that the continued growth of alternative educational institutions was a reality that the district could not prevent. For that reason, he favored proceeding with the sale.

Mr. McMillan asked Dr. Sylvia Jackson to confirm whether the deadline for submitting offers on the property had been established as October 19, 2026. Dr. Jackson confirmed that October 19, 2026, was the established deadline for receiving offers. Mr. McMillan reiterated his concern about selling district property to an organization that might compete with Gadsden County public schools. He acknowledged that the property was in serious disrepair and needed to be sold. However, he stated that after reviewing the second page of the Letter of Intent, he had reservations about supporting the proposal because of the possibility that the property could become a private educational campus.

Ms. Hannigon raised two additional concerns regarding the proposed sale. First, she explained that she had reviewed the Gadsden County Property Appraiser's website and discovered a possible discrepancy in the ownership records. She stated that according to the information she reviewed, the Old Quincy School property on King Street was listed as belonging to the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners, while Ward's Lot, which had previously been donated to the County Commission, was still listed as belonging to the School Board. She questioned whether an error might have occurred when the property records were updated following the donation of Ward's Lot. She suggested that the discrepancy should be brought to the attention of the Property Appraiser's Office for clarification. Second, Ms. Hannigon expressed concern regarding the potential long-term financial consequences of selling the property to an entity that might establish a competing educational institution. She reminded the Board of previous discussions regarding student enrollment losses and the resulting reduction in funding received by the district. She questioned whether accepting a one-time payment of $100,000 could ultimately result in the district losing significantly more revenue if students transferred from Gadsden County public schools to a private educational facility established on the property. She emphasized that while the district needed additional financial resources, the Board should carefully consider the potential long-term impact of its decisions. She stated that she would be uncomfortable knowing that the School Board had directly contributed to establishing a facility that could draw students and funding away from the district. She concluded her remarks by stating that she would await the Board's vote.

Mr. McMillan directed the Board's attention to additional provisions contained in the prospective purchaser's Letter of Intent. He referenced Item 2, which outlined the earnest money deposit requirements. Under the proposal, the purchaser would provide an earnest money deposit of $5,000 within three days following execution of a mutually accepted purchase and sale agreement. He stated that the deposit would be held in escrow by Smith, Thompson, Shaw and Power, P.A., located at 3520 Thomasville Road, Fourth Floor, Tallahassee, Florida, and credited toward the purchase price at closing. He explained that the deposit would be refundable only if the purchaser terminated the agreement during the designated 10-day inspection period or if title defects could not be corrected. He also referenced Item 3, which addressed the condition of the property and inspection requirements. He stated that the proposal specified that the property would be purchased "as is," in its present condition. He stated that the purchaser would have 10 days following execution of the purchase and sale agreement to inspect the property and its facilities. He stated that during that period, the purchaser could terminate the agreement at its discretion. He stated that all inspection costs would be the responsibility of the purchaser. He emphasized that these provisions meant the proposed sale was not guaranteed to be completed, as the purchaser could elect not to proceed following the inspection. He wanted Board members to be aware of those conditions before making a decision.

Attorney Minnis reminded the Board that its responsibility was to determine the disposition of district-owned property in the best interest of the public. She explained that the Board had several options available, including accepting the current offer and allowing the transaction to proceed through the contractual process, considering whether additional offers might be received, or exploring the possibility of donating the property to a nonprofit

organization or another qualified entity. She further explained that if the Board elected to pursue a donation, it could establish a procedure for accepting and evaluating requests from interested organizations. She emphasized the importance of documenting the Board's considerations and establishing a clear public record demonstrating that its decision was made in the best interest of the public.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Steve Scott to proceed with the proposed sale of the Old Quincy School property. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost.

Ms. Hannigon expressed her opposition to the motion based on her previously stated concerns regarding the property's potential use as a private educational facility and the possible financial impact on the district. Mr. McMillan stated that, despite his concerns about the purchaser's proposed educational use, he believed it was in the best interest of the School Board to dispose of the property. He emphasized that the deteriorating condition of the buildings and the continuing liability associated with the property supported moving forward with the sale.

Following the Board's consideration of the sale, Ms. Hannigon asked how the proceeds from the transaction could legally be used by the school district. Attorney Minnis explained that proceeds generated from the sale of the property would be required to be used for capital outlay purposes. Mrs. Bruner provided additional clarification regarding eligible expenditures. She explained that the district could use the proceeds for expenditures that qualify under the same guidelines applied to the district's annual local capital outlay funding.
She shared examples of eligible expenditures discussed included:

- School bus driver salaries, where authorized.
- Materials and supplies for the Maintenance Department.
- School buses and maintenance vehicles.
- Facility repairs and improvements, including heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems.
- Roofing and other major facility improvement projects.
- District enterprise systems used to support classroom operations, including FOCUS.

Mrs. Bruner explained that these expenditures would be subject to applicable capital outlay funding requirements.

Ms. Hannigon stated that when the final purchase and sale agreement returned to the Board for consideration, she intended to recommend that the proceeds be specifically earmarked for the district's new school. She emphasized her preference that the funds be used to support the new school's facility needs rather than being absorbed into general district expenditures.

Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to proceed with the proposed sale of the Old Quincy School property for $100,000. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost, and carried with Mr. McMillan, Mr. Scott, and Mr. Frost voting “aye”. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Hannigon voted “nay”’

c. Mine Road Property

Mr. McMillan stated that Item 10c was concerning the district-owned property located on Mine Road in Midway, Florida. He acknowledged that Mr. Key had requested that the item be placed on the agenda and invited him to provide an explanation.

Mr. Key explained that the item had been placed on the agenda for discussion purposes. He informed the Board that no offers had been received for the property. Mr. McMillan requested confirmation that the property consisted of approximately 15 acres located in Midway, Florida. Mr. Key confirmed that the property consisted of 15 acres.

Ms. Hannigon requested permission to make a motion regarding the property. She made a motion that the Board extend the deadline for receiving purchase offers or leave the property available for offers without establishing a specific cutoff date. She explained that extending the opportunity for interested purchasers to submit offers could increase the likelihood of receiving proposals for the property.

Mr. McMillan acknowledged the motion and requested a second.

Mr. Charlie D. Frost seconded the motion for the Mine Road Property with the option of leaving the offer period open without a specific closing date. The motion carried unanimously.

d. Chattahoochee High School Property

Mr. McMillan stated that Item 10d was concerning the former Chattahoochee High School property currently held by Faith Apostolic Church. He explained that he had specifically requested that the item be placed on the agenda for Board discussion. He noted that no representative from Faith Apostolic Church was present at the meeting. He explained that the Gadsden County School Board held a mortgage secured by a promissory note associated with the property. He stated that although the church had experienced difficulties maintaining its payment schedule, he

believed that approximately 50 percent of the original obligation had been paid. He asked Mrs. Bruner to verify the amount paid toward the promissory note.

Mrs. Bruner stated that she did not have the most recent financial documentation immediately available but would review the records to verify the payment history and outstanding balance.

Mr. McMillan continued reviewing the documentation associated with the property. He referenced previous transactions in which the Board had held mortgages for purchasers of former district-owned properties, including religious institutions. He explained that the purpose of the discussion was to determine whether the Board should consider releasing Faith Apostolic Church from its remaining mortgage obligation, particularly in light of the payments already made and the circumstances surrounding the property.

Mr. Frost provided background information regarding the original sale of the property to Faith Apostolic Church. He explained that when the district began closing certain schools, the Board considered opportunities for churches and other community organizations to acquire former school properties for beneficial purposes. He stated that he recalled that Faith Apostolic Church originally intended to use the Chattahoochee High School property to establish a Bible college and other programs. He stated that unfortunately, the church's pastor was involved in a tragic accident that resulted in his death. He stated that following his passing, his wife and members of the congregation attempted to maintain the property and continue the church's plans. Mr. Frost acknowledged that the church had faced significant challenges but emphasized that its members had made considerable efforts to fulfill their responsibilities. He stated that he had spoken with the pastor earlier that day and invited her to attend the meeting. However, she was unable to attend because of other pressing obligations. He expressed his personal reluctance to take action that could create additional hardship for a church, particularly considering the district's longstanding relationships with local religious institutions. He noted that churches have frequently supported the school district through prayer, community involvement, and other activities. He stated that, given the church's circumstances and the substantial amount already paid toward the property, he favored allowing Faith Apostolic Church to retain the property and relieving the organization of its remaining mortgage obligation.

Mr. Scott expressed agreement with Mr. Frost. He noted that Faith Apostolic Church had possessed the property for many years and indicated his support for allowing the church to retain ownership.

Ms. Johnson stated that she also wanted Faith Apostolic Church to retain the property.

Ms. Hannigon requested clarification regarding whether Ms. Johnson supported allowing the church to keep the property while continuing to make payments or whether she supported forgiving the remaining mortgage balance.

Ms. Johnson clarified that she favored allowing the church to retain the property while continuing to fulfill its financial obligation. She stated that the district should accept the remaining payments owed under the promissory note. She also expressed concern about the School Board's historical practice of financing property transactions through mortgages. She emphasized that the district is an educational institution rather than a mortgage lending company and stated that the Board should avoid entering into similar arrangements in the future. She acknowledged that the existing arrangement had already been established but believed the district should learn from the experience.

Mrs. Bruner provided additional information regarding the original promissory note and the church's payment history. She reported that the original promissory note was for $500,000, with an interest rate of one percent. She stated that based on the financial information available during the meeting, she indicated that the church appeared to have paid approximately half of its obligation, depending on whether interest was included in the calculation. Ms. Hannigon requested the specific dollar amount associated with the outstanding balance. Mrs. Bruner explained that the church had made payments over time, although not consistently every month. She referenced the payment history through October 2025 and additional payments made afterward. Based on her preliminary review, she estimated that the church was close to the 50-percent payment threshold, although the exact amount remained subject to verification. Ms. Hannigon stated that she was also reviewing the property's assessed value. After examining the available information, she indicated that she had no additional comments at that time.

Ms. Johnson asked whether Faith Apostolic Church maintained insurance coverage on the property. Attorney Minnis clarified that the School Board no longer owned the property but held the mortgage associated with the promissory note. Mrs. Bruner explained that the church was responsible for maintaining its own insurance coverage. She further stated that the district did not require the church to provide regular insurance documentation to the School Board.

Mr. McMillan asked whether Board members had any additional questions or comments regarding Item 10d. He stated that hearing no further discussion, he requested a motion.

Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion that the Gadsden County School Board release Faith Apostolic Church from its remaining mortgage obligation associated with the former Chattahoochee High School property and authorize satisfaction of the mortgage. Mr. Steve Scott seconded the motion, and carried with Mr. McMillan, Mr. Scott and Mr. Frost voting “aye”. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Hannigon voted “nay”.

11. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Moved to the beginning of the agenda.

12. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key provided the Board with updates from Academic Services and Support Services, highlighting activities, accomplishments, and developments that had taken place since the previous School Board meeting. He informed Board members that additional academic performance data and supporting information were included on the reverse side of the Academic Services report provided in their meeting packets. He also provided clarification regarding the district's school safety compliance reports and recommendations. He explained that after reviewing the reports, he identified one primary recommendation involving the need for additional funding from the State and School Board to increase the number of Safe School Officers assigned to district campuses. He acknowledged that the district currently lacks the financial resources necessary to employ additional officers. However, he emphasized that the district is meeting the existing State requirement of having at least one Safe School Officer assigned to each school. He noted that West Gadsden currently has two Safe School Officers assigned to its campus. He explained that additional officers would provide greater flexibility and ensure adequate coverage when assigned personnel are absent or otherwise unavailable. As an alternative to hiring additional officers, the Superintendent discussed the possibility of implementing a program similar to those used in other school districts, particularly smaller districts in the surrounding area. He stated that under this approach, selected district employees who do not serve in classroom instructional positions could receive the required training and certification to serve as school guardians. He explained that these individuals could provide additional campus security while continuing to serve in their regular district positions. He stated that however, implementing such a program would require the School Board to adopt or amend its existing policies. He clarified that the district's current policy permits only uniformed guardians to serve in that capacity. He stated that expanding the program to include non-uniformed guardians would therefore require Board consideration and approval. He emphasized that the purpose of the recommendation was to strengthen school safety by increasing the number of trained individuals available to respond to emergencies on district campuses.

Mr. Key reported that, following his review of the previous school year's Office of Safe Schools inspection reports, only one school had been identified with a compliance deficiency. He confirmed that the issue was corrected by replacing the lock and securing the gate. He emphasized that this was the only noncompliance finding identified during that particular State inspection review and that all other schools were found to be in compliance. He also discussed inspections conducted during the current school year by the District School Safety Specialist. He reported that two schools were initially identified with compliance deficiencies, primarily involving required documentation that was missing or incomplete. He explained that the deficiencies were addressed within the following days and that follow-up inspections were conducted to verify corrective action. He confirmed that the identified issues had been resolved and that the schools were subsequently found to be in compliance. He reiterated that the primary outstanding recommendation involved obtaining additional funding to increase the number of Safe School Officers available throughout the district.

Mr. McMillan asked the Superintendent whether district employees selected to serve as additional school guardians would be required to carry firearms. Mr. Key confirmed that individuals serving in the proposed guardian capacity would be armed. He explained that they would be required to successfully complete the appropriate School Guardian training before being authorized to serve in that role. He reiterated that implementation of the proposed expansion would require changes to the district's existing School Board policy.

Mr. Key reminded Board members that the Gadsden County High School Homecoming Parade was scheduled for Friday (October 30). He encouraged Board members to participate and advised that the parade would begin at 4:00 P.M. He stated that participants were asked to arrive before the scheduled starting time. He stated that he planned to walk in the parade with district representatives. He also provided an update on the Gadsden County High School football team's performance and playoff prospects. He expressed confidence that the team was positioned to qualify for the State playoffs based on its current ranking and performance. He noted that the team's recent victory over Rutherford had strengthened its playoff prospects and that the upcoming game against Blountstown would be another important opportunity. He expressed optimism that the team would secure a victory against Blountstown. He commended the players and coaching staff for the significant progress made throughout the season. He explained that the team was relatively young and had shown tremendous improvement since the beginning of the year. He stated that the team's

overall performance had developed considerably, describing the current team as significantly stronger than it had been earlier in the season. However, he acknowledged that improvements were still needed on defense, particularly in reducing the number of points allowed to opposing teams. He expressed confidence that, with appropriate defensive adjustments, the team could be competitive for a district championship. He concluded by wishing the team continued success as it prepared for the upcoming game and potential playoff competition.

Mr. Key requested that the Board consider adjusting its regular meeting schedule for November and December because of the upcoming holidays. He recommended moving the November Regular School Board Meeting from its customary fourth Tuesday to Tuesday, November 17, 2026, at 6:00 P.M**.** He also requested that the Board schedule its annual Organizational Meeting for Tuesday, November 17, 2026, at 5:30 P.M., immediately before the Regular Board Meeting. Additionally, Mr. Key recommended rescheduling the December Regular School Board Meeting to Tuesday, December 15, 2026, rather than holding it during the customary fourth week of the month. He explained that these adjustments would allow the Board to conduct its required business while avoiding scheduling conflicts associated with the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.

Mr. McMillan requested a motion to approve the proposed changes to the November and December School Board meeting schedules.

Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon made a motion to approve the revised meeting dates. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott, and carried unanimously.

13. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Scott requested to be the last Board member to offer comments.

Ms. Johnson stated that she had no comments at that time.

Ms. Hannigon stated that she would keep her comments brief in consideration of Mr. Scott's final meeting. She identified several matters she would like the Board and Superintendent to address at a future meeting. She requested an update from the Superintendent regarding the consolidation of students from James A. Shanks Middle School into West Gadsden Middle School and Havana Magnet School. She expressed interest in learning how the transition was progressing and whether any challenges or concerns had developed since the consolidation. However, she indicated that the discussion could be postponed until the following month's meeting.

Ms. Hannigon also requested that the Board revisit its previous practice of having a student representative serve as a liaison to the School Board. She recalled that before her tenure, a student had appeared before the Board to discuss the student liaison position. She expressed her desire to reinstate the practice as early as the following month, allowing a student representative to participate in the Board meeting process and provide a student perspective on educational matters. She noted that the Board had previously discussed a selection process and believed the representative might be identified through the Student Government Association (SGA), possibly serving as its president. Dr. Sylvia Jackson clarified that no student representative had been selected and that interested students would be required to complete an application process. Ms. Hannigon reiterated her interest in moving forward with the student liaison initiative and requested that the matter be revisited at the next Board meeting.

Ms. Hannigon returned to a concern she had raised during the previous Board meeting regarding the continued loss of students from the Gadsden County School District. She explained that the district needed to explore strategies to reduce student withdrawals and improve student retention. She recalled previously suggesting that the district consider obtaining outside assistance to study the reasons families were choosing to withdraw their children from Gadsden County schools. She also acknowledged the Superintendent's earlier comments regarding similar efforts undertaken by other school districts. As an additional approach, Ms. Hannigon proposed exploring the possibility of establishing a Withdrawal Prevention Specialist position or assigning an existing staff member to assist families before they complete the student withdrawal process. She explained that her suggestion was based on two recent situations involving parents whose decisions resulted in three students withdrawing from the district. After learning the reasons behind those decisions, Ms. Hannigon believed some of the concerns might have been resolved if district personnel had intervened before the withdrawals were finalized. She suggested that a designated employee could meet with parents, identify concerns, provide assistance, and work toward resolving issues that might otherwise lead families to leave the district. Ms. Hannigon emphasized that the goal would not be to interfere with parents' right to choose the educational setting they believe is best for their children. She stated rather, the purpose would be to provide families with an opportunity to address concerns and consider remaining in the district. She encouraged the Board to take a more proactive approach to student retention rather than accepting enrollment losses without exploring possible solutions. Ms. Hannigon concluded by stating that these matters could be placed on the agenda for further discussion at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Frost expressed concern regarding the district's declining student enrollment and the possibility of hiring an outside consultant to study the issue. He referenced a similar situation involving the Leon County School District, where the Superintendent had pursued outside assistance to address enrollment concerns. He stated that although the proposal initially received support, public opinion appeared to change after the process was completed. He expressed reservations about pursuing a similar approach in Gadsden County without carefully considering the potential consequences. He also noted that declining enrollment was not unique to Gadsden County, as Leon County was experiencing student losses as well.

Mr. Frost informed the Board that he would need to leave the meeting early to check on his mother. Before departing, he took the opportunity to express his appreciation for Board Member Steve Scott. He thanked Mr. Scott for his years of dedicated service and reflected on their working relationship. He commended Mr. Scott for his calm demeanor, professionalism, and ability to maintain a respectful tone during Board discussions, even when disagreements occurred. He described Mr. Scott as a knowledgeable and thoughtful individual who consistently approached matters with patience and understanding. He also recognized Mr. Scott's lasting impact as an educator, noting the number of former students who continued to approach him and express appreciation for his influence on their lives. He stated that such recognition demonstrated the positive impression Mr. Scott had made throughout his teaching career. He particularly praised Mr. Scott's efforts to have the football field dedicated in honor of Coach Jackson. He acknowledged that Mr. Scott had remained committed to the effort despite opposition and challenges, ultimately helping preserve the legacy of a coach with whom he had previously worked. He expressed gratitude for Mr. Scott's leadership, friendship, and contributions to the Gadsden County School District.

Mr. Frost also thanked the Board members who supported the decision to release Faith Apostolic Church from its remaining mortgage obligation on the former Chattahoochee High School property. He acknowledged that some Board members had voted against the motion and respected their right to hold a different opinion. However, he reiterated his personal belief in supporting religious institutions and expressed appreciation that the Board had chosen not to pursue further collection of the remaining mortgage balance. He referenced the important role churches play in supporting the school district and the broader community. He also reflected on the power of prayer and community unity, recalling the national response when a professional football player suffered a serious injury during an NFL game. He concluded by expressing his belief that acts of kindness and generosity often have a lasting positive impact. He thanked the Board and concluded his remarks before departing.

Mr. Frost's remarks, Ms. Hannigon requested an opportunity to clarify her earlier vote regarding Faith Apostolic Church. She stated that she wanted the official record to reflect that her opposition to the motion was not intended as opposition to the church itself. Ms. Hannigon clarified that her vote concerned the Board's decision to forgive the remaining mortgage obligation rather than requiring the continuation of payments under the existing agreement. She emphasized that her position should not be interpreted as opposition to Faith Apostolic Church retaining the property. She stated that her comments were offered to ensure that the intent of her vote was accurately reflected in the meeting record.

Mr. Steve Scott expressed his sincere appreciation to the Superintendent, School Board members, administrators, teachers, principals, district employees, and community members with whom he had worked throughout his career. As he concluded his 12 years of service on the Gadsden County School Board, Mr. Scott reflected on his accomplishments as an educator and public servant. He humorously remarked that individuals are generally permitted to speak proudly about their accomplishments on two occasions: when running for public office and when retiring.

Mr. Scott expressed gratitude for the opportunities provided to him during his 33 years of service with the Gadsden County School District. He recalled several professional accomplishments, including being recognized as a school-level Teacher of the Year on four occasions and receiving district-level Teacher of the Year recognition. He also discussed his work as a Florida Department of Education competency and peer reviewer, which allowed him to evaluate and support other educators. Additionally, he reflected on his involvement in social studies education and other professional opportunities that contributed to his growth and success. He stated that he was grateful for the experiences and achievements made possible through his years of service in Gadsden County.

Mr. Scott reflected on several important accomplishments achieved during his 12 years as a School Board member. He acknowledged improvements in school performance, including efforts that helped raise the district's high school grade from an “F” to a “C”. He also recognized the Board's work in addressing surplus district properties and securing funding for the construction of a new K–8 school. He explained that obtaining funding for the new school had required years of persistence and advocacy with members of the Florida Legislature. He recalled repeatedly hearing concerns about declining enrollment, the number of schools operating in the district, and the district's academic performance. Despite those challenges, he continued advocating for improved educational facilities for Gadsden County students. He expressed pride that the district had ultimately secured funding for the new school. He also acknowledged the collective efforts of Board members and district leadership in making the project possible. Although he expressed disappointment

that his contributions to the new school project might not be formally recognized, he remained proud of the accomplishment and its importance to the community.

Mr. Scott expressed concern that, following his departure, the School Board would no longer include a member with direct classroom teaching experience. He emphasized that educators bring valuable firsthand knowledge of the challenges and responsibilities associated with operating schools. He explained that individuals who have worked directly with students, teachers, and school administrators often have a deeper understanding of the daily realities of public education. He encouraged Board members to spend time in schools and consider serving as substitute teachers to gain additional insight into classroom operations. He shared an experience involving a former Superintendent who had visited a high school and taught a class. He noted that he had also spent time teaching at the school and emphasized the importance of remaining connected to the classroom environment. He encouraged Board members to continue learning about the challenges faced by teachers, administrators, and students through direct involvement in school activities.

Mr. Scott emphasized the importance of public perception and the responsibility of School Board members to communicate carefully and thoughtfully. He referenced a principle he had frequently shared throughout his career: "Perception is reality." He explained that the public's perception of the school district can strongly influence community confidence, even when those perceptions do not fully reflect actual conditions. He reminded Board members that their comments and actions during public meetings are closely observed by parents, employees, students, and community members. He encouraged the Board to remain mindful of how its discussions might affect public confidence in the district. He also expressed concern that too much of the Board's public discussion focused on financial challenges rather than educational accomplishments. He acknowledged that the district faced ongoing financial pressures and that responsible financial management was necessary. However, he emphasized that the primary mission of the School Board is to educate students. He encouraged Board members to balance discussions about financial difficulties with recognition of student achievement, teacher accomplishments, and positive developments throughout the district. He stated that while constructive criticism and recommendations for improvement are important, they should be accompanied by acknowledgment of the good work taking place in Gadsden County schools.

Mr. Scott also addressed the district's concerns regarding students transferring to private schools, charter schools, and neighboring school districts. He acknowledged that alternative educational opportunities were continuing to expand and stated that the School Board would not be able to prevent that growth. He explained that families make educational decisions for a variety of reasons, including academic programs, athletics, religious education, family circumstances, and personal preferences. As an example, he referenced the Superintendent's previous decision to enroll his son at Godby High School for athletic opportunities. He also recalled a former School Board member who enrolled his children in a private school because he wanted them to receive a religious education. He emphasized that families often make school choices based on what they believe will best meet their children's individual needs. He shared an experience from earlier in his School Board tenure involving a parent who requested permission for a child to transfer to Leon County schools. He stated that the parent worked in Leon County, and two other children in the family were already attending schools there. He stated at that time, student transfers between districts required approval, and the Board initially denied the request. He stated that he recalled the matter was eventually resolved through communication between district Superintendents. He used the example to illustrate the importance of considering individual family circumstances when making decisions regarding student enrollment. He encouraged the Board to focus on improving the educational experiences offered within Gadsden County schools while recognizing that parents have different reasons for selecting educational opportunities for their children. He reiterated the importance of maintaining public confidence, recognizing successful practices, and ensuring that student achievement remains the district's highest priority.

Mr. Scott concluded his farewell remarks by thanking his fellow Board members, district employees, and the community for their support throughout his career. He expressed special appreciation to his family for attending the meeting and supporting him during both his retirement from teaching and his departure from the School Board. He reflected on the many experiences and relationships developed throughout his years of service and humorously remarked that he could have written a book about them. He thanked everyone for allowing him the opportunity to serve the students and families of Gadsden County.

Mr. McMillan offered a personal tribute to Mr. Scott. He stated that drawing upon his experience as a sailor, he shared a traditional farewell expression used when someone retires: "Fair winds and following seas." Mr. McMillan explained that the expression represents a sincere wish for success, peace, and favorable circumstances in the next chapter of life. He thanked Mr. Scott for his friendship, guidance, and dedicated service to the Gadsden County School Board. He concluded by wishing Mr. Scott continued happiness and success in retirement.

Mr. McMillan reminded Board members of his previous challenge to contribute financial support toward the district's Correctional Officer Certification Program. He referenced a fundraising goal of $1,800 to assist students enrolled in the program. He announced that the district anticipated receiving a contribution from the Morris A. Young Foundation at the following month's meeting. He explained that the funding would help support nine students currently enrolled in the program who were expected to graduate with certifications as correctional officers. He also noted that additional students had expressed interest in participating in future classes. He encouraged Board members and the Superintendent to continue supporting the Foundation so that financial resources would remain available to assist students pursuing correctional officer certification. He emphasized the importance of providing students with opportunities to obtain career credentials and prepare for employment following graduation.

Mr. Key informed Board members that the Gadsden Education Foundation was another organization supporting educational opportunities and stated that he personally contributed to the Foundation. He then expressed his appreciation to Mr. Scott for his years of service and offered clarification regarding an earlier reference to his son's enrollment at Godby High School. He explained that when his son, Jayden, attended Godby High School, he was serving as Principal at Florida A&M University Developmental Research School (FAMU DRS) and was not employed by the Gadsden County School District. He further clarified that when he returned to employment with the Gadsden County School District, his children returned to the district as well. He concluded by again thanking Mr. Scott for his dedication and contributions to public education. Mr. McMillan thanked Mr. Key and concluded his comments.

14. The meeting adjourned at 7:58 P.M.