

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

February 25, 2025

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 6:02 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Reverend Nathaniel Trumpet, Pastor of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Key recognized the City of Chattahoochee for the work they have done with the old Southside School on Lincoln Drive. He stated that the outside of the building looks wonderful.

Mr. McMillan stated that years ago the Board donated the Old Southside Elementary School to the City of Chattahoochee. He stated that the work they have done is remarkable, there are spaces to host events and space for our senior citizens.

Ms. Johnson announced that the Special Olympics Team would be going to Chiles High School this Saturday for basketball and a couple of other events.

Ms. Hannigon stated that she heard the pastor mention about what happened this past Thursday at the high school, but on a much better note she wanted to recognize the staff and students at Carter Parramore Academy for an outstanding Black History Program. She stated that in the midst of all the negativity there was some positive things happening.

Mr. McMillan stated that the Black History Program at Carter Parramore Academy was awesome. He stated that we have good children in Gadsden County. He stated that we always hear about the 1% negativity, but we need to focus on the positive things our children are doing. He stated that the students at Carter Parramore Academy spoke were knowledgeable and very well about Black History.

5. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Mrs. Karema Dudley, former Board member, addressed the Board to request that all School Board meetings are transparent. She stated that she would like the meetings to be available to the public other than the district's Facebook page. She stated that some people do not have Facebook and use other social media platforms.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mr. Key stated that on February 20th, Mr. Jamaal Holt officially requested a hearing before the Board. He requested that Mr. Holt's name be removed from agenda item #7a - Personnel.

Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to approve agenda item #7a – Personnel with the exception of employee Holt being removed from the personnel list. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

Mr. McMillan entertained a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda. The motion was made by Mr. Steve Scott, seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

6. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- a. January 27, 2025, 4:00 p.m. – School Board Workshop
- b. January 28, 2025, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Financial Workshop
- c. January 28, 2025, 6:00 p.m. - Regular School Board Meeting

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

7. PERSONNEL MATTERS (resignations, retirements, recommendations, leaves of absence, terminations of services, volunteers, and job descriptions)

- a. Personnel 2024– 2025

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. AGREEMENTS/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

- a. Purchase of Vendor Services to provide Disaster Recovery services in the form of off-site data backup and recovery and AS400 document

Fund Source: General Fund

Amount: \$45,456.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Purchase of School Buses

Fund Source: General Fund

Amount: \$302,424.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- d. Copier Leases – CopyFax

Fund Source: General Funds, Yearly Lease Amount

Amount: \$22,600.92

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

9. STUDENT MATTERS

- a. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #054-2425-0211

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #069-2425-0051

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

10. CONSIDERATION, PROPOSAL, AND/OR ADOPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND RELATED MATTERS

- a. Request to Post Notice of Intent to Amend/Adopt Board Policy

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Items preceded by an (*) asterisk were removed from the consent agenda at the beginning of the meeting and acted upon during the discussion portion of the agenda.

*8. AGREEMENTS/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

c. Routing Software for Buses

Fund Source: General Fund School Start Time Grant

Amount: \$92,454.00

Mr. McMillan stated that the math did not add up for the routing software. He stated that when he added the amount came up to \$91,554. He stated that a correction needed to be made on item #8c. He stated that he spoke with the Superintendent regarding the routing software program. He stated that the Superintendent informed him that we must be very careful about where students are dropped off, because the routing software does not allow a student to be dropped off multiple places.

Following discussion, Mr. Leroy McMillan made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #8c. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

*9. STUDENT MATTERS

c. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #070-2425-0211

The mother of student #070-2425-0211 addressed the Board to request a hearing.

Following discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to defer action on agenda item #9c. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommends approval.

11. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key stated that the Board received updates on the different departments and a newsletter from academic services. He stated that the Board will received updates on a monthly basis from support services and academic services.

12. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Scott stated that he wanted to know what the district was doing in regards to the students fighting last week. He wanted to know how things were being handled. He wanted to know what more could be done. He stated that some students are standing around recording the fights. Mr. Key stated that an investigation has been started at the school level. He stated that reports have to be submitted to his office. He stated that every student that played a part in the fight would be disciplined. He stated that staff still have to speak with the parents and students. He stated that the people are not talking. He stated that these are some of the things that are happening in the community. He stated that charges have been filed on some of the students. He stated that the students have to be identified to get them off campus.

Mr. McMillan stated that he was guilty of having a soft heart. He stated that when the students come before the Board they need to be sent home. He stated that cell phones play a major role in students planning fights.

Mrs. Karema Dudley addressed the Board and stated that we have to have more respect for our community. She stated that we have to start holding parents and students accountable. She stated that they are painting a narrative that we have a poor school district and that is not the case. She stated that it is very disheartening that we are doing this to ourselves. She stated that we are contacting the news and putting the negativity out there, but when positive things happen, the news does not show up. She stated that we have to figure out something about the cell phones.

Ms. Johnson stated that she would like to have a board meeting and invite community members to discuss a plan and work together. Officer Buckhault stated that the community needed to be more involved. She stated that we all needed to work together and be on one accord. She stated that according to the law, the district receive daily updates from the local police department. Mr. Key stated that he would contact the sheriff's office to receive updates from them as well.

Ms. Johnson inquired about the number of high school seniors that are graduation ready. Mr. Key stated that the number is well above and much better than it has been in the last three years. He stated that in the student's junior year there were 50% of the students graduation ready. He stated that he would provide the information to the Board.

Ms. Johnson inquired about the projections for the 2024 – 2025 school grades for Chattahoochee Elementary School, West Gadsden Middle School and James A. Shanks Middle School based on their PM2 data. Mr. Key stated that he would provide that information to the Board. Ms. Johnson requested a presentation on the progress Marzano data from all the schools by grade levels for the next workshop. Mr. Key stated that the district has that information. Mrs. McGriff stated that the information was shared with the Board last month in a newsletter. Mr. Johnson stated that with school ending in the next three months, are there any plans for summer remediation. Mr. Key stated that Mrs. McGriff is already acting upon that. He stated that the only school that will be closed this summer would be James A. Shanks Middle School due to construction of the new K-8 school. He stated that staff is currently working on summer remediation plans at each location. Mrs. McGriff stated that the next planning meeting would be this Friday (February 28th).

Ms. Hannigon stated that at the last meeting she made mention of making some movement on the education foundation. She stated that the school district has many schools. She stated that there are many happenings. She wanted to know if the district had only one person managing everything that goes on in the district. She stated that things that are going on in the district needed to be posted, so she can participate and know what is going on. Mr. Key stated that the best approach is getting the information from the schools, but what the district can try to do is get the Public Information Officer to create a google calendar. He stated that he would make sure the Board is tagged in on all of calendar of events. Ms. Hannigon stated that she know that in open Board meetings, the Board cannot discuss collective bargaining issues; however, we need to talk about the TISA funds. She stated that as a Board steps needed to be taken. She stated that the Board is receiving negative feedback. She stated that she does not know where the district is in the bargaining process. She asked what the Board could do, and what steps needed to be taken so the teachers could receive the TISA funds. Mr. Key stated that he actually talked with the attorney before the meeting. He stated that he was going to ask for an executive session to discuss collective bargaining issues. Ms. Hannigon stated that there are some requests regarding sitting down and having some conversations with community leaders. She stated that in her notes, she requested a Board workshop to discuss the state of the schools. She inquired about a Board retreat, given that we only meet once a month. She stated that the Board needed to carve out more time and discuss some solutions. She stated that the Board needed to schedule more meetings because there is a lot our plate. Mr. McMillan agreed with Ms. Hannigon to have another workshop. Ms. Hannigon stated that there was a workshop yesterday (February 24th) to discuss the Quincy Main Street request. She stated that she does not want to be the Board member that does not take action. She stated she would make the request again that the Board schedule another workshop and give them directions. Mr. McMillan stated that the reason he cancelled the workshop with Quincy Main Street was that the offices of ESOL, Head Start, and the Band room are still located at the old Quincy High School Building. He stated that the Band room is in horrible condition. He stated that the Board could not move forward with the request from Quincy Main Street at this time. He stated that the Board has to come together to discuss where to house ESOL and Head Start staff. He stated that he would love to work this out with Quincy Main Street. Ms. Hannigon stated that this Friday, February 28th the teacher of the month recognition would take place in partnership with Direct Auto Exchange and the Ivy Shop. She stated that each teacher would receive a \$250 gift card, flowers and a trophy. She stated that they would be going to two schools for the month of January and February.

13. The meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

The Board convened in an executive session at 7:12 p.m. to discuss collective bargaining issues; and adjourned at 7:36 p.m.