

## SCHOOL BOARD WORKSHOP

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

August 31, 2021

4:30 P.M.

The workshop was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Leroy McMillan, Chairman; Mr. Steve Scott; Mrs. Karema D. Dudley; Ms. Cathy S. Johnson; 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 workshop was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Leroy McMillan, at 4:30 p.m.

2. Financial Information

Mr. Mays, Interim Chief Financial Officer, stated that the district was in the process of closing out fiscal year 2020 – 2021. He stated that the final budget will be presented to the Board next Tuesday (September 7<sup>th</sup>). He stated that the district is working to ensure that positions are aligned with salaries. He stated that the district will be finding ways to increase salaries for teachers and non-instructional employees. He stated that the district is working strategically with federal funds.

In response to Mr. McMillan's clarification of salary increases for all employees or teachers, Mr. Key stated that salary increases for all employees but is a priority for teachers.

Mr. Mays stated that salary increases and academics help to retract and retain teachers. He stated that the district is faced with a lot of challenges, but will overcome. He stated that academics is a top priority to make sure students receive the best education possible.

Mr. Frost asked if ESSER funds could be used for salaries. He stated that he wants to make sure the district stays in line with the law.

Mr. Key stated that ESSER is interpreted differently between federal and state. He stated that he will make sure the district is in line with DOE and Federal guidelines about using ESSER monies. He asked Mr. Mays when the final budget would be available for the Board's review.

Mr. Mays stated that the final budget will be emailed to Board members on Saturday (September 4<sup>th</sup>) for review. He stated that the budget is more strategic this year.

Ms. Johnson requested an expense report on monies spent with the CARES Act funding. She stated that she wanted to know what the funds were used for, and to make sure the district was following federal guidelines for use of the CARES Act funds.

Mr. Mays stated that the CARES Act funds were used in the classrooms for sanitation/cleaning. He stated that he will provide an expense report to show what monies were used from the CARES Act fund.

### 3. Facilities Update

Mr. Hunter stated that Stewart Street Elementary School AC units are still struggling to keep rooms and buildings cool because of the duct work. He stated that he is waiting on a lot of materials for door projects. He stated that the work will be scheduled when materials arrive. He stated that the maintenance department is challenged with manpower. He stated that a lot of the roof leaks have been repaired. He stated that the HVAC repair work is moving smoothly. He stated that at some point all of the HVAC units will need repair work.

In response to Mr. Scott's concern regarding whether all the AC units at James A. Shanks Middle School have been worked on, Mr. Hunter stated that the AC units at Shanks are the older units and could cause leaks or condensation. He asked Mr. Scott to let him know when there is an issue. He stated that he has been checking into having the coils steam cleaned, which is very expensive.

In response to Mrs. Dudley's question about what it would cost to repair the HVAC system at Stewart Street Elementary School, and what can be done now to keep students and staff comfortable; Mr. Hunter stated that the Board has to decide what to do with the site in the future. He stated if the buildings are used for office space then individual AC units can be used. He stated that 2 or 3 compressors are on hand at all times for Stewart Street Elementary School and when one stops working it is replaced. He stated that the funds are not available for a complete update on the system.

In response to Mr. Key's question whether the duct work could be replaced, Mr. Hunter stated yes, the duct work could be replaced but is costly.

In response to Ms. Johnson's question regarding the AC unit at Havana Magnet School not working, Mr. Hunter stated that he was not aware of the issue but he will check on it.

Mr. Key asked Mr. Hunter to check the AC unit in the cafeteria at Havana Magnet School because it is not comfortable in there. He stated that the district may be able to use ESSER funds to help repair some of the AC units.

Mrs. Dudley stated that in the future she would like for the district to look at job descriptions for custodians in lieu of contracting for grounds work.

Mr. Key stated that some staff have requested lawn mowers on campus to help with lawn maintenance. He stated that custodians have to do a better job of keeping schools clean.

Mr. Frost stated that the district has the best power equipment in the State of Florida. He stated that the power equipment is available.

In response to Mr. McMillan's request for an update on the new school, Mr. Hunter stated that the district is on time with the timeline for a new school. He stated that he will invite the Department of Education to come and share information on the use of special facilities funds.

Mr. McMillan requested an update on the new school at every Board meeting.

Mr. Key stated the new school application has to be submitted by February 1<sup>st</sup>. He stated that the meeting with DOE is part of the process to get to the February date.

### 4. Educational Items by the Superintendent

Mr. Key stated that the August report of positive COVID-19 cases and protocol to abide by will be discussed in more detail at the Regular School Board Meeting. He stated that the district's warm body student count was 4,100. He stated that the union representatives provided a list of suggested changes to be included in the Code of Student Conduct. He stated that many of the changes have already been addressed. He stated that conversations are taking place.

5. School Board Requests and Concerns

Ms. Johnson stated that the district need to stay within a safe number of students in the classroom. She stated that she was told some classrooms have approximately 30 students.

Mr. Key stated that he was not aware of any classroom having 30 students. He stated that most classrooms have 15 or less, but no more than 22. He stated that he will ask teachers to provide a seating chart.

Mrs. Dudley stated that she wanted to ensure that community and parents know the protocol for COVID-19 cases. She stated that she want to ensure that parents receive information when there is a positive case at a school. She stated that the district need to be more transparent and communicate with parents.

Mr. Key stated that the district is putting information on the website. He stated that specific classrooms cannot be identified. He stated that parents can receive information on positive COVID cases identified on a school campus and ensure them that safety measures are in place.

Dr. Sylvia Jackson stated that the district's website lists the school and the number of students or employees with positive COVID cases.

Mr. McMillan stated that as a whole everyone must make an effort to get parents and citizens of Gadsden county on our side. He stated that the district has to win the trust of the parents and citizens. He stated that the parents need to be told what they need to know.

6. The workshop adjourned at 5:34 p.m.