

## REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

May 25, 2021

6:00 P.M.

The meeting 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 meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Leroy McMillan, at 6:00 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Chaplain Jimmy Salters with the Gadsden County Sheriff's Department.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. RECOGNITIONS

Ms. Johnson thanked the parents for attending the Board meeting.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mr. Key added to the agenda item #6c – Revised Organizational Chart 2021 – 2022, item #9f – Purchase Order Request for Dale Earnhardt, Jr., Tallahassee, and to pull item #9c – Purchase Order Request for Coggin Chev at the Avenue.

Mr. McMillan entertained a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda. The motion was made by Mr. Charlie D. Frost, seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

5. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- a. April 27, 2021, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Workshop
- b. April 27, 2021, 6:00 p.m. – Regular School Board Meeting
- c. April 28, 2021, 9:00 a.m. – School Board Retreat
- d. May 11, 2021, 5:00 p.m. – Special School Board Meeting

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. AGREEMENT/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

- a. Board Approval for Amendments to the Contractual Agreement with Rostan Solutions, LLC for Professional Services Dealing with FEMA

Fund Source: Eligible for FEMA Reimbursement of 75% of Cost and Florida Division of Emergency of Management of 12 ½ % of Cost; Initial cash flow is provided by Insurance Recovery Funds

Amount: Hourly payments based on utilization of services – Status of FEMA Projects – in appeals process

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- c. EdforTech Gadsden Integrative STEM PD

Fund Source: Title IV Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment

Amount: \$56,315.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- d. Strengthening Teaching and Instructional Leadership

Fund Source: Title II. Part A

Amount: \$57,115.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- e. FSU Multidisciplinary Services 2021-22 School Year

Fund Source: FEFP Dollars

Amount: \$25,000.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- f. Request Approval for Erate Funded Services

Fund Source: USAC-Erate/District

Amount: \$606,040.37

Erate Funding: \$472,445.31

District Funding: \$133,595.06

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- g. Renewal of Charter School Contract

Fund Source: General Fund

Amount: To Be Determined by FEFP (Florida Education Finance Program) Generated by Annual Enrollment

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- h. FOCUS School Software Contract

Fund Source: General Fund (Capital Outlay)

Amount: \$75,164.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

i. PAEC Student Data Services Resolution and Contract

Fund Source: General Fund (Capital Outlay)

Amount: Base sum of \$13,500.00 plus a sum per the most recent FTE Enrollment Forecast from the Office of Economic & Demographic Research mid-year Estimate and WDIS as per the 2020-21 year's enrollment @ a rate of \$0.946537517

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

9. SCHOOL FACILITY/PROPERTY

a. Purchase Order Request (Clemons, Rutherford and Associates)

Fund Source: Insurance Recovery

Amount: \$31,200.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. Request to Announce the Intent to Pre-Qualify Contractors

Fund Source: Varies by project but could be from state, federal, grant, insurance or FEMA

Amount: Varies by project

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

c. Purchase Order Request (Coggin Chev at the Avenues) - Pulled from Agenda

Fund Source: General Fund (as allocated and approved in the September 8, 2020 Final Original Budget for the 2020-21 school year)

Amount: \$105,160.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

d. Purchase Order Request (Matthews Buses Florida)

Fund Source: General Fund (as allocated and approved in the September 8, 2020 Final Original Budget for the 2020-21 school year)

Amount: \$470,162.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

f. Purchase Order Request for Dale Earnhardt, Jr. Tallahassee

Fund Source: General Fund (as allocated and approved in the September 8, 2020 Final Original Budget for the 2020-21 school year)

Amount: \$132,941.80

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

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

b. Request to Advertise Notice of Intent to Amend/Adopt Policies

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 moved to the DISCUSSION portion of the agenda.

\*6. PERSONNEL MATTERS (resignations, retirements, recommendations, leaves of absence, terminations of services, volunteers, and job descriptions)

a. Personnel 2020 – 2021

Ms. Johnson requested an explanation on the personnel termination list.

Mr. Key stated that terminations deal with employees that break their contract from July 1st – June 30<sup>th</sup>, or employees who are on annual contract.

In response to Ms. Johnson's question about job descriptions, Mr. Key stated that the Board approves all job descriptions.

Ms. Johnson stated that she is an organized person and thinks the board information packet should be placed in a notebook binder and tabulated.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. Personnel 2021 - 2022

Ms. Kenyetta Lloyd, HeadStart Regional Office, addressed the Board via phone to speak about the termination of Mrs. Lakysa Perkins. She stated that Mrs. Perkins position is a key position and the HeadStart Regional Office do not agree with her termination.

Mr. McMillan stated that this a personnel issue. He stated that it is the Board's responsibility to carry out policies. He stated that personnel issues are handled by the Superintendent. He stated that the Superintendent makes the decision on personnel.

Ms. Johnson requested a workshop to discuss the Board member's roles and responsibilities. She stated that Florida Statutes provides information on School Board member's roles and responsibilities. She stated that the agenda is too general and cannot be followed. She stated that the Board is the governing body. She questioned why the Behavior Specialists were not recommended back. She stated that the job description does not state that Behavior Specialists have to be certified teachers. She stated that she was elected and she will do the job she was elected to do.

Mr. Frost clarified that the Board receive their packets in enough time to review the packet prior to coming to the meeting. He stated that Board members have every opportunity to get questions and concerns answered before the meeting.

Ms. Johnson stated again that 90% of the time she receive her Board packet on Friday prior to Tuesday's meeting. She stated that she needs it earlier and the law states that Board information packets should be available at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

Mr. McMillan explained how the Board packets are created. He stated that page numbers are listed where you can go to read information on the item. He stated that he reviews the Board packet with no problem.

Ms. Deidra Mitchell, Program Specialist, addressed the Board via phone to share her sentiments regarding the termination of Mrs. Lakysa Perkins. She stated that the composition of the Head Start/PreK Policy Council and the methods to be used in selecting representatives of the community must be determined by the School Board or designee. She stated that training and technical assistance must be provided. She recommended the Board separate the Executive Director's position.

Mrs. Dudley asked who had been terminated at the Head Start PreK Office. She stated that the issue is the end of an annual contract.

Ms. Johnson stated that it is hard to support the Superintendent when the Board doesn't know what is going on. She questioned whether letters went to employees about not being recommended back.

Mrs. Minnis stated that statute requires the district to notify every employee by a certain time each year of employment for the next year.

Mr. Frost stated that he gets questions from employees about their employment status, but all he can respond to is what is on the agenda.

Mr. McMillan stated that he wants the Board to be respectful to each other and to the public. He stated that Board members have the freedom to talk with other employees as they need to discuss items placed on agenda. He asked Board members to speak with individuals that have items on the agenda prior to the meeting.

Ms. Johnson stated she has a copy of the letter received by an employee for non-recommendation. She stated that the employees are in limbo at the moment until a decision is made.

Mr. Key stated that every Board member has come by his office to talk about the agenda items except for one. He stated that the packet was ready last week on Monday and changes were made by Wednesday. He stated that every Board member was notified to come pick up the agenda. He stated that the letter that went out was sent to all uncertified teachers that they were not being renewed for the upcoming year. He stated that behavior specialists do not require certification. He stated that this position was brought on as a political appointment to give them jobs at a teacher salary. He stated that behavior specialists need to change the behavior of students not just get a salary. He stated that he make decisions to get the best employees for the district. He stated that he is trying to make the district a model district and change is required.

Following discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #6b. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried with Mrs. Dudley, Mr. McMillan, Mr. Scott and Mr. Frost voting "aye". Ms. Johnson voted "nay".

**ACTION REQUESTED:** The Superintendent recommended approval.

c. Gadsden County Public Schools Organizational Chart 2021 – 2022

Ms. Johnson stated that according to the organizational chart, it looks like the district will be top heavy. She stated that she feels like the teachers, parents and students should be the main focus.

Mr. Key stated that in comparison to the previous organizational charts, this one actually has less with no additional positions.

Following discussion, Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #'s 6a & 6c. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried with Mr. McMillan, Mrs. Dudley, Mr. Scott and Mr. Frost voting "aye". Ms. Johnson voted "nay".

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

\*7. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

- a. Board Review Requested for the 2020 – 2021 Third Quarter Financial Statements from Crossroad Academy Charter School

Fund Source: All Public Funds at Crossroad Academy Charter School  
Amount: Crossroad Academy Charter School Financial Statements Attached

Ms. Johnson stated that she wanted more detailed information and asked to table agenda item #7a until a workshop could be held.

Mr. McMillan stated that pursuant to Sections 1002.33(9)(g) and 218.39(1)(3) Florida Statutes, Board review is requested for the Income/Expense Statement for the third quarter of the 2020-2021 fiscal year, and the Balance sheet as of March 31, 2021 for Crossroad Academy Charter School.

Following discussion, Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #7a. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

\*8. AGREEMENT/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

- b. Paraprofessional to Professional Partnership Program

Fund Source: Title II, Part A (2020- - 2021 funding period)  
Amount: \$28,307.15

Mr. Scott asked for clarification on whether the Paraprofessional to Professional Partnership Program will put a paraprofessional on track to become a certified teacher and if the district would be responsible for tuition.

Mr. Key stated that the Paraprofessional to Professional Partnership Program is through Title II funding. He stated that there is funding available. He stated that this is a way for the district to build our own paraprofessionals to become teachers.

Mrs. Farlin explained that St. Leo University will come to the district to conduct the training and the district does not pay tuition. She stated that this is a onetime payment for the term of the partnership.

In response to Mrs. Dudley's concern regarding if the paraprofessionals are responsible for paying their tuition, Mrs. Ella Mae Daniel stated yes, and the stipends can be reimbursed.

Following discussion, Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #8b. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

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

a. Approval of Job Description

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

Mrs. Tylisa Chapman-Thomas addressed the Board regarding the provisional instructor position. She stated that the provisional instructor position looks like a beginning teacher position. She stated that she wanted to know if the provisional instructor will get the same privilege as a beginning teacher.

Mr. Key stated that the provisional instructor position is a full time sub position to assist with getting people in place to begin working on their certification. He stated that the pay will be different from a beginning teacher, but the employee will receive benefits.

Mr. Gary Russ, teacher at Shanks Middle School, addressed the Board to question whether the provisional instructor position falls under the bargaining unit. He stated that he is one of the teachers that would be moved to a provisional instructor because he has failed his certification test. He stated that he has been in the classroom for 3 years and he didn't know about a New Teacher Program until 2019. He stated that the district is not providing mentors for new teachers.

Mr. McMillan stated that he knew Mr. Russ and he is committed to district. He stated that he will ensure that Mr. Russ gets the help he needs.

Mr. Frost stated that he wants everyone to forget what happened in the past and move forward.

Mr. Russ stated that GCCTA will work to get teachers certified. He asked the Board not to approve the provisional instructor job description.

Mr. Key stated that the law is that if a person doesn't have certification the district cannot hire them. He stated that this agreement was approved prior to him taking office. He stated that the GCCTA contract references this certification issue. He stated that as a former principal a lot of things mentioned by Mr. Russ falls on the principal. He stated that it is the principal's responsibility to make sure beginning teachers are assigned a mentor.

Ms. Sheria Griffin, Executive Director for GCCTA and GESPA, addressed the Board to request tabling agenda item #10a in order to have a conversation with the district. She stated that she wants to work collaboratively with the district. She stated that the provisional instructor job description reduces the bargaining union of GCCTA. She stated that there needs to be conversation between teachers and the district. She requested the Board wait before voting on the job description until a conversation is had with the district. She stated that she wants to create a workgroup to come up with a plan for the teachers.

Mr. McMillan stated that he likes that Ms. Griffin wants to work collaboratively with the district.

Mr. Frost stated that it bothers him for people to think that the Board is the reason for teachers not getting certified. He stated that he wants to make sure the district has certified teachers.

Mr. McMillan stated for clarification that this issue was negotiated with the union last year that if a teacher is not certified they can only be a sub. He stated that he wants to make sure employees get what they need. He stated that the teachers knew this was coming because it was bargained last year.

Mr. Key stated that everyone that has asked for an extension has been approved and sent to DOE. He stated that State statute says the district cannot employ non certified teachers. He stated that this was agreed prior to him being elected and he is hearing that the union wants to change it now.

Ms. Griffin again asked the Board to table agenda item #10a in order to have more discussion with the district to see how this will impact individuals. She stated that when employees become certified where they will be placed on the salary schedule.

Mrs. Minnis explained that job descriptions are not policies.

Mrs. Mandela stated that GCCTA agreed to this but GCCTA did not bring it to the table. She stated that this was brought to the bargaining table by the district and they were under threat from state that all bargaining would stop. She stated that she doesn't think the contract is the place for the language of what will be paid to noncertified teachers. She stated that everyone need to think about a Train the Trainer Program. She stated that GCCTA want teachers certified but it should not be punitive since the district has not done everything they need to do. She stated that behavior specialists that are going to sub pay will no longer be eligible for certain retirement benefits.

Mr. McMillan stated that this district is going to do what is needed to get teachers certified.

Mr. Frost stated that the Board need to do what the union has in their contract. He clarified that the collective bargaining agreement just says non certified teachers will be paid at sub pay. He stated that the Superintendent tried to provide help by adding benefits.

Mrs. Mandela stated that the contract is almost over and we do not have to keep that language in the contract when negotiations begin.

Mrs. Wood stated that the teachers who do not have any certification on July 1st in accordance with the agreement would become a full time sub, and without the description will have a salary lower than what is.

Following discussion, Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item 10a. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried with Mr. McMillan, Mr. Scott and Mr. Frost voting "aye". Ms. Johnson and Mrs. Dudley voted "nay".

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

\*9. School Facility/Property

e. Disposal of Gretna Elementary School Property

Mr. McMillan stated that the Board received to offers (one from True Hope Ministries and one from the City of Gretna) to purchase the Gretna Elementary School property.



Following discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to sell the Gretna Elementary School property to the City of Gretna. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

#### 11. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key stated that the district is nearing the close of another school year. He stated that Gadsden County High School has announced its Top Ten students. He provided the Board an end of the year activity schedule from each school. He stated that the district is collaborating with the Gadsden County Health Department to provide COVID-19 Pfizer vaccinations to students who are ages 12 years and older. He stated that in order to receive the vaccination, qualifying minors must have their parent/guardian's written consent. He stated that the vaccinations will be administered on middle and high school campuses June 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>. He stated that the district is collaborating with the County Commissioners' Office, TCC, Career Source Capital Region, and the Gadsden County Development Council to move forward with the Gadsden Youth (Workforce) Initiative. He stated that the Family & Community Engagement team expresses their appreciation to those who participated in the Virtual Parents as Partners Symposium, which was held via Zoom on Thursday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. He stated that the PAEC 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Conference is scheduled for July 12<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>. He stated that registration for this conference is coordinated through the Professional Learning department. He stated that the Academic Services department and the Professional Learning department are working collaboratively on the Summer Institute for administrators and teachers, tentatively planned for July 26<sup>th</sup> – August 6<sup>th</sup>. He stated that more information is forthcoming. He stated that the district will host the 2021 BSI Summer Academy at WGMS on Tuesday, July 27<sup>th</sup>. He stated that the Exceptional Student Education/Student Services department will host a Virtual Parents' Night on Preventing the Summer Slide on Thursday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Melissa McGriff (audience), addressed the Board to speak on behalf of the principal at Havana Magnet Schools principal. She stated that she feels she was left in the dark about the administration. She stated that she wanted to know the outcome for the principal and leadership of the school. She asked Mr. Key why he would not recommend someone back for employment that was qualified to come back. She questioned why Havana was always at the bottom of the pole.

Ms. Linda Clemons (audience) addressed the Board to express her concerns regarding the principal at Havana Magnet School. She stated that she has a student at HMS and is concerned about the principal being moved. She stated that she wants to know why would you move a man that makes a difference and is not only a principal, but also goes in the classroom, provides transportation for employees that don't have a way to work, and that go beyond and above to make his school successful. She stated that if the principal is not at the level he needs to be, then the principal needs to be picked up. She stated that Gadsden County is never going to change. She stated that the heart has to be changed first and then help one another. She stated that everyone needs to be true to their heart.

#### 12. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Frost stated that he was looking forward to what the future holds for the district. He stated that this is a new day and everyone needs to start from this point.

Ms. Johnson stated that she went to school with one of the principals and has seen him pick up the pieces. She stated that he had to get the school out of the mud. She stated that Mr. Parish Williams did a great job. She stated that all Board members need to review the statutes and treat people with respect.

Mrs. Minnis stated that the Board sets policies, and the Superintendent implement the policies. She stated that personnel matters cannot be refused by the Board that are submitted by the Superintendent without good reason. She stated that the Board does not have the authority to get into the day to day operation of the school system.

Mr. Scott stated that he has seen Superintendents put together their own team and what has happened in this Board meeting is not unusual.

Mrs. Dudley stated that she thinks the Board needs to be more transparent. She stated that the meetings need to be more accessible to the public. She stated that collaboration is needed because the Board cannot do it alone. She stated that everyone needs to respect each other and self-reflect on what could have been done better during this meeting.

Mr. McMillan stated that Board members need to know their roles and be respectful of each other. He stated that the Superintendent is doing what the people have asked him to do and now is the time to support him. He stated that the Superintendent is the captain of the ship. He stated that the Superintendent was elected by the majority of the people in Gadsden County.

Mr. Frost stated that he wants us to work towards Mrs. Dudley's idea of being transparent at the meetings.

13. The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.