

# FANNIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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SUPERINTENDENT  
*Dr. Michael Gwatney*

BOARD MEMBERS  
*Bobby Bearden*  
*Lewis DeWeese*  
*Terry Bramlett*  
*Chad Galloway*  
*Steve Stanley*



March 24, 2018

Dear FCSS Community:

I hope you are doing well and enjoying this weekend. We are four school days away from Spring Break, and I know you are looking forward to it! I am thankful that we will have a majority of our break, despite the need to reclaim April 5-6 due to missing 10 days this school year. The break is needed, and it will certainly help each of us “recharge” to be ready to finish out the 2017-2018 school year in a good way for our students.

There was a called meeting of our Board of Education last Thursday afternoon. One item on the agenda was “Property.” I wish to share information about this agenda item – and the related Board action taken – to keep you informed. If you hear that our school system paid \$250,000 for an acre of property, it is true; however, there is more that you need to know about this purchase, and I want you to have the facts in case you hear misinformation.

The one-acre tract that was approved for purchase is on Highway 515; it is located between Highway 515 and our existing 31+ acres of land on Ada Street. This new tract will connect our existing acreage and provide us with a continuous piece of property directly connecting to Highway 515. Although our district has – and will continue to use – an easement that allows us to have the driveway that is currently in place by the entrance of the new Fannin County Fire Department (off of the Windy Ridge Connector), purchasing this additional property allows us to have another access that is directly on Highway 515 – our county’s major thoroughfare. This second Highway 515 access will be a safer and quicker way to enter our agriculture facility, and it will alleviate the need for visitors to travel to the Windy Ridge Connector and then down the hill from the new fire department’s entrance to go to the agriculture facility.

The Georgia Department of Transportation recently met with district personnel, including me, and it has been determined that a deceleration lane may be placed ahead of the existing entrance on the property. This deceleration lane will help safely ease the transition off Highway 515 for our buses, student drivers, and large vehicles that may be towing trailers.

Regarding the purchase price of \$250,000, it is important to know that it is \$130,000 less than what the property sold for over a decade ago. It is also important to remember that all usable commercial frontage on Highway 515, especially with an access road already in place, is quite valuable. In addition, the property is currently being used commercially, as it has a building being used as a dog grooming business, an advertisement sign, and storage units that will all become the property of our school system.

Finally, I am thankful that our citizens passed an ESPLOST resolution that allows our Board to make purchases like this with funds that are not derived from any property tax but a sales tax that is shared by all, especially by the many non-resident visitors to our county. The ESPLOST allows us to provide more for our students, while reducing the tax burden shared by property owners.

Please know that it is my belief that every student matters, and it is my belief that every employee matters, too. Each role in our school district plays a part in the overall success of our students; they are the future, and I appreciate what you do each day to ensure the future success of Fannin County.

Be sure to contact me if you have questions. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gwatney". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Michael Gwatney, Ed.D.  
Superintendent