

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

March 23, 2010

6:00 P.M.

This meeting was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Isaac Simmons, Chairman; Mr. Roger P. Milton; Mr. Charlie D. Frost; Mr. Judge B. Helms; and Mr. Eric F. Hinson. Also present were Mr. Reginald C. James, 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. Isaac Simmons, at 6:00 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Mr. Judge B. Helms.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Larry Morse (Division of Forestry) presented the Board with a check in the amount of \$10,366.65 for distribution of Lake Talquin proceeds for the 2008 – 2009 year.

Mr. James congratulated Jerome Maples (Student Board Representative) for being a Paige for the Legislature.

Mr. Helms recognized Mr. Hinson for receiving an award at the Law Enforcement Academy Gala.

Mr. Hinson recognized the First Presbyterian Church in Havana for hosting a 5K Run event for the Relay for Life; and Dr. Kimblin Nesmith and Mrs. Deborah Rackley for putting together the Gadsden Leadership and Law Academy Gala.

Jerome Maples recognized students Nicholas Goodlet and Tyrroderick Jackson for their efforts in assisting students to get off the bus during the March 8th bus accident. He also recognized the students and staff for their leadership efforts during a tragic time.

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Hinson recognized the Emergency Management crew for responding quickly to the bus accident on March 8th.

Mr. Curtis Montgomery addressed the Board and recognized Mr. Simmons and Mr. Rocky Pace for attending a meeting in Chattahoochee regarding the March 8th bus accident. He stated that his daughter (Katura Montgomery) has submitted requests to the Superintendent and Chairman regarding the disciplinary action taken in respect to his grandson at West Gadsden High School. He stated that he wanted to know the status of the requests, the Superintendent's position in this matter, and a copy of his grandson's records.

Mr. Simmons stated that he will have the Board's attorney review the requests and respond to Mr. Montgomery.

Ms. Lenora Montgomery addressed the Board on behalf of the Chattahoochee Concerned Citizens for Change to present the following letter of demands. She stated that the concerned citizens for change recognized that school buses are still the safest mode of transportation to and from school. She stated that the State law requires that students and adults wear seatbelts. She stated that many of our children are sent off to school on buses with seatbelts on them, but our children are not encouraged to wear them. She stated that the demands also included the following: 1) the development of a comprehensive school bus surveillance camera policy that includes notification of use of parents, storage and ownership of tapes, viewing of taped material on a routine basis and disposal of collected video records; 2) development of a model training program for age-appropriate school bus safety training and safety drills for all students, as well as training regarding on-bus behavior, include documentation that the training was conducted; 3) School Board members should, on an unannounced basis, ride a bus route in the respective districts, as well as the Superintendent; 4) each child be transported in a child restraint system suitable for that child's size, weight and age; 5) capacity of each bus should be determined by the Superintendent and School Board members using a common sense methodology versus the manufacturer's maximum rated capacity; 6) development of policies that subject bus drivers to stricter background checks that include criminal record, drug testing, state child abuse registry, domestic violence and proper driving certification; 7) all bus drivers should adhere to the district's Student Code of Conduct relating to on-board behavior. A 24-hour complaint hotline should be established to report non-compliance behaviors; 8) develop and distribute a written evacuation plan for students and drivers for use in emergency situations; and 9) establishment of procedures for loading and unloading children, to include a checklist of names.

Mr. Simmons thanked Mrs. Montgomery for addressing the Board. He stated that the Board has already began to take measures to increase the safety of all students riding buses in the district. He expressed his concerns for student safety. He stated that the investigative report is ongoing. He stated that the district recently purchased 24 new buses that are scheduled to arrive in April. He stated that there will be seatbelts and cameras on each bus. He stated that he met with individuals to price putting seatbelts on the existing buses. He stated that a consultant was needed to evaluate the existing buses to see if the buses can be retrofitted to put seatbelts on them. He stated that the district is looking at placing Global Positioning Systems (GPS) on all buses. He stated that the district will develop a new policy that states no child will be allowed to stand on the bus. He stated that the new director of transportation will ensure that all policies are adhered to.

Mr. Milton requested that Mrs. Montgomery ask the concerned citizens for change group to support the district's new policy to enforce students to wear seatbelts. He stated that parents and the community need to support the drivers, rather than always taking the side of the student, when the student's conduct is less than desirable while on the bus.

Mrs. Montgomery stated that training was needed for the students on how to properly wear seatbelts.

Mr. James thanked Mrs. Montgomery for sharing the concerns of the Chattahoochee concerned citizens for change.

Mr. Hinson requested having a meeting with the Director of Transportation, and include Mrs. Montgomery on the discussion of the seatbelt training for students.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mr. Simmons entertained a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda. The motion was made by Roger P. Milton, seconded by Mr. Eric F. Hinson and carried unanimously.

5. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- a. February 23, 2010, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Workshop
- b. February 23, 2010, 6:00 p.m. – Regular School Board Meeting
- c. March 2, 2010, 3:00 p.m. – Student Hearing
- d. March 2, 2010, 4:00 p.m. – School Board Workshop

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

7. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

- a. Approval of bills and vouchers - See back-up material

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. AGREEMENTS/PROJECT/GRANT APPLICATIONS

- b. 2010 – 2011 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant Application

Fund Source: Florida Department of Education
Amount: Determined by Grant Approval

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

9. STUDENT MATTERS

- a. Student Transfers – See back-up material

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- d. Student Expulsion – See back-up material
Case #48-0910-0211
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- e. Student Expulsion – See back-up material
Case #58-0910-0071
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- f. Student Expulsion – See back-up material
Case #68-0910-0051
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- g. Student Expulsion – See back-up material
Case #69-0910-0061
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
- h. Student Expulsion – See back-up material
Case #70-0910-0071
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

11. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

- a. Florida School Boards Association Annual Dues for 2010 – 2011
Fund Source: General
Amount: \$14,160.00
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.

- *6. PERSONNEL MATTERS (resignations, retirements, recommendations, leaves of absence, terminations of services, volunteers, and job descriptions)
 - a. Personnel 2009 - 2010
Mr. Roger P. Milton made a motion to remove the termination from agenda item #6a. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eric F. Hinson and carried unanimously.
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. 2010 – 2011 Calendars

Mr. Judge B. Helms asked if input from the union representatives and others were involved in the 2010 - 2011 calendars. He stated that he was concerned about the spring holidays before FCAT. He stated that he want the students to take the FCAT before the spring holidays.

Mr. James stated that the students will have returned a week before FCAT. He requested the Board table agenda item #6b in order to gather more input.

Following discussion, Mr. Judge B. Helms made a motion to defer action on agenda item #6b. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eric F. Hinson and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

Mr. Milton made a motion to approve the remainder of agenda item #6a. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eric F. Hinson and carried unanimously.

*8. AGREEMENTS/PROJECT/GRANT APPLICATIONS

a. General Release and Settlement Agreement with the City of Chattahoochee

Fund Source: Capital Improvements Fund
Amount: \$10,862.48

Mr. Hinson requested an explanation of the General Release and Settlement Agreement with the City of Chattahoochee.

Mr. Simmons stated that agenda item #8a had been previously addressed by the Board and he feels that it is best interest of the Board to act favorably on the Superintendent's recommendation.

Mr. Helms stated that although he has some concerns with the General Release and Settlement Agreement with the City of Chattahoochee, the Board's approval is needed because it's a business situation.

Mrs. Wood stated that the fund source should be from the general funds and not capital improvement funds.

Following discussion, Mr. Eric F. Hinson made a motion to rescind the previous Board action in February on the General Release and Settlement Agreement with the City of Chattahoochee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Judge B. Helms and carried unanimously.

Mr. Eric Hinson made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #8a with the correction to change the fund source to the general fund. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

c. Contract for Federal Funds Consultation in Accordance with Direction From the Florida Department of Education

Fund Source: Federal Indirect Cost in the General Fund
Amount: \$14,400.00

In response to Mr. Hinson's concern in regards if bidding took place with agenda item #8c, Mr. James stated that the contract for services was rendered.

Following discussion, Mr. Eric F. Hinson made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #8c. The motion was seconded by Mr. Judge B. Helms and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

***9. STUDENT MATTERS**

- b. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #46-0910-0211

Ms. Tina Halverson, mother of student #46-0910-0211, addressed the Board to request a hearing.

Following discussion, Mr. Roger P. Milton made a motion to defer action on agenda item #9b until a hearing was held on Tuesday, April 6th at 4:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Judge B. Helms and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- c. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #47-0910-0211

Mr. Roger P. Milton made a motion to defer action on agenda item #9c. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

***10. SCHOOL FACILITY/PROPERTY**

- a. Request to Delete from Capital Assets – Motor Vehicles

Fund Source: Applicable Funds
Amount: \$117,723.00

Mr. Hinson requested an explanation of agenda item #10a.

Mr. Bruce James stated that in accordance with Sections 274.04, 274.05 and 274.06, Florida Statutes, Board approval is requested to delete \$117,723.00 plus applicable depreciation from the Capital Assets list of motor vehicles. He stated that this action is required based on the information received from the Transportation Director.

Following discussion, Mr. Eric F. Hinson made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #10a. The motion was seconded by Mr. Judge B. Helms and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Request to Delete and Dispose from Capital Assets – Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment

Fund Source: All Funds
Amount: \$267,964.18

Mr. Hinson requested an explanation of agenda item #10b.

Mr. Bruce James stated that in accordance with Sections 274.04, 274.05 and 274.06, Florida Statutes, Board approval is requested to delete \$267,964.18 from the Capital Assets General Ledger, and to dispose of the said property with Creative Recycling, Inc.

Following discussion, Mr. Eric F. Hinson made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #10b. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

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

- a. Discussion and Request to Advertise the Board's Intent to Amend School Board Rules by Adopting Numbers 2.96 (Preventing Fraud) and 2.97 (Procurement Card)

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A

Mr. Simmons requested an overview of agenda item #12a.

Mr. Helms stated that he worked with staff on 2.96 (Preventing Fraud). He stated that the policy established certain principles for, and expectations of, district employees in order to prevent fraud, provide for the investigation of suspected fraud, provide for consequences for engaging in any manner of fraud, and to heighten awareness of possible fraud.

Mr. Simmons thanked Mr. Helms for working with staff on Policy 2.96 (Preventing Fraud).

Following discussion, Mr. Judge B. Helms made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #12a. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eric F. Hinson and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

Mr. Milton stated that there were two parents that signed to address the Board regarding agenda item #9b. He stated that the mother made the request for a hearing, and the father who is the custodial parent had signed up to address the Board. He asked Attorney Minnis to review the court document to see whether both parents were allowed to request a hearing.

Attorney Minnis stated that because there is shared responsibility by both parents, both parents have equal rights.

13. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. James stated that all schools have had good FCAT pep rallies and events. He stated that he was optimistic about the district and predicts that there will be more "A" schools this year. He credits the success to the students and teachers. He stated that West Gadsden High School tested approximately 95% of its students.

14. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Hinson thanked Mrs. Juliette Jackson, Principal, students and staff at West Gadsden High School for the outstanding leadership and pride during the March 8th bus accident. He stated that he was also concerned about transportation issues at Crossroad Academy.

Mr. Frost invited Board members to mentor. He stated that he currently mentors 8 students at the elementary schools and 9 at Carter Parramore Academy. He announced that a live broadcast was being held at Carter Parramore Academy by the Statewide School Choice Parent Advisory Council. He expressed his sentiments for the love of students.

Mr. Milton stated that he wanted to ensure that the necessary precautions were taken on the recent student transfers.

Jerome Maples commended Mr. Frost for what he do for the students. He stated that the district need more mentors. He stated that student councils are moving forward in the schools.

Mr. Simmons requested Board members return their issues and concerns regarding transportation safety to the Superintendent no later than Friday. He encouraged each Board member to think about ways to make our schools better. He challenged each Board member to serve better, be more responsive, and provide a better quality of service to everyone.

Mr. James stated that he has always been responsive. He stated that he has a public cell phone. He stated that he is a public servant. He stated that he love every student within the district.

Rev. Tony Hannah invited Board members to a breakfast on Wednesday, April 7th at 8:30 a.m., Carter Parramore Academy.

Mr. James stated that the graduation rate is increasing, and could approximately be 80% for East Gadsden High School.

Mr. Billy Gordon addressed the Board to express his concerns in regards to a proposed meeting called for bus drivers by the Superintendent. He stated that bus drivers are also important and need the support of the Superintendent and Board.

Mr. James stated that the meeting was called by the new Transportation Director, Mr. Joe Lewis. He stated that the Superintendent and Board did not know about the meeting.

Mr. Simmons stated that the Board is concerned about the transportation department and supports bus drivers.

Mr. Tony Britt, Past President GESPA, and Ms. Regina Munroe, President GESPA, addressed the Board. Mr. Britt thanked Mr. Lewis for allowing him to attend the bus drivers meeting. He stated that the meeting was very productive. He stated that school buses are built for safety. He commended the bus drivers. He asked everyone to keep Mr. Tim Kelly in prayer along with all the other students that were involved in the March 8th bus accident.

Mr. Simmons announced that an executive session was scheduled immediately following the meeting, and called for a short recess before convening in executive session.

15. The meeting recessed at 7:45 p.m.; convened in executive session at 7:55 p.m., adjourned executive session at 8:22 p.m.; reconvened the meeting at 8:26 and adjourned at 8:30 p.m.