

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

July 27, 2021

Immediately Following Tentative Budget Hearing at 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 6:07 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

Omitted.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Omitted.

4. RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Key recognized the City of Chattahoochee officials and the community for their involvement in the facelift of Chattahoochee Elementary School. He thanked them for their support of the school.

Mr. Frost recognized the new administrators to the district. He stated that he was excited because the principals showed excitement to be here.

Ms. Johnson recognized Staples store. She stated that Staples agreed to donate to Gadsden schools during their \$5.00 donation drive. She stated that every time you pay \$5.00 to the Staples' annual donation drive, Gadsden schools will receive school supplies.

Mr. Scott recognized the district's new administrators. He stated that he was excited to have them working in the district.

Mrs. Dudley recognized the district's new administrators. She stated that she is looking forward to their leadership and the growth of Gadsden district. She stated that staff were beginning to work to beautify the schools.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mr. Key pulled from the agenda item #9b – Approval of 2021 – 2022 Code of Student Conduct.

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

5. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- a. June 16, 2021, 6:00 p.m. – Special School Board Meeting
- b. June 22, 2021, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Workshop
- c. June 22, 2021, 6:00 p.m. - Regular School Board Meeting
- d. July 6, 2021, 6:00 p.m. – Special School Board Meeting

Following Discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to accept the Superintendent’s recommendation to approve agenda item #'s 5a – d. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

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

- a. Personnel 2020 – 2021

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Personnel 2021 – 2022

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

7. AGREEMENT/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

- a. Renewal of Capital Health Plan, Inc., World Class Schools of Leon County, Inc., and Titus Sports Academy, L.L.C.

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. SCHOOL FACILITY/PROPERTY

- a. Purchase Order Request for Mark’s Lawn Maintenance, Inc.

Fund Source: 1100E 8100 3500 0051 31000 00000 00000 (Gadsden County HS)
1100E 8100 3500 0052 31000 00000 00000 (West Gadsden MS)
1100E 8100 3500 0091 31000 00000 00000 (Havana Magnet)
Amount: \$20,800 for Gadsden County HS
\$20,800 for West Gadsden MS
\$3,900 for Havana Magnet

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Purchase Order Requests for Sonitrol of Tallahassee

Fund Source: General Fund
Amount: \$33,276.72 for school locations
\$14,888.32 for administrative locations
\$2,500.00 for trip charges and other items not covered

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

c. RFP 2021- 005 Pre-Qualification of Construction Managers

Fund Source: Capital Projects and Federal Projects Funds
Amount: Budgeted by Project within Available Revenues

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

9. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

b. Approval of 2021 – 2022 Code of Student Conduct

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent removed from the agenda.

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.

*9. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

a. Gadsden Technical Institute Name Change

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A

Mr. Frost asked Mr. Saxton to state why he wanted to change the name of Gadsden Technical Institute and how will it benefit the school.

Mr. Thomas Saxton, Director of Adult Career Technical Education, stated that GTI is one of four career technical centers in the State that have not changed their name to college. He stated that he has seen what a name change can do to bring a sense of pride in the community. He stated that the curriculum is not changing. He stated that the change will be consistent with the best practices for Career and Technical Education in the State of Florida and will assist in marketing the school to increase enrollment.

Mr. Mays stated that changing Gadsden Technical Institutes name will get the school in a financial position to stand on its own. He stated that the school's name change will be the life line of the district. He stated that the district will need to ensure that the tools are available to get the school where it needs to be.

Mr. McMillan stated that he is looking forward to seeing great things at Gadsden Technical.

Ms. Johnson stated that increased student participation is needed at Gadsden Technical. She stated that vocational education drives the economy.

Mr. Saxton stated that he plan to increase social media, involve the community, network, and inform guidance counselors as soon as the Board approves the name change. He stated that there will be networking in the community, and awareness will be increased.

Following discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #9a. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

Mr. McMillan thanked the Superintendent. He stated that the Superintendent has made necessary changes and he is pleased with his direction for the district. He stated that Gadsden County is headed in the right direction.

Mr. Key thanked Mr. McMillan for his acknowledgement.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

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

a. Adoption / Approval of Policy Revisions

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

Following discussion, Mrs. Karema D. Dudley 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 unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

11. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key stated that good quality people are interested in coming to Gadsden County. He stated that people want to be a part of what is going on in the district. He stated that he visited Havana Magnet School and was excited to see a parent enrolling four students. He stated that he attended Open House at Chattahoochee Elementary School and parents were enrolling students from Jackson County. He stated that there will be more community involvement. He stated that principals will be required to attend Board meetings to give updates on their school. He stated that principals and staff are getting schools ready for students. He stated that all kindergarten – second grade teachers will participate in training for the new ELA curriculum on July 28th. He stated that the B.E.S.T Standards (ELA) training for grades kindergarten through second will occur August 4th – 6th. He stated that the Gadsden Administrators' Institute is scheduled for July 29th – 30th at the Four Points Sheraton in Tallahassee. He stated that for the 2021 – 2022 school year, students will return to face-to-face instruction, unless otherwise directed by the Florida Department of Education. He stated that should the State department mandate that schools return to remote learning, the schools and district staff are prepared to do so. He stated that the district cannot require masks inside according to CDC guidelines. He stated that we have to be mindful and will recommend wearing masks as well as sanitizing. He stated that low salaries are hurting teachers and other employees in the district. He stated that competitive pay is needed to retain good quality people. He stated that principals are working hard to recruit teachers. He stated that schools are partnering with businesses. He stated that everything is not where it needs to be right now, but schools will be in a better position prior to students returning. He stated that his goal is to have a new facility for students. He stated that the district has to do a better job of maintaining the buildings. He stated that preventative measures are needed. He stated that people are leaving the district for pay reasons and the district has to change this. He stated that salaries are the key to keeping employees. He stated that counselors will be added to some of the schools. He stated that he is trying to return employees with music and art background into the elementary schools. He stated that he is working to get schools to where they need to be.

12. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Frost recognized Mr. Anthony Lucky and Mr. Calvin Robinson who have committed to staying in the district. He stated that the Superintendent is headed in the right direction with schools. He stated that he is excited about the new leadership.

Mrs. Dudley stated that teachers are excited but concerned about the new school year because the achievement gap has widened due to the pandemic. She challenged teachers to come to Board meetings to express their concerns and share their ideas. She stated that teachers matter!

In response to Mr. McMillan's request for an update on provisional teachers, Mr. Key stated that the district is trying to bridge the gap with the issues of not having enough teachers but that is not the case. He stated that there are 18 students per class but some schools are overstaffed by 6 or 7 people. He stated that the provisional description would allow teachers to stay with benefit, but because the district received a cease and desist by the union the district had to go back to the letter of the law and contract. He stated that he is going by Florida Statute and will follow the law and not hire uncertified teachers and pay them as regular teachers.

Mr. McMillan stated that he know some committed teachers that could have gone elsewhere but they stayed and he appreciates them. He stated that the district is heading in the right direction with reducing the number of employees in order to find money for salaries. He stated that Chattahoochee High School is leased by a church and they are behind on payments. He requested Attorney Minnis advise the Board on what to do about a possible foreclosure on the property. He stated that the district will build a K-8 school in the city of Quincy.

13. The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.