



September Board Meeting & Budget Hearing

#2

09/08/2026 05:00 PM

Litchfield Middle School

1109 Hoke St., Gadsden, AL

## MEETING MINUTES

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### Attendance

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#### Voting Members

Rev. Z. Andre' Huff, Board Member - District 3  
Mrs. Nancy Stewart, Board Member - District 6  
Hon. Allen Millican, Board Chairman - District 7  
Mr. Mark Dayton, Board Member - District 5  
Mr. Mike Haney, Board Member - District 4  
Ms. Adrienne Reed, Board Member - District 1  
Mrs. Rita Smith, Board Member - District 2

#### Absent

#### Non-Voting Members

Mr. Keith Blackwell, Superintendent  
Mrs. Cory Skelton, Chief School Financial Officer  
Mrs. Kelly Swafford, Superintendent Administrative Assistant

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### A. Call to Order, Opening Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call

Chairman Millican called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Board Member Rita Smith led with prayer followed by the opportunity to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Roll was called and Chairman Millican declared that a quorum was present.

### B. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was presented for approval.

**Motion made by:** Mr. Mark Dayton

**Motion seconded by:** Mr. Mike Haney

#### **Voting results:**

Yes: Mrs. Nancy Stewart

Yes: Hon. Allen Millican

Yes: Mr. Mark Dayton

Yes: Mr. Mike Haney

Not Present: Ms. Adrienne Reed

Yes: Mrs. Rita Smith

### C. Recognition of Visitors/Guests

Board Member Adrienne Reed entered the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

Superintendent Blackwell acknowledged all the parents in the audience, former Superintendent Tony Reddick, and Mr. Charlie Parker, Principal of Litchfield Middle School, for maintaining a clean campus. Principal Parker expressed his gratitude to the school board and welcomed everyone to Litchfield Middle School. He then invited the Eagle Ambassadors to come forward and introduce themselves. The Eagle Ambassadors assist with various activities around the school. Following their introductions, the Litchfield Middle Choir, led by Ms. Katherine Hood, performed a song.

**1. Athlete of the Year for Special Olympics of Alabama: William Stewart**

Superintendent Blackwell introduced Ms. Christine Lowery, the Gadsden City High School Special Olympics Sponsor. Ms. Lowery recognized student William Stewart, who won Athlete of the Year for the State of Alabama. Ms. Lowery discussed the qualifications to be considered for this award and stated that William Stewart exceeded them all. This is Ms. Lowery's sixth Athlete of the Year winner during her tenure.

**D. Reports**

**1. Mr. Matthew Monson - Service Dog**

Mr. Matthew Monson, the Principal of Gadsden City High School, delivered a report on Fancy, a nationally accredited service dog trained to support social and emotional health in a school environment. Mr. Monson highlighted the numerous positive benefits that Fancy has brought to both students and faculty at Gadsden City High. Fancy was obtained through Service Dogs of Alabama and typically serves for eight years. Titan Ambassador Maddison White shared her observations as an office aide, noting the positive impact Fancy has had and how the dog is a valuable addition and accommodation for the school. Mr. Monson expressed his appreciation to the board for their continued support.

**E. Board Action**

**1. Final Review of the FY 2027 School System Budget and Recommendation for Approval**

With no questions, Superintendent Blackwell recommended that the board approve the fiscal year 2027 school system budget.

**Motion made by:** Mr. Mike Haney

**Motion seconded by:** Mrs. Rita Smith

**Voting results:** Unanimously Approved

Yes: Mrs. Nancy Stewart

Yes: Hon. Allen Millican

Yes: Mr. Mark Dayton

Yes: Mr. Mike Haney

Yes: Ms. Adrienne Reed

Yes: Mrs. Rita Smith

## **2. Monthly Financial Report and Bank Reconciliation**

Cory Skelton, Chief Financial School Officer, presented the monthly financial report for review and approval. The financial data and cash balance presented are based on the reconciled bank statement and the general ledger as on July 31, 2026.

**Motion made by:** Mrs. Nancy Stewart

**Motion seconded by:** Mr. Mark Dayton

**Voting results:** Unanimously Approved

Yes: Mrs. Nancy Stewart

Yes: Hon. Allen Millican

Yes: Mr. Mark Dayton

Yes: Mr. Mike Haney

Yes: Ms. Adrienne Reed

Yes: Mrs. Rita Smith

## **3. Approval of Minutes**

### **a. Regular Board Meeting Minutes from August 04, 2026**

Superintendent Blackwell recommended that the board approve the minutes from the regular board meeting on August 04, 2026, if no corrections are needed.

**Motion made by:** Mr. Mark Dayton

**Motion seconded by:** Mrs. Rita Smith

**Voting results:** Unanimously Approved

Yes: Mrs. Nancy Stewart

Yes: Hon. Allen Millican

Yes: Mr. Mark Dayton

Yes: Mr. Mike Haney

Yes: Ms. Adrienne Reed

Yes: Mrs. Rita Smith

### **b. Special Called Board Meeting Minutes from August 11, 2026**

Superintendent Blackwell recommended that the board approve the minutes from the special called board meeting on August 11, 2026, if no corrections are needed.

**Motion made by:** Mr. Mike Haney

**Motion seconded by:** Mrs. Rita Smith

**Voting results:** Unanimously Approved

Yes: Mrs. Nancy Stewart

Yes: Hon. Allen Millican

Yes: Mr. Mark Dayton

Yes: Mr. Mike Haney

Yes: Ms. Adrienne Reed

Yes: Mrs. Rita Smith

## **4. Approval of Surplus Property**

Superintendent Blackwell asked for approval of the following surplus property reports from Thompson Elementary and Litchfield Middle.

**a. Thompson Elementary School**

**Motion made by:** Mr. Mark Dayton

**Motion seconded by:** Mrs. Rita Smith

**Voting results:** Unanimously Approved

Yes: Mrs. Nancy Stewart

Yes: Hon. Allen Millican

Yes: Mr. Mark Dayton

Yes: Mr. Mike Haney

Yes: Ms. Adrienne Reed

Yes: Mrs. Rita Smith

**b. Litchfield Middle School**

**Motion made by:** Mr. Mark Dayton

**Motion seconded by:** Mrs. Rita Smith

**Voting results:** Unanimously Approved

Yes: Mrs. Nancy Stewart

Yes: Hon. Allen Millican

Yes: Mr. Mark Dayton

Yes: Mr. Mike Haney

Yes: Ms. Adrienne Reed

Yes: Mrs. Rita Smith

**5. Personnel Actions**

Superintendent Blackwell recommended that the board approve the following personnel recommendations.

**PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Under Alabama law, all new employees are subject to a criminal background check, and all employment recommendations are contingent upon a satisfactory criminal background report.

**Retirement**

Dr. David Asbury, w/m, Central Office, Director of Human Resources, Technology, Career Technical Education, effective 11/01/2026

Dr. Kim Townsel, w/f, Litchfield Middle, Family & Consumer Science Teacher, effective 10/01/2026

Mr. Kenneth Whitmire, w/m, Gadsden City High, Maintenance Supervisor, effective 10/01/2026

**Resignations**

Ann T. Sharpe, w/f, Gadsden Middle, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts, effective 08/25/2026

Quenyana Ragland, b/f, Striplin Elementary, Special Education Aide, effective 08/28/2026

Denise Lynne Bishop, w/f, Gadsden City High School, Lunchroom Worker,

effective 09/11/2026

**(Part A) Reemployment**

(A-1) Ke'Sean Williams, b/m, Walnut Park Elementary, Systemwide Special Education Instructional Aide, effective 08/25/2026, **#2627.132**, *Pending Board Approval*

(A-2) Gina Allen, b/f, Striplin Elementary, Title I Instructional Aide, August – September 2026 only, **#2627.100**, effective 08/17/2026, *Pending Board Approval, August-September only*

(A-3) Penelope Newell, w/f, Transportation Department, Bus Aide, **#2627.129**, effective 08/21/2026, *Pending Board Approval*

(A-4) Reese Morrison, w/m, Gadsden City High, Title I Intervention Teacher, effective 08/06/2026, *Pending Board Approval, for one year only*

**(Part B) Transfer**

(B-1) Jackie Williams, b/f, from Lunchroom Worker at Floater-Districtwide to Lunchroom Worker at Striplin Elementary, **#2627.122**, effective 08/31/2026, *Pending Board Approval*

(B-2) Jackie Isom, w/f, from Classroom Teacher at Adams Elementary to Classroom Teacher at Donehoo Elementary, **#2627.130**, effective 09/09/2026

(B-3) Brenda Jimenez, h/f, from Clerical/Data Manager at Central Office-Federal Programs to Bookkeeper/Data Manager at Central Office- Federal Programs, **#2627.134**, effective 10/01/2026

**(Part C) New Personnel**

(C-1) Kayla Carver, w/f, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Class-Size Reduction Unit at Walnut Park Elementary, **#2627.131**, effective 09/08/2026, *One year only*

(C-2) Helen Thompson, w/f, Classroom Teacher at Gadsden Middle School, **#2627.135**, effective 09/03/2026, *Pending Board Approval*

(C-3) Barbara Bellew, w/f, Bookkeeper/Data Manager/CNP at Central Office-Child Nutrition Department, **#2627.126**, *Pending Board Approval*

(C-4) Jordan Fugatt, w/f, Bookkeeper/Data Manager/Special Education at Central Office-Special Education Department, **#2627.124**, effective 09/21/2026

(C-5) Claudia McCluney, b/f, Systemwide Special Education Aide at Even Start/Gadsden Family Literacy Center-Homeschool, **#2627.120**, effective 08/18/2026, *Pending Board Approval*

(C-6) Lorretta Jones, b/f, Title I Instructional Aide August-September only, **#2627.127**, Title I Instructional Aide October-May only, **#2627.128**, effective 08/06/2026 (Aug-Sept only) and 10/01/2026 (Oct-May only), *One Year Only*

(C-7) Jala Watkins, b/f, Special Education Aide at Adams Elementary, effective 09/18/2026

**Contracts**

Emily Burttram, Systemwide, Eura Brown Elementary, Speech Therapy Specialist-Supervision for Speech Therapists and Services, August 6, 2026 – May 30, 2027

Emily Day, Gadsden City High, Special Education Teacher – Supervision for

Special Education Program and Services, August 6, 2026 – May 30, 2027  
Madolyn Farmer, Systemwide, Psychometrist Services, August 12, 2026 – May 30, 2027  
Carl Byers, Gadsden City High, Adjunct Mathematics Instructor, August 10, 2026 – May 31, 2027  
Kelly Gregg, Systemwide, Nurse, August 10, 2026 – September 30, 2026  
Kathy Bradford, Emma Sansom Middle, Intervention Teacher, August 17, 2026-September 30, 2026  
Andria Blackwell, Gadsden City High School, Part-Time Librarian, August 12, 2026-May 31, 2027  
Kenneth Whitmire, Districtwide Maintenance Worker, November 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027  
Paola Morena, Gadsden City High, ESL, Bilingual Aide, September 8, 2026-September 30, 2026  
Paola Morena, Gadsden City High, ESL, Bilingual Aide, October 1, 2026-May 27, 2027  
Jimmy Gramling, Gadsden City High, Part-Time Health Occupations Instructional Assistant, August 6, 2026-May 27, 2027  
Mandy Burgess, Walnut Park Elementary, Title I Interventionist Services, August 17, 2026-September 30, 2026  
Laurie Smith, Walnut Park Elementary, Title I Interventionist Instructor, August 17, 2026-September 30, 2026  
Charissa Stephens, Walnut Park Elementary, Title I Interventionist, August 12, 2026-September 30, 2026

**Gadsden City Employees with Bus Routes #2627.013**

Hunter Bussey  
Roger Lamberth  
Zachary Stewart  
Brian Westcott

**Updates/Corrections**

Anna Teal's contract position is Districtwide Secondary Instructional Coach, rather than, Emma Sansom Middle School Instructional Coach  
Horace Johnson corrected start date is 08/26/2026 for Bus Driver  
Phillip Hunt's start date is 08/25/2026 for Adams Elementary School Counselor position  
Daphne Littlejohn, Emma Sansom Middle School, FACS Instructor, resignation effective date 08/14/2026  
Shelley Cantrell, Emma Sansom Middle School, FACS Instructor, start date 09/04/2026  
Brian Matias, Gadsden City High School, TEAMS Science Teacher

**Motion made by:** Mrs. Rita Smith

**Motion seconded by:** Mr. Mark Dayton

**Voting results:** Unanimously Approved

Yes: Mrs. Nancy Stewart

Yes: Hon. Allen Millican

Yes: Mr. Mark Dayton

Yes: Mr. Mike Haney

Yes: Ms. Adrienne Reed

Yes: Mrs. Rita Smith

Superintendent Blackwell read the names of the newly hired personnel and recognized Dr. David Asbury in the audience on his retirement. Dr. Asbury is the Director of Human Resources, Technology, and Career Technology Education.

**F. Information Items**

**1. Old Business**

Superintendent Blackwell requested that Mrs. Sharon Maness be able to speak. Chairman Millican asked for a motion to amend the agenda for a recondition. The request was approved on motion by Board Member Mike Haney.

Assistant Superintendent Maness recognized Mrs. Lynne Whisenant, the Gadsden City Schools Homeless Liaison. Mrs. Maness highlighted the dedication and hard work Mrs. Whisenant puts into ensuring that the students of Gadsden City Schools are well taken care of.

**a. Work Session and Whole Board Training on Thursday, September 17, at the Central Office**

**2. New Business**

Superintendent Blackwell announced that guest speaker Timothy Alexander will visit Litchfield Middle School on September 9, 2026, to address students about purpose over pressure.

**a. Gadsden City High's Homecoming Football Game on Friday, October 2. Early release for homecoming parade on Broad Street**

**b. The 62nd Annual MidSouth Marching Band Festival is on Saturday, September 26, at Gadsden City High School**

**3. Next Regular Board Meeting is on Tuesday, October 06. 2026, at Striplin Elementary, at 5:00 p.m.**

**G. Adjournment**

Board members took time to express their appreciation and gratitude for serving on the board together for the next four years.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:46 p.m. on motion by Rita Smith.

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Date

Superintendent/Secretary