



**Work Session and Whole Board Training**  
**09/17/2026 08:00 AM**  
Gadsden City Board of Education  
Central Office

## **MEETING MINUTES**

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### **Attendance**

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#### **Voting Members**

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

#### **Non-Voting Members**

Mr. Keith Blackwell, Superintendent  
Mr. Ed Howard, Board Attorney  
Mrs. Kelly Swafford, Superintendent Administrative Assistant

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### **I. Call to Order**

Chairman Millican called the work session to order at 8:17 a.m. Board Member Rita Smith opened the meeting with a prayer. A quorum was declared present. All members were in attendance except Mark Dayton.

### **II. Virtual School Discussion - Karen Winn**

Superintendent Blackwell welcomed Mrs. Karen Winn and Dr. Dee Dee Jones to the meeting. Mrs. Winn provided an update on the rollout of the Gadsden City Virtual School Academy, highlighting the many benefits of offering a virtual school option for both students and the school system. It was noted that the virtual school academy is for secondary students.

### **III. Review of ACAP Scores - Allison Miller**

Mrs. Marcia Farabee and Mrs. Allison Miller presented a report on district testing and data. Mrs. Miller reviewed the growth and strengths for which the Gadsden City School System was recognized. She also discussed how favorably Gadsden City Schools compared overall with surrounding systems. Mrs. Farabee and Mrs. Miller reviewed the projected Report Card grades for the system and discussed the progress made and the support for the plan going forward.

#### **IV. Discussion Items from Superintendent**

Superintendent Blackwell provided an overview of the funding received from the City of Gadsden.

##### **i. Middle School Discussion**

Superintendent Blackwell reviewed location options for consolidating the three current middle schools, Emma Sansom Middle, Gadsden Middle, and Litchfield Middle.

##### **ii. Athletic Uniforms**

Superintendent Blackwell gave the board an update on Gadsden City's decision for athletic apparel.

##### **iii. Review upcoming Bills**

Superintendent Blackwell reviewed the Campus Chaplains Act.

##### Campus Chaplains Act

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, each local board of education and the governing body of each public charter school may take a recorded vote on whether to adopt a policy authorizing a public school under its jurisdiction to accept a campus chaplain as a volunteer.

If a local board of education or the governing body of a public charter school votes to accept a campus chaplain as a volunteer, a campus chaplain may be made available to provide support, services, and programs at the request of any teacher in the local school district.

Each campus chaplain volunteering must have completed a recognized chaplain training program.

A public school that accepts a campus chaplain as a volunteer shall ensure that the campus chaplain complies with Section 16-22A-5, Code of Alabama 1975, relating to criminal history background check requirements.

A public school may not accept a campus chaplain as a volunteer who has been adjudicated or convicted of an offense that requires registration as a sex offender.

This act shall become effective on July 1, 2026.

**V. Lunch**

Chairman Millican reviewed the roles and responsibilities of board members.  
Discussion followed regarding the board members' visits to schools.  
Mr. Mark Dayton arrived for the Whole Board Training at 12:20 p.m.

During discussion, no action was taken.

The meeting concluded at 1:05 p.m.

**VI. Whole Board Training**

Alabama Association of School Boards, Ava Cranmore, presented the Whole Board Training at 1:05 p.m. on Improving School - Focus on What Matters Most. All Board Members were in attendance, and this will conclude their required two hours of Whole Board Training for the 2026-2027 school year.

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Superintendent Signature

Date