

Gulf County School Board

September 17, 2013, 1:00 E.T.

GRIEVANCE HEARING

GCEA vs. Gulf County School Board

The Gulf County School Board met in special session Tuesday, September 17, 2013, at 1:00 P. M., at their Administrative Office to conduct a grievance hearing filed by the Gulf County Educators Association. The following board members were present: Chairman Linda R. Wood, Vice-Chairman George M. Cox, Danny Little, Billy C. Quinn, Jr., and John Wright. Superintendent Norton and Attorney Costin were also present. Jerry Copeland represented Superintendent Norton and Attorney Costin sat as advisor to the School Board. Attorney Martin Powell represented the Gulf County Educators Association. Also present from the union was GCEA President Billy Hoover and Executive Director Sandra Butler. Trudie Downs with Gulf/Bay Reporting served as court reporter.

District Staff in Attendance: Sara Joe Wooten, Duane McFarland, Melissa Ramsey and Mary Lou Cumbie.
Others: Tim Croft, STAR Newspaper Editor

The Gulf County Educators Association filed a grievance against the Gulf County School Board alleging that the District violated the Master Contract procedurally during the lay-off and subsequent recall process associated with the Reduction in Force (*RIF*). The School Board contends that recently enacted legislation (FS 1012.33[5]) trumps Master Contract language. After arguments from both sides, Mr. Copeland requested that the School Board deny the GCEA Grievance due to there being no legal basis for the grievance. Chairman Wood asked Mr. Costin to advise the Board.

In response to Mr. Copeland's request Attorney Costin laid out the position of both sides. He then recommended to the Board that they deny the grievance based on them being sworn officers of the constitution and further stated that to do otherwise would put them in violation of FS 1012.33(5). Chairman Wood asked if the Board's pleasure was to make a decision immediately or at a later date. Mr. Wright made the motion to deny the grievance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Little and passed unanimously by the Board. Chairman Wood took a roll call vote with each board member voting *yes* to deny the grievance.

Attorney Costin advised that he would reduce the proceedings and ruling to prepared documents and forward those to both parties.

The special session was adjourned at 2: 17 P. M.

(SM:13-129)