

## Minutes of Mississippi Board of Education Meeting

August 17, 2023

The members of the Mississippi Board of Education met at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, August 17, 2023, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-5 for the purpose of conducting a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

The public accessed this meeting via livestream or in-person at the Central High School Building, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Boardroom, 359 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi. Board members physically present included: Mr. Glen V. East, Mr. Bill Jacobs, Mr. Matt Miller, Mr. Mike Pruitt, and Ms. Mary Werner. Board members participating virtually: Dr. Wendi Barrett, (Pascagoula, Mississippi) and Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee (Maggie Valley, North Carolina). Student Representatives present: Ms. Kate Riddle and Mr. Charlie Frugé. Dr. Raymond C. Morgigno, Interim State Superintendent, was also present.

- I. Mr. Glen V. East called the Board meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., after determining that a quorum of the Board existed for the purpose of conducting a meeting.
- II. Mr. Mike Pruitt led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Matt Miller gave the Invocation.
- III. On a motion by Ms. Mary Werner, seconded by Mr. Mike Pruitt, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of July 27, 2023, Board meeting.
- IV. On a motion by Mr. Bill Jacobs, seconded by Mr. Mike Pruitt, the Board unanimously adopted the Consent agenda.

On a motion by Mr. Bill Jacobs, seconded by Mr. Matt Miller, the Board approved the agenda as presented.

- V. Recognition Ceremony

**2023 Grand Prize High School Winner, National Public Radio Student Podcast Challenge**

Georgianna McKenny  
Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science

- VI. Dr. Raymond C. Morgigno gave the following report as the Interim State Superintendent of Education:
  - Dr. Morgigno stated that the past month he had the opportunity to visit several school districts including Rankin County, Pearl, and Lauderdale County and next week he will visit Noxubee County School District. He stated it is exciting to visit school districts at the start of a new school year.

- Dr. Morgigno stated the MDE literacy team is in the middle of a three-week tour celebrating this year's 11 Emerging Science of Reading Schools. Dr. Morgigno stated that Mr. East took part in one of the celebrations at Pass Road Elementary School in Gulfport. Dr. Morgigno stated this recognition is for schools that have trained teachers in the science of reading, been effective in implementing changes in instructional practices, and embodied a school culture that focuses on building strong readers in kindergarten through third grade.
- Dr. Morgigno stated MDE had a very productive meeting with a dozen leaders from Mississippi's business community including:
  - Accelerate MS
  - Camgian
  - CREATE Foundation
  - Ingalls Shipbuilding
  - Mississippi Economic Council
  - Mississippi Energy Institute
  - National Guard Association
  - Nissan
  - PATH
  - State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB)
  - University of Mississippi Medical Center
  - Wayne-Sanderson Farms
- Dr. Morgigno stated they discussed the progress Mississippi has made in public education and the qualities employers expect from the graduates to be college and career ready. Dr. Morgigno stated they also discussed the need for educators and families to understand and promote the range of postsecondary opportunities that can prepare students for a successful future. Dr. Morgigno stated MDE plans to continue this dialogue with business leaders and will discuss the same topics at the upcoming round of Regional Superintendents meetings this fall.
- Dr. Morgigno stated that he and Dr. Paula Vanderford traveled to Mississippi State University to meet with College of Education Dean, Dr. Teresa Jayroe, and Delta State University College of Education Dean, Dr. Leslie Griffin. Dr. Morgigno stated that Dr. Griffin is the President and Dr. Jayroe is President-Elect of the Mississippi Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE). Dr. Morgigno stated they had a good conversation about how we can strengthen our partnership to prepare future educators. Dr. Morgigno stated that he, Dr. Vanderford, and Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee met with Dr. Eddie Peasant, Assistant Dean of the William Carey University School of Education.
- Dr. Morgigno stated that he and several MDE directors met with the regional liaison for the U.S. Department of Defense to learn about the Department's 2024 policy priorities for supporting military families.
- Dr. Morgigno stated that he met with the new Executive Director of Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB) and got a tour of the MPB facility.

- Dr. Morgigno stated these meetings generated a lot of good ideas about how MDE and these various stakeholder groups can strengthen our partnerships.
- Dr. Morgigno brought the Board's attention to a flyer at their seats about reducing chronic absenteeism. Dr. Morgigno stated that School Attendance Officers will be distributing a poster-size version of this flyer to all schools over the next month. Dr. Morgigno stated MDE will create a communication toolkit for districts with materials (flyer with tips for parents, web graphics, and social media posts) to help raise awareness about the importance of regular school attendance. Dr. Morgigno stated Mississippi's chronic absenteeism rate increased from a low of 13.1% in 2018-19 to a high of 28% in 2021-22.
- Dr. Morgigno stated that chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or 18 days per school year, and this includes excused and unexcused absences.
- Dr. Morgigno stated that while COVID-19 absences likely contributed to the increase, this issue needs renewed attention from families and school districts to help bring the rate down. Dr. Morgigno stated that last year MDE provided guidance and resources for school and district leaders to help address chronic absenteeism in their districts. Dr. Morgigno stated the 2022-23 chronic absenteeism report will be released in September, which will help keep everyone focused on this issue.

VII. Mr. Glen V. East, Chair of the State Board, gave the following report:

- Mr. East stated that he attended the business and industry meeting along with Dr. Morgigno.

VIII. Reports from Student Representatives

Ms. Kate Riddle reported on the effects of block scheduling. Ms. Riddle stated this was the second year of block scheduling at her school and she provided the pros and cons of block scheduling.

Mr. Charlie Frugé provided an update on what he has been doing for the summer. Mr. Frugé stated he attended Boy's State, the Mississippi Governor's School, the Naval Academy, and visited potential universities.

IX. Reports on State Board of Education Subcommittee meetings

Mr. Bill Jacobs, Chair of the Internal Accountability Subcommittee, stated their initial meeting was on August 10, 2023, to learn about the purpose, scope, and its function being a legislative mandated subcommittee and to prepare our members for the workload. Mr. Jacobs stated today they discussed the FY22 MDE single audit report that was released recently by the State Auditor and

MDE's response to the report. Mr. Jacobs stated the subcommittee would meet next week.

Ms. Mary Werner, Chair of the Workforce/Career and Technical Education Subcommittee, thanked the MDE including Ms. Wendy Clemons and Mr. Brett Robinson for their hard work. Ms. Werner stated the subcommittee discussed the reauthorization of Perkins V to include partnering with WIOA. Ms. Werner mentioned the business and industry meetings that Dr. Morgigno talked about earlier. Ms. Werner stated there is a lot to look forward to in the future.

X. Discussion and/or Approval of Board Items

01. Information: 2022-2023 Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Results [Goals 1 and 2 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

Dr. Paula Vanderford and Dr. Jackie Sampsell presented the results of the 2022-2023 Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Results.

02. Action: Approval of the MDE Contracts [Goals 1, 3, and 4 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Felicia Gavin)

02.A. Action: Modify contract with Ajax Industrial Cleaning, LLC to continue to provide janitorial services for Dorm Four (4) and to include the Administration Building located at the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) [Goals 3 and 4 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Donna Boone and Paula Vanderford)

02.B. Action: Contract with CCSI, Inc. for Security Services for Child Nutrition and the Office of Healthy Schools [Goal 1 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Felicia Gavin)

02.C. Action: Contract with selected vendors to provide services as Mississippi Recipes for Success Coordinators [Goal 1 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Felicia Gavin)

On a motion by Mr. Bill Jacobs, seconded by Mr. Mike Pruitt, the Board unanimously approved items 02.A., 02.B., and 02.C. (copy attached).

03. Action: Approval of the MDE grant awards [Goal 3– MBE Strategic Plan] (Felicia Gavin)

03.A. Action: Award competitive grants to Early Learning Collaborative to support pre-kindergarten programs [Goal 3 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Donna Boone)

On a motion by Ms. Mary Werner, seconded by Dr. Wendi Barrett, the Board unanimously approved item 03.A. (copy attached).

04. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of monthly expenditures for the Mississippi School of the Arts (Donna Boone)
- B. Approval of monthly expenditures for the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (Donna Boone)
- C. Approval of certified personnel for the Mississippi School of the Arts, Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, and Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (Donna Boone)

On a motion by Mr. Bill Jacobs, seconded by Mr. Mike Pruitt, the Board unanimously approved items A., B., and C. (copy attached).

XI. Consideration of Executive Session

Mr. Matt Miller moved that the Board consider making a closed determination of the need to go into Executive Session. Ms. Mary Werner seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a unanimous vote. Mr. Glen V. East asked for Legal Counsel and Dr. Raymond C. Morgigno to remain in the room.

Mr. Matt Miller, then moved that the Board go into Executive Session in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-7(4)(b) and (d), to discuss strategy sessions or negotiations with respect to prospective litigation, litigation, or issuance of an appealable order and to discuss investigative proceedings by any public body regarding allegations of misconduct or violation of law.

Mr. Mike Pruitt seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Ms. Jennifer Nichols informed the public of the Board's vote to go into Executive Session for the above stated reasons.

**Minutes of the Executive Session**

During the Executive Session, in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-7(4)(b) and (d), the Board discussed strategy sessions or negotiations with respect to prospective litigation, litigation, or issuance of an appealable order and discussed investigative proceedings by any public body regarding allegations of misconduct or violation of law.

Ms. Mary Werner left the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

On a motion by Mr. Matt Miller, seconded by Mr. Mike Pruitt, the Board voted 5 to 0 to come out of Executive Session.

The public came back into the Board meeting and Mr. East stated the Board took action on one item during the Executive Session.

01. On a motion by Ms. Mary Werner, seconded by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, the Board voted unanimously to approve the request for South Delta School District and schools to maintain the same accountability designation in the 2022-2023 school year as assigned in the 2021-2022 school year.

XII. State Board of Education

1. No report on meetings attended.
2. No request to attend a meeting.

XIII. Other Business


Mr. East gave an update on the State Superintendent search process. He stated the recruitment period for the State Superintendent of Education began on August 14, 2023, and will close on October 19, 2023. Mr. East stated the position announcement is posted on the MDE website, the McPherson & Jacobson website, and it has been shared nationally by the search firm. He stated on September 5, 2023, the Communications Office will release a Stakeholder Survey for public comment which will close on September 22, 2023. Mr. East stated that on November 2, 2023, the State Board will meet with the McPherson & Jacobson consultants to discuss the candidates who applied for the position, view applicant videos, and select the semi-finalists for interview on December 11-12, 2023. He stated that following the semi-finalist interviews, finalists will be selected for interview on December 20, 2023. Mr. East stated the State Superintendent will be appointed by the State Board on December 20, 2023, with a hire date of July 1, 2024, upon Senate confirmation.

Mr. East stated the September Board meeting will be held on September 28, 2023, in Jackson, MS at the Central High School Building in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor Boardroom starting at 10:00 a.m.

XIV. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Matt Miller, seconded by Dr. Wendi Barrett, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:07 p.m.

Approved:

  
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Glen V. East, Board Chair  
Mississippi Board of Education

  
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Raymond C. Morgigno  
Interim Executive Secretary  
Mississippi Board of Education