



**Minutes of the  
Commission on School Accreditation  
Central High School Building  
Fourth Floor, Board Room  
359 North West Street  
Jackson, Mississippi  
October 3, 2019  
10:00 a.m.**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission on School Accreditation (CSA or Commission) took place at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 3, 2019. The Commission members present in the Fourth Floor Board Room of the Central High School Building, 359 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi included:

Heather Westerfield, Chair  
Kelle Barfield  
Sean Brewer  
Sarah Foster  
Roy Gill  
Michael Lindsey  
Dr. Valencia Martin  
John Mistilis

Attending via teleconference: None

The following members did not attend:

Brian Harvey  
Eddie Prather  
Anthony Montgomery  
Brad Stevens  
Ingrid Williams

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Accreditation staff members/representatives present included:

Dr. Paula Vanderford, Chief Accountability Officer  
Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Executive Secretary  
Melissa Biggs, Office of Accreditation  
Shulawnda Johnson, Office of Accreditation  
Angela Kitchens, Office of Accreditation  
Angelo Nuzzo, Office of Accreditation  
Ken Stamps, Office of Accreditation

Also in attendance: Alan Burrow and Wendy Clemons

Erin Meyer, Special Assistant Attorney General, served as legal counsel to the Commission.

**I. Call to Order and Invocation**

Heather Westerfield, Chair of the CSA, opened the Commission meeting and conducted a roll-call of the Commission members.

Ms. Westerfield announced that a quorum of the Commission existed.

Ms. Westerfield called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Sarah Foster led an invocation.

**II. Adoption of Agenda**

On a motion by Sean Brewer, seconded by Michael Lindsey, the Commission unanimously approved the agenda.

**III. Action: Approval of the minutes of the September 17, 2019 Meeting of the Commission on School Accreditation**

On a motion by Sean Brewer, seconded by Sarah Foster, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2019 meeting.

**IV. Action: Approval to downgrade the Accreditation Status of the Carroll County School District from ACCREDITED to PROBATION**

On a motion by Roy Gill, seconded by Kelle Barfield, the Commission unanimously voted to downgrade the accreditation status of the Carroll County School District from ACCREDITED to PROBATION.

**V. Discussion: Consideration of request to revise Accreditation Policies in Miss. Admin. Code: 7-24: Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2019**

Dr. Malone reminded the Commission that these were the revisions that were discussed in a previous meeting and were now being brought forward for consideration to begin the APA process.

Committee members asked that the MDE confirm the status of Policy 4.2.3 Financial Rewards to ensure that recent changes in statute are reflected in the edits.

**VI. Action: Approval to submit request to the State Board of Education to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process to revise the Accreditation Policies in Miss. Admin. Code: 7-24: Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2019**

On a motion by Sean Brewer, seconded by John Mistilis, the Commission unanimously voted to submit a request to the State Board of Education to begin the Administrative Procedures Act

process to revise the Accreditation Policies in Miss. Admin. Code: 7-24: *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2019*

**VII. Information: Report of the Internal Review Committee's decision of the Final Accountability Results in accordance with Accreditation Policy 3.1.4 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2019***

Alan Burrow, Executive Director of the Office of School and District Performance, provided a report of the Internal Review Committee's decision of the Final Accountability Results in accordance with Accreditation Policy 3.1.4 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2019* for the following districts:

**a. North Bolivar Consolidated School District**

Mr. Burrow explained that North Bolivar Consolidated School District was appealing the graduation rate of Northside High School and that the Internal Review Committee met on October 1, 2019 and unanimously voted to deny the district's appeal based on business rules 8.5 and 20.1 of the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System.

**b. George County School District**

Mr. Burrow explained that George County School District was appealing the participation rate for two (2) schools, Benndale Elementary School and George County Middle School and that the Internal Review Committee met on October 1, 2019 and unanimously voted to deny the district's appeals based on business rules 4.1, 18.1, and 18.3 of the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System. Mr. Burrow further explained that the explanation provided by the district is a violation of Process Standard 21 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2019*.

**VIII. Discussion: Appeals of the Final Accountability Results in accordance with Accreditation Policy 3.1.4 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2019***

In accordance with Policy 3.1.4 of the *Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Standards, 2019*, the CSA gave each superintendent and the MDE an opportunity to address the CSA during this meeting.

**a. North Bolivar Consolidated School District**

Mr. Maurice Smith, Superintendent of the North Bolivar Consolidated School District presented a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of the North Bolivar Consolidated School District.

**b. George County School District**

Due to a medical emergency and in the absence of Ms. Pamela Touchard, Superintendent of the George County School District, Dr. David King, District Test Coordinator presented for

the District. Dr. King asked the Commission for permission to distribute a packet of information. Attorney Meyer advised the Commission to take a 10-minute recess to give her time to review the materials for any information before granted permission to the district to distribute the materials. The Commission took a 10-minute recess.

**c. Mississippi Department of Education's Response**

Dr. Paula Vanderford, MDE's Chief Accountability Officer, Alan Burrow, and Wendy Clemons, presented on behalf of the MDE and rebutted the information presented.

The Commission took a recess at 12:20 p.m. for lunch and resumed at 12:50 p.m.

**IX. Action: Consideration of appeals of the Final Accountability Results in accordance with Accreditation Policy 3.1.4 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2019***

**a. North Bolivar Consolidated School District**

On a motion by Roy Gill, seconded by Michael Lindsey, the Commission voted 6-1 to uphold the Internal Review Committee's Decision and deny the appeal of the North Bolivar Consolidated School District's Northside High School based on business rule 20.1 of the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System.

Members voting aye:

Kelle Barfield

Sean Brewer

Roy Gill

Michael Lindsey

Dr. Valencia Martin

John Mistilis

Members voting nay:

Sarah Foster

**b. George County School District**

The CSA considered the appeals of the two (2) schools within the George County School District separately. Additionally, the CSA made two (2) separate motions related to the appeal for George County Middle School. The CSA voted to grant in part and deny in part the appeals from the George County School District.

On a motion by Roy Gill, seconded by Sean Brewer, the Commission unanimously voted to uphold the decision of the Internal Review Committee and deny the appeal for Benndale Elementary School due to the general lack of participation in required assessments.

Sean Brewer made a motion to grant the appeal and overturn the decision of the Internal Review Committee for the sixteen (16) students enrolled in George County Middle School's Star Academy with the stipulation that the District implement a policy to prevent any future occurrences of mid-year promotions. The motion was seconded by John Mistilis. After discussion, Sean Brewer amended the motion to remove the stipulation. The amended motion was seconded by John Mistilis. The Commission unanimously voted to grant the appeal and overturn the decision of the Internal Review Committee for the sixteen (16) students enrolled in George County Middle School's Star Academy.

On a motion by Kelle Barfield, seconded by Dr. Valencia Martin, the Commission unanimously voted to uphold the Internal Review Committee's Decision and deny the appeal of the final accountability results for the other students referenced in the appeal for George County Middle School.

**X. Other Business**

Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Executive Secretary, informed the Commission that Kenny Bush had resigned from the Commission thus leaving a vacancy for a non-educator and reminded the Commission that the next regularly scheduled meeting will be Thursday, December 5, 2019.

**XI. Adjournment**

On a motion by Roy Gill, seconded by Dr. Valencia Martin, the Commission unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 1:29 p.m.

APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION:

Dec. 5 2019  
(Month) (Day) (Year)

Heather Westphal  
Chair of the Commission

Jo Ann Malone  
Executive Secretary of the Commission