



**Minutes of the  
Commission on School Accreditation  
Regular Scheduled Meeting  
Central High School Building  
Senator Grey Ferris Board Room  
359 North West Street  
Jackson, Mississippi  
August 2, 2021  
10:00 a.m.**

The regular scheduled meeting of the Commission on School Accreditation (CSA or Commission) took place at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, August 2, 2021. The public was invited to attend in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Auditorium of the Central High School Building, 359 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi. Commission members in attendance in the Senator Grey Ferris Board Room included:

Pamela Manners, Chair  
Dr. Lundy Brantley  
Lori Brechtel  
Grant Dickinson  
Dr. Carla Evers  
Reginald Goins  
Jefferson Hughes  
Dr. Valencia Martin  
Brad Stevens  
Jan Vaughn  
Sarah Wansley  
Ingrid Williams

Commission members in attendance via teleconference included:

Kelle Barfield, Vicksburg, MS  
Aisha Maxwell, Olive Branch, MS  
Brett Robinson, Clinton, MS

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

Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Executive Director/Executive Secretary, Office of Accreditation  
Dr. Paula Vanderford, Chief Accountability Officer  
Dr. Felicia Gavin, Chief Financial Officer  
Dr. Nathan Oakley, Chief Academic Officer  
Jean Cook, Public Relations Director  
Wendy Clemons, Executive Director, Office of Secondary Education/Dropout Prevention  
Melissa Biggs, Office of Accreditation  
Darla Hammons, Office of Academic Education

David Minton, Special Assistant Attorney General, served as legal counsel to the Commission.

**I. Announcement of Quorum and Call to Order**

Ms. Pamela Manners, Chair of the CSA, opened the Commission meeting and conducted a rollcall of the Commission members.

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

Ms. Manners called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

**II. Adoption of Agenda**

Ms. Manners asked the Commission members to review the proposed agenda. On a motion by Dr. Carla Evers, seconded by Dr. Lundy Brantley, the Commission unanimously approved the agenda.

**III. Action: Approval of the minutes of the June 3, 2021, Meeting of the Commission on School Accreditation**

On a motion by Kelle Barfield, seconded by Dr. Valencia Martin, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2021, meeting.

**IV. Action: Approval of the minutes of the July 1, 2021, Special-Called Meeting of the Commission on School Accreditation**

On a motion by Dr. Lundy Brantley, seconded by Mr. Jefferson Hughes, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2021, special-called meeting.

**V. Action: Approval of the minutes of the July 20, 2021, Special-Called Work Session of the Commission on School Accreditation**

On a motion by Dr. Valencia Martin, seconded by Ms. Sarah Wansley, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2021, special-called work session.

**VI. Discussion: Report on the existence of an extreme emergency situation regarding the safety, security, and educational interests of the children enrolled in the Holmes County Consolidated School District**

Dr. Paula Vanderford, Chief Accountability Officer, and Dr. Felicia Gavin, Chief Financial Officer, reported to the Commission concerning the existence of an extreme emergency situation in the Holmes County Consolidated School District which jeopardizes the safety, security, and educational interests of the children enrolled in the schools in this District.

In accordance with Accreditation Policy 5.0 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2020*, the State Superintendent of Education called for a full investigative audit of the Holmes County Consolidated School District which the MDE conducted April 27, 2021, through July 23, 2021. On July 26, 2021, the MDE provided the District with the On-Site Investigative

Audit Report. The report revealed that the Holmes County Consolidated School District failed to comply with 26 of the 32 process standards. Accreditation Policy 2.5 outlines the nine (9) areas for an immediate downgrade to PROBATION or WITHDRAWN, which are considered the most serious violations of process standards. The District is in violation of nine (9) of these nine (9) areas:

- Reporting false information;
- Failure to implement appropriate standards of governance;
- Failure to comply with local school board policies that meet state and federal statutes, rules, and regulations;
- Failure to comply with financial accountability requirements of a serious nature;
- Failure to comply with graduation requirements;
- Failure to comply with test security procedures required by the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System outlined in Appendix F, numbers 8 and 9;
- Failure to comply with state/federal programs whose regulations call for strong sanctions for a continued pattern of noncompliance;
- Failure to comply with instructional practices; and
- Failure to comply with standards that pose life-threatening conditions for students and staff.

Dr. Vanderford stated, based on Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6(12)(b), the State Board of Education must determine if an extreme emergency exists in the Holmes County Consolidated School District that jeopardizes the safety, security, or educational interest of the children enrolled in that District.

Ms. Manners recognized Dr. Debra Powell, Superintendent of the Holmes County Consolidated School District, and she addressed the Commission. Additionally, Board Member Anthony Anderson also addressed the Commission. The Holmes County Consolidated School District submitted a binder to the Commission as part of their presentation, which the Commission accepted.

The Commission asked questions of both the MDE and the District. The Commission then heard closing arguments from Mr. Clarence Webster, legal representative for Holmes County Consolidated School District and Mr. Joe Goff, legal representative for the Mississippi Department of Education.

**VII. Action: Discussion and action request for the need to declare a state of emergency in the Holmes County Consolidated School District**

Dr. Lundy Brantley made a motion to consider going into Closed Session for consideration of entering Executive Session for deliberations and discussions. Mr. Brad Stevens seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

After entering closed session, Dr. Lundy Brantley moved that the Commission go into Executive Session for discussion and/or deliberations with respect to investigative proceedings regarding allegations of misconduct or violations of law in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-

7(4)(d), specifically, regarding whether the Commission finds there is sufficient cause to believe that an extreme emergency situation exists in the Holmes County Consolidated School District.

Ms. Jan Vaughn seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous in favor of the motion. Counsel for the Commission made announcement of the Executive Session and subject matter thereof in a common area of the 4th floor of the Central High School Building.

After deliberations on the presentations by MDE and the Holmes County Consolidated School District, a discussion was had on the form and language of a resolution finding an extreme emergency situation. Upon drafting, Dr. Lundy Brantley moved that the Commission adopt the resolution that an extreme emergency situation did exist in Holmes County Consolidated School District and for presentment of said resolution to the State Board of Education. Mr. Jefferson Hughes seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Ms. Pamela Manners, as Chairperson, abstained from the vote. The remaining Commission members present all voted and unanimously adopted the resolution.

Dr. Valencia Martin moved that the Commission exit executive session and return to open session, which Mr. Grant Dickinson seconded. A voice vote was unanimous in favor of the motion. Ms. Pamela Manners, Chair of the Commission, read the resolution.

**VIII. Discussion: Consideration of request to revise Miss. Admin. Code: 7-24, *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2021* (Process Standard 2.4)**

Ms. Wendy Clemons, Executive Director, Office of Secondary Education/Dropout Prevention, presented the request to the Commission members.

**IX. Action: Approval to submit request to the State Board of Education to begin the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) process to revise Miss. Admin. Code: 7-24, *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2021* (Process Standard 2.4)**

On a motion by Dr. Valencia Martin, seconded by Ms. Jan Vaughn, the Commission voted unanimously to submit request to the State Board of Education to begin the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) process to revise Miss. Admin. Code: 7-24, *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2021* (Process Standard 2.4).

**X. Action: Approval to upgrade the North Panola Consolidated School District's accreditation status from PROBATION to ACCREDITED**

On a motion by Dr. Carla Evers, seconded by Mr. Grant Dickinson, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the upgrade of the North Panola Consolidated School District's accreditation status from PROBATION to ACCREDITED.

**XI. Action: Approval to upgrade the Benton County School District's accreditation status from PROBATION to ACCREDITED**

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On a motion by Mr. Jefferson Hughes, seconded by Dr. Lundy Brantley, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the upgrade of the Benton County School District's accreditation status from PROBATION to ACCREDITED.

**XII. Other Business**

Dr. Malone reminded Commission members that the next regular scheduled meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Thursday, October 7, 2021, and that the MDE will begin relocating to a new temporary location in Clinton, Mississippi. Therefore, the place of the meeting will be determined at a later date.

**IV. Adjournment**

On a motion by Ms. Lori Brechtel, seconded by Mr. Grant Dickinson, the Commission unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION:

October 19, 2021  
(Month) (Day) (Year)

Parula Manner  
Chair of the Commission

John Malone  
Executive Secretary of the Commission