

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Item
April 19-20, 2012

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION

47. Approval of request to Governor that the Governor declare a state of emergency in the Aberdeen School District

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached:

DRAFT

April 20, 2012

The Honorable Phil Bryant
Governor
State of Mississippi
Post Office Box 139
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

Dear Governor Bryant:

This letter is in regard to action taken by the Mississippi Board of Education concerning the Aberdeen School District. The Commission on School Accreditation held a special-called meeting on April 18, 2012 to consider information presented by the Office of Accreditation, Mississippi Department of Education, regarding the District's impairments related to serious violations of accreditation standards, violations of state and federal law, and a continued pattern of poor student performance in the District.

Grave concerns raised by the information provided by Department staff required the Commission to consider its responsibility under Section 37-17-6 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended. This consideration led the Commission to determine, as evidenced by its Resolution, that an extreme emergency situation exists in the Aberdeen School District and that this extreme emergency jeopardizes the safety, security, and educational interests of the children enrolled in the schools of this District pursuant to Section 37-17-6 (11)(b).

The reports from the Department staff and the Commission's Resolution were presented to the Mississippi Board of Education at its April 19, 2012 work session. Due deliberation of the reports and documents led the Board to conclude that an extreme emergency situation exists in the Aberdeen School District brought on by serious violations of accreditation standards, violations of state and federal law, and a continued pattern of poor student performance, which jeopardizes the safety, security, and educational interests of the children enrolled in the schools of this District. At its April 20, 2012 meeting, the Board unanimously approved a Resolution determining that an extreme emergency situation exists in the District pursuant to Section 37-17-6 (11)(b).

The Board also unanimously approved a motion, pursuant to the same statute, asking you to declare that a state of emergency exists in the Aberdeen School District. To that end, please accept this correspondence as the official request by the Commission on School Accreditation and by the Mississippi Board of Education that you declare that a state of emergency exists in the Aberdeen School District. Contingent upon your declaration that a state of emergency exists in the District, the Board unanimously approved a motion, pursuant to Section 37-17-6 (11)(c)(vii) and Section 37-17-13, abolishing the Aberdeen School District.

Recognizing that this action is of the gravest nature, I am submitting the following documents in support of the Commission and Board request: a copy of the April 18th Resolution adopted by the Commission on School Accreditation; a copy of the April 20th Resolution adopted by the Mississippi Board of Education; and, a draft of the April 19 and 20, 2012 minutes of the Mississippi Board of Education. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Tom Burnham, State Superintendent of Education, at (601) 359-3512.

Respectfully,

Charles McClelland, Chair
Mississippi Board of Education

WHJ:sw

cc: Tom Burnham, State Superintendent of Education
Commission on School Accreditation