

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Item
September 12-13, 2013

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION

21. Approval of request to the Governor that the Governor declare a state of emergency in the Claiborne County School District

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

O. WAYNE GANN, Chair

LYNN J. HOUSE, Ph.D.
Executive Secretary

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September 13, 2013

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

VIA HAND-DELIVERY

Dear Governor Bryant:

This letter is in regard to action taken by the Mississippi Board of Education concerning the Claiborne County School District. The Commission on School Accreditation held a regular meeting on September 10, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. 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 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 Claiborne County 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 regular meeting on September 12, 2013. Due to deliberation of the reports and documents led the Board to conclude that an extreme emergency situation exists in the Claiborne County School District brought on by serious violations of accreditation standards, violations of state 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 September 13, 2013 regular meeting immediately following the work session, 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 Claiborne County 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 Claiborne County 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 Claiborne County 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 September 10, 2013 Resolution adopted by the Commission on School Accreditation; a copy of the September 13, 2013 Resolution adopted by the Mississippi Board of Education; and, a draft of the September 12-13, 2013 minutes of the Mississippi Board of Education. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Lynn J. House, Interim State Superintendent of Education, at (601) 359-3512.

Respectfully,

Dr. O. Wayne Gann, Chair
Mississippi Board of Education

OWG:sj

cc: Lynn J. House, Interim State Superintendent of Education
Commission on School Accreditation