

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

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION

33. Approval of request to the Governor that the Governor declare a state of emergency in the Leflore 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

HOWELL N. GAGE, *Vice-Chair*

MEMBERS
KAMI BUMGARNER
CHARLES MCCLELLAND
WILLIAM H. JONES
JOHN R. KELLY

September 13, 2013

MEMBERS
MARTHA MURPHY
RICHARD MORRISON
SIMON F. WEIR, II

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 Leflore 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 and the Office of School Improvement, 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. Additionally, the Leflore County School District meets the School Board of Education's definition of a failing school district for two (2) consecutive full school years and 100% of the schools within the district are designated as failing for the 2012-2013 school year.

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 Leflore 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 Leflore 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 Leflore 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 Leflore 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 Leflore 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