

Minutes of Mississippi Board of Education Meeting

August 18, 2022

The members of the Mississippi Board of Education met in a Board meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, August 18, 2022, in person and via video conference means pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-5 for the purpose of conducting the Board meeting.

The Board made this meeting available to the public via live stream at the Mississippi School Boards Association located at 380 Zurich Drive, Ridgeland, Mississippi. Board members physically present included: Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman, Mr. Glen V. East, Mr. Bill Jacobs, Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, Mr. Matt Miller, and Ms. Mary Werner. Board members attending via video conference means included: Dr. Wendi Barrett (Biloxi, Mississippi) and Dr. Karen Elam (Steamboat Springs, Colorado). Student Representatives present: Ms. Micah Hill and Mr. Charlie Frugé. Dr. Kim S. Benton, Interim State Superintendent, was also present.

Dr. Angela Bass joined the meeting at 10:10 a.m. for recognition purposes.

- I. Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman called the Board meeting to order at 10:02 a.m., after determining that a quorum of the Board existed for the purpose of conducting a meeting through video conference means in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-5.
- II. Ms. Mary Werner led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Matt Miller gave the Invocation.
- III. On a motion by Ms. Mary Werner, seconded by Mr. Matt Miller, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2022, Board meeting.
- IV. On a motion by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, seconded by Mr. Bill Jacobs, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.
- V. No recognition ceremony.
- VI. Dr. Kim S. Benton gave the following report as the Interim State Superintendent of Education:
 - Dr. Benton stated the MDE had a busy and productive month supporting districts as they welcomed more than 400,000 students back to Mississippi classrooms.
 - Dr. Benton stated that the work continues on the repairs to the Central High School building. Interior projects are on schedule, though rain has delayed the roofing schedule by about a week.
 - Dr. Benton stated she had several meetings with state leaders and legislators this month including Governor Tate Reeves, House Speaker

Philip Gunn, State Auditor Shad White, Department of Public Safety Commissioner Sean Tindell, and members of the Jackson Legislative Delegation. Dr. Benton stated these meetings provided the opportunity to build partnerships and talk about how we are pressing forward with our work to continue to improve student achievement.

- Dr. Benton met with the new cohort of TeachPlus Fellows at their kickoff meeting in Jackson last Saturday. This program enables teachers from across the state to learn how education policies are made and provides training and opportunities to influence policies that ultimately impact the classroom. Dr. Benton stated it was impressive to see these twenty-five educators volunteer their time on the weekend to engage in professional growth.
- Dr. Benton welcomed Mississippi teachers back to school with a short video and shared it through the various communication channels and she appreciated the support from other educational organizations in our state that also shared the video.
- Dr. Benton stated that she and members of the Executive Leadership Team traveled to Hattiesburg for the first Regional Superintendents Meetings of the fall. Dr. Benton thanked Mr. Matt Miller for joining the meeting and that the Superintendents truly appreciated his presence and support. Dr. Benton stated she is looking forward to the next five Regional Superintendents Meetings in September.
- Dr. Benton stated she is excited to announce that this month MDE celebrates 10 years of providing literacy coaching support for teachers. The MDE literacy coaches are a key part of statewide systems of support for K-3 schools and teachers. This year we have forty-five literacy coaches and staff serving thirty-nine districts and seventy-six schools. Dr. Benton stated that MDE has also advertised for additional contractual literacy coaches to reach even more districts.
- Dr. Benton stated that she attended a virtual town hall meeting hosted by the Mississippi Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The event provided information to family physicians and pediatricians about the University of Mississippi Medical Center's school-based telehealth program. Four districts are currently receiving telehealth services and thirty more districts will come on board in October.
- Dr. Benton stated she made her first appearance on the Paul Gallo Show on SuperTalk Radio and enjoyed talking about the start of the new school year.
- Dr. Benton stated that other media highlights include:
 - Time Magazine article titled, Inside the Massive Effort to Change the Way Kids Are Taught to Read, which highlighted Mississippi's effective literacy reforms.
 - Digital Promise article titled, How Mississippi Stakeholders Collaborated to Narrow the Digital Divide, about our Mississippi Connects initiative.

- Dr. Benton stated that she wanted to recognize the MDE’s State Special Education Director, Robin Lemonis, who is retiring this month after a 30-year career in education and nearly 10 years at the MDE. Ms. Lemonis has served as the state director of special education for the MDE since 2019 and previously led various programs including Student Intervention Services, Literacy, Early Childhood, Response to Intervention, and Dyslexia. Dr. Benton stated that Ms. Lemonis has been a strong supporter of students with dyslexia and has been instrumental in formulating policies and expanding resources for parents, teachers, and administrators to ensure the success of all students. Dr. Benton stated that throughout her career, Ms. Lemonis advanced the education profession through her leadership roles in numerous state and national organizations and most importantly, she has touched the lives of countless students and educators.

VII. Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman, Chair of the State Board, gave the following report:

- Ms. Aultman stated that for the majority of the month, she has been working to organize dates and times for interviews while working with Ms. Sonya Amis, Dr. Felicia Gavin, and the consultants.
- Ms. Aultman stated she met with Dr. Benton.
- Ms. Aultman stated that Mr. Charlie Frugé from Oxford High School was chosen as the junior representative, and he is here today.
- Ms. Aultman stated that Dr. Angela Bass has taken a new job and is leaving the Board. Ms. Aultman stated that Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee will serve as the Chair of the School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee.
- Ms. Aultman read a Resolution for Dr. Bass (copy attached).

VIII. Report of Student Representatives

Ms. Micah Hill stated she participated in NASBE’s Student Engagement Collaborative where the mission is equity and excellence in public education for students of all races, genders, and circumstances. Ms. Hill stated the facilitators were Ms. Celina Pierrottet and Ms. Megan Blanco and the student helpers were Ms. Solyana Mesfin (KY) and Ms. Grace Anne Dela Cruz (GU). Ms. Hill stated there were nine student representatives on the team from all over the United States, and some from outside the country. Ms. Hill showed part of a video made by student representatives from Guam. This video discussed mental health in Guam and what they did to get students help. Ms. Hill stated that after the video there were questions to answer and an item to create individual problem statements, get statistics, and then present findings to the Board. Ms. Hill stated that she looks forward to working with Mr. Charlie Frugé on this project.

Mr. Charlie Frugé stated that he attended the Hugh O’Brien Youth Leadership Seminar on the Millsaps campus. This seminar focused on personal leadership and leadership as a group. Mr. Frugé was able to hear a lot of great speakers.

Mr. Frugé stated he attended a two-week class on the Vanderbilt campus in Nashville, Tennessee that focused on education policy and the professor talked about the guidance counselor shortage. Mr. Frugé reported on the Oxford School District Portrait of a Graduate (copy attached) that hangs in nearly every classroom at Oxford to remind students of the eight skills they need to succeed in the 21st Century. Mr. Frugé stated that in 2018, forty-five community leaders met to identify the most crucial skills needed to succeed and this Portrait of a Graduate was adopted. Mr. Frugé talked about effective communication, critical thinking, and personal responsibility.

IX. Report on State Board of Education Subcommittee meetings

Mr. Glen V. East, Chair of the Academic Achievement PreK-12/Early Childhood Subcommittee, reported that the textbook depository will make changes to help school districts make it easier so there is one system to use and the PreK collaboratives are moving forward. Mr. East stated that an update was given on the Social Studies curriculum and the MDE team has used the input from public comments received to produce a powerful document and it will come to the Board in the next few months.

Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, Chair of the Workforce/Career and Technical Education Subcommittee, reported that an update was given on workforce development and the implementation of House Bill 1388. Dr. McGehee stated the Expert Citizenship License will help in CTE moving forward.

Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, Chair of the School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee, reported the Subcommittee had discussions and Dr. Paula Vanderford will give the report on the results of 2021-2022 Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP).

X. Discussion and/or Approval of Board Items

01. Information: 2021-2022 Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Results [Goals 1 and 2 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

Dr. Paula Vanderford presented the results of the 2021-2022 Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP). The results showed overall student achievement exceeding pre-pandemic levels in English Language Arts (ELA) and science and nearly tying in mathematics.

02. Action: Approval of the MDE Contracts [Goals 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Felicia Gavin)

- 02.A. Action: Award sole source contract for a Textbook Depository to assist school districts in managing, inventorying, and procuring

instructional materials (Textbooks) [Goal 1, 2, and 5 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Marla Davis)

- 02.B. Action: Approval of the employment agreement with Dr. Jennifer Wilson to serve as the Interim Superintendent for the Holmes County Consolidated School District [Goals 1, 2, 4, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Kim Benton)

On a motion by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, seconded by Dr. Karen J. Elam, the Board unanimously approved items 02.A. and 02.B. (copy attached).

03. Action: Approval of the MDE grant awards [Goals 3 and 4 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Felicia Gavin)

03.A. Action: Award grant for special projects appropriated by the Mississippi Legislature to the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) with a World Class Teacher Program (WCTP) site in House Bill 1600, 2022 Legislative Session [Goal 4 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

03.B. Action: Award competitive grants to Early Learning Collaboratives to support pre-kindergarten programs [Goal 3 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Tenette Smith)

On a motion by Ms. Mary Werner, seconded by Mr. Glen V. East, the Board unanimously approved items 03.A. and 03.B. (copy attached).

04. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of monthly expenditures for the Mississippi School of the Arts (Wendy Clemons)
- B. Approval of monthly expenditures for the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (Wendy Clemons)
- C. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To revise Miss. Admin. Code: 7-24: *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2022*, Appendices A-6 – A-10, A-12, and C-2 and Miss. Admin. Code 7-163: *Mississippi Nonpublic School Accountability Standards, 2022*, Appendices A-6 – A-10, A-12, and C-2 (Wendy Clemons)
- D. Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code: 7-24: *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2022*, specifically Process Standard 2.4, and Miss. Admin. Code: 7-163: *Mississippi Nonpublic School*

Accountability Standards, 2022, specifically Process Standard 2.4 – Student Support Services

(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process with one public comment) (Wendy Clemons)

- E. Approval to establish Miss. Admin. Code 7-24: *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2022*, specifically to establish Process Standard 17.9 – Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Training and to establish Miss. Admin. Code 7-163: *Mississippi Nonpublic School Accountability Standards, 2022*, specifically to establish Process Standard 14.9 – Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Training
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Wendy Clemons)
- F. Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code 7-24: *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2022* specifically Process Standard 17.4 – Special Education
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Marla Davis)
- G. Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code 7-24: *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2022*, specifically Process Standard 2.2: More than 5% Professional Staff Working Out-of-Field
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Paula Vanderford)
- H. Approval to establish Miss. Admin. Code 7-239: *Instructor’s Guide for Training School Bus Drivers*
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Paula Vanderford)
- I. Approval of certified personnel for the Mississippi School of the Arts, Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, and Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (Wendy Clemons)
- J. Approval to revise the methodology to reimburse costs incurred by school districts and charter schools related to the ACT WorkKeys Assessment (Wendy Clemons)
- K. Approval to revise the methodology to reimburse costs incurred by school districts and charter schools related to Advanced Placement, dual credit, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge, and diploma endorsements (Wendy Clemons)

On a motion by Mr. Matt Miller, seconded by Mr. Bill Jacobs, the Board unanimously approved items A., B., C., D., E., F., G., H., I., J., and K. (copy attached).

XI. Consideration of Executive Session

Mr. Glen V. East moved that the Board consider making a closed determination of the need to go into Executive Session. Mr. Matt Miller seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a vote of 7 to 0. Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman asked Dr. Kim S. Benton, Ms. Baylea Blough, and Ms. Erin Meyer to remain in the Executive Session.

Mr. Glen V. East, then moved that the Board go into Executive Session in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-7(4)(a), (b), and (k) to discuss discrete personnel matters related to the State Superintendent search process for the Department of Education, and for strategy sessions or negotiations with respect to prospective litigation, litigation or issuance of an appealable order. Mr. Matt Miller seconded the motion, which passed on a motion of 7 to 0. Ms. Baylea Blough informed the public of the Board's vote to go into Executive Session for the above stated reasons.

Minutes of the Executive Session

During the Executive Session, the Board in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-7(4)(a), (b), and (k) discussed discrete personnel matters related to the State Superintendent search process for the Department of Education, and for strategy sessions or negotiations with respect to prospective litigation, litigation or issuance of an appealable order.

On a motion by Mr. Glen V. East, seconded by Ms. Mary Werner, the Board voted 7 to 0 to come out of Executive Session.

The public came back into the Board meeting and Ms. Aultman stated that no action was taken during the Executive Session. Ms. Aultman stated that the Board heard an update on legal issues and a report was given from the consultants on the State Superintendent search.

XII. State Board of Education

1. Mr. Matt Miller stated that he attended the Regional Superintendents Meeting in Hattiesburg and there was a lot of information given during the meeting. Mr. Miller stated that he was impressed with the engagement of the superintendents during the meeting.
2. No request to attend a meeting.

XIII. Other Business

01. Action: Approval to move the location of the State Board of Education November 10, 2022, meeting from the Mississippi School Boards Association, 380 Zurich Drive, Ridgeland, Mississippi 39157 to the Madison County School District Boardroom, 476 Highland Parkway, Ridgeland, MS 39157

On a motion by Mr. Glen V. East, seconded by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, the Board unanimously approved to change the location of the November 10, 2022, meeting from the Mississippi School Boards Association, 380 Zurich Drive, Ridgeland, Mississippi 39157 to the Madison County School District Boardroom, 476 Highland Parkway, Ridgeland, MS 39157.

Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman stated the September Board meeting will be held on September 29, 2022, in Ridgeland, Mississippi at the Mississippi School Boards Association, 380 Zurich Drive starting at 10:00 a.m.

XIV. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Matt Miller, seconded by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:23 p.m.

Approved:


Rosemary G. Aultman, Chair
Mississippi Board of Education



Kim S. Benton
Interim Executive Secretary
Mississippi Board of Education