

Minutes of Mississippi Board of Education Meeting

January 19, 2023

The members of the Mississippi Board of Education met at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 19, 2023, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-5 for the purpose of conducting a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

The public could access this meeting via livestream or in-person at the Madison County School District Boardroom, Ridgeland, Mississippi. Board members physically present included: Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman, Dr. Wendi Barrett, Mr. Glen V. East, Mr. Bill Jacobs, Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, Mr. Matt Miller, and Ms. Mary Werner. Student Representative present: Ms. Micah Hill. Student Representative absent: Mr. Charlie Frugé. Dr. Kim S. Benton, Interim State Superintendent, and Dr. Robert P. Taylor, State Superintendent, were also present.

- I. Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman called the Board meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., after determining that a quorum of the Board existed for the purpose of conducting a meeting.
- II. Mr. Bill Jacobs led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Matt Miller gave the Invocation.
- III. On a motion by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, seconded by Ms. Mary Werner, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the December 15, 2022, Board meeting.
- IV. On a motion by Mr. Bill Jacobs, seconded by Mr. Matt Miller, the Board unanimously adopted 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 welcomed Dr. Robert P. Taylor as the new State Superintendent. Dr. Benton stated this is her final Board meeting as Interim State Superintendent and will work with Dr. Taylor and the MDE staff through the end of the month to assist with the transition.
 - Dr. Benton stated all legislators and elected officials received a hand-delivered copy of the *2021-2022 Superintendent's Annual Report* on the first day of the session. Dr. Benton stated that Board members and many education partners received their copies by mail.
 - Dr. Benton stated she, Dr. Taylor, Dr. Felicia Gavin, and Ms. Holly Spivey attended the Senate Budget Committee hearing to present MDE's budget request for Fiscal Year 2024 and to share information about the previous year's return on investment.

- Dr. Benton stated she and MDE staff met with directors of Mississippi's six Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) to plan professional development for the 2023-24 school year.
- Dr. Benton stated MDE has received two grants to help further our work. Dr. Benton stated the first grant is federal Preschool Development Grant, which the Mississippi Department of Human Services is implementing as the lead agency and MDE is the primary partner state agency and will receive approximately \$6 million annually to provide professional development and support to early learning providers not currently engaged in Early Learning Collaborative services/trainings. Dr. Benton stated the second grant that MDE received is a three-year grant from Strategic Education Research Partnership (SERP) to work with 20 middle schools in the area of sixth through eighth grade reading.
- Dr. Benton stated the Region 7 Comprehensive Center (R7CC) that supports Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana is on track with its work facilitating the review of our English Learner standards and will meet with agency leads tomorrow during our cross-office meeting to provide an overview of all their services to our state.
- Dr. Benton stated she spoke to the Tupelo Kiwanis Club about the progress of education in Mississippi. Dr. Washington Cole joined in the presentation representing one of our Districts of Transformation.
- Dr. Benton stated that MDE is finalizing our proposed amendments to Mississippi's plan to meet the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Plan and will begin seeking public comment on the updated plan on January 23 before submitting to the U.S. Department of Education for final approval.
- Dr. Benton stated MDE will bring attention to the issue of chronic absenteeism with the resumption of the statewide chronic absenteeism report later this month. Dr. Benton stated this information is publicly reported each fall in the *Mississippi Succeeds Report Card*. Dr. Benton stated chronic absenteeism is defined as a child missing 10% or 18 days per school year and this includes excused and unexcused absences. Dr. Benton stated Mississippi's chronic absenteeism rate has increased while COVID-19 absences likely contributed to the increase it is important to identify and mitigate all the factors that contribute to excessive absences. Dr. Benton stated MDE has provided guidance and resources for school and district leaders to consider as they address chronic absenteeism in their districts.
- Dr. Benton expressed a deep appreciation to the entire MDE staff who have worked tirelessly and seamlessly throughout the entire agency's leadership transition. Dr. Benton stated that all have remained focused on our goals, priorities, and core initiatives and never let up for a moment, despite office moves, water crises, and other challenges.

- VII. Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman, Chair of the State Board, gave the following report:
- Ms. Aultman thanked Dr. Benton for serving as the Interim State Superintendent and as the Chief Academic Officer. Ms. Aultman read a Resolution for Dr. Benton (copy attached).
 - Ms. Aultman stated this past month she helped with the transition for Dr. Taylor. Ms. Aultman thanked Ms. Holly Spivey for setting up meetings with leadership in the state and legislative committees for Dr. Taylor.
 - Ms. Aultman introduced Dr. Robert P. Taylor.

Dr. Taylor thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as the State Superintendent. Dr. Taylor stated that his goal is to continue the work that MDE has been doing. Dr. Taylor thanked Dr. Benton for working with him to make the transition go smoothly. Dr. Taylor thanked the MDE staff for their work. Dr. Taylor stated he promoted Dr. Felicia Gavin to serve as the Chief of Staff. Dr. Taylor stated that he is working to make the right connections and he thanked Ms. Holly Spivey for setting up the meetings. Dr. Taylor stated he will be going out to the districts to talk with the superintendents, principals, and teachers.

VIII. Report of Student Representatives

Ms. Micah Hill reported on the Middle College program, the schools in MS that provide the option, and the benefits of the program. She gave an update on her experience with the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Student Engagement Collaborative.

Mr. Charlie Frugé, who is in Washington, D.C. and will return in person at the February Board meeting, spoke on the importance of Advanced Placement (AP), Honors, and dual credit courses in high school.

IX. Report on State Board of Education Subcommittee meetings

Mr. Glen V. East, Chair of the Academic Achievement PreK-12/Early Childhood Subcommittee, reported the staff presented two large reports, one on the math coaching contract that will be presented later in the meeting and the professional development for teachers across the state.

Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, Chair of the School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee, reported he and Mr. Bill Jacobs received an update from the subcommittee and received a very informative direction of where MDE is going.

X. Discussion and/or Approval of Board Items

01. Information: Educator Workforce Development Update [Goal 4 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

Dr. Paula Vanderford and Dr. Courtney Van Cleve presented an update on the Educator Workforce Development (copy attached).

02. Information: Mississippi Educator Career Continuum Archive (MECCA) System Update [Goals 4 and 5 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

Dr. Vanderford and Dr. Cory Murphy presented an update on the Mississippi Educator Career Continuum Archive (MECCA) System (copy attached).

03. Information: Report of the 2023 graduation rates for the state, district, and school levels [Goal 2 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

Dr. Vanderford and Mr. Alan Burrow presented the 2023 graduation rates for the state, district, and school levels (copy attached).

04. Information: Overview of the Mathematics Professional Development and Instructional Coaching Services [Goals 1, 2, 4, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Marla Davis)

Dr. Marla Davis and Dr. Tenette Smith presented the overview of the Mathematics Professional Development and Instructional Coaching Services (copy attached).

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

05.A. Action: Multi-year contract with Catapult Learning, LLC to provide mathematics professional development and instructional coaching services [Goals 1, 2, 4, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Marla Davis)

05.B. Action: Renew contract with Mythics, Inc. to provide Oracle Licensing Support [Goal 5 – MBE Strategic Plan] (John Kraman)

On a motion by Ms. Mary Warner, seconded by Mr. Glen V. East, the Board unanimously approved items 05.A. and 05.B. (copy attached).

06. 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 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)
- D. Approval of an appointment to the Commission of School Accreditation (Paula Vanderford)
- E. Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code 7-4: Part 4: *Licensure Guidelines K-12* and *State Board of Education Policy Rule 71.2*, to ensure consistency regarding certain criteria found therein required for licensing of School Business Administrators (Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Paula Vanderford)
- F. Approval of a temporary rule and to begin the Administration Procedures Act process: To establish Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 78.11, State Board Policy Chapter 78, Rule 78:11: Guidelines for Mississippi's Implementation of the Locally Selected Nationally Recognized, High School Assessment Provision of ESSA (Paula Vanderford)
- G. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To amend Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: Chapter 1 – Accountability, Rules 1.1 – 1.3 (Sonya Amis)
- H. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To amend Miss. Admin. Code 7-2: Chapter 2 – Organization of the State Board, Rule 2.3 – Student Representatives of the Mississippi State Board of Education (Sonya Amis)
- I. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To amend Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: Chapter 10 – Subrecipient Single Audit Resolution, Rule 10.1 – Subrecipient Single Audit Resolution (Sonya Amis)
- J. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To amend Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: Chapter 12 – Board of Education Operations, Rules 12.1 – Rule 12.10 (Erin Meyer)

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., and J. (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. Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a vote of 6 to 0. Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman asked Ms. Erin Meyer, Dr. Robert P. Taylor, and Dr. Felicia Gavin 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)(b) to discuss strategy sessions or negotiations with respect to prospective litigation, litigation, or issuance of an appealable order.

Ms. Mary Werner seconded the motion, which passed on a motion of 6 to 0. Ms. Jessica Robinson, Special Assistant Attorney General, informed the public of the Board's vote to go into Executive Session for the above stated reason.

Minutes of the Executive Session

During the Executive Session, the Board in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-7(4)(b) discussed 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 6 to 0 to come out of Executive Session.

The public came back into the Board meeting and Ms. Aultman stated an update was given but no action was taken.

XII. State Board of Education

1. No reports on meetings attended.
2. No request to attend a meeting.

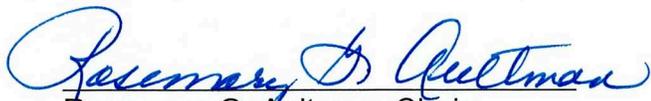
XIII. Other Business

Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman stated the February Board meeting will be held on February 16, 2023, in Ridgeland, MS at the Madison County School District Boardroom, 476 Highland Parkway starting at 10:00 a.m.

XIV. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, seconded by Mr. Matt Miller, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:13 p.m.

Approved:



Rosemary G. Aultman, Chair
Mississippi Board of Education



Robert P. Taylor
Executive Secretary
Mississippi Board of Education