

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
March 19, 2020

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02. Action: Approval by the SBE to allow school districts to operate for less than 180 days as required in Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-63(1) following Governor Tate Reeves' Proclamation of a State of Emergency as a result of the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) on school districts during the Spring of 2020 in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-65 and § 37-13-63(2) [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan]

Under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-65, upon application from the school board, the superintendent of schools may close any school because of an epidemic prevailing in the school district or because of the death, resignation, sickness or dismissal of a teacher or teachers or because of any other emergency necessitating the closing of the school. However, all such schools so closed shall operate for the required full time after being reopened during the scholastic year, unless the school board of the local school district submits a plan to alter the school term that is approved by the State Board of Education under the authority of Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-63(2).

President Donald Trump declared a national emergency on March 13, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak. On March 14, 2020, Governor Tate Reeves issued a Declaration of a State of Emergency for the state of Mississippi. Included in his Proclamation, Governor Reeves directed that pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 33-15-11(c), the provisions of state statutes, rules, regulation or order may be temporarily suspended or modified if compliance with such provisions would prevent, hinder, or delay action to cope with the outbreak.

Due to the unprecedented and unique circumstances arising as a result of COVID-19, such as statewide school closures that have occurred during the later portion of the 2019 – 2020 school year, it is not economically feasible or practical to operate any school within the district for the full one hundred eighty (180) days required for a scholastic year.

It is the recommendation of the MDE that the SBE suspend the requirements mandating each school district to submit a request to alter the school calendar and request forgiveness by the SBE for all days missed as a result of the impact of COVID-19 in the state of Mississippi. The MDE further recommends that the SBE approve altered school terms for school districts to operate for less than one hundred eighty (180) days.

Following the lifting of the state of emergency related to COVID-19, school districts will be provided guidance on how to update their altered school term in MSIS for the 2019 – 2020 school term.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up Material: None