

Minutes of Mississippi Board of Education Meeting

March 11, 2021

The members of the Mississippi Board of Education met in a Board meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 11, 2021, via teleconference and video means pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-5 for the purpose of conducting the Board meeting.

The meeting was available to the public via live stream.¹ Board members present: Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman (Central High School, 4th Floor Boardroom, Jackson, Mississippi), Dr. Angela Bass (Jackson, Mississippi), Mr. Glen East (Gulfport, Mississippi), Dr. Karen J. Elam (Oxford, Mississippi), and Dr. Ronnie McGehee (Madison, Mississippi). Student Representatives: Mr. Omar G. Jamil (Hernando, Mississippi) and Ms. Amy Zhang (Starkville, Mississippi). Dr. Carey M. Wright was present at Central High School, 4th Floor Boardroom, Jackson, Mississippi.

- I. Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman called the Board meeting to order at 10:05 a.m., after determining that a quorum of the Board existed at the locations stated for the purpose of conducting a meeting through teleconference and video means in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-5.
- II. Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Glen East gave the Invocation.
- III. On a motion by Mr. Glen East, seconded by Dr. Ronnie McGehee, the Board voted unanimously to approve the February 25, 2021, Board meeting minutes.
- IV. On a motion by Dr. Karen J. Elam, seconded by Dr. Angela Bass, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.
- V. Dr. Carey M. Wright gave the following report as the State Superintendent of Education:
 - Dr. Wright stated that the Student Advisory Council set up subgroups in various topics and met between meetings. Dr. Wright stated that at the last meeting they presented on the following topics: additional training that teachers needed in this virtual world; ACT/SAT recommendations on how to improve our scores; improving virtual learning; social justice and the need to be addressing social justice issues in our schools to include a social justice club that would meet after school; and ways to address social and emotional issues among students. Dr. Wright stated the presentations were so thoughtful and so amazing that another meeting was scheduled so she

¹ Due to the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) and the recommendations of the CDC and the Mississippi Department of Health, gatherings should be restricted to no more than 10 people. To protect the public health, the State Board of Education met via teleconference and video means and the meeting was available to the public via video means (live stream). The SBE exercised their authority granted by the Governor in his Proclamation of a State of Emergency. See Miss. Code Ann. § 33-15-31.

would have an opportunity to respond to what they had presented, and she thanked the Council for all their hard work.

- Dr. Wright stated that she met with the first half of the Teacher Advisory Council and next week she will meet with the second half. Dr. Wright stated it is always a great discussion and a great way to get information to teachers and a way to get information back to their staffs.
- Dr. Wright stated that the National Assessment Governing Board met last week. Dr. Wright stated that they are currently reviewing a proposal change to the reading framework by which the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessment will be administered, and this will be voted on either this spring or fall.
- Dr. Wright stated that she met with the entire Department virtually with all employees to keep them apprised of what is going on and to remind them where we were, what we have done during this pandemic, and what we have moving forward.
- Dr. Wright stated that she, Mr. Pete Smith, and Dr. Felicia Gavin met with both the Senate and House Appropriations Chairs, Education Chairs, and the Legislative Budget Office (LBO) staff to discuss the cuts to MDE's budget which as proposed, are significant. Dr. Wright stated that agencies were supposed to get cut 2.5% to 3.5%, but the Department's budget is proposed to be cut 35 percent or \$7 million. Dr. Wright stated that she would keep the Board posted.
- Dr. Wright stated that she was the opening keynote at the Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership. Dr. Wright stated that this is a statewide initiative that is put on by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and it is about the importance of the role of the principalship in addressing the needs of students with disabilities. Dr. Wright stated that she got a chance to interview a Mississippi team that were there to be recognized for their hard work and this included Dr. Debra Burson, Ms. Robin Lemonis, and Ms. Christy Hunt from MDE; Dr. Ben Burnett, Executive Vice President at William Carey University; Dr. Jocelyn Whipps, Assistant Principal in Rankin County School District; and Ms. Colleen Barr, teacher at Ocean Springs High School. Dr. Wright stated that each brought their own perspectives on what we can do to address the needs of students with disabilities. Dr. Wright stated there will be lots more on this to come. Dr. Wright stated that this is a very important topic and that students with disabilities is the lowest performing subgroup that we have and we are excited to dig into this work and help our principals build their capacity as we continue to build teacher capacity on how to address those needs.

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

- Ms. Aultman stated that since Dr. Jason S. Dean left the Board, she has spent time meeting with him and Dr. Wright to get up to speed on things. Ms. Aultman stated that she has appointed subcommittee chairs since a lot of the Board's work is done through subcommittees. Ms. Aultman stated

that some of the subcommittees have been combined due to the number of Board members. Ms. Aultman stated that the Academic Achievement PreK-12/Early Childhood Chair is Mr. Glen East; Educator Quality Subcommittee Chair is Dr. Karen J. Elam; Legislative Subcommittee Chair is herself; School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee Chair is Dr. Angela Bass; and Workforce/Career and Technical Education Chair is Dr. Ronnie McGehee (copy attached). Ms. Aultman stated when there are more Board members then the list can be revised.

VII. Report of Student Representatives

Mr. Omar G. Jamil stated that he has been in steady contact with his peers and teachers across the district and have discussed a number of issues that pertain to state affiliated matters including those addressed in the Student Advisory Council meetings. Mr. Jamil stated that in regards to ACT both new and veteran teachers desire more consistent training, whether state sponsored or ACT sponsored. Mr. Jamil stated that the teachers believe that funding assistance for ACT modules prove to be expensive will also be fundamental in improving the scores of students. Mr. Jamil stated that as addressed by the Student Advisory Council and educators in MS there is a growing demand for free ACT to be administered during the underclassman years so improvements can be made in a timely manner for college preparation. Mr. Jamil stated that he understands this issue proves most problematic to students and teachers alike and the Student Advisory Council has been working diligently to amend these conflicts in the education sector as Dr. Wright mentioned. Mr. Jamil stated that he would like to propose a new idea to the State Board of Education that he believes will provide much insight to a number of issues in education. Mr. Jamil stated that he has served on the Board for the past two years and he has heard of the Teacher Advisory Council and the improvements that have been made by the Council and with the adoption of the Student Advisory Council we are also creating amendments to our education sector that will prove fundamental in the upcoming years for the next generation. Mr. Jamil stated that what he would like to propose is for the Teacher Advisory Council to open lines of communication with the Student Advisory Council. Mr. Jamil stated that he finds it kind of useless to approach an issue without the entirety of our manpower consisting of students and teachers working together since a lot of these issues go together with things the Student Advisory Council discussed. Mr. Jamil stated that he believes that this could be a vital support system to the well being and the academic standards of students and teachers if the Student Advisory Council and the Teacher Advisory Council come together. Mr. Jamil stated that teachers and students will gain a new respect for one another in these issues and will understand the issues from both perspectives.

Dr. Wright stated that this was a great idea and she would have to work on the logistics to make this happen.

Ms. Amy Zhang stated that in two weeks she will be participating in the Student Mental Wellness Summit for the National Consortium of Secondary STEM Schools on March 25, 2021. Ms. Zhang stated that she will have the opportunity to speak on a student panel consisting of five students from member schools. Ms. Zhang stated they will be presenting on successes and barriers in schools offering student perspective. Ms. Zhang stated the audience will mostly be administrators and educators much like the State Board of Education it is important for student voices to be heard especially because this deals with mental health that is present in our everyday lives even outside of school. Ms. Zhang stated that she will be incorporating some things from the Student Advisory Council subgroup that presented on mental health and emotional wellness. Ms. Zhang stated that earlier this week the panel met and the focus right now is the unique mental health struggles of being a student at a STEM school, what improvements students would like to see, and things that are working well that more schools should implement. Ms. Zhang stated that a few topics that maybe discussed are the community among students, how better to facilitate communication between students and administration, improving access to resources such as mental health counselors, increasing student outreach and leadership in community, helping teachers to better understand our struggles, and the impact that COVID has had on emotional health. Ms. Zhang stated that the meeting also helped her appreciate some things that the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS) has, such as a very strong student community, especially since MSMS is a residential school and this is very important for a schools overall environment, and there is a healthy and trusting relationship between students and teachers. Ms. Zhang stated these are some things that MSMS is doing and she wants to highlight them. Ms. Zhang stated that mental health is a very important issue that she is very passionate about and it greatly impacts the quality of a persons education. Ms. Zhang stated that she is looking forward to the mental health summit and spreading more awareness.

Ms. Aultman thanked Mr. Jamil and Ms. Zhang for the work they are doing moving these ideas forward. Ms. Aultman stated they are doing exactly what the Board had anticipated that the student representatives would do. Ms. Aultman stated they are lifting up some good ideas and will lay the ground work for some significant changes and things that will come out of this will be very impactful.

VIII. Dr. Angela Bass, Chair of the School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee, met this morning by Zoom. Dr. Bass stated they appointed five members for the selection committee that will be in charge of selecting a new junior student representative.

Ms. Aultman stated the Board received 79 applications and the members of the selection committee are from the Department. Ms. Aultman stated the committee will screen the applications and will rank the top 10. Ms. Aultman stated that the 10 will be

interviewed and the top two selected will be interviewed by the Board. Ms. Aultman stated that Mr. Jamil will be moving off the Board in April.

IX. Discussion and/or Approval of Board Items

01. Action: Begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To establish Mississippi Secondary Curriculum Framework for Computer Science and Engineering in Career and Technical Education [Goal 2 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Nathan Oakley)

On a motion by Dr. Ronnie McGehee, seconded by Dr. Karen J. Elam, the Board unanimously approved item 01 (copy attached).

02. Information: Spring/Fall 2020 ACT results [Goals 1 and 2 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

Dr. Paula Vanderford and Dr. Nathan Oakley presented the Spring/Fall 2020 ACT results. The average score for juniors increased from 17.6 in 2019 to 17.7 in 2020.

03. Information: Report of the 2021 graduation rates for the state, district, and school levels [Goal 2 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

Dr. Vanderford and Dr. Alan Burrow presented the 2021 graduation rate for the state, district, and school levels. The 2019-2020 graduation rate for the state is 87.7%, surpassing the most recent national rate of 85%.

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

04.A. Action: Contract with Interim Superintendent for Tunica County School District [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Washington Cole)

04.B. Action: Contract with North Mississippi Education Consortium (NMEC) to provide a variety of education-related services to support the MDE's Digital Learning program, including, but not limited to procuring Digital Learning Instructional Coaches [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (John Kraman)

04.C. Action: Contract with the Mississippi State Department of Health to provide health inspections for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Summer Food Service Program for the remainder of FY 2021 and FY 2022 [Goal 1 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Felicia Gavin)

- 04.D. Action: Contract with North Mississippi Education Consortium to coordinate and facilitate regional training sessions and procure related services for Mississippi Department of Education for 2021-2022 [Goals 1, 2, and 4 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Nathan Oakley)

On a motion by Mr. Glen East, seconded by Dr. Ronnie McGehee, the Board unanimously approved items 04.A., 04.B., 04.C., and 04.D. (copy attached).

05. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of monthly expenditures for the Mississippi School of the Arts (Nathan Oakley)
- B. Approval of the school calendars for State Schools for 2021-2022 school year (Nathan Oakley)
- C. Approval of methodology to award funds to school districts in support of the implementation of the Mississippi Online Course Application (MOCA) process (Nathan Oakley)
- D. Approval of methodology to award grant funds to local school districts for the Perkins Reserve Grant Program (Nathan Oakley)
- E. Approval of methodology to award supplemental literacy grants to schools to support Kindergarten through 5th grade literacy instruction and accelerate reading skills through summer learning opportunities under the Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) (Nathan Oakley)
- F. [PULLED]
- G. Approval of Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) for Districts assigned a PROBATION or WITHDRAWN status in accordance with Accreditation Policy 2.8.1 (Paula Vanderford)
- H. Approval to establish implementation procedures for recently adopted Licensure Guidelines for Licensure Preparation and Other Programs Completed Outside the State of Mississippi (Paula Vanderford)
- I. Approval of methodology to provide services and assistance to eligible Non-Public Elementary and Secondary Schools under the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021* (CRRSA Act) (Joe Goff)

On a motion by Dr. Angela Bass, seconded by Dr. Karen J. Elam, the Board unanimously approved items A., B., C., D., E., G., H., and I. (copy attached).

X. No Executive Session.

XI. State Board of Education

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

XII. Other Business

Ms. Rosemary G. Aultman stated that the April Board meeting will be held on April 15, 2021, at the Central High School Building starting at 10:00 a.m.

XIII. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Karen J. Elam, seconded by Dr. Ronnie McGehee, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:43 a.m.

Approved:



Rosemary G. Aultman, Chair
Mississippi Board of Education



Carey M. Wright
Executive Secretary
Mississippi Board of Education