



**Minutes of the
Commission on School Accreditation
Special-Called Meeting
Central High School Building
4th Floor Board Room
359 North West Street
Jackson, Mississippi
September 13, 2017
10:00 a.m.**

The special-called meeting of the Commission on School Accreditation (CSA or Commission) took place at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, September 13, 2017. The Commission members present in the 4th Floor Board Room of the Central High School Building, 359 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi included: Heather Westerfield, Chair, Sean Brewer, Kenny Bush, Sarah Foster, Roy Gill, Brian Harvey, Ann Jones, Michael Lindsey, Dr. Valencia Martin, Michael Miller, John Mistilis, Eddie Prather, and Rob Tyner. Kelle Barfield and Anthony Montgomery did not attend.

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Accreditation staff members present included: Dr. Paula Vanderford, Chief Accountability Officer/Executive Secretary, Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Executive Director, Teresa Jones, Katrina McDowell, and Ken Stamps.

Other MDE staff present included: Dr. Carey Wright, Dr. Kim Benton, Dr. Felicia Gavin, Dr. John Porter, Washington Cole, Dr. Bill Welch, Walt Drane, Alan Burrow, Jean Massey, Gretchen Cagle, Quentin Ransburg, Patrice Guilfoyle, Jean Cook, and Pete Smith.

Also in attendance: Special Assistant Attorneys General, Erin Meyer and Raina Lee, and Assistant Attorney General, Ricky Luke.

I. Call to Order and Invocation

Heather Westerfield, Chair of the CSA, opened the Commission meeting and announced a quorum of the Commission existed. Ms. Westerfield called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. Eddie Prather gave the invocation.

II. Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Westerfield asked the Commission members to review the agenda they received previously. A motion was made by Rob Tyner and seconded by Kenny Bush to approve the agenda. In discussing the agenda, Ann Jones made a motion to amend the agenda to table Item VI until the October meeting. Dr. Vanderford reminded the Commission that the original purpose of the special-called meeting was to address Item VI and that trainings have been scheduled across the state pending the Commission's approval of the item. Ann Jones withdrew her motion and John Mistilis made a motion to amend the agenda by moving Item VI to the end. Sean Brewer seconded the motion.

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Members voting aye:

Sean Brewer
Kenny Bush
Sarah Foster
Roy Gill
Brian Harvey
Ann Jones
Michael Lindsey
Dr. Valencia Martin
Michael Miller
John Mistilis
Eddie Prather
Rob Tyner

Members voting nay: None

Members abstaining: None

Members absent: Kelle Barfield
Anthony Montgomery

III. Approval of the minutes of the June 15, 2017, Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Commission on School Accreditation

On a motion by Ann Jones, seconded by Roy Gill, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the June 15, 2017 meeting.

Members voting aye:

Sean Brewer
Kenny Bush
Sarah Foster
Roy Gill
Brian Harvey
Ann Jones
Michael Lindsey
Dr. Valencia Martin
Michael Miller
John Mistilis
Eddie Prather
Rob Tyner

Members voting nay: None

Members abstaining: None

Members absent: Kelle Barfield
Anthony Montgomery

IV. Approval of the minutes of the August 15, 2017, Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Commission on School Accreditation

On a motion by Sarah Foster, seconded by Eddie Prather, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the August 15, 2017 meeting.

Members voting aye:

Sean Brewer
Kenny Bush
Sarah Foster
Roy Gill
Brian Harvey
Ann Jones
Michael Lindsey
Dr. Valencia Martin
Michael Miller
John Mistilis
Eddie Prather
Rob Tyner

Members voting nay: None

Members abstaining: None

Members absent: Kelle Barfield
Anthony Montgomery

V. Report on the existence of an extreme emergency situation regarding the safety, security, and educational interest of the children enrolled in the Jackson Public School District (Dr. Paula Vanderford)

Dr. Paula Vanderford reported to the Commission concerning the existence of an extreme emergency situation in the Jackson Public School District which jeopardizes the safety, security, and educational interests of the children enrolled in the schools in this District.

Dr. Vanderford reported that an unannounced accreditation audit conducted in the Jackson Public School District which began on April 4, 2016 and concluded on April 22, 2016 in twenty-two (22) of the fifty-eight (58) schools revealed that the Jackson Public School District was noncompliant with twenty-one (21) of the twenty-nine (29) process standards that the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) evaluated during the audit process. On June 15, 2016, the MDE provided the District with the *Preliminary Report of Findings* with the recommendation to

downgrade the District's accreditation status to PROBATION in accordance with Accreditation Policy 2.5.1. On August 16, 2016, the Office of Accreditation made a report to the Commission in accordance with Accreditation Policy 2.5 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2015*. Accreditation Policy 2.5 outlines the eight (8) areas for an immediate downgrade to PROBATION or WITHDRAWN, which are considered the most serious violations of process standards. In August 2016, the District was in violation of five (5) of these eight (8) areas. On August 16, 2016, the Commission on School Accreditation unanimously approved downgrading of the District's accreditation status to PROBATION. In accordance with Accreditation Policy 5.0 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2016*, the Commission called for a full investigative audit of the Jackson Public School District which the MDE conducted September 6, 2016 through July 31, 2017. The MDE provided the District with the *On-Site Investigative Audit Report* on August 31, 2017.

Dr. Vanderford summarized that the Jackson Public School District is in violation of seven (7) of the eight (8) areas outlined in Accreditation Policy 2.5, which have the greatest impact on student achievement:

- Reporting false information;
- Failure to implement appropriate standards of governance;
- Failure to comply with school board policies that meet state and federal statutes, rules, and regulations;
- Failure to comply with graduation requirements;
- Failure to comply with test security procedures of the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System;
- Failure to comply with state/federal regulations; and
- Failure to comply with standards that sustain a safe school climate.

Dr. Vanderford stated, based on Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6(12)(b), the State Board of Education must determine if an extreme emergency exists in the Jackson Public School District that jeopardizes the safety, security, or educational interest of the children enrolled in that District.

Ms. Westerfield recognized Dr. Fredrick Murray, Interim Superintendent of Jackson Public School District, and he addressed the Commission. Dr. Murray distributed two (2) volumes of documentation disputing the findings outlined in the audit report of the District.

Special Assistant Attorney General Erin Meyer informed the CSA that the binders distributed by JPS contained student-level confidential data and should not have been disseminated. Additionally, she advised that all copies should be returned immediately. The JPS removed the confidential data from the binders following Dr. Murray's presentation.

The Commission asked questions of both Dr. Vanderford and Dr. Murray. The Commission then heard closing statements from Jim Keith, legal representative for Jackson Public School District and Erin Meyer, legal representative of the Mississippi Department of Education.

VI. Discussion and action request for the need to declare a state of emergency in the Jackson Public School District

Rob Tyner moved that the Commission make a closed determination to consider going into Executive Session for discussion and/or deliberations with respect to investigative proceedings regarding allegations of misconduct or violations of law in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-7 (4)(d). Specifically, regarding whether the Commission finds there is sufficient cause to believe that an extreme emergency situation exists in the Jackson Public School District. Sean Brewed seconded the motion.

Members voting aye:

Sean Brewer
Kenny Bush
Sarah Foster
Roy Gill
Brian Harvey
Ann Jones
Michael Lindsey
Dr. Valencia Martin
Michael Miller
John Mistilis
Eddie Prather
Rob Tyner

Members voting nay: None

Members abstaining: None

Members absent: Kelle Barfield
Anthony Montgomery

The Commission left the 4th Floor Board room and relocated for a closed determination to Room 311 in the Central High School.

Ms. Westerfield and Mr. Ricky Luke, Assistant Attorney General, returned to the 4th Floor Board room and announced that the Commission voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 2:52 p.m.

Specifically, Sarah Foster, moved that the Commission go into Executive Session for discussion and/or deliberation with respect to investigative proceedings regarding allegations of misconduct or violations of law in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-7 (4)(d). Specifically, regarding whether the Commission finds there is sufficient cause to believe that an extreme emergency situation exists in the Jackson Public School District. Roy Gill seconded the motion.

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Members voting aye:

Sean Brewer
Kenny Bush
Sarah Foster
Roy Gill
Brian Harvey
Ann Jones
Michael Lindsey
Dr. Valencia Martin
Michael Miller
John Mistilis
Eddie Prather
Rob Tyner

Members voting nay: None

Members abstaining: None

Members absent: Kelle Barfield
Anthony Montgomery

The Commission remained in Room 311 for Executive Session and returned to open session at 4:13 p.m.

Specifically, on a motion by Sarah Foster, seconded by Valencia Martin, the Commission voted unanimously to come out of Executive Session.

Members voting aye:

Sean Brewer
Kenny Bush
Sarah Foster
Roy Gill
Brian Harvey
Ann Jones
Michael Lindsey
Dr. Valencia Martin
Michael Miller
John Mistilis
Eddie Prather
Rob Tyner

Members voting nay: None

Members abstaining: None

Members absent: Kelle Barfield
Anthony Montgomery

The Commission took no actions during Executive Session.

On a motion by Rob Tyner, seconded by Michael Miller, the Commission voted to approve the determination and resolution discussed in Executive Session that an extreme emergency situation exists in the Jackson Public School District which jeopardizes the safety, security, and educational interests of the children enrolled in the schools in this District, and that this emergency situation is related to serious violations of accreditation standards and state law, and to petition the State Board of Education to declare a state of emergency in the Jackson Public School District.

Members voting aye:

Kenny Bush
Sarah Foster
Roy Gill
Brian Harvey
Michael Lindsey
Dr. Valencia Martin
Michael Miller
John Mistilis
Eddie Prather
Rob Tyner

Members voting nay: Ann Jones

Members abstaining: None

Members absent: Kelle Barfield
Sean Brewer*
Anthony Montgomery

VII. Discussion of the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) public comments regarding the proposed graduation requirements for incoming ninth graders effective school year 2018-2019 (Jean Massey and Gretchen Cagle)

Jean Massey and Gretchen Cagle provided an overview of the APA comments regarding the proposed graduation requirements. Ms. Massey and Ms. Cagle provided a rationale for revisions to the proposed graduation requirements effective for incoming ninth graders effective for school year 2018-2019.

* Sean Brewer left the meeting at approximately 4:15 p.m. when the Commission returned from Executive Session.

VIII. Approval to submit request to the State Board of Education for final approval to amend the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2016 Process Standard 14, Appendix A, and Appendix G to include the proposed graduation requirements effective school year 2018-2019

On a motion by John Mistilis, seconded by Ann Jones, the Commission unanimously approved the request to petition the State Board of Education for final approval to amend the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2016 Process Standard 14, Appendix A, and Appendix G* to include the proposed graduation requirements effective school year 2018-2019.

Members voting aye:

Kenny Bush
Sarah Foster
Roy Gill
Brian Harvey
Ann Jones
Michael Lindsey
Dr. Valencia Martin
Michael Miller
John Mistilis
Eddie Prather
Rob Tyner

Members voting nay: None

Members abstaining: None

Members absent: Kelle Barfield
Sean Brewer
Anthony Montgomery

IX. Adjournment

On a motion by Ann Jones, seconded by Sarah Foster, the Commission unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Members voting aye:

Sean Brewer
Kenny Bush
Sarah Foster
Roy Gill
Brian Harvey
Ann Jones
Michael Lindsey
Dr. Valencia Martin

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Michael Miller
John Mistilis
Eddie Prather
Rob Tyner

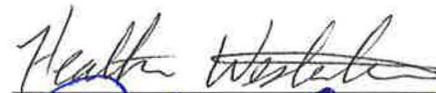
Members voting nay: None

Members abstaining: None

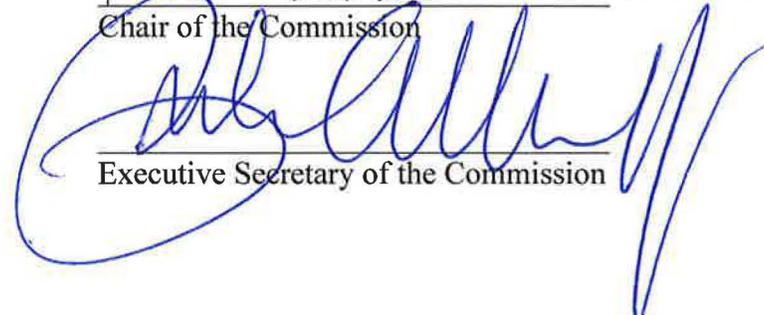
Members absent: Kelle Barfield
Sean Brewer
Anthony Montgomery

APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION:

10 17 2017
(Month) (Day) (Year)



Chair of the Commission


Executive Secretary of the Commission