

Subcommittee for the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education,  
Certification and Licensure and Development  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor Board Room Central High School  
359 N. West Street, Jackson, MS 39201  
April 28, 2022

In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-3-2(10) and 25-41-5, a subcommittee of the members of the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development (“Commission”) met at 9:00 a.m. on April 28, 2022, in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Room of the Central High School Building, 359 N. West Street, Jackson, MS 39201.

Members in Attendance: Rebecca Gray, Etta Taplin, and David Martin  
Commission Counsel: Baylea Blough, Special Assistant Attorney General

OEM Counsel: Joseph Runnels, Esq.

Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Personnel Attending:  
Tilla Tate, Investigator for the Office of Educator Misconduct (OEM)  
Scott DeJong, Director for the OEM

Others in Attendance:  
Marilyn Sawyer, Educator  
John Reeves, Attorney for Educator

Matters before the Subcommittee:

**I. Agreed Orders**

David Martin, serving as presiding officer for the Commission Hearing Subcommittee, called the hearing to order at 9:09 a.m.

Scott Dejong, Director for the Office of Educator Misconduct, presented one proposed Agreed Order for ratification by the Commission Hearing Subcommittee:

**A. Linsie Exum, Educator License No. 327664, Standard 10**

Following the Presentation by OEM, Etta Taplin moved that the Commission Hearing Subcommittee accept and ratify the proposed Agreed Orders. Rebecca Gray seconded the motion and the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to accept and ratify the above listed matters.

This matter concluded at 9:15 a.m.

**II. Case of Marilyn Sawyer, Educator License No. 230831**

David Martin, presiding officer of the Commission Hearing Subcommittee, called the hearing to order at 9:19 a.m.

Respondent, represented by counsel, requested that the Commission Hearing Subcommittee accept the Agreed Order proposed by OEM months prior to the hearing. On an objection from OEM, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee heard from each side. After all arguments were heard, on a motion from Etta Taplin, seconded by Rebecca Gray, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to go into closed session to determine the necessity to go into executive session. The Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to go into executive session for deliberation concerning the Agreed Order pertaining to the license of Educator, Marilyn Sawyer.

During executive session, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted not to accept the Agreed Order and to proceed with the hearing.

On a motion by Etta Taplin seconded by Rebecca Gray, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

After all exhibits were received into evidence and testimony heard, Etta Taplin moved that the subcommittee go into closed session to determine the necessity to go into executive session. Rebecca Gray seconded the motion and the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to go into closed session.

On a motion by Etta Taplin seconded by Rebecca Gray, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

During Executive Session, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously agreed to take the following action:

Based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it was the decision of the Commission Hearing Subcommittee to suspend Educator License No. 230831 held by Marilyn Sawyer for the 2022-2023 school year by reason of breach of her employment and resulting violation of Miss. Coe Ann. §§ 37-3-2(12)(a) and 37-9-57, and Standard 10 of the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct. Upon the submission of a licensure reinstatement application, this license shall be reinstated at the end of the suspension period in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-3-2(14)(a), without the necessity of a hearing.

Respondent shall truthfully answer all questions in the Character Determination section of the licensure reinstatement application. Specifically, Respondent shall answer "yes" to the

question which asks, "Have you had a certificate/license denied, suspended, and/or revoked by MS or another state?" As specified on the licensure reinstatement application, Respondent shall provide a brief letter of explanation for the "yes" response. The Office of Educator Licensure shall not accept the licensure reinstatement application before the end of the suspension year.

On a motion by Etta Taplin, seconded by Rebecca Gray, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

In open session, counsel read the decision of the Commission Hearing Subcommittee to the participants.

The conclusion of the hearing was pronounced at 11:35 a.m.

**III. Adjournment.**

On a motion by Etta Taplin, seconded by Rebecca Gray, the Commission Hearing Subcommittee unanimously voted to adjourn for the day at 11:35 a.m.

Approved:



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David Martin, Subcommittee Chair  
Commission on Teacher and Administrator  
Education, Certification and Licensure and  
Development



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Cory Murphy, Ph.D., Executive Secretary  
Commission on Teacher and Administrator  
Education, Certification and Licensure and  
Development