

Minutes of Mississippi Board of Education Meeting

September 27, 2012

The members of the Mississippi Board of Education met in a work session at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 27, 2012 via teleconference pursuant to Section 25-41-5 of the Mississippi Code for the purpose of determining if an extreme emergency situation exists that jeopardizes the safety, security, and educational interests of the children enrolled in the Oktibbeha County School District. The location of the meeting available to the public was the 4th Floor Boardroom of the Central High School Building, 359 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi. Board members present were: Dr. O. Wayne Gann (4th Floor Boardroom of the Central High School Building, Jackson, Mississippi), Mr. Hal Gage (Port Gibson, Mississippi), Dr. John R. Kelly (Gulfport, Mississippi), Mr. Charles McClelland (Jackson, Mississippi), Mr. Richard Morrison (4th Floor Boardroom, Central High School Building, Jackson, Mississippi), Ms. Martha Murphy (Rienzi, Mississippi), and Mr. Simon F. Weir, II, (Southaven, Mississippi). The Board members absent were Ms. Kami Bumgarner and Mr. William H. Jones. Dr. Lynn House, Interim State Superintendent, was present in the 4th Floor Boardroom of the Central High School Building, 359 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi.

The work session was called to order by Dr. O. Wayne Gann, Chair. Dr. Gann noted the statement on the agenda that cellular telephones and pagers are not permitted during the Board meeting.

Dr. Wayne Gann noted that the meeting of the Board of Education was being held via teleconference pursuant to Section 25-41-5 of the Mississippi Code and that the notice of this meeting made at least five days prior to the hearing included the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting and identified the location of the meeting available to the public. Dr. Gann also stated that an audio recording was being made of the meeting. Dr. Gann announced that a quorum of the board was present at the locations stated for the purpose of conducting a meeting through teleconference means.

Dr. Paula Vanderford reported from the Commission on School Accreditation concerning the Commission's determination that an extreme emergency situation exists in the Oktibbeha County 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 a continued pattern of poor student performance.

Dr. Vanderford reported that the Office of School Improvement at the Department of Education provided technical assistance in the schools within the Oktibbeha County School District during the three previous school years and that the final action by the Office of School Improvement was to terminate their services and remove the technical assistance teams due to the lack of cooperation from the district. Dr. Vanderford stated that on September 14, 2012 the State Board of Education transformed the East Oktibbeha County High School into a New Start School under the administration of the

Department of Education, due to receiving the performance classification of “Failing” for three consecutive years, in accordance with Mississippi Code Section 37-167-1 and the timelines determined by the Department of Education.

Dr. Vanderford further reported that an accreditation audit conducted in the Oktibbeha County School District on September 10-14, 2012 revealed that the Oktibbeha County School District was not fully compliant with 29 of the 30 process standards evaluated in the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2012* and that these violations jeopardize the safety and security of the students in the school district. Dr. Vanderford further provided evidence that these violations were related to serious violations of accreditation standards and state law and also provided evidence of a continued pattern of poor student performance. Dr. Vanderford stated that the five-year graduation rate for the school district was 59%.

Mr. James Covington, Superintendent of Oktibbeha County School District, Mr. Curtis Snell, Board President of Oktibbeha County School District and Mr. Bennie Jones, school board attorney, addressed the Board. The Board questioned the superintendent of the Oktibbeha County School District.

Dr. Vanderford discussed the determination and resolution by the State Board of Education that an extreme emergency situation exists in the Oktibbeha County 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 a continued pattern of poor student performance. Dr. Vanderford recommended approval.

Dr. Vanderford discussed the determination by the State Board of Education to officially abolish the Oktibbeha County School District contingent upon a declaration of a state of emergency in the District by the Governor. Dr. Vanderford recommended approval.

Dr. Vanderford discussed the request to the Governor that the Governor declare a state of emergency in the Oktibbeha County School District. Dr. Vanderford recommended approval.

Dr. Bill Welch discussed the appointment of a Conservator for the Oktibbeha County School District contingent upon a declaration of a state of emergency in the District by the Governor. Dr. Welch recommended approval.

Dr. Welch discussed the contract for a Conservator for the Oktibbeha County School District. Dr. Welch recommended approval.

A motion to adjourn the work session was made by Mr. Richard Morrison and seconded by Ms. Martha Murphy. The Board unanimously approved to adjourn the work session.

Immediately following the work session

- I. The meeting was called to order by Dr. O. Wayne Gann, Chair.
- II. On a motion by Dr. John R. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Richard Morrison, the Board unanimously approved the agenda by the following roll-call vote:

Members voting aye:

Mr. Hal Gage
Dr. John R. Kelly
Mr. Charles McClelland
Mr. Richard Morrison
Ms. Martha Murphy
Mr. Simon F. Weir, II

Members absent: Ms. Kami Bumgarner and Mr. William H. Jones

III. Approval of Action Items

02. On a motion by Mr. Hal Gage, seconded by Ms. Martha Murphy, the Board unanimously approved the determination by the State Board of Education that an extreme emergency situation exists in the Oktibbeha County 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 a continued pattern of poor student performance on the following roll-call vote:
(Office of Educational Accountability)

Members voting aye:

Mr. Hal Gage
Dr. John R. Kelly
Mr. Charles McClelland
Mr. Richard Morrison
Ms. Martha Murphy
Mr. Simon F. Weir, II

Members absent: Ms. Kami Bumgarner and Mr. William H. Jones

03. On a motion by Dr. John R. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Simon F. Weir, II, the Board unanimously approved the determination by the State Board of Education to officially abolish the Oktibbeha County School District contingent upon a declaration of a state of emergency in the District by the Governor on the following roll-call vote:
(Office of Educational Accountability)

Members voting aye:

Mr. Hal Gage
Dr. John R. Kelly
Mr. Charles McClelland
Mr. Richard Morrison
Ms. Martha Murphy
Mr. Simon F. Weir, II

Members absent: Ms. Kami Bumgarner and Mr. William H. Jones

04. On a motion by Mr. Hal Gage, seconded by Mr. Simon F. Weir, II, the Board unanimously approved to submit a request to the Governor that the Governor declare a state of emergency in the Oktibbeha County School District on the following roll-call vote:
(Office of Educational Accountability)

Members voting aye:

Mr. Hal Gage
Dr. John R. Kelly
Mr. Charles McClelland
Mr. Richard Morrison
Ms. Martha Murphy
Mr. Simon F. Weir, II

Members absent: Ms. Kami Bumgarner and Mr. William H. Jones

05. On a motion by Dr. John R. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Richard Morrison, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Dr. Jayne Sargent as the Conservator for the Oktibbeha County School District contingent upon a declaration of a state of emergency in the District by the Governor on the following roll-call vote:
(Office of School Improvement, Oversight and Recovery)

Members voting aye:

Mr. Hal Gage
Dr. John R. Kelly
Mr. Charles McClelland
Mr. Richard Morrison
Ms. Martha Murphy
Mr. Simon F. Weir, II

Members absent: Ms. Kami Bumgarner and Mr. William H. Jones

06. On a motion by Ms. Martha Murphy, seconded by Mr. Simon F. Weir, II, the Board unanimously approved the contract for Dr. Jayne Sargent as the

Conservator for the Oktibbeha County School District on the following roll-call vote:

(Office of School Improvement, Oversight and Recovery)

Members voting aye:

Mr. Hal Gage
Dr. John R. Kelly
Mr. Charles McClelland
Mr. Richard Morrison
Ms. Martha Murphy
Mr. Simon F. Weir, II

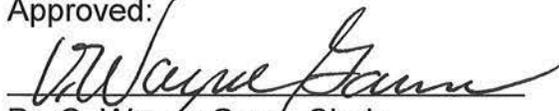
Members absent:

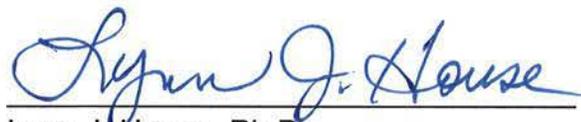
Ms. Kami Bumgarner and Mr. William H. Jones

IV. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Richard Morrison, seconded by Mr. Hal Gage, the Board unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 2:31 p.m.

Approved:


Dr. O. Wayne Gann, Chair
Mississippi Board of Education


Lynn J. House, Ph.D.
Interim, Executive Secretary
Mississippi Board of Education