

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER
Summary of the State Board of Education Agenda Items
September 29, 2022

OFFICE OF SAFE AND ORDERLY SCHOOLS

05. Action: Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1. State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1 – Weapons [Goal 4 – MBE Strategic Plan]

Background Information: In 1990, the State Board of Education (SBE) promulgated a policy regarding weapons on campus before any notable school shootings, or the adoption of Mississippi's enhanced carry laws. The only time this regulation underwent revisions was at the end of December 2015, when the Secretary of State's new regulations required that the SBE repeal the regulation as Miss. Admin. Code 7-3:9500 and it received its current citation of Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1. Based on the adoption of Mississippi's enhanced carry laws, which authorizes certain licensed individuals to carry concealed weapons into any locations listed in Miss. Code Ann. § 45-9-101(13), which includes any elementary or secondary school facility, the 1990 SBE Policy is in conflict. SBE policy may not prohibit actions otherwise authorized in state law; therefore, the enhanced conceal weapons statutes would supersede the SBE policy.

The temporary rule and final action were necessary to implement the policy revisions immediately upon its filing with the Secretary of State in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-43-3.113(2)(b)(ii). *See also* Miss. Code Ann. § 25-43-3.108. For a rule to become effective immediately upon its filing, the Board is required to make a finding that the rule only confers a benefit or removes a restriction on the public or some segment thereof.

The public comment period was open from July 22, 2022, through 5:00 p.m. August 15, 2022, with forty-four public comments received. Based on the public comments received, there are no recommended revisions.

This item references Goal 4 of the *Mississippi Board of Education 2018-2022 Strategic Plan*.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

Chapter 97: Weapons Rule 97.1 Weapons. Each local school district shall have a policy concerning weapons on school premises.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-1-3; 45-9-101 Revised 9/2022*)

Chapter 97: Weapons Rule 97.1 Weapons. Each local school district shall have a policy concerning weapons on school premises. ~~It shall contain at least the following provisions and may include such additional provisions as the local school district deems appropriate: The (Name of District) Board of Education recognizes that the possession of pistols, firearms, or other weapons on school premises or at school functions by persons other than duly authorized law enforcement officials creates an unreasonable and unwarranted risk of injury or death to District employees, students, visitors, and guests and further creates an unreasonable and unwarranted risk of damage to properties of District employees, students, visitors, and guests. Because of such dangers, the Board hereby prohibits the possession of pistols, firearms, or weapons in any form by any person other than duly authorized law enforcement officials on school premises or at school functions, regardless of whether any such person possesses a valid permit to carry such pistols, firearms, or weapons.~~

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-1-3; 45-9-101 Revised 9/2022*)

**Summary of Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Comments Approval to Revise
Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1 - Weapons.**

The Office of Accountability received the following APA comment(s) regarding the proposed revisions to Mississippi Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1 - Weapons.

#	Summary of Comment	MDE Response
1	I am writing to request that the MDE hold a public hearing [sic] regarding its proposed regulatory revisions about guns in schools. *Noted as Request 1	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
2	Have a hearing regarding guns in schools!!! *Noted as Request 2	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
3	As a concerned parent of a second grader, I believe that it is important that the public have the opportunity to make public comment on these proposed changes. Gun violence in schools has become an epidemic but I am not sure that problem is alleviated by bring [sic] MORE guns into the schools.	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
4	Please accept this into public comment on the proposed change to the MBE proposed change to its policy on weapons in schools. I am opposed to striking the language in the existing policy. While I believe every school district has differences, I DO believe that the only people allowed on school grounds with weapons should be law enforcement officers. It is the only way to know what is friendly weapon carry and what isn't. I worry that students could gain access to guns within schools, and I also don't believe teachers should be placed in the position to protect/harm students in this way for a variety of reasons. Striking the existing policy language seems especially tone deaf in the current climate surrounding school shootings.	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
5	We think it is abhorrent for the State of Mississippi and Mississippi Department of Education to change statutes to allow weapons into our public schools. There are examples of best practices and creative ways to implement excellent security for public school buildings and properties. We want our tax dollars spent on improving public school safety through enhanced security measures. Please explore the options, choose one and implement statewide. The safety of our public school students and staff are worth the necessary spending. It is deplorable for our state leaders to expect public school teachers to spend their low wages on weapons and weaponry training.	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
6	I agree on the new school gun policies	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
7	I think it is abhorrent for the State of Mississippi and Mississippi Department of Education to change statutes to allow weapons in	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.

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	<p>our public schools. Our teachers and staff should focus on educating our children, not acting as a militia force.</p> <p>There are examples of best practices and creative approaches to implement excellent security for public school buildings and properties. These approaches include addressing students' health, empowering teachers and law enforcement to intervene if students show warning signs, improving schools' physical security in a targeted way, and keeping guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them. We can't let risky ideas, like arming teachers, dominate the debate on school safety. An armed teacher cannot transform into a specially-trained law enforcement officer in a moment of extreme duress.</p> <p>I support gun control legislation that limits purchase, capacity, and availability of guns. I reject any and all measures to expand gun presence. To say that the presence of guns in the classrooms will make schools safer is counter- intuitive and is not backed up by statistics. You can access factual data here.</p> <p>I want my tax dollars spent on improving public school safety through enhanced security measures such as better monitoring, smaller classrooms, screening devices on admission, training in recognizing danger, and professional security personnel at entrances and in hallways. Please explore the options, choose one or more and implement statewide. The safety of our public school students and staff are worth the necessary spending.</p> <p>It is deplorable and it is dangerous for our state leaders to expect public school teachers to engage in weapons and weaponry training. We owe it to future generations to allow our teachers to focus on providing high quality education.</p>	
8	<p>I write to register my strong dismay [sic] at the recent (or proposed) change in policy which allows for the possibility of guns in schools, and also with what will likely be the eventual move toward arming teachers. The claim by some that the best answer to a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun is patently false. The best answer is to ban assault style weapons. This is totally compatible with the 2nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. There are already several types of weapons of war which are banned, and such bans are fully constitutional. We need leaders who will stand up and speak out for reasonable gun regulation. Being relatively new to Mississippi, I do not claim to have a full awareness of the laws of this state, but I am able to discern reasonable and sensible regulations. We need more, not less regulation of guns. As a regular columnist for "The Sea Coast Echoe" of Bay St. Louis, I</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>

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	<p>have recently written a column in this regard. You may find it published online at the "Echo" website.</p>	
9	<p>I'm against creating "Teachers" responsible for Our Children's safety. That's NOT THEIR JOB !! Find another solution instead of WIMPING OUT?</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>
10	<p>Comments on changes in state law regarding weapons on school campuses. Chapter 97: Weapons Rule 97.1 Weapons. This change completely opens the door to parents, alumni, even students, anyone carrying a gun regardless of mental capacity or training. This will only result in more school shootings which, for the most part, we have been able to restrict. Without a unified policy throughout the state with some flexibility for indiv. [sic] districts, every district is wasting time "inventing the wheel" while more pressing educational matters are ignored. If there is not a defined protocol and chain of responsibility (recommended from professionals) we could end up like Uvalde, Texas. The state must do its homework and provide a basic format for dealing with and preventing school shootings.</p> <p>As a retired high school teacher, I have known or taught teachers and students with mental problems, law enforcement with vindictive tendencies and Napoleonic complexes or who had no knowledge of the students and faculty they were. [sic] dealing with. Unfortunately, we have seen the criminalization of minor adolescent behavior through policing on school premises which has created criminal records for too many youthful indiscretions.</p> <p>School districts need guidance and information from experts that they can model in formulating their localized policies and strategies without opening the doors to every wacko with a gun. Even the type of gun and amunition [sic] may need to be restricted to avoid stray bullet injuries and mistaken targets. Only the state has the time and resources to provide such information for a unified and effective policy. Don't neglect your responsibility at the state level.</p> <p>You might find some of these articles enlightening. JULY 28, 2022 DEBATE OF THE WEEK How Do We Stop Mass Shootings? Political strategist Kristal Knight and talk show host Ari Hoffman join Celeste & Andrew for a thoughtful discussion on steps we can all agree on to curb mass shootings and gun violence in America.</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>

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11	I'm opposed to the policy changes for weapons in schools. How many children are you going to put in danger because there will be a weak if any policy regarding weapons in schools. Do you job. [sic]	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
12	Sir I applaud your efforts to allow a layer of additional protection for our Children, Teachers and Staff. I am retired Air Force, NRA Life member, Certified NRA Basic Pistol Instructor and Mississippi State Certified Enhanced Carry Instructor. If I can be of any help with the development/implementation of the required training please let me know. I live in Woolmarket.	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
13	With the availability of assault weapons today and active shooters. [sic] School staff needs to be prepared to keep children safe.	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
14	<p>I'm a lifelong Mississippian (aged 62), a passionate voter, and a faithful taxpayer.</p> <p><u>Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1.</u> The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, <i>so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.</i></p> <p>Consistency in the law is a hallmark of a truly free society. I hope and pray that you'll agree. Thank you for your efforts.</p>	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
15	Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
16	I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
17	I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. I am asking you to move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.

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18	<p>Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>
19	<p>Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>
20	<p>I'm a Biloxi, Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.</p> <p>Mississippi state law has generally allowed permitted individuals to carry firearms on public school campuses for over a decade. Recently, the Mississippi State Board of Education has made an effort to update their policies to be in accordance with state law and one of these policies is an outdated prohibition on carry.</p> <p>While the State Board should have policies that are in accordance with state law, we as gun owners must ensure your policies are in line with the law as well. After all, this anti-gun policy has been on the books—and against state law—for over a decade. Currently, the Board has made a temporary move to repeal the outdated policy and we would like it to become permanent.</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>
21	<p>Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>

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	The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens, like me, can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.	
24	Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. Recently, Mississippi State Board of Education has made an effort to update their policies to be in accordance with state law. One of these policies was an outdated prohibition on firearm carry. This anti-gun policy has been on the books - - and against state law- - for over a decade. Currently, the Board has made a temporary move to repeal the outdated policy, but it needs to become permanent. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
25	Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. My wife is a retired educator with experience as a teacher and school administrator. I understand the challenges that our schools face and the possible threats that we have seen in other communities around this nation. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
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<p>29</p>	<p>As a 16 year veteran teacher, I have been through many lock down situations. Only once was I truly afraid there was an active shooter on our campus. (There was a shooting one block away from the school in which I believe three people were killed including the shooter.) As I sat with my 9-10 year old students and tried to keep them calm and quiet, I have NEVER felt so helpless in my life! The lockdown occurred during a transition when I and my students were returning from the cafeteria and were already outside. We had to take shelter in the nearest entrance, which for us was an auditorium. This was a huge, open, empty room with six doors entering it, two of which were exterior. The only thought that kept running through my mind was, "If someone makes it through those doors, there's absolutely nothing I can do to save these children or myself."</p> <p>As someone who has an enhanced concealed carry permit, I often carry when I am traveling or shopping alone for personal protection, However, until this incident occurred, I had never really given much thought to teachers carrying in schools. I had always felt safe in the company of others. The feeling of safety was forever questioned that day.</p> <p>I am in strong favor of allowing teachers (who are willing) to go to special training for active shooter situations led by certified instructors, perhaps even something similar to the firearm training law enforcement receive. Then in the case of an active shooter, there are already trained personnel inside the schools who can help protect our children.</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>
<p>30</p>	<p>I agree that local school boards and governing authorities should have the right to decide about their own gun policies and ways to protect their students/staff on campuses.</p> <p>Our children are our most precious resources and should be protected at-all-costs!</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>
<p>31</p>	<p>Several years ago, I saw a bumper sticker on a vehicle that stated, "When you outlaw guns, only outlaws will have guns!" When the the [sic] only person armed on a school campus is an intruder (or intruders) and POSSIBLY an SRO, odds do not favor school children!</p> <p>Responsible adults, especially those that love children enough to choose to serve as an educator, can safely carry firearms to protect those children to whom they have been entrusted. I served as an educator for over 35 years in two different states (three counting student teaching) and arming qualified teachers to carry firearms on school campuses is a "no-brainer." Very few teachers that I have taught with as a classroom teacher and even fewer teachers that I hired as an administrator would I hesitate to arm to</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>

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	<p>protect children. About four years ago I went through enhanced-carry firearm training with other educators. After the training we all acquired our enhanced carry licenses through the local Mississippi State Highway Patrol Station. We were ready then to stand up for children in the face of those that would harm our students. Please note that I have qualified my strong feelings by using words above like "responsible" and "qualified." I do not advocate blindly arming every educator! Parameters should be established to put guns in the correct hands.</p>	
<p>32</p>	<p>I am a strong advocate of the weapons policy, [sic] Our principal told us this year that even though there was a policy change there are to be no weapons on our campus. I say that to say that there are teachers that are scared of guns. There are also teachers who are trained in weapon retention and have had firearms training. The teachers that have educated themselves on firearms and firearms safety are not scared to have guns at school. It is those who are not educated that are afraid to have firearms anywhere near a school. There are several teachers that are ex military or ex law enforcement that are more than willing to carry a concealed firearm or take a bullet for the safety of our children. As with everything the answer lies in education. If the districts continue to scare teachers at the beginning of every year by showing videos of the damage firearms can do on school campuses those with proper training will never prevail.</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>
<p>33</p>	<p>I am a retired lawyer and lifetime resident of Mississippi, with several generations of family deeply involved in service to public schools of our state. I write to urge you to bravely reconsider your recent action rescinding the traditional statewide rule against possession of guns on school property, allowing instead a "local option" policy. WHY NOT ALLOW EACH COMMUNITY'S LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD TO DETERMINE THE BEST POLICY FOR THEIR COMMUNITY? The State Board has no function whatever [sic] if local boards assume responsibility for the most important policies regarding K-12 education in Mississippi. Your board's very existence is to guarantee equal opportunity and equal protection to ALL of Mississippi's schoolchildren. This is why you have authority over curriculum. Likewise the freedom to learn and teach in a healthy, safe, clean environment is central to your mission. Your very existence as a board is to take the heat away from local authorities and teachers, to protect them from passion or prejudice on any side of controversial issues. You should own your authority and bravely acknowledge that you have relative anonymity and</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>

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	<p>seclusion from the sometimes angry passions and instincts of local citizens who can threaten and intimidate local school board members for any unpopular decision. You stand as a protective force to shield local authorities from such threats and violence. Recent U.S. court decisions recognize gun ownership as a fundamental right, but no federal or state law allows guns to be carried everywhere and any time. Reasonable restrictions as to time and place -- such as protection of vulnerable people in hospitals, care facilities and schools -- will continue to be upheld by the courts.</p> <p>It is your job to decide that the right of vulnerable teachers and students deserves your protection, to create uniformly safe and healthy environments for ALL of Mississippi's teachers and students. This right entrusted to you outweighs any "liberty" interest of a gun owner, even a well meaning volunteer or family member, to carry around a gun to be used in whatever manner or for whatever purpose he/she decides.</p> <p>Please do your job, and stand up for the freedom of teachers and students to do theirs.</p>	
34	<p>I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses. Mississippi state law has generally allowed permitted individuals to carry firearms on public school campuses for over a decade without any problems. As I understand it, the Board has made a temporary move to repeal the outdated policy, but it needs to become permanent.</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>
35	<p>Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>
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37	<p>I am writing to ask that MDE change its policy on concealed carry weapons on K-12 campuses. I realize that MDE stated that it is simply getting its policy in line with current statute but that position</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>

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	<p>makes schools less safe and is insufficient in this current moment when students, teachers, staff and parents are worried daily about getting shot at school.</p> <p>The public doesn't want guns on K – 12 campuses. A recently released study by Johns Hopkins University found that the public does not support concealed firearms on K-12 school grounds. In fact, support dropped from 31% in 2019 to 23% in 2021.</p> <p>Teachers don't want guns in the classroom. A survey of more than 2,900 current and former teachers across the country conducted in the weeks following the Parkland shooting by a California State University researcher found that more than 95% of respondents did not want teachers to have weapons. They felt that having guns in the classroom could lead to more violence, including from accidental discharge and accidental shootings.</p> <p>Allowing the carrying of concealed, loaded guns on school campuses can quickly escalate everyday conflicts into deadly altercations. School personnel are already exposed to the following:</p> <p>Parents and guardians who are agitated about academic issues, sporting events, or political issues such as COVID restrictions; Parents who are involved in divorce or custody disputes; and Fights among students.</p> <p>MDE should make policy that makes it easier for school districts to keep their schools safe. I am asking that MDE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Go on record against concealed carry on school campuses -Work to change the concealed carry law -Provide policy templates to school districts that want to restrict concealed carry on campuses. 	
38	<p>Frankly, I think it is ridiculous that we are debating the right to have a weapon on a school campus. People who are 18 or older have the right to smoke but are not allowed to do so on a school campus. This is because we as a society have decided that the safety of students trumps the inconvenience of a few. Weapons are way more dangerous than secondhand smoke. There are so many dangers that can occur if someone brings a weapon to a school building. The person who brings a weapon to a school campus can present a danger and what happens if that weapon falls into the hands of a child? Why on earth would we do something that increases the chance of violence at school campuses? Schools are already tasked with [sic] creating and implementing numerous safety policies. They should not have to create a common sense gun law to protect our children. Our local</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>

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	government should because you all owe students the right to learn safely.	
39	I am writing to request a public hearing about the policy for guns in schools that it implemented on a temporary basis and proposes to make permanent. *Noted as Request 3	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
40	I am writing my public comment on potential changes to weapons policy in Mississippi state schools. As a strong supporter of the second amendment [sic] I am proud that Mississippi is one of the best states for protecting 2A rights. Naturally I understand that these freedoms do carry potential risks. That is why I believe it is imperative to make our schools hard targets in order to deter would-be violent actors. I strongly believe that if school faculty has the proper training, ability, and willingness to carry weapons at our schools to protect our students then they should be allowed to do so. Our teachers and administrators are the first line of defense for the most vulnerable of our population and they should be properly equipped to deal with any situation that poses a threat to our children.	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
41	Please do NOT allow teachers to carry firearms on campus. Firearms should only be carried in schools by HIGHLY trained law enforcement professionals. Extra firearms on campuses carried by anyone other [sic] these highly trained law enforcement professionals can potentially put students in unnecessary danger due to accidental shootings, potential for students accessing teacher firearms, etc. There are other ways to keep students and staff safe at school besides allowing teachers to bring firearms on campus.	These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.
42	I respectfully submit these comments to the Mississippi Department of Education, in conformity with the Mississippi Administrative Procedures Act. Per the Administrative Procedures Act, all public comments must be received in the Office of Accreditation no later than 5:00 p.m. on August 15, 2022.0F1 1 Miss. Code Ann. § 25-43-1, et seq. 2 https://www.sos.ms.gov/adminsearch/ACProposed/00026486b.pdf 3 https://www.sos.ms.gov/adminsearch/ACProposed/00026486a.pdf 4 Julia James, Guns have been allowed in Mississippi Schools (for some people) since 2012 Mississippi Today (2022), https://mississippitoday.org/2022/07/21/mississippi-guns-in-schools-2012/ (last visited Jul 26, 2022). 5 Enhanced concealed carry license applicants in Mississippi must be over age 21, pass a background check and take a	

Summary of Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Comments Approval to Revise Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1 - Weapons.

The Office of Accountability received the following APA comment(s) regarding the proposed revisions to Mississippi Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1 - Weapons.

<p>voluntary course on the safe handling and use of firearms by a certified instructor to obtain the enhanced carry license. Miss. Code Ann. § 97-37-7</p> <p>6 Miss. Code Ann. §45-9-101</p> <p>7 School Safety: Guns in Schools, School Safety: Guns In Schools, https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/school-safety-guns-in-schools.aspx (last visited Jul 27, 2022).</p> <p>On July 21st, 2022, Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) filed the required MAPA Notice to amend Mississippi Administrative Code 7-3:97.11F2, otherwise known as the MDE weapons policy.^{2F3} This change clarifies that anyone with an enhanced concealed carry permit may carry a gun onto an elementary, secondary, or tertiary campus.^{3F4} MDE states that this policy change is intended to bring the agency into compliance with state law.^{4F5} Enhanced concealed carry license applicants in Mississippi must be over age 21, pass a background check and take a voluntary course on the safe handling and use of firearms by a certified instructor to obtain the enhanced carry license.^{5F6} [sic]</p> <p>While 34 states allow someone other than law enforcement officers to carry firearms into schools, only three states require a concealed carry license alone.^{6F7} Public schools, colleges, and universities are generally prohibited from restricting visitors with enhanced concealed carry permits from carrying on public grounds on school grounds. However, these educational institutions may still adopt policies which administratively limit possession of firearms by enrolled students, employees, dormitory residents, and other school stakeholders. Without implementing limitations on firearm carrying on school's grounds, it is entirely possible that individual school districts or institutions open themselves to liability should a firearm be stolen, left unattended, or otherwise misused.^{7F8} 8 Wroth v. McKinney, 190 Kan. 127 (1962) 9 Protecting the next generation: Strategies to keep America's kids safe from gun violence, GIFFORDS LAW CENTER (2020), https://giffords.org/lawcenter/report/protecting-next-generation/ (last visited Jul 27, 2022).</p> <p>10 Id. 11 https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/suicide-data-statistics.html</p> <p>The argument that the enhanced carry designation denotes a more responsible gun owner is false. Even the most responsible gun owners are not immune to mistakes. Between 2014-2018 there were over 100 publicly reported incidents of mishandled guns in schools in the 32 states that allow firearms on campuses. Furthermore, as of 2018, more than 150,000 minors have been shot in the United States. In more than 170 elementary, middle, and high schools around the country, 150,000 students have experienced school shootings as of 2018.^{8F9} Looking at these</p>	
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**Summary of Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Comments Approval to Revise
Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1 - Weapons.**

The Office of Accountability received the following APA comment(s) regarding the proposed revisions to Mississippi Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1 - Weapons.

	<p>numbers, it is almost understandable that MDE decided to publicly clarify this policy. However, allowing anyone with an enhanced concealed carry license to bring a firearm onto a school campus is thoughtless at best, and negligent at worst. With 60% of high school-aged students reporting they feared a school shooting in 2018⁹ and a teen suicide rate 30% higher than the national average¹⁰, it makes little sense for Mississippi schools to allow more guns onto school grounds.</p> <p>A local stopgap could be requiring permission from school administrators, as in Idaho, Indiana, Missouri, and Oklahoma, though it is likely this could be challenged in court. Two possible forms of legislative correction include: (1) limiting the exception to school employees and requiring more rigorous training for any person who wants to carry a firearm onto a school campus, like Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming, or (2) amendment of Miss. Code Ann. §45-9-10(13) to add school grounds as a place of nuisance, much like the airport or a courthouse, to disallow the carrying of firearms by any person.¹¹ These in no way encompass all recourse options but are meant to illustrate possibilities and allow for further research into what other states have done. The law of the state and the policy of MDE as it the agency wishes to amend is not in the best interest of Mississippi students. I hope to see MDE present strong guidance to limit firearms on school campuses, as well as advocate for the addition of schools as a place of nuisance to disallow firearms by anyone other than law enforcement. We must protect our children with the same fervor we protect our airports, courthouses, and churches.</p>	
43	<p>I hope MDE will hold a hearing on the revised weapon policy, but I haven't seen any notice of one. Would you let me know if a hearing will be held? *Noted as Request 4</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>
44	<p>I understand that the Mississippi Board of Education voted recently to remove a policy that barred individuals with enhanced concealed carry permits from carrying guns in the state's elementary and secondary public schools. As the father of two children in public school in Hattiesburg (Thames Elementary), I would like to request a hearing to appeal that policy. I myself am a former infantry soldier, and I don't believe guns have any place in the classroom or on public school grounds. Armed civilian responders are highly unlikely to subdue an attacker, as the data shows https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/06/22/us/shootings-police-response-ualde-buffalo.html), and they are far more likely</p>	<p>These revisions are necessary to comply with state law.</p>

**Summary of Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Comments Approval to Revise
Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1 - Weapons.**

The Office of Accountability received the following APA comment(s) regarding the proposed revisions to Mississippi Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1 - Weapons.

	to endanger our children, teachers, and staff. I also don't believe that the policy change is required for compliance. *Noted as Request 5	
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An2ela Kitchens

From: Brian McGairty
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2022 2:17 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Request for Public hearing

BRIAN MCGAIRTY, **Director**
Office of Educator Misconduct
Office of Safe and Orderly Schools
601-359-1028 | mdek12.org

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MISSISSIPPI
STATE
UNIVERSITY

From: James M. Thomas (JT) <jmthoma4@olemiss.edu>
Sent: Monday, July 25, 2022 3:57 PM
To: Brian McGairty <bmcgairty@mdek12.org>
Subject: Request for Public hearing

Hello

I am writing to request that the MOE hold a public hearing regarding its proposed regulatory revisions about guns in schools.

James M. Thomas (JT)

Associate Professor (with dissent)
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
The University of Mississippi
Lamar Hall 514
P.O. Box 1848
University, MS 38677-1848
+1-662-915-7430
jmthoma4@olemiss.edu

Incoming Co-editor of [*Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*](#)

My latest book: [Diversity Regimes](#) (Rutgers University Press, 2020)
My website: <http://jamesmichaelthomas.wordpress.com>

Self-expression and self-identification are among my professional and personal values. One way to practice these values is to share personal gender pronouns. My name is James, I go by my initials JT, and I use he, him, his pronouns. What pronouns do you use?

Anaela Kitchens

From: Brian McGairty
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2022 2:23 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: PLEASE!!!!

BRIAN MCGAIRTY, Director
Office of Educator Misconduct
Office of Safe and Orderly Schools
601-359-1028 | mdek12.org

-----Original Message-----

From: mhehoworth <mhehoworth@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 25, 2022 4:28 PM
To: Brian McGairty <bmcgairty@mdek12.org>
Subject: PLEASE!!!!

Have a hearing regarding guns in schools!!!

Sent from my iPhone

Ana,ela Kitchens

From: Brian McGairty
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2022 2:24 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Hearing for changes to MS rules on gun procedures in schools

BRIAN MCGAIRTY, Director
Office of Educator Misconduct
Office of Safe and Orderly Schools
601-359-1028 | mdek12.org

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan Allen <suz.allen@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 25, 2022 5:30 PM
To: Brian McGairty <bmcgairty@mdek12.org>
Subject: Hearing for changes to MS rules on gun procedures in schools

Hello,

As a concerned parent of a second grader, I believe that it is important that the public have the opportunity to make public comment on these proposed changes. Gun violence in schools has become an epidemic but I am not sure that problem is alleviated by bring MORE guns into the schools.

Thank you,

Susan Allen
Oxford, MS

An,2ela Kitchens

From: rowan williams <rowanwilliams@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 29, 2022 9:48 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Guns in schools policy public comment

Please accept this into public comment on the proposed change to the MBE proposed change to its policy on weapons in schools. I am opposed to striking the language in the existing policy. While I believe every school district has differences, I DO believe that the only people allowed on school grounds with weapons should be law enforcement officers. It is the only way to know what is friendly weapon carry and what isn't. I worry that students could gain access to guns within schools, and I also don't believe teachers should be placed in the position to protect/harm students in this way for a variety of reasons. Striking the existing policy language seems especially tone deaf in the current climate surrounding school shootings.

Thank you for your time and attention,
R. Haug, Starkville

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Rob and Barb Knapstein <rbknapstein@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, July 29, 2022 2:01 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Change to policy on Weapons in schools

Mississippi Department of Education/State of Mississippi
Dear MS Kitchens,

We think it is abhorrent for the State of Mississippi and Mississippi Department of Education to change statutes to allow weapons in our public schools.

There are examples of best practices and creative ways to implement excellent security for public school buildings and properties. We want our tax dollars spent on improving public school safety through enhanced security measures. Please explore the options, choose one and implement statewide. The safety of our public school students and staff are worth the necessary spending.

It is deplorable for our state leaders to expect public school teachers to spend their low wages on weapons and weaponry training.

Concerned Citizens,
Barbara and Robert Knapstein
85528 Diamondhead Dr West
Diamondhead, MS 39525

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

An2ela Kitchens

From: Diane Pope <dianecarapope1@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, July 29, 2022 2:36 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: I agree on the new school gun policies

Thank you
Diane Pope
1130 Pope Road
Richton, MS 39475

Sent from my iPhone

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Jane Bearden <janebbearden@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 30, 2022 9:59 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Public Comment: Safety in schools proposed ammendment

Attn: Ms Angela Kitchens

I think it is abhorrent for the State of Mississippi and Mississippi Department of Education to change statutes to allow weapons in our public schools. Our teachers and staff should focus on educating our children, not acting as a militia force.

There are examples of best practices and creative approaches to implement excellent security for public school buildings and properties. These approaches include addressing students' health, empowering teachers and law enforcement to intervene if students show warning signs, improving schools' physical security in a targeted way, and keeping guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them. We can't let risky ideas, like arming teachers, dominate the debate on school safety. An armed teacher cannot transform into a specially-trained law enforcement officer in a moment of extreme duress.

I support gun control legislation that limits purchase, capacity, and availability of guns. I reject any and all measures to expand gun presence. To say that the presence of guns in the classrooms will make schools safer is counter- intuitive and is not backed up by statistics. [You can access factual data here_](#).

I want my tax dollars spent on improving public school safety through enhanced security measures such as better monitoring, smaller classrooms, screening devices on admission, training in recognizing danger, and professional security personnel at entrances and in hallways. Please explore the options, choose one or more and implement statewide. The safety of our public school students and staff are worth the necessary spending.

It is deplorable and it is dangerous for our state leaders to expect public school teachers to engage in weapons and weaponry training. We owe it to future generations to allow our teachers to focus on providing high quality education.

Rev'd Jane B Bearden

84107 Bayou Dr
Diamondhead, MS 39525

617-240-7252 Cell

The words of the liturgy are theologically correct words that stay the same from week to week. A sermon, on the other hand, is an act of creation with real risk. In it, as one foolhardy human being presumes to address both God and humankind, speaking to each on the other's behalf and praying to get out of the pulpit alive.

-Barbara Brown Taylor in The Preaching Life (Boston: Cowley, 1993)

Ans,ela Kitchens

From: Charles Richardson <rspiritr@benlomand.net>
Sent: Sunday, July 31, 2022 3:17 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Guns in schools

I write to register my strong dismay at the recent (or proposed) change in policy which allows for the possibility of guns in schools, and also with what will likely be the eventual move toward arming teachers. The claim by some that the best answer to a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun is patently false. The best answer is to ban assault style weapons. This is totally compatible with the 2nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. There are already several types of weapons of war which are banned, and such bans are fully constitutional.

We need leaders who will stand up and speak out for reasonable gun regulation.

Being relatively new to Mississippi, I do not claim to have a full awareness of the laws of this state, but I am able to discern reasonable and sensible regulations. We need more, not less regulation of guns.

As a regular columnist for "The Sea Coast Echoe" of Bay St. Louis, I have recently written a column in this regard. You may find it published on line at the "Echo" website.

Thank you for your attention.

C. Gerald Richardson, D.Min.
Diamondhead, Ms.

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Robert Smith <wetpalette@live.com>
Sent: Monday, August 1, 2022 10:55 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Guns in Schools

I'm against creating "Teachers" responsible for Our Children's safety. That's NOT THEIR JOB !! Find another solution instead of WIMPING OUT?

Robert G. Smith
3915 Palmetto Av
Pascagoula, Ms 39581

An,aela Kitchens

From: Kay Sims <kay.sims@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 1, 2022 12:56 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Weapons policy changes

Comments on changes in state law regarding weapons on school campuses.

Chapter 97: Weapons Rule 97.1 Weapons.

This change completely opens the door to parents, alumni, even students, anyone carrying a gun regardless of mental capacity or training. This will only result in more school shootings which, for the most part, we have been able to restrict. Without a unified policy throughout the state with some flexibility for indiv. districts, every district is wasting time "inventing the wheel" while more pressing educational matters are ignored. If there is not a defined protocol and chain of responsibility (recommended from professionals) we could end up like Uvalde, Texas. The state must do its homework and provide a basic format for dealing with and preventing school shootings.

As a retired high school teacher, I have known or taught teachers and students with mental problems, law enforcement with vindictive tendencies and Napoleonic complexes or who had no knowledge of the students and faculty they were dealing with. Unfortunately we have seen the criminalization of minor adolescent behavior through policing on school premises which has created criminal records for too many youthful indiscretions.

School districts need guidance and information from experts that they can model in formulating their localized policies and strategies without opening the doors to every wacko with a gun. Even the type of gun and ammunition may need to be restricted to avoid stray bullet injuries and mistaken targets. Only the state has the time and resources to provide such information for a unified and effective policy. Don't neglect your responsibility at the state level.

Kay Sims, Pascagoula, MS
Teaching veteran of over 32 years

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Kay Sims <kay.sims@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 1, 2022 12:59 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Fwd: How Do We Stop Mass Shootings?

You might find some of these articles enlightening.
Kay Sims

----- Forwarded message-----

From: **Newsweek** <newsletter@email.newsweek.com>
Date: Thu, Jul 28, 2022 at 12:32 PM
Subject: How Do We Stop Mass Shootings?
To: <kay.sims@gmail.com>



JULY 28, 2022

DEBATE OF THE WEEK

How Do We Stop Mass Shootings?

Political strategist Kristal Knight and talk show host Ari Hoffman join Celeste & Andrew for a thoughtful discussion on steps we can all agree on to curb mass shootings and gun violence in America.

**Listen to the latest episode of
The Debate podcast [HERE](#)**

VIEWPOINTS

ARI HOFFMAN

HOST OF THE ARI HOFFMAN SHOW ON TALK RADIO 570 KV/

Enforcing the Rules Would Eliminate Need for Red Flag Laws

If a kid has gone for psychiatric help before, who's a juvenile, I don't think that kid belongs anywhere near a weapon. And I think most gun owners like myself would agree with something like that, because there are these issues, and they aren't being addressed. Every time we hear about one of these shootings it's the exact same thing. Every single time. People knew it could happen because the kid had mental health issues and he was posting weird stuff to Facebook. Why was none of that reported under the red flag laws?... [READ MORE](#)

KRISTAL KNIGHT

POLITICAL STRATEGIST & COMMENTATOR

Implement Community Violence Intervention Programs

Some of the systemic issues have a number of nuanced problems, understanding that each jurisdiction has their own way that they implement red flag laws. Everyone loves to use Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York as poster children. There's money in the federal government that can be given to states for community violence intervention programs, and that's not something that a lot of people want to talk about because it's not sexy. It's not popular all the time, but those are things that could absolutely help address some of these prolific offenders.....[READ MORE](#)

FURTHER READING

- **Good Guys With Guns May Be Heroes-But They're Not Our Solution**
- **Democrat Calls Assault Weapons Ban 'Death Wish' for Part_y:**
- **Want to Protect Yourself? Don't Bu_y: a Gun**
- **With New Gun Law, New York Lawmakers Disregard the Constitution**

Anflela Kitchens

From: Wendy McDonald <mcwendy115@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 2, 2022 9:14 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Weapons in schools.

I'm opposed to the policy changes for weapons in schools.

How many children are you going to put in danger because there will be a weak if any policy regarding weapons in schools. Do you job.

From: [Larry Shook](#)
To: [Brian McGarity](#)
Subject: Firearms in Public Schools
Date: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 11:36:12 AM

Sir I applaud your efforts to allow a layer of additional protection for our Children, Teachers and Staff. I am retired Air Force, NRA Life member, Certified NRA Basic Pistol Instructor and Mississippi State Certified Enhanced Carry Instructor. If I can be of any help with the development/implementation of the required training please let me know. I live in Woolmarket.

Larry Shook
228 669-8373

With the availability of assault weapons today and active shooters. School staff needs to be prepared to keep children safe.

Robert L. Beasley, MSW,
Veterans Resource Coordinator
Greenwood Community Center Veterans Support Network program.
709 Ave. I
Greenwood, MS 38930
662-299-6798 cell

I salute your courage, your honor and most of all, your sacrifice.

An,2ela Kitchens

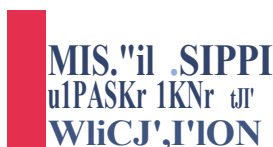
From: Kim Benton
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 4:56 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: A word of encouragement

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdek12.org

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From: John Switzer <switzerjohn1516@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 8:18 AM

To: Rosemary Aultman <rosemary.au1tman@mdek12.org>; Glen East <geast@mdek12.org>; Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>; Ronnie McGehee <rmcgehee@mdek12.org>; Karen Elam <karen.elam@mdek12.org>; Angela Bass <abass@mdek12.org>; Wendi Barrett <wbarrett@mdek12.org>; Matt Miller <mmiller@mdek12.org>; Mary Werner <mwerner@mdek12.org>; Bill Jacobs <bjacobs@mdek12.org>; Micah Hill <mhill@mdek12.org>; Charlie Fruge <cfruge@mdek12.org>

Subject: A word of encouragement

Dear Friends,

I'm a lifelong Mississippian (aged 62), a passionate voter, and a faithful taxpayer.

Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97. Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, *so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.*

Consistency in the law is a hallmark of a truly free society. I hope and pray that you'll agree. Thank you for your efforts.

Most Sincerely,

John B. Switzer, PhD
312 Lovers Lane
Ocean Springs, MS 39564
(228) 235-4400

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 4:57 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW:

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.
State Superintendent of Education, Interim
601-359-3512 | mdek12.org

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From: Martin_ X6 <martincereceres06@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 8:39 AM
To: Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>
Subject:

Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 4:57 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Mississippi Education Board Must Follow State Law

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdek.12.org

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From: m.thoren@yahoo.com <m.thoren@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 8:34 AM
To: Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>
Subject: Mississippi Education Board Must Follow State Law

Dr./Secretary Benton,

I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Thank you,

Michael Thoren
230 Fairview Tail
Byhalia, MS 38611
815-297-4706

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 4:58 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Urge You to Make the Temporary Change Permanent

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdek12.org

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From: Robert <res416@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 9:31 AM
To: Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>
Subject: Urge You to Make the Temporary Change Permanent

Dr. Benton:

Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. I am asking you to move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Robert E. Smith, Ph.D.
Brandon

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 5:03 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Mississippi Education Board Must Follow State Law

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdek.12.org

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From: draparkinson@aol.com <draparkinson@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 10:34 AM
To: Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>
Subject: Mississippi Education Board Must Follow State Law

Hello,

I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1.

The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Anthony Parkinson

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 5:03 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: State Board Policy

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdek.12.org

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From: Greg Burgreen <greg.burgreen@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 10:41 AM

To: Rosemary Aultman <rosemary.aultman@mdek12.org>; Glen East <geast@mdek12.org>; Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>; Ronnie McGehee <rmcgehee@mdek12.org>; Karen Elam <karen.e1am@mdek12.org>; Angela Bass <abass@mdek12.org>; Wendi Barrett <wbarrett@mdek12.org>; Matt Miller <mmiller@mdek12.org>; Mary Werner <mwerner@mdek12.org>; Bill Jacobs <bjacobs@mdek12.org>; Micah Hill <mhill@mdek12.org>; Charlie Fruge <cfruge@mdek12.org>

Subject: State Board Policy

Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer.

Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1.

The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Dr. Greg W. Burgreen
Starkville, MS

From: [Kim Benton](#)
To: [Accreditation Shared](#)
Subject: FW: State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1.
Date: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 5:09:55 PM
Attachments: [iooageoo1.ona](#)
[iooaaeeo2.png](#)
[iooageoo3.png](#)
[imaeeoo4.png](#)

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdek12.org

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MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

From: RickRizzle <rem6268@proton.me>

Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 11:12 AM

To: Rosemary Aultman <rosemary.aultman@mdek12.org>; Glen East <geast@mdek12.org>; Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>; Ronnie McGehee <rmcgehee@mdek12.org>; Karen Elam <karen.e1am@mdek12.org>; Angela Bass <abass@mdek12.org>; Wendi Barrett <wbarrett@mdek12.org>; Matt Miller <mmiller@mdek12.org>; Mary Werner <mwerner@mdek12.org>; Bill Jacobs <bjacobs@mdek12.org>; Micah Hill <mhill@mdek12.org>; Charlie Fruge <cfruge@mdek12.org>; rick@andrewburrell.com

Subject: State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1.

Hello Board Members,

I'm a Biloxi, Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Mississippi state law has generally allowed permitted individuals to carry firearms on public school campuses for over a decade. Recently, the [Mississippi State Board of Education](#) has made an effort to update their policies to be in accordance with state law and one of these policies is an outdated prohibition on carry.

While the State Board should have policies that are in accordance with state law, we as gun owners must ensure your policies are in line with the law as well. After all, this anti-gun policy has been on the books -- and against state law -- for over a decade.

Currently, the Board has made a temporary move to repeal the outdated policy

and we would like it to become permanent.

Best regards,

Rick Murray Jr.

"A man's rights rest in three boxes: the ballot box, the jury box, and the cartridge box."

-Frederick Douglass

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

Ana,ela Kitchens


From: Kim Benton
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 5:10 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Take Action to Ensure MS Ed Board Follows the Law

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.
State Superintendent of Education, Interim
601-359-3512 | mdek12.org

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 **From:** Donna Flanagan <dbflanaganguns@bellsouth.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 11:14 AM
To: Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>
Subject: Take Action to Ensure MS Ed Board Follows the Law

Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Sent from my iPhone 6S

An2,ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 5:12 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1.

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.
State Superintendent of Education, Interim
601-359-3512 | mdek12.org

-----Original Message-----

From: Dale <rdalek1967@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 12:49 PM
To: Rosemary Aultman <rosemary.aultman@mdek12.org>; Glen East <geast@mdek12.org>; Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>; Ronnie McGehee <rmcgehee@mdek12.org>; Karen Elam <karen.elam@mdek12.org>; Angela Bass <abass@mdek12.org>; Wendi Barrett <wbarrett@mdek12.org>; Matt Miller <mmiller@mdek12.org>; Mary Werner <mwerner@mdek12.org>; Bill Jacobs <bjacobs@mdek12.org>; Micah Hill <mhill@mdek12.org>; Charlie Fruge <cfruge@mdek12.org>
Subject: Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1.

Hello,

Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin.

Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Ronnie Kirkley
West Point MS 39773

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 5:22 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Change in your policy

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdek12.org

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From: cricket007352 <cricket007352@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 2:45 PM

To: Rosemary Aultman <rosemary.aultman@mdek12.org>; Glen East <geast@mdek12.org>; Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>; Ronnie McGehee <rmcgehee@mdek12.org>; Karen Elam <karen.elam@mdek12.org>; Angela Bass <abass@mdek12.org>; Wendi Barrett <wbarrett@mdek12.org>; Matt Miller <mmiller@mdek12.org>; Mary Werner <mwerner@mdek12.org>; Bill Jacobs <bjacobs@mdek12.org>; Micah Hill <mhill@mdek12.org>; Charlie Fruge <cfruge@mdek12.org>

Subject: Change in your policy

Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens, like me, can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Thank you

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Thursday, August 4, 2022 7:30 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdek.12.org

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From: Erick <enmolander@protonmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 9:09 PM
To: Rosemary Aultman <rosemary.aultman@mdek12.org>; Glen East <geast@mdek12.org>; Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>; Ronnie McGehee <rmcgehee@mdek12.org>; Karen Elam <karen.elam@mdek12.org>; Angela Bass <abass@mdek12.org>; Wendi Barrett <wbarrett@mdek12.org>; Matt Miller <mmiller@mdek12.org>; Mary Werner <mwerner@mdek12.org>; Bill Jacobs <bjacobs@mdek12.org>; Micah Hill <mhill@mdek12.org>; Charlie Fruge <cfruge@mdek12.org>
Subject: Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1

To: Mississippi State Board Of Education Members

Hello,

I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1.

Recently, Mississippi State Board Of Education has made an effort to update their policies to be in accordance with state law. One of these policies was an outdated prohibition on firearm carry. This anti-gun policy has been on the books -- and against state law -- for over a decade.

Currently, the Board has made a temporary move to repeal the outdated policy, but it needs to become permanent.

The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Sincerely,

Erick Molander
Ocean Springs, MS

An2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Thursday, August 4, 2022 7:30 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Protection for our children, faculty, and staff

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdelu2.org

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From: timm777 <tim777@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 7:55 PM
To: Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>
Subject: Protection for our children, faculty, and staff

Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. My wife is a retired educator with experience as a teacher and school administrator. I understand the challenges that our schools face and the possible threats that we have seen in other communities around this nation. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Thursday, August 4, 2022 7:31 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdeku2.org

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From: Mark <maru@hughes.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 4, 2022 6:47 AM
To: Kim Benton <KBenton@mdeku2.org>
Subject: Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1

Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Mark Russell

An2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Thursday, August 4, 2022 10:44 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Fwd: Outdated School Board Policy

[Get Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Nay <nreed92.17@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 4, 2022 8:57:34 AM
To: Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>
Subject: Outdated School Board Policy

Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Nay Reed

Sent from my iPad

Ans,ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Thursday, August 4, 2022 5:33 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Make MS State Board of Ed policy in line with State law

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdek12.org

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MISSISSIPPI
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EDUCATION

From: John Thoren <j.thoren47@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 4, 2022 4:17 PM
To: Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>
Subject: Make MS State Board of Ed policy in line with State law

Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Ans,ela Kitchens

From: Brandie Williams <brwilliams@nettleton.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Friday, August 5, 2022 8:27 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Opinion on weapons policy

As a 16 year veteran teacher, I have been through many lock down situations. Only once was I truly afraid there was an active shooter on our campus. (There was a shooting one block away from the school in which I believe three people were killed including the shooter.) As I sat with my 9-10 year old students and tried to keep them calm and quiet, I have NEVER felt so helpless in my life! The lockdown occurred during a transition when I and my students were returning from the cafeteria and were already outside. We had to take shelter in the nearest entrance, which for us was an auditorium. This was a huge, open, empty room with six doors entering it, two of which were exterior. The only thought that kept running through my mind was, "If someone makes it through those doors, there's absolutely nothing I can do to save these children or myself."

As someone who has an enhanced concealed carry permit, I often carry when I am traveling or shopping alone for personal protection, However, until this incident occurred, I had never really given much thought to teachers carrying in schools. I had always felt safe in the company of others. The feeling of safety was forever questioned that day.

I am in strong favor of allowing teachers (who are willing) to go to special training for active shooter situations led by certified instructors, perhaps even something similar to the firearm training law enforcement receive. Then in the case of an active shooter, there are already trained personnel inside the schools who can help protect our children.

"The foregoing electronic message and any files transmitted with it are confidential and are intended only for the use of the intended recipient named above. This communication may contain material protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). If you are not the intended recipient, copying, distribution, or use of the contents of this message is strictly prohibited. If you received this electronic message in error please notify, me at the email address above."

Anjela Kitchens

From: DARRELL AINSWORTH <jdainsworth@bellsouth.net>
Sent: Friday, August 5, 2022 11:33 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: school board policy changes re: gun policies on school campuses

I agree that local school boards and governing authorities should have the right to decide about their own gun policies and ways to protect their students/staff on campuses.

Our children are our most precious resources and should be protected at-all-costs!

Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion concerning this important matter.

Sincerely,

Deborah Ainsworth (retired schoolteacher with 39 years' service)
153 Knight to Oak Grove Road
Mount Olive, MS 39119

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Joseph Kennedy <jraykennedy31@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 5, 2022 11:49 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Firearms in the hands of educators

Several years ago, I saw a bumper sticker on a vehicle that stated, "When you outlaw guns, only outlaws will have guns!" When the the only person armed on a school campus is an intruder (or intruders) and POSSIBLY an SRO, odds do not *favor* school children!

Responsible adults, especially those that love children enough to choose to serve as an educator, can safely carry firearms to protect those children to whom they have been entrusted. I served as an educator for over 35 years in two different states (three counting student teaching) and arming qualified teachers to carry firearms on school campuses is a "no-brainer." Very few teachers that I have taught with as a classroom teacher and even fewer teachers that I hired as an administrator would I hesitate to arm to protect children.

About four years ago I went through enhanced- carry firearm training with other educators. After the training we all acquired our enhanced carry licenses through the local Mississippi State Highway Patrol Station. We were ready then to stand up for children in the face of those that would harm our students.

Please note that I have qualified my strong feelings by using words above like "responsible" and "qualified." I do not advocate blindly arming every educator! Parameters should be established to put guns in the correct hands.

Thank you for considering my thoughts,

Ray Kennedy

Member of MPE since 1988

Sent from my iPhone

An,2ela Kitchens

From: rebecca goldman <reb.goldman80@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 5, 2022 8:00 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Weapons Policy

Good evening,

I am a strong advocate of the weapons policy, Our principal told us this year that even though there was a policy change there are to be no weapons on our campus.

I say that to say that there are teachers that are scared of guns. There are also teachers who are trained in weapon retention and have had firearms training. The teachers that have educated themselves on firearms and firearms safety are not scared to have guns at school. It is those who are not educated that are afraid to have firearms anywhere near a school. There are several teachers that are ex military or ex law enforcement that are more than willing to carry a concealed firearm or take a bullet for the safety of our children. As with everything the answer lies in education. If the districts continue to scare teachers at the beginning of every year by showing videos of the damage firearms can do on school campuses those with proper training will never prevail.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Goldman

An2ela Kitchens

From: Virginia Munford <ginniree@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 6, 2022 10:53 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Gun Policy on School Property

Dear State Board Members:

I am a retired lawyer and lifetime resident of Mississippi, with several generations of family deeply involved in service to public schools of our state. I write to urge you to bravely reconsider your recent action rescinding the traditional statewide rule against possession of guns on school property, allowing instead a "local option" policy.

WHY NOT ALLOW EACH COMMUNITY'S LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD TO DETERMINE THE BEST POLICY FOR THEIR COMMUNITY?

The State Board has no function whatever if local boards assume responsibility for the most important policies regarding K-12 education in Mississippi. Your board's very existence is to guarantee equal opportunity and equal protection to ALL of Mississippi's schoolchildren. This is why you have authority over curriculum. Likewise the freedom to learn and teach in a healthy, safe, clean environment is central to your mission. Your very existence as a board is to take the heat away from local authorities and teachers, to protect them from passion or prejudice on any side of controversial issues. You should own your authority and bravely acknowledge that you have relative anonymity and seclusion from the sometimes angry passions and instincts of local citizens who can threaten and intimidate local school board members for any unpopular decision. You stand as a protective force to shield local authorities from such threats and violence.

Recent U.S. court decisions recognize gun ownership as a fundamental right, but no federal or state law allows guns to be carried everywhere and any time. Reasonable restrictions as to time and place -- such as protection of vulnerable people in hospitals, care facilities and schools -- will continue to be upheld by the courts.

It is your job to decide that the right of vulnerable teachers and students deserves your protection, to create uniformly safe and healthy environments for ALL of Mississippi's teachers and students. This right entrusted to you outweighs any "liberty" interest of a gun owner, even a well meaning volunteer or family member, to carry around a gun to be used in whatever manner or for whatever purpose he/she decides.

Please do your job, and stand up for the freedom of teachers and students to do theirs.

Thank you for your service and your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Virginia T. Munford
810 Gillespie St.
Jackson MS 39202
Email: ginniree@gmail.com

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Monday, August 8, 2022 8:31 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: State Board Policy

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdek12.org

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DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

From: rtdaltonjr@frontiernet.net <rtdaltonjr@frontiernet.net>

Sent: Friday, August 5, 2022 4:26 PM

To: Glen East <geast@mdek12.org>; Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>; Karen Elam <karen.elam@mdek12.org>; Angela Bass <abass@mdek12.org>; Wendi Barrett <wbarrett@mdek12.org>; Matt Miller <mmiller@mdek12.org>; Mary Werner <mwerner@mdek12.org>; Bill Jacobs <bjacobs@mdek12.org>; Micah Hill <mhill@mdek12.org>; Charlie Fruge <cfruge@mdek12.org>

Subject: State Board Policy

I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1.

The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Mississippi state law has generally allowed permitted individuals to carry firearms on public school campuses for over a decade without any problems.

As I understand it, the Board has made a temporary move to repeal the outdated policy, but it needs to become permanent.

Thank you, and sincerely yours,

R. Terry Dalton, Jr., R.Ph.
Corinth, MS

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Monday, August 8, 2022 8:32 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: Policy

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdek12.org

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From: David Miller <ageranger36l@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, August 5, 2022 4:56 PM
To: Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>
Subject: Policy

Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

David Miller

Luke 22:35-37 **NLT**

[35] Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you out to preach the Good News and you did not have money, a traveler's bag, or an extra pair of sandals, did you need anything?" "No," they replied. [36] "But now," he said, "take your money and a traveler's bag. And if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one! [37] For the time has come for this prophecy about me to be fulfilled: 'He was counted among the rebels.' d Yes, everything written about me by the prophets will come true." ...

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Kim Benton
Sent: Monday, August 8, 2022 8:33 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: FW: I vote

KIM S. BENTON, ED.D.

State Superintendent of Education, Interim

601-359-3512 | mdek12.org

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From: Phillip Ley <minimalmed@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 7, 2022 7:37 AM
To: Kim Benton <KBenton@mdek12.org>
Subject: I vote

Hello, I'm a Mississippi citizen, voter, and taxpayer. Please move forward to revise and make in accordance with state law Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 97.1, State Board Policy Chapter 97, Rule 97.1. The policies set forth by the Board should be consistent with state law, so citizens can clearly understand what is and is not lawful activity on school campuses.

Henry Schumacher

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Julia Weaver <julia.weaver@att.net>
Sent: Tuesday, August 9, 2022 3:03 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: weapons in schools

Dear Ms. Kitchens,

I am writing to ask that MDE change its policy on concealed carry weapons on K-12 campuses. I realize that MOE stated that it is simply getting its policy in line with current statute but that position makes schools less safe and is insufficient in this current moment when students, teachers, staff and parents are worried daily about getting shot at school.

The public doesn't want guns on K -12 campuses. A recently released [study by Johns Hopkins University](#) found that the public does not support concealed firearms on K-12 school grounds. In fact, support dropped from 31% in 2019 to 23% in 2021.

Teachers don't want guns in the classroom. A [survey](#) of more than 2,900 current and former teachers across the country conducted in the weeks following the Parkland shooting by a California State University researcher found that more than 95% of respondents did not want teachers to have weapons. They felt that having guns in the classroom could lead to more violence, including from accidental discharge and accidental shootings.

Allowing the carrying of concealed, loaded guns on school campuses can quickly escalate everyday conflicts into deadly altercations. School personnel are already exposed to the following:

- Parents and guardians who are agitated about academic issues, sporting events, or political issues such as COVID restrictions;
- Parents who are involved in divorce or custody disputes; and
- Fights among students.

MOE should make policy that makes it easier for school districts to keep their schools safe. I am asking that MOE:

- **Go on record against concealed carry on school campuses**
- **Work to change the concealed carry law**
- **Provide policy templates to school districts that want to restrict concealed carry on campuses**

Thank you for allowing me to comment on this issue,

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Mari Williams <williams.marigny@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 9, 2022 4:48 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Weapons Policy

To Whom it May Concern,

Frankly, I think it is ridiculous that we are debating the right to have a weapon on a school campus. People who are 18 or older have the right to smoke but are not allowed to do so on a school campus. This is because we as a society have decided that the safety of students trumps the inconvenience of a few. Weapons are way more dangerous than secondhand smoke. There are so many dangers that can occur if someone brings a weapon to a school building. The person who brings a weapon to a school campus can present a danger and what happens if that weapon falls into the hands of a child? Why on earth would we do something that increases the chance of violence at school campuses? Schools are already tasked with creating and implementing numerous safety policies. They should not have to create a common sense gun law to protect our children. Our local government should because you all owe students the right to learn safely.

-Mari Williams (First Grade Assistant at a Mississippi public school)

An2ela Kitchens

From: Brian McGairty
Sent: Thursday, August 11, 2022 9:20 AM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Fwd: Hearing request

Angela,

I realize its after the deadline for the request for public hearing, but I was unsure if you needed to still chart/log.

Brian McGairty, Director
Office of Educator Misconduct
Office of Safe and Orderly Schools

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. Box 771 | Jackson, MS | 39205-0771
Tel (601) 359-2742 Fax (601) 359-2778
www.mde.k12.ms.us
Twitter: @MissDeptEd

From: Charla Miley <c.miley@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 10, 2022 7:10:09 PM
To: Brian McGairty <bmcgairty@mdek12.org>
Subject: Hearing request

I am writing to request la public hearing about the policy for guns in schools that it implemented on a temporary basis and proposes to make permanent.

Thank you,

C Miley

An2ela Kitchens

From: James. <j_west19@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 12, 2022 2:52 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Weapons policy

To whom it may concern I am writing my public comment on potential changes to weapons policy in Mississippi state schools. As a strong supporter of the second ammendment I am proud that Mississippi is one of the best states for protecting 2A rights. Naturally I understand that these freedoms do carry potential risks. That is why I believe it is imperative to make our schools hard targets in order to deter would-be violent actors. I strongly believe that if school faculty has the proper training, ability, and willingness to carry weapons at our schools to protect our students then they should be allowed to do so. Our teachers and administrators are the first line of defense for the most vulnerable of our population and they should be properly equipped to deal with any situation that poses a threat to our children.

I hope the board will seriously take this in to consideration.

An,2ela Kitchens

From: Sena Adekpuitor Townsend <senayawa@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 14, 2022 7:24 PM
To: Accreditation Shared
Subject: Public Comment Re: Desoto Co. Schools Weapons Policy

To Whom It May Concern,

Please do NOT allow teachers to carry firearms on campus. Firearms should only be carried in schools by HIGHLY trained law enforcement professionals. Extra firearms on campuses carried by anyone other these highly trained law enforcement professionals can potentially put students in unnecessary danger due to accidental shootings, potential for students accessing teacher firearms, etc. There are other ways to keep students and staff safe at school besides allowing teachers to bring firearms on campus.

Thank you,
Sena Townsend (Concerned Parent)

From: [Jonathan Allen](#)
To: [Brian McGairty](#)
Subject: Hearing on revised weapon policy
Date: Tuesday, August 9, 2022 1:58:54 PM

Hello:

I hope MDE will hold a hearing on the revised weapon policy, but I haven't seen any notice of one. Would you let me know if a hearing will be held?

Thank you!
Jonathan Allen

To Whom It May Concern:

I respectfully submit these comments to the Mississippi Department of Education, in conformity with the Mississippi Administrative Procedures Act. Per the Administrative Procedures Act, all public comments must be received in the Office of Accreditation no later than 5:00 p.m. on August 15, 2022.¹

On July 21st, 2022, Mississippi Department of Education (MOE) filed the required MAPA Notice to amend Mississippi Administrative Code 7-3:97.1², otherwise known as the MOE weapons policy.³ This change clarifies that anyone with an enhanced concealed carry permit may carry a gun onto an elementary, secondary, or tertiary campus.⁴ MOE states that this policy change is intended to bring the agency into compliance with state law.⁵ Enhanced concealed carry license applicants in Mississippi must be over age 21, pass a background check and take a voluntary course on the safe handling and use of firearms by a certified instructor to obtain the enhanced carry license.⁶

While 34 states allow someone other than law enforcement officers to carry firearms into schools, only three states require a concealed carry license alone.⁷ Public schools, colleges, and universities are generally prohibited from restricting visitors with enhanced concealed

¹ Miss. Code Ann. § 25-43-1, et seq.

² <https://www.sos.ms.gov/adminsearch/ACProposed/00026486b.pdf>

³ <https://www.sos.ms.gov/adminsearch/ACProposed/00026486a.pdf>

⁴ Julia James, Guns have been allowed in Mississippi Schools (for some people) since 2012 Mississippi Today (2022), <https://mississippitoday.org/2022/07/21/mississippi-guns-in-schools-2012/> (last visited Jul 26, 2022).

⁵ Enhanced concealed carry license applicants in Mississippi must be over age 21, pass a background check and take a voluntary course on the safe handling and use of firearms by a certified instructor to obtain the enhanced carry license. Miss. code Ann. § 97-37-7

⁶ Miss. Code Ann. §45-9-101

⁷ School Safety: Guns in Schools, School Safety:Guns In Schools, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/school-safety-guns-in-schools.aspx> (last visited Jul 27, 2022).

carry permits from carrying on public grounds on school grounds. However, these educational institutions may still adopt policies which administratively limit possession of firearms by enrolled students, employees, dormitory residents, and other school stakeholders. Without implementing limitations on firearm carrying on school's grounds, it is entirely possible that individual school districts or institutions open themselves to liability should a firearm be stolen, left unattended, or otherwise misused.⁸

The argument that the enhanced carry designation denotes a more responsible gun owner is false. Even the most responsible gun owners are not immune to mistakes. Between 2014-2018 there were over 100 publicly reported incidents of mishandled guns in schools in the 32 states that allow firearms on campuses. Furthermore, as of 2018, more than 150,000 minors have been shot in the United States. In more than 170 elementary, middle, and high schools around the country, 150,000 students have experienced school shootings as of 2018.⁹ Looking at these numbers, it is almost understandable that MDE decided to publicly clarify this policy. However, allowing anyone with an enhanced concealed carry license to bring a firearm onto a school campus is thoughtless at best, and negligent at worst. With 60% of high school-aged students reporting they feared a school shooting in 2018.¹⁰ and a teen suicide rate 30% higher than the national average.¹¹, it makes little sense for Mississippi schools to allow more guns onto school grounds.

⁸ Wroth v. McKinney, 190 Kan. 127 (1962)

⁹ Protecting the next generation: Strategies to keep America's kids safe from gun violence, GIFFORDS LAW CENTER (2020), <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/report/protecting-next-generation/> (last visited Jul 27, 2022).

¹⁰ Id.

¹¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/suicide-data-statistics.html>

A local stopgap could be requiring permission from school administrators, as in Idaho, Indiana, Missouri, and Oklahoma, though it is likely this could be challenged in court. Two possible forms of legislative correction include: (1) limiting the exception to school employees and requiring more rigorous training for any person who wants to carry a firearm onto a school campus, like Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming, or (2) amendment of Miss. Code Ann. §45-9-10(13) to add school grounds as a place of nuisance, much like the airport or a courthouse, to disallow the carrying of firearms by any person.}² These in no way encompass all recourse options but are meant to illustrate possibilities and allow for further research into what other states have done. The law of the state and the policy of MDE as it the agency wishes to amend is not in the best interest of Mississippi students. I hope to see MDE present strong guidance to limit firearms on school campuses, as well as advocate for the addition of schools as a place of nuisance to disallow firearms by anyone other than law enforcement. We must protect our children with the same fervor we protect our airports, courthouses, and churches.

Optimistically,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Megan M Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Megan M. Bennett, Esq.

¹² Law enforcement is exempt from this prohibition.

From: [Joshua Bernstein](#)
To: [Brian McGairty](#)
Cc: [Greg \(John\) Hartley](#); [Kim Benton](#); [Wend Barrett](#); [Rosemary Aultman](#); [RonnieMcGehee](#); [Karen Elam](#); [Angela Bass](#); [Matt Miller](#); [Mary Werner](#); [Bill Jacobs](#)
Subject: Request for hearing on changes to gun policy
Date: Monday, August 15, 2022 10:14:57 AM

Dear Brian McGairty,

I hope you're well and safe. I understand that the Mississippi Board of Education voted recently to remove a policy that barred individuals with enhanced concealed carry permits from carrying guns in the state's elementary and secondary public schools. As the father of two children in public school in Hattiesburg (Thames Elementary), I would like to request a hearing to appeal that policy. I myself am a former infantry soldier, and I don't believe guns have any place in the classroom or on public school grounds. Armed civilian responders are highly unlikely to subdue an attacker, as the data shows (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/06/22/us/shootings-police-response-ualde-buffato.html>), and they are far more likely to endanger our children, teachers, and staff. I also don't believe that the policy change is required for compliance. If you could please take note of my request for a hearing or let me know how to proceed, I'd be grateful.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,
Joshua Bernstein
305 Lynnwood Circle
Hattiesburg, MS 39402
joshuaandrewbernstein@gmail.com
601-266-5789