

OFFICE OF STATE SUPERINTENDENT
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
June 20, 2024

OFFICE OF DISTRICT OF TRANSFORMATION

01. Action: Initiate the process to reconstitute Tunica County School District that is a District of Transformation and approve the resolution from the State Board of Education by finding that satisfactory corrective action has taken place and by requesting that the Governor declare that the emergency no longer exists in the district [Goal 2 – MBE Strategic Plan]

Pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6 (12)(d), at the time that satisfactory corrective action has been taken in a school district in which a state of emergency has been declared, the State Board of Education may request the Governor to declare that the state of emergency no longer exists in the district.

Additionally, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-13 (4), the State Board of Education determined in November 2022 that the impairments in the district had been substantially corrected and appointed five (5) individuals to the Board of the Tunica County School District. In accordance with the foregoing code section, the reconstituted board served in an advisory capacity alongside Interim Superintendent, Dr. Margie Pulley, for the past 18 months. These board members have drawn lots as prescribed by statute and are prepared to commence their respective terms of office on July 1, 2024. The State Board of Education shall notify the municipal governing authority of the terms of office and request that they provide for the election of the school board members at the end of said terms of office in accordance with applicable law.

This item references Goal 2 of the *Mississippi Board of Education Strategic Plan*.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

June 20, 2024

Honorable Tate Reeves
Governor
State of Mississippi
Post Office Box 139
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

Dear Governor Reeves:

On July 9, 2015, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6, former Governor Phil Bryant issued a Proclamation declaring that a state of emergency existed in the Tunica County School District (TCSD) because serious violations of accreditation standards, and state laws and a continued pattern of poor student performance which jeopardized the safety, security or educational interests of the children enrolled in the schools of that district. Following the declaration of the state of emergency, the State Board of Education (SBE) abolished the district, removed the school board, assumed control and administration of the schools formerly constituting the district, and appointed an Interim Superintendent to administer the district under the direction of the SBE.

Mississippi Code Annotated § 37-17-6(12)(d) provides that when the State Board of Education determines that the deficiencies giving rise to the state of emergency have been satisfactorily corrected, the State Board of Education may notify you and ask you to declare that the state of emergency no longer exists.

In 2015, the Commission on School Accreditation (CSA) withdrew the TCSD's accreditation status. In Fall 2016, the CSA upgraded the TCSD from withdrawn to probation, and in Fall 2017 from probation to accredited after it became fully compliant with the 32 accreditation process standards. Furthermore, since 2015, the TCSD's performance classification (i.e., accountability rating), increased from a "D" for scholastic year 2014-2015, to a "C" for scholastic years 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, to a "B" for scholastic years 2021-2022, and 2022-2023.

On behalf of the SBE, the Interim State Superintendent of Education, and the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Accreditation, I am proud to report that the TCSD substantially corrected its impairments and has demonstrated maintenance of a "C" accountability rating or better for five consecutive years in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-13.

In November 2022, the SBE appointed five individuals to form the new Board of the TCSD and to serve in an advisory capacity alongside Interim Superintendent, Dr. Margie Pulley, during the past 18 months to prepare for assuming full responsibility of the district. The board members have since drawn lots in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-13(4) and each will assume their respective staggered terms of office on July 1, 2024.

Today, the SBE determined that emergency situation no longer exists in the Tunica County School District. Please accept this correspondence with the attached Resolution as the SBE's official request pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6(12)(d) that effective at 11:59 p.m. on June 30, 2024, you lift the state of emergency declared for the TCSD.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Raymond C. Morgigno, Interim State Superintendent of Education.

Respectfully,

Glen V. East, Chair
Mississippi State Board of Education

Enclosures

MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, on July 9, 2015, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6, the Honorable Phil Bryant, Governor of the State of Mississippi declared a state of emergency existed in the Tunica County School District because of serious violations of accreditation standards and state laws, and a continued pattern of poor student performance which jeopardized the safety, security and educational interests of the children enrolled in the schools of this district as evidenced by Proclamation attached hereto as Exhibit “1” and incorporated herein by reference as a part of this Resolution; and

WHEREAS, upon the issuance of the declaration of the state of emergency in the Tunica County School District, the Mississippi State Board of Education, acting in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6(12), appointed an Interim Superintendent to be responsible for the administration, management, and operation of the school district; and

WHEREAS, on July 9, 2015, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-13, the Mississippi State Board of Education abolished the Tunica County School District and assumed control and administration of the schools formerly constituting the district and appointed an Interim Superintendent to administer the district under the direction of the Mississippi State Board of Education as evidenced by the Resolution attached hereto as Exhibit "2" and incorporated herein by reference as part of this Resolution; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the Commission on School Accreditation (CSA) withdrew the Tunica County School District’s accreditation status, in Fall 2016, the CSA upgraded the Tunica County School District from withdrawn to probation, and in Fall 2017 from probation to accredited after it became fully compliant with the 32 accreditation process standards.

WHEREAS, since 2015, the Tunica County School District’s performance classification (i.e., accountability rating), increased from a “D” for scholastic year 2014-2015, to a “C” for scholastic years 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, to a “B” for scholastic years 2021-2022, and 2022-2023; thereby demonstrating maintenance of a “C” accountability rating or better for five consecutive years in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-13.

WHEREAS, having been fully apprised that the corrective action recommended in order to remove the deficiencies has been satisfactorily taken by the district and based on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent, the Mississippi Department of Education’s Office of Accreditation, and the Interim State Superintendent of Education, the Mississippi State Board of Education finds that the deficiencies have been sufficiently corrected, and the reason for declaring the state of emergency no longer exists; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-13(4), in November 2022, the Mississippi State Board of Education reconstituted the Board of the Tunica County School District with the appointment of five (5) new members of the board to work in an advisory capacity with the Interim Superintendent for one (1) year prior to assuming their terms of office; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-13(4), the reconstituted members of the Board of the Tunica County School District determined their respective terms of office by the drawing of lots and are prepared to assume full responsibility for the District and commence their terms of office on July 1, 2024, and

WHEREAS, since the board members are assuming full responsibility for the District six months into a term year, the staggered terms shall each contain an additional six months; therefore, one member shall serve a one-year term of office, plus six months; one member shall serve a two-year term of office, plus six months; one member shall serve a three-year term of office, plus six months; one member shall serve a four-year term of office, plus six months; and one member shall serve a five-year term of office, plus six months; and the first board member election shall be scheduled for November 2025; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6(12)(d), the Mississippi State Board of Education, with the concurrence of the Interim State Superintendent of Education, and the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Accreditation hereby requests the Governor of the State of Mississippi to dissolve and lift the emergency declaration for the Tunica County School District, effective at 11:59 p.m. on June 30, 2024.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-17-6(12)(d) and 37-17-13(4), the Mississippi State Board of Education, with the concurrence of the Interim State Superintendent of Education, and the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Accreditation, does hereby request the Governor of the State of Mississippi to dissolve and lift the emergency declaration for the Tunica County School District effective at 11:59 p.m. on June 30, 2024.

THIS THE 20th DAY OF JUNE, 2024.

Glen V. East, Chair
Mississippi State Board of Education

Dr. Raymond C. Morgigno
Executive Secretary
Mississippi State Board of Education

COUNTY OF HINDS
STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

This day personally appeared before me, the undersigned authority of law in and for the above-named county and state, the within named Glen V. East and Raymond C. Morgigno, who acknowledged that they signed the above and foregoing instrument of writing on the day and year therein mentioned for the purposes therein shown as their voluntary act and deed.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL on this, the 20th day of June, 2024.

NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires:

DRAFT