

## Minutes of Mississippi Board of Education Meeting

April 17, 2025

The members of the Mississippi Board of Education met at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 17, 2025, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-5 for the purpose of conducting a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

The public accessed this meeting via livestream or in-person at the Central High School Building, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Boardroom, 359 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi. Board members physically present included: Mr. Glen V. East, , Mr. Bill Jacobs, Mr. Matt Mayo, Mr. Matt Miller, Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, Mr. Mike Pruitt, Ms. Billye Jean Stroud, and Ms. Mary Werner. Board member attending virtually: Dr. Wendi Barrett (New Orleans, Louisiana). Student Representative present: Ms. Kate Riddle. Student Representative attending virtually: Mr. Crosby Parker (Gulfport, Mississippi) joined the meeting at 10:20 a.m. Dr. Lance Evans, State Superintendent, was also present.

- I. Mr. Glen V. East called the Board meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., after determining that a quorum of the Board existed for the purpose of conducting a meeting.
- II. Mr. Bill Jacobs led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Mike Pruitt gave the Invocation.
- III. On a motion by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, seconded by Ms. Mary Werner, the Board voted 7 to 0 with one abstaining to approve the minutes of March 20, 2025 Board meeting and the minutes of the Special-Called Board meeting on March 21, 2025.

Members voting aye:

Dr. Wendi Barrett  
Mr. Bill Jacobs  
Mr. Matt Mayo  
Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee  
Mr. Matt Miller  
Ms. Billye Jean Stroud  
Ms. Mary Werner

Member voting nay:

None

Member abstaining:

Mr. Mike Pruitt

- IV. On a motion by Ms. Mary Werner, seconded by Ms. Billye Jean Stroud, the Board approved the Consent Agenda.

On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Mr. Mike Pruitt, the Board approved the agenda as presented.

V. Recognition Ceremony

**Legion of Valor for Achievement**

Cadet Brooke Paal  
Florence High School  
Rankin County School District

Cadet Matthew Reed  
Northwest Rankin High School  
Rankin County School District

**Air Force JROTC Flight Academy**

Cadet Cody Quarles  
Lafayette High School  
Lafayette County School District

Cadet Brynn Butler  
Madison Central High School  
Madison County School District

VI. Dr. Lance Evans gave the following report as the State Superintendent of Education:

- Dr. Evans stated that MDE staff have been working since March 28 to develop Mississippi's ESSER extension requests. Dr. Evans stated that Mississippi is requesting approval to spend a total of \$137.2 million through the previously approved deadline of March 31, 2026. Dr. Evans stated that the U.S. Department of Education said they would consider extensions on a project specific basis.
- Dr. Evans stated MDE is in receipt of the Title VI compliance letter from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) requiring states and districts to certify their compliance with ED's antidiscrimination obligations to continue receiving federal financial assistance. Dr. Evans stated MDE is preparing our response and have provided guidance to districts for responding to ED's request in consultation with their board attorney.
- Dr. Evans stated that the House and Senate adjourned the first week of April without passing a state budget. Dr. Evans stated that Gov. Reeves will call a special session, but has not indicated when that will happen.
- Dr. Evans stated MDE hosted members of the Mississippi Student Advisory Council for the final meeting of the year. Dr. Evans stated the students presented group projects on various topics including mentoring, student representatives on local school boards, accountability grades, teacher recruitment, school safety, college and career preparation, and student cell phone policies. Dr. Evans stated he met with the council members who attend the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science to share their feedback about the school and its future.



- Dr. Evans stated he met with Teacher Advisory Councils in Clinton, Oxford, and Gulfport to provide updates about Mississippi achievements and MDE initiatives and to get their feedback from the classroom.
- Dr. Evans stated he had a speaking engagement at CCSSO Annual Legislative Conference and the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading State meeting.
- Dr. Evans stated he attended the Scott County School District School Leadership Academy.
- Dr. Evans stated he and Dr. Paula Vanderford were interviewed by The New York Times about Mississippi student performance in the lowest percentiles on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Dr. Evans stated Mississippi appears to be the only state that shows improvement among the lowest performing students over time.
- Dr. Evans stated he was on MPB Radio, Super Talk Radio, WTVA, and WLBT to discuss ESSER funding suspension.
- Dr. Evans stated that Newsmax interviewed him about Mississippi's NAEP scores. Dr. Evans stated that it has been widely shared on social media that researchers at the Urban Institute found that when adjusting for student demographics, Mississippi's fourth graders scored Number 1 in the nation in reading and eighth graders scored Number 4 in the nation in reading.

VII. Report of the Chair

- Mr. East thanked Dr. Evans and MDE staff on their work on Mississippi's ESSER extension request. Mr. East stated that MDE is getting information to the districts and answering questions.
- Mr. East read a resolution for Ms. Kate Riddle for her two years as a student representative. Mr. East stated this would be her last Board meeting.

VIII. Report of Student Representatives

Ms. Kate Riddle spoke about her accomplishments and suggestions for improvement as this is her last meeting with the State Board of Education

Mr. Crosby Parker spoke about the Student Advisory Council and the outcomes that have come from this endeavor. Mr. Parker thanked Ms. Riddle for her guidance during this year as he served as the junior representative.

IX. Report on State Board of Education Subcommittee meetings

Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, Chair of the School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee, stated they met this morning and Dr. Paula Vanderford will be giving a presentation later in the meeting.

Mr. Bill Jacobs, Chair, Internal Accountability Subcommittee, stated they met this morning. Mr. Jacobs stated the Ad-Hoc Steering Committee led by Mr. Matt

Miller have reviewed 30 applications for the junior representative. Mr. Jacobs stated they approved 10 junior student representative semifinalists that were recommended by the Ad-Hoc Steering Committee. Mr. Jacobs thanked the members of the committee for their work. The 10 semifinalists are: Isaiah Barbour, Tupelo School District, Tupelo High School; Amy Choi, Starkville Oktibbeha School District, Starkville High School; Katie Chung, Starkville Oktibbeha School District, Starkville High School; Price Denham, Lamar County School District, Oak Grove High School; Thad Garner, Chickasaw County School District, Houston High School; Avani Pacharne, Starkville Oktibbeha School District, Starkville High School; Abigail Ratcliffe, Gulfport School District, Gulfport High School; Angelina Tan, Starkville Oktibbeha School District, Starkville High School; Hayes Tyler, Kosciusko School District, Kosciusko High School; and Michelle Xie, Lamar County School District, Oak Grove High School. Mr. Jacobs stated these students will be interviewed by the Internal Accountability Subcommittee on May 1 and 2 and following the interviews the subcommittee will select the top four highest scoring finalists which the Board will interview on June 18, 2025. Mr. Jacobs stated the Board will select a junior student representative and an alternate after the interviews and the student representative will begin their term on July 1, 2025 and end on April 30, 2027.

X. Discussion and/or Approval of Board Items

01. Action: Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code: 7-24, *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2024*, Appendices A-5 – A-10, A-12, A-13, B-2, and Glossary, and Miss. Admin. Code 7-163: *Mississippi Nonpublic School Accountability Standards, 2024*, Appendices A-6 – A-10, A-12, A-13, B-2, and Glossary [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process with public comments) (Wendy Clemons)

On a motion by Ms. Mary Werner, seconded by Mr. Mike Pruitt, the Board unanimously approved item 01. (copy attached).

02. Action: Begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To revise Miss. Admin. Code 7-24: *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2024* specifically the business rules of the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System, Section 4, *Participation Rates*, Section 6, *Growth*, Section 9, *Acceleration*, Section 10, *Banking Scores: End-of-course, subject area assessments taken before 10th grade*, Section 16, *Students with Disabilities*, Section 18, *Invalid Test Scores*, Section 22, *Schools without Tested Subjects or Grades*, Section 23, *State and Other Special Schools*, Section 25, *College and Career-Readiness Indicator*, Section 26, *Senior Snapshot*, and Section 27, *Other* [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)



On a motion by Mr. Matt Miller, seconded by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, the Board unanimously approved item 02. (copy attached).

03. Action: Approval to eliminate the administration of, and graduation requirement for, the U.S. History end-of-course assessment beginning with the 2025-2026 school year and begin the Administrative Procedures Act process for the following:
- A. To revise State Board Policy Chapter 36, Rule 36.4 – Assessments Required for Graduation
  - B. To revise State Board Policy Chapter 36, Rule 36.5 – Additional Assessment Options for Meeting End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment Requirements
  - C. To revise the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2024* specifically, Appendices A-5 – A-9 and F, and the Glossary [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

On a motion by Mr. Matt Miller, seconded by Mr. Matt Mayo, the Board approved item 03. on a vote of 7 to 1 (copy attached).

Members voting <u>aye</u> :	Dr. Wendi Barrett
	Mr. Bill Jacobs
	Mr. Matt Mayo
	Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee
	Mr. Matt Miller
	Mr. Mike Pruitt
	Ms. Billye Jean Stroud

Member voting <u>nay</u> :	Ms. Mary Werner
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04. Action: Approval of the MDE Contracts [Goals 1, 2, 4, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Kym Wiggins)
- 04.A. Action: Contract with Studer Education to provide comprehensive strategic planning and performance scorecard for the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) (Lance Evans)
- 04.B. Action: Contract with Gay, Jones, and Kuhn, PLLC to provide supplementary legal counsel and policy and guidelines support to the Office of Special Education relative to the enforcement of and compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) [Goal 4 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Jennifer Boykin)
- 04.C. Action: Renew contract with selected vendors for Fiscal Year 2026 for the Mississippi Recipes for Success Coordinator(s) MRS [Goal 1 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

- 04.D. Action: Renew contract with Research and Curriculum Unit, Mississippi State University for Fiscal Year 2026 for the operation of the Mississippi Career and Planning and Assessment System, Third Edition (MS-CPAS3) [Goals 1 and 2 – MBE Strategic Plan] (John Ferrell)
- 04.E. Action: Approve employment agreement for Dr. Washington Cole, IV to continue to serve as Interim Superintendent for the Noxubee County School District [Goals 1, 2, 4, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (John Ferrell)
- 04.F. Action: Approve employment agreement for Dr. Jennifer Wilson to continue to serve as Interim Superintendent for the Holmes County Consolidated School District [Goals 1, 2, 4, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (John Ferrell)
- 04.G. Action: Approve employment agreement for Dr. Earl Watkins to serve as Interim Superintendent for Yazoo City Municipal School District [Goals 1, 2, 4, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (John Ferrell)
- 04.H. Action: Approve employment agreement for Dr. Stanley K. Ellis to serve as Interim Superintendent for the Humphreys County School District [Goals 1, 2, 4, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (John Ferrell)

On a motion by Mr. Mike Pruitt, seconded by Ms. Mary Werner, the Board unanimously approved items 04.A., 04.B., 04.C., 04.D., 04.E., 04.F., 04.G., and 04.H. (copy attached).

05. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of monthly expenditures for the Mississippi School of the Arts (Suzanne Hirsch)
- B. Approval of monthly expenditures for the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (LaMarlon Wilson)
- C. Approval of the school calendars for the Mississippi School of the Arts, the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, and the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science for 2025-2026 school year (Suzanne Hirsch, LaMarlon Wilson, and Ginger Tedder)
- D. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To create State Board Policy Chapter 36, Rule 36.7 – Early Graduation Policy (Wendy Clemons)



- E. Approval to revise Unit 8: Digital Literacy and Citizenship of the College- and Career-Readiness course  
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Wendy Clemons)
- F. Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code 7 – 4: Part 4: Licensure Guidelines K-12 to establish a new supplemental endorsement licensure option in the area of Mild/Moderate Disability 7-12 that may be added to a valid three (3) year internship license or valid five (5) year standard license by obtaining a passing score on the appropriate Praxis Subject Assessment  
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process with public comments) (Paula Vanderford)
- G. Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code 7 – 4: Part 4: Licensure Guidelines K-12 to amend the Principles of Learning and Teaching Praxis Pedagogy Assessment requirement for educator license 211 Special Education/Birth to Kindergarten (Early Intervention) to align with the associated grade span  
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Paula Vanderford)
- H. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To revise Miss. Admin. Code 7 – 4: Part 4: Licensure Guidelines K-12 to establish a supplemental endorsement and licensure criteria for Advanced Placement Computer Science A (Licensure Endorsement Code 612) (Paula Vanderford)
- I. Approval to establish a qualifying score for the revised versions of certain Praxis Subject Assessments: Early Childhood Education: Foundational Knowledge and Content (Test Code 5534); Family and Consumer Sciences (5123); and Social Studies (5581) as recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development and approval to establish a qualifying score for Praxis Subject Assessment: Japanese: World Language (Test Code 5661) and add Japanese: World Language (Licensure Endorsement Code TBD) to the list of approved supplemental endorsements that may be added to a valid three (3) year internship license or valid five (5) year standard license by obtaining a passing score on the appropriate Praxis Subject Assessment; and update the test code associated with the Foundations of Reading Assessment to change from test code 190 to test code 890 with no changes to the test content, and no

change to the current Mississippi Board of Education's required passing score (Paula Vanderford)

- J. Approval of industry certifications that will calculate in the Acceleration component of the Accountability Model for the 2025-2026 school year (John Ferrell)
- K. Approval of 2025-2026 certified personnel contracts for the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (LaMarlon Wilson)
- L. Approval of Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS) revised Student Fee Information for 2025-2026 school year (Ginger Tedder)

On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Mr. Matt Miller, the Board unanimously approved items A., B., C., D., E., F., G., H., I., J., K., and L. (copy attached).

XI. No Executive Session.

XII. State Board of Education

- 1. No report on meetings attended.
- 2. No request to attend a meeting.

XIII. Other Business

Mr. East stated the May Board meeting will be held on May 15, 2025 in Jackson, MS at the Central High School Building in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Boardroom starting at 10:00 a.m.

XIV. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Matt Miller, seconded by Mr. Matt Mayo, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:34 a.m.

Approved:

  
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Glen V. East, Board Chair  
Mississippi Board of Education

  
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Lance Evans  
Executive Secretary  
Mississippi Board of Education