

Minutes of Mississippi Board of Education Meeting

May 15, 2025

The members of the Mississippi Board of Education met at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 15, 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, 4th Floor Boardroom, 359 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi. Board members physically present included: Mr. Glen V. East, Dr. Wendi Barrett, Mr. Bill Jacobs, Mr. Matt Mayo, Mr. Matt Miller, Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, Mr. Mike Pruitt, and Ms. Billye Jean Stroud. Board member attending virtually: Ms. Mary Werner (Saltillo, Mississippi). Student Representative present: Mr. Crosby Parker. 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. Crosby Parker led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Matt Mayo gave the Invocation.
- III. On a motion by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, seconded by Ms. Mary Werner, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of April 17, 2025.
- IV. On a motion by Mr. Bill Jacobs, seconded by Mr. Mike Pruitt, the Board approved the Consent Agenda.

On a motion by Ms. Mary Werner, seconded by Mr. Matt Mayo, the Board approved the agenda as presented.

- V. No Recognition Ceremony.
- VI. Dr. Lance Evans gave the following report as the State Superintendent of Education:
 - Dr. Evans welcomed Ms. Wendy Clemons as the new Chief Academic Officer starting in that position on May 1, 2025.
 - Dr. Evans stated MDE held a kickoff meeting with Studer Education to establish the vision and planning process for developing the new Strategic Plan for education in Mississippi. Dr. Evans stated the plan will be developed with stakeholder input throughout this summer and fall. Dr. Evans stated the final plan will be taken to the Board in December and launched in January 2026. Dr. Evans stated this afternoon will be a work session with Studer Education representatives to gather input about your

priorities for public education in Mississippi and there will be several opportunities for Board members to provide input.

- Dr. Evans stated the U.S. Department of Education requested additional information from MDE for part of our late liquidation extension request and we have provided that information. Dr. Evans stated MDE is still waiting to hear a decision about our funds. Dr. Evans stated that the district ESSER requests to restore the original spending deadline were due to MDE on May 9 and the requests are being reviewed before submitting them together to the U.S. Department of Education.
- Dr. Evans stated he spoke at stakeholder groups:
 - Head Start Directors;
 - Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS); and
 - Principal Advisory Council.
- Dr. Evans stated he spoke at the following:
 - Commission for Northeast Mississippi's State of the Region Conference;
 - Mississippi Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) Conference;
 - Mississippi School Nutrition Association (MSNA) Nutrition Industry Summit;
 - University of Mississippi Excellence in Teaching; and
 - Mississippi Educator Preparation Program Literacy (MEPPL) Network Meeting.
- Dr. Evans stated that MDE and our partners have six major summer conferences planned for June and July that will reach several thousand educators across the state. Dr. Evans stated that these conferences are part of our service to districts to help equip teachers and administrators with knowledge and skills specific to their areas of expertise. These conferences are:
 - Every Student Counts Math Conference, June 12-13, 2025, Biloxi, Mississippi;
 - Time is Right: Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities Conference, June 16-18, 2025, Meridian, Mississippi;
 - Statewide Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Prevention Conference, June 18-19, 2025, Jackson, Mississippi;
 - Mississippi Association of Federal Education Program Directors Conference, June 18-20, 2025, Flowood, Mississippi;
 - Mississippi Early Childhood Education Conference, June 24-26, 2025, Biloxi, Mississippi; and
 - Elevate Teachers Conference, July 9-10, 2025, Cleveland, Mississippi.

VII. Report of the Chair

- Mr. East stated there will be a planning meeting this afternoon at 1:00 p.m. to discuss the strategic plan.

VIII. Report of Student Representative

Mr. Crosby Parker spoke about the mentoring program doubling for next year at his school and fostering leadership opportunities for high school students. Mr. Parker stated he was part of the interview process for the Junior Student Representative. Mr. Parker stated how important it is that districts focus on developing not only academic skills but also students' speaking and communication abilities.

IX. Report on State Board of Education Subcommittee meetings

Ms. Mary Werner, Chair of the Workforce/Career and Technical Education Subcommittee, stated they met this morning, and she asked Mr. Mike Pruitt to chair the meeting since she was virtual. Mr. Pruitt stated that the upcoming two-day Summer Conference for schools rated a D and F with 100 seats available to improve leadership. He stated the invitations have gone out and the response is good. He stated that the Workforce Development Coordinator is in the final stages of being hired and will come on board on June 1 and the FFA Coordinator has been hired and will come on board on June 16. Mr. Pruitt stated the SWIB Certification List will come back to the Board in June with a change from AccelerateMS. Mr. Pruitt stated the review of the Embedded WBL Date is good in the three areas of agriculture, health science, and educator prep. He stated that the Emerging CTE Pathway Application is being set up for districts and industries or community colleges to pilot a course in their area that could lead to a curriculum being developed.

Mr. Bill Jacobs, Chair, Internal Accountability Subcommittee, stated they met on May 1 and 2 to conduct interviews of the semifinalists for the Junior Student Representative to the State Board of Education. He stated that Mr. Matt Miller, Ms. Billye Jean Stroud, Mr. Crosby Parker, and himself interviewed ten (10) impressive students from across the state. Mr. Jacobs stated that the Subcommittee was tasked with choosing up to four (4) finalists to recommend to the State Board. The four (4) finalists are: Katie Chung, Starkville Oktibbeha School District, Starkville High School; Price Denham, Lamar County School District, Oak Grove High School; Angelina Tan, Starkville Oktibbeha School District, Starkville High School; and Michelle Xie, Lamar County School District, Oak Grove High School. Mr. Jacobs stated these students will be interviewed by the State Board on June 18th beginning at 8:30 a.m. He stated that at the conclusion of the interviews, a Junior Student Representative and an Alternate will be appointed by the Board for a term that begins on July 1, 2025 and ends on April 30, 2027.

X. Discussion and/or Approval of Board Items

01. Information: Spring 2025 Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) 3rd Grade Initial Reading Summative Assessment Results [Goals 1 and 2 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford and Wendy Clemons)

Dr. Paula Vanderford and Ms. Wendy Clemons presented the results from the Spring 2025 Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (NAAP) 3rd Grade Reading Summative Assessment.

02. Action: Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To establish Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 100.1, State Board Policy, Chapter 100, Rule 100.1, “Compliance with State Law Regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Prohibitions, Complaint Process, and Investigations” [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Erin Meyer)

On a motion by Mr. Matt Miller, seconded by Ms. Billye Jean Stroud, the Board unanimously approved item 02. (copy attached).

03. Action: Approval of school reconfiguration to grades PreK-3 through grade 12 at the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind [Goals 3, 4, and 5 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Wendy Clemons)

On a motion by Mr. Mike Pruitt, seconded by Mr. Matt Mayo, the Board unanimously approved item 03. (copy attached).

04. Action: Approval of the MDE Contract [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Kym Wiggins)

- 04.A. Action: Contract with North Mississippi Education Consortium to provide service as fiscal agent for the Regional Education Service Agencies (RESA) Mega Contract [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Ms. Mary Werner, the Board voted 7 to 0 with one abstaining to approve item 04.A. (copy attached).

Members voting aye:

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

Member voting nay:

None

Member abstaining: Mr. Matt Miller

05. Action: Approval of the MDE Grant Awards [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Kym Wiggins)
- 05.A. Action: Modify existing Educator-in-Residence (EIR) grant awards for literacy coaching support by adding districts [Goals 1, 2, and 4 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Wendy Clemons)
- 05.B. Action: Award competitive grants for the State Invested Pre-K Cohort IV Grant Program [Goal 3 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Wendy Clemons)
- 05.C. Action: Award grant to Mississippi School Boards Association to conduct basic and continuation education for local school boards as required by Miss. Code Annotated § 37-3-4 [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

On a motion by Ms. Billye Jean Stroud, seconded by Dr. Wendi Barrett, the Board unanimously approved items 05.A., 05.B., and 05.C. (copy attached).

06. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of monthly expenditures for the Mississippi School of the Arts (Wendy Clemons)
- B. Approval of monthly expenditures for the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (Wendy Clemons)
- C. Approval of certified personnel for the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind and one resignation from the Mississippi School of the Arts (Wendy Clemons)
- D. [PULLED]
- E. Approval to revise the *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three- and Four-Year-Old Children (2025)* (Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process with public comments) (Wendy Clemons)
- F. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To establish Miss. Admin. Code Title 7: Part 267: Mississippi Driver Education and Training Program Curriculum (Paula Vanderford)
- G. Approval of Statewide Purchasing Program's FY25 Financial Statement and FY26 fee structure (Paula Vanderford)

- H. Award formula grants to school districts for the purpose of providing reimbursement for 1-3 universal screening assessments
(Paula Vanderford)
- I. Approval of Pupil Transportation Equipment Bids
(Paula Vanderford)

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

XI. Consideration of Executive Session

Mr. Matt Miller moved that the Board consider making a closed determination of the need to go into Executive Session. Mr. Matt Mayo seconded the motion, and the motion passed by unanimous vote. Mr. Glen V. East asked for legal counsel to remain in the room.

Mr. Matt Miller, then moved that the Board go into Executive Session in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-7 (4)(b) for discussion of strategy sessions or negotiations with respect to prospective litigation, ongoing litigation, or issuance of an appealable order. Dr. Wendi Barrett seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote. Ms. Jennifer Nichols informed the public of the Board's vote to go into Executive Session for the above stated reasons.

Minutes of the Executive Session

During the Executive Session, the Board discussed strategy sessions or negotiations with respect to prospective litigation, ongoing litigation, or issuance of an appealable order.

On a motion by Mr. Matt Miller, seconded by Mr. Matt Mayo, the Board unanimously voted to come out of Executive Session.

The public came back into the Board meeting.

Ms. Mary Werner left the Board meeting at 11:37 a.m.

XII. State Board of Education

- 1. No report on meetings attended.
- 2. On a motion by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, seconded by Mr. Matt Miller, the Board unanimously approved for any Board member to attend the Mississippi Association of School Administrators (MASA) Conference in

June and the Mississippi Association of School Superintendents (MASS) Conference in July.

3. On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Mr. Matt Miller, the Board unanimously approved the State Board meeting dates for Fiscal Year 2026.

XIII. Other Business

01. On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Mr. Matt Miller, the Board unanimously approved to change the State Board of Education budget meeting date from Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. to Thursday, June 19, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.
02. On a motion by Mr. Matt Miller, seconded by Mr. Bill Jacobs, the Board unanimously approved the State Board of Education Work Session with Studer Education on Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. to discuss the strategic plan.

Mr. East stated the Board will have a work session for the finalist interviews for Student Board Representatives and meeting with Studer Education to discuss the Strategic Plan on June 18, 2025 in Jackson, MS at the Central High School Building in the 4th Floor Boardroom starting at 8:30 a.m.

Mr. East stated the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Meeting, and the June Board meeting will be held on June 19, 2025 in Jackson, MS at the Central High School Building in the 4th Floor Boardroom starting at 9:00 a.m.

XIV. Adjournment

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

Approved:



Glen V. East, Board Chair
Mississippi Board of Education



Lance Evans
Executive Secretary
Mississippi Board of Education