

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
June 19, 2025

MISSISSIPPI SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND – COMBINED SERVICES

- F. Approval of contract with American Sentry Security System to provide unarmed security services on the campus of the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind for the 2025-2026 fiscal school year

Awarded Vendor: American Sentry Security System
Cullman, Alabama

Scope of Project: The purpose of this contract is for American Sentry Security System to provide unarmed security services on the campus of the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. Duties include, and are not limited to:

- Provide MSDB with twenty-four (24) hour unarmed security guards;
- Assign a Vendor Account Representative to work directly with the MSDB assigned representative;
- Maintain a sufficient pool of qualified guards large enough that if, for any reason, the scheduled guard does not report for duty or must be replaced, the security company can provide a replacement guard within two (2) hours after notification;
- Replace, at no additional expense to MSDB, any guard not performing satisfactorily within two (2) hours;
- Ensure that all guards fully comply with the policies and procedures of MSDB to which they are assigned, the applicable standards, Joint Commission standards, and all applicable regulations as now existing or as may be modified;
- Intercept visitors, check for proper identification and record visitors information prior to entry on MSDB's campus;
- Patrol MSDB grounds and monitor security of exterior doors;
- Assist in campus logistics to aid smooth operations; and
- Lock and unlock all exterior doors, campus wide, throughout the day.

Personnel associated with this contract are not former MSDB employees or related to any MSDB employees.

Scope of Contract:

- Term of Contract: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026
- Amount to be Awarded: \$450,347.04
- Method of Award: Invitation for Bid

Funding Source: State funds

Summary of Selection Process: A competitive selection process was utilized to award contract by Invitation for Bid for Security Services.

Selection Process:

BIDDING COMPANY	RESPONSE SUBMITTED
5th Meridian Group	Bid response received at \$28.00 an hour.
Gater Consultants, LLC	Bid response received at \$20.00 an hour.
IPC Security, LLC	Incomplete Bid response received.
American Sentry Security System, Inc.	Bid response received at \$26.73 an hour.
Topp's Private Investigation & Security Firm, LLC	Bid response received at \$18.90 an hour.
Elite Force & Investigation, LLC	Incomplete Bid response received.
Palmer Security Services, LLC	Bid response received at \$28.50 an hour.
Cornerstone Protection, LLC	Incomplete Bid response received.
MWM Security Guard Services, Inc.	Incomplete Bid response received.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

Invitation for Bid for Security Services

CONTRACTOR NAME	CONTRACT AMOUNT
American Sentry Security System July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026	\$450,347.04
American Sentry Security System July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	\$450,347.04
American Sentry Security System July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028	\$450,347.04
Total	\$1,351,041.12



Tara Brister, Ed.D.
Principal

Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

Superintendent of Education • LaMarlon J. Wilson, Ed.S.

Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment • Adrienne Williams, Ph.D.

Executive Director of Finance & Operations • Alison Bradford



Lakesha Doyle, Ed.S.
Principal

State Board of Education Board Members

May 27, 2025

Subject: Justification for Security Services Vendor

Members of the Board,

This letter serves to formally outline the rationale behind our decision to not accept the two lowest bidder responses for security services provided by Topps Security Services or Gator Consultants at the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB).

Our institution has a fundamental obligation to provide a safe and secure environment for our students, faculty, staff, and visitors. After repeated and well-documented incidents involving inadequate performance, failure to follow established protocols, and concerns about safety breaches by security personnel, we have determined that contracting security services with either of these bidders would not be in the best interest of our campus community.

Primary Concerns:

1. Repeated Noncompliance with Patrol Requirements:

Despite clear directives issued requiring security personnel to conduct twice-daily campus patrols and submit corresponding patrol logs, these expectations were not met. Follow-ups confirmed that these procedures were not being implemented as required.

2. Negligent On-Duty Behavior:

Multiple video reviews and eyewitness accounts confirmed that officers consistently failed to perform basic security duties. For example, on multiple occasions, an officer spent nearly his entire shift sitting in the Student Center, frequently on his personal phone playing games. This dereliction of duty was captured on camera and reported in detail.

3. Failure to Correct Issues After Repeated Warnings:

Despite a written warning and an opportunity to rectify issues, further reports showed no meaningful change in behavior. Our final warning communicated a zero-tolerance stance toward continued violations, yet the behavior persisted.

4. Serious Safety Incident:

On a recent occasion a student was nearly struck by a security guard operating a cart at unsafe speeds. Given the unique needs of our student population—including those who are blind or deaf—such carelessness poses a heightened and unacceptable risk.

5. Non-Enforcement of Access Control Protocols:

New gate access policies were communicated to enhance campus security. However, reports indicate these procedures have not been followed consistently, particularly by guards on the Alpha Shift.



Tara Brister, Ed.D.
Principal

Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

Superintendent of Education • LaMarlon J. Wilson, Ed.S.

Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment • Adrienne Williams, Ph.D.

Executive Director of Finance & Operations • Alison Bradford



Lakesha Doyle, Ed.S.
Principal

These incidents collectively illustrate a concerning pattern of disregard for safety standards, professional responsibilities, and institutional directives. The well-being of our students—many of whom have sensory impairments—demands a higher standard of care and vigilance than what has been demonstrated.

Conclusion:

Given the persistent failures in performance, lack of accountability, and the inability of these providers to meet the critical needs of our unique educational environment, we do not feel they can adequately provide the services we require. We are therefore selecting the 3rd lowest responsive bidder for security services and feel, based on their proposal, they can meet and maintain the standards required to ensure the safety and security of our students and campus.

Sincerely,

Alison Bradford

Executive Director-Finance & Operations

Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind