

Minutes of Mississippi Board of Education Meeting

July 17, 2025

The members of the Mississippi Board of Education met at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, July 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, 4th 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, and Ms. Mary Werner. Board members attending virtually: Dr. Wendi Barrett (Biloxi, Mississippi) and Ms. Billye Jean Stroud (New Albany, Mississippi). Student Representative present: Mr. Crosby Parker. Student Representative absent: Ms. Michelle Xie. 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. Mike Pruitt led the Pledge of Allegiance and Ms. Mary Werner gave the Invocation.
- III. On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Mr. Mike Pruitt, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of June 19, 2025 Special-Called Board meeting – Budget Work Session, minutes of June 19, 2025 Board meeting, minutes of Special-Called Board meeting on June 18, 2025 – Student Representative Interviews, and Board Work Session on June 18, 2025.
- IV. On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, the Board approved to pull Tab E. (approval of the FY26 budget for the Mississippi School of the Arts); Tab F. (approval of the FY26 budget for the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind); and Tab J. (approval of the 2025-2026 Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science and the Mississippi University for Women Memorandum of Agreement) from the Consent Agenda and place them on the regular agenda as Tabs 03. (approval of the FY26 budget for the Mississippi School of the Arts and approval of the FY26 budget for the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind) and 04. (approval of the 2025-2026 Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science and the Mississippi University for Women Memorandum of Agreement).

On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, the Board approved the agenda as amended.

V. Recognition Ceremony

**Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching
(PAEMST) 2025 State-Level Finalists**

Mathematics State-Level Finalists

Alison Alexander

Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science

Virginia Cornelius

Lafayette High School

Lafayette County School District

Laurel Yates

Northwest Rankin High School

Rankin County School District

Science State-Level Finalists

Angela Lee

Bayou View Middle School,

Gulfport School District

Tammie Marlow

Cleveland Central Middle School

Cleveland School District

Anamaria Moore

Vardaman Attendance Center

Calhoun County School District

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

- He and several MDE leaders presented at the Mississippi Association of School Superintendents (MASS) Conference this week, and that MDE provided updates and sessions on assessment, accountability, and literacy. Dr. Evans stated that he had the opportunity to address superintendents at a superintendents only session to provide information and let them ask questions.
- The U.S. Department of Education notified states on June 26th that it had reinstated the original late liquidation date of March 2026 for pandemic-relief funds, restoring federal funds to MDE and school districts to complete projects and services to address the impact of the pandemic. The U.S. Department of Education's decision followed two federal court injunctions that prevented it from withholding the funds. The MDE is grateful for the

collective efforts of states to advocate for the reinstatement of funds that had been promised to states and local school districts.

- On June 30, the U.S. Department of Education notified states that it was reviewing several grant programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and was not awarding certain funds that are normally provided on July 1. For Mississippi, this affects approximately \$68 million in grants for Migrant Education, Support for Effective Instruction, English Language Acquisition, Student Support and Academic Enrichment, and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (Title I-C, II-A, III-A, IV-A, IV-B). MDE had a Teams meeting last week with superintendents, business managers, and federal programs directors to provide districts with guidance to deal with this concerning development. MDE shared the meeting invitation with state leaders so they would know how this issue was affecting local districts. On Monday of this week, 24 states and the District of Columbia filed a lawsuit in federal court requesting the court to compel the administration to unfreeze the funding that Congress has appropriated. The MDE will continue to monitor this issue.
- On June 27, MDE sent districts their FY26 Mississippi School Funding Formula (MSFF) allocations. In accordance with the Hold Harmless provision in state law, no district will receive less funding than it received in FY24. The changes in district allocations from last year (FY25) to this year (FY26) reflect factors such as adjustments in the employer portion of PERS and State Health Insurance, enrollment increases or decreases, shifts in local contributions, and changes in student counts within weighted categories.
- Dr. Evans stated he spoke at the Education Commission of the States (ECS) National Forum last week. He spoke on a panel with education leaders from West Virginia and Rhode Island about Advancing Digital Literacy Through State-Level Partnerships. ECS supports all states with their work creating effective education policy.
- Dr. Evans stated he had an interview by WLOX while on the Coast at MASS. He discussed education funding, gains in student achievement, and new initiatives.

VII. Report of the Chair

- Mr. East stated he provided the welcome at the MASS Prayer Breakfast on behalf of the State Board. Also, he was a part of the Scott County Administrative Staff Development and their theme this year was "Building a Legacy."

VIII. Report of Student Representative

Mr. Crosby Parker reported that he attended the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and the Ronald Reagan Leadership Conference this summer. He stated that the robotics camp hosted by the Boys and Girls Club was a success. Mr. Parker

stated that he was proud of the students who participated in the mentoring program during the school year, and he looks forward to continuing the program this school year.

IX. Reports on State Board of Education Subcommittee meetings

Mr. Glen V. East, Chair of the Academic Achievement PreK-12/Early Childhood Subcommittee, stated they met yesterday, and they discussed the State-wide Synchronous Instructional Program funded by the Legislature for the 2025-2026 school year. He stated applications are forthcoming. Mr. East stated they discussed the changes in the *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines Serving Classrooms of Three- and Four-Year-Old Children* program to remove the quality component due to the change of the assessment and ability to revise when needed. The Subcommittee also discussed the Bridge to Career Course being added to State Board Policy Chapter 36, Rule 36.5 as well as the curriculum for the course being approved for APA as well as a temporary rule to allow district implementation in the fall if desired.

Mr. Bill Jacobs, Chair of the Internal Accountability Subcommittee, stated they met this morning. He stated that two auditors have been hired, and they were introduced to the Subcommittee. He stated they discussed an internal audit policy manual, but some changes were needed before the manual could be approved. Mr. Jacobs stated the Internal Subcommittee, and the Internal Audit Office are legislatively mandated and have certain things that have to be done so the manual will be adjusted to include those things. He stated that Ms. Sam Atkinson is working on a way to keep the independence of the internal audit as it needs to be.

X. Discussion and/or Approval of Board Items

01. Action: Approval of Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Kym Wiggins)

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

02. Action: Approval of the MDE Contract [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Kym Wiggins)

- 02.A. Action: Contract with nSide, Inc. for a continued service subscription of a web-based solution for public school districts for the consistent development and implementation for all components of the Mississippi Department Crisis Management Plan and Miss. Code Ann. § 37-3-83 [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

On a motion by Mr. Mike Pruitt, seconded by Mr. Bill Jacobs, the Board unanimously approved item 02.A. (copy attached).

03. Action: Approval of the FY26 budget for the Mississippi School of the Arts and approval of the FY26 budget for the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (Wendy Clemons)

On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee, the Board unanimously temporarily approved item 03. (copy attached). The Board noted they would like to review and revisit the FY26 budgets for these schools.

04. Action: Approval of the 2025-2026 Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science and the Mississippi University for Women Memorandum of Agreement (Wendy Clemons)

On a motion by Mr. Bill Jacobs, seconded by Mr. Matt Mayo, the Board unanimously approved item 04. (copy attached). The Board requested a report to the MSMS Subcommittee before the next Board meeting or have a report at the next Board meeting given by Ms. Ginger Tedder.

05. 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 School of the Arts and Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (Wendy Clemons)
- D. Approval of the 2025-2026 Crisis Management Plans for the State Schools (Wendy Clemons)
 - 1. Mississippi School of the Arts
 - 2. Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
 - 3. Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science
- E. [PULLED]
- F. [PULLED]
- G. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To adopt the *Grant Funded Program Quality Assessment for*

Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children (2025) (Wendy Clemons)

- H. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To revise the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three- and Four-Year-Old Children (2025) (Wendy Clemons)
- I. Approval of temporary rule and to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To revise State Board Policy Chapter 36, Rule 36.5 – Additional Assessment Options for Meeting End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment Requirements (Wendy Clemons)
- J. [PULLED]
- K. Approval of the *Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Act of 1998*: Designation of 2025-2026 Critical Shortage Subject Areas and Critical Shortage Geographical Areas (Mississippi School Districts) (Paula Vanderford)
- L. Approval of preliminary calculation of the Mississippi Student Funding Formula Base Student Cost for Fiscal Year 2027 (Kym Wiggins)
- M. Approval of preliminary calculation of the Mississippi Student Funding Formula for Fiscal Year 2027 (Kym Wiggins)
- N. Approval of methodology to award grants to Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to expand a teacher residency program in critical shortage areas in Mississippi (Paula Vanderford)
- O. Approval to revise Mississippi Administrative Code 7-3: 24. State Board Policy Chapter 24, Rule 24.1 and 24.2 – Contracts, Teachers (Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Kym Wiggins)
- P. Approval of temporary rule and to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To approve the *Bridge to Career Curriculum Framework* as an additional option for meeting End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment Requirements in accordance with State Board Policy Chapter 36, Rule 36.5 – Additional Assessment Options for Meeting EOC Requirements (Wendy Clemons)

On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Ms. Mary Werner, the Board unanimously approved items A., B., C., D., G., H., I., K., L., M., N., O., and P. (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. Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee 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 regarding three separate matters: 1) strategy session on the recently filed suit on HB1193, 2) to discuss discrete personnel matters related to the Office of Educational Accountability, and 3) the State Superintendent's evaluation, such executive session being in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-7 (4)(b), and 25-41-7 (4) (a) and (k). Mr. Matt Mayo seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for matters #1 and #3, and voted 8 to 1 to go into Executive Session on matter #2 with Mr. Jacobs voting no on #2. Ms. Erin Meyer 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 and discussed personnel matters.

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

The public came back into the Board meeting and Mr. East reported that during the Executive Session the Board discussed three items with no action taken. Mr. East said that the Board evaluated the State Superintendent and gave feedback to move forward.

XII. State Board of Education

1. No report on meetings attended.
2. On a motion by Ms. Mary Werner, seconded by Mr. Matt Miller, the Board unanimously approved for Ms. Michelle Xie to attend the virtual START+ Conference on August 15-17, 2025. She will be participating in the National Student Board Member Association (MSBMA) which is a student-led organization that works to connect, support, and educate student school

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board members and other educational stakeholders to strengthen student representation in education decision-making.

On a motion by Mr. Matt Miller, seconded by Mr. Matt Mayo, the Board unanimously approved for Board members to visit the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science and the Mississippi University for Women on Wednesday, August 13, 2025.

3. Dr. Wendi Barrett nominated Mr. Matt Miller to serve as Board Chair. On a motion from Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Ms. Mary Werner, the Board unanimously approved Mr. Matt Miller to serve as Board Chair from July 2025 to July 2026.

Ms. Mary Werner nominated Mr. Matt Mayo to serve as Board Vice-Chair. On a motion from Ms. Mary Werner, seconded by Mr. Bill Jacobs, the Board unanimously approved Mr. Matt Mayo to serve as Board Vice-Chair from July 2025 to July 2026.

XIII. Other Business

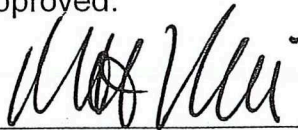
01. On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Mr. Bill Jacobs, the Board unanimously approved to change the regularly scheduled State Board of Education meeting date from Thursday, September 18, 2025 to Thursday, September 25, 2025.

Mr. East stated the August Board meeting will be held on August 21, 2025 in Jackson, Mississippi at the Central High School Building in the 4th Floor Boardroom starting at 10:00 a.m.

XIV. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Matt Miller, seconded by Dr. Wendi Barrett, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:36 p.m.

Approved:



Matt Miller, Board Chair
Mississippi Board of Education



Lance Evans
Executive Secretary
Mississippi Board of Education