

Minutes of Mississippi Board of Education Meeting

September 25, 2025

The members of the Mississippi Board of Education met at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 25, 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: Dr. Wendi Barrett, Mr. Glen V. East, Mr. Bill Jacobs, Mr. Matt Mayo, Mr. Matt Miller, and Mr. Mike Pruitt. Board members attending virtually: Ms. Billye Jean Stroud (New Albany, Mississippi) and Ms. Mary Werner (Manistee, Michigan). Board member absent: Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee. Student Representatives present: Mr. Crosby Parker and Ms. Michelle Xie. Dr. Lance Evans, State Superintendent, was also present.

- I. Mr. Matt Miller called the Board meeting to order at 10:02 a.m., after determining that a quorum of the Board existed for the purpose of conducting a meeting.
- II. Mr. Glen V. East led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Matt Miller gave the Invocation.
- III. On a motion by Ms. Mary Werner, seconded by Mr. Glen V. East, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of August 21, 2025 Board meeting, and minutes of September 19, 2025, Special-Called Board meeting.
- IV. On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Mr. Bill Jacobs, the Board approved the Consent Agenda.

On a motion by Mr. Glen V. East, seconded by Mr. Mike Pruitt, 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:
 - He stated he wanted to highlight our newly redesigned teacher recruitment website, TeacherMS.org. He stated this site markets the teacher profession in Mississippi while breaking down the teacher prep and licensure process into easy-to-understand steps. He stated there is a quiz to help potential teachers find the licensure pathway that fits their background, highlights the benefits of teaching in Mississippi, and an interactive salary schedule. He stated the site links to job listings in the MECCA talent portal.
 - He stated he presented MDE's FY27 budget priorities at the Joint Legislative Budget Committee Hearing.

- He and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) members participated in the first strategic plan focus group with Studer Education. He stated that over the next two weeks, ELT will facilitate focus groups with students, teachers, principals, superintendents, legislators, IHL and community college leaders, business leaders, and education stakeholder groups.
- He stated that the first standard setting meeting for accountability summative ratings was held. This was the first of several meetings to build upon the recommendations from the Accountability Task Force to establish new requirements for how schools and districts receive A-F grades. These new summative ratings will be established for the current academic year that will be assigned in the fall of 2026. He thanked Mr. Glen V. East for participating in the standard setting work as a State Board representative and a district superintendent.
- He stated that the first classes of the inaugural Mississippi Superintendents Institute (MSI) began in late August for new and career superintendents. This program is a partnership with the National Center on Education and Economy (NCEE) to strengthen leadership across Mississippi school districts. He stated that MDE appreciates MSI participants for dedicating time over the next eight months to professional learning that will benefit their students, staff, and communities.
- He stated he and ELT members met with superintendents at six regional superintendent meetings at RESAs across the state. He stated updates were provided by MDE program offices.
- He stated that three regional meetings with the members of the Teacher Advisory Council were held in Hattiesburg, Clinton, and Oxford.
- He stated he met with a group of about 40-50 principals and assistant principals who are part of the PREPS CEO Leadership Academy (Program of Research and Evaluation for Public Schools Collaborating to Empower Others). He stated this is a yearlong program that provides administrators with a solid background in school culture, data analysis, and instructional theory.
- He stated that he and several MDE staff members attended the 2025 Reidy Interactive Learning Series (RILS) hosted by the Center for Assessment this week. He stated this year's series examined balanced assessment systems by identifying implementation barriers and facilitators and analyzed successful transition strategies used by states and districts.

VII. Report of the Chair

- Mr. Miller stated he has finalized all the subcommittees. He thanked all who have taken a leadership role in the subcommittees. He stated that a new subcommittee will be created soon.

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VIII. Reports of Student Representatives

Mr. Crosby Parker provided an update on the mentoring program that was started at his school and now is taking shape in two partner schools. He stated that mentoring is not defined by a single model, but by the outcomes it produces in student's lives.

Ms. Michelle Xie reported on college visits and college fairs. She stated that by expanding fairs and organizing campus tours, Mississippi high schools could give its students a clearer view of all the pathways open to them.

IX. Report on State Board of Education Subcommittee meeting

Mr. Matt Mayo, Chair of the Internal Accountability Subcommittee, stated they met this morning. He stated that Mr. Bill Jacobs and Ms. Mary Werner met with Program Evaluation, Internal Audit, and Public Records to get an overview of the offices and a feel for what is going on. He stated that Internal Audit discussed potential updating of charters and operations manuals and Program Evaluation gave an update on the work they are doing around early childhood as well as discussed, a potential project that they are planning to bring forward later. He stated in general they talked about functions of the Department and things that need to be addressed. He thanked the staff for answering questions and sending information ahead of the meeting so it could be reviewed.

X. Discussion and/or Approval of Board Items

01. Action: Approval of the 2024-2025 Mississippi Statewide Accountability Results [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (Paula Vanderford)

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

02. Information: MDE Administrator Evaluation Form [Goals 1, 2, 4, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan] (John Ferrell)

Mr. John Ferrell presented the MDE Administrator Evaluation Form.

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

- 03.A. Action: Contract with EMS LINQ, Inc. to provide additional modules, hosting, and maintenance and support to the Mississippi Department of Education relative to the Mississippi Comprehensive Automated

Performance-based System (MCAPS) [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 –
MBE Strategic Plan] (Kym Wiggins)

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

04. Action: Approval of the MDE Grant Awards [Goal 4 – MBE Strategic Plan]
(Kym Wiggins)

04.A. Action: Award discretionary grants for the Mississippi Teacher
Residency (MTR) Program in Elementary Education (K-6) and
Special Education Mild/Moderate [Goal 4 – MBE Strategic Plan]
(Paula Vanderford)

On a motion by Dr. Wendi Barrett, seconded by Mr. Matt Mayo, the Board
unanimously approved item 04.A. (copy attached).

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 non-instructional staff – at will employees for the Mississippi School of the Arts (Wendy Clemons)
- D. Approval to adopt policies required by state statute for the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind to be placed on the District Policy Service website established by the Mississippi School Boards Association (Wendy Clemons)
- E. Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 36.5, State Board Policy Chapter 36, Rule 36.5 – Additional Assessment Options for Meeting End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment Requirements (Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Wendy Clemons)
- F. Approval of Miss. Admin. Code 7-269: *Bridge-to-Career Course Standards* that provide standards and resources for the portfolio and exhibit option for meeting End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment Requirements (Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process with public comments) (Wendy Clemons)

- G. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To revise Miss. Admin. Code: 7-24, *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2025*, Appendix A-8 and Miss. Admin. Code 7-163: *Mississippi Nonpublic School Accountability Standards, 2025*, Appendix A-8 (Wendy Clemons)
- H. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To readopt Miss. Admin. Code 7-169: *2018 Mississippi College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Science* (Wendy Clemons)
- I. Approval of revised methodology to award grants to local school districts to support high-quality early childhood programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Wendy Clemons)
- J. Approval 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)
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Paula Vanderford)
- K. Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code 7-142: Guidelines and Clarification of Requirements for Issuance of Career and Technical Education (Occupational Educator) Licenses: To include a new pathway to licensure in the area of Driver Education (Licensure Endorsement Code 114)
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Paula Vanderford)
- L. Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code: 7 - 4: Part 4: Licensure Guidelines K-12 to require all candidates seeking initial licensure in the area of Elementary Education (K-3/K-6/4-6) to earn a passing score on either the Foundations of Reading assessment or Pathways to Proficient Reading following a Foundations of Reading assessment attempt and to establish a Three-Year Entry-Level Elementary Education Non-Renewable License option to allow completion of the Pathways to Proficient Reading while in-service for the purpose of obtaining a standard renewable five-year license
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process with public comments) (Paula Vanderford)
- M. Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code: 7 - 4: Part 4: Licensure Guidelines K-12 to amend the Foundations of Reading

assessment requirement by removing the assessment from being required as one condition for obtaining licensure in the endorsement area of Special Education Mild/Moderate (licensure codes: 221 (K-12) and 223 (K-8))
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Paula Vanderford)

- N. Approval to revise Miss. Admin. Code 7 – 4: Part 4: *Licensure Guidelines K-12* to revise the acceptable degree requirement for Mississippi State Board of Education-approved nontraditional licensure pathways
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process without public comments) (Paula Vanderford)
- O. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To revise Miss. Admin. Code 7-24, *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2025*, Process Standard 3.1
(John Ferrell)

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

Ms. Billy Jean Stroud and Ms. Mary Werner left the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

XI. Consideration of Executive Session

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

Mr. Matt Mayo then moved that the Board go into Executive Session for a strategy session or negotiations with regard to prospective litigation involving the MDE or the issuance of an appealable order related to the Appeal of the decision of the Licensure Commission filed by Spurgeon Banyard, Educator License No. 167657, as well as litigation involving McKinney vs. MSMS, such Executive Session being in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-7 (4)(b). 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 regards to prospective litigation, litigation involving the MDE or the issuance of an appealable order related to the Appeal of the decision of the Licensure Commission

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filed by Spurgeon Banyard, Educator License No. 167657, as well as litigation involving McKinney vs. MSMS, such Executive Session being in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-41-7 (4)(b).

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

The public came back into the Board meeting and Mr. Miller reported that during the Executive Session the Board took the following action.

On a motion by Mr. Matt Mayo, seconded by Mr Mike Pruitt, the Board voted 6 to 0 to affirm the decision of the Commission Hearing Subcommittee to suspend Spurgeon Banyard, Educator License No. 167657 for five (5) calendar years and ordered Spurgeon Banyard to participate and complete a three (3) credit hour course on Educator Ethics prior to petitioning for reinstatement of his license, all in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-3-2 (10) and 37-3-2 (12).

XII. State Board of Education

1. Mr. Mike Pruitt and Mr. Bill Jacobs recently visited the Mississippi School of the Arts. Mr. Pruitt was inspired to see such talented students.
2. No request to attend a meeting.

XIII. Other Business

Mr. Miller stated the October Board meeting will be held on October 16, 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 Mayo, seconded by Dr. Wendi Barrett, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:40 p.m.

Approved:



Matt Miller, Board Chair
Mississippi Board of Education



Lance Evans
Executive Secretary
Mississippi Board of Education