



MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

**Minutes of the  
Commission on School Accreditation  
Regular Teleconference meeting  
February 5, 2026  
8:30 a.m.**

A regular meeting of the Commission on School Accreditation (CSA or Commission) took place via teleconference and video means from the Central High School Building, 359 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 5, 2026. The public was invited to view the livestreaming via the MDE YouTube Channel or in person in the Senator Grey Ferris Board Room.

Commission members in attendance via teleconference included:

Anthony Bryant, Tupelo, MS  
Dr. John-Mark Cain, Lauderdale County, MS  
Judge Mary B. "Betsy" Cotton, Yazoo City, MS  
Dr. Carla Evers, Pass Christian, MS  
Patrice Guilfoyle, Jackson, MS  
Jeremy Hamm, Carthage, MS  
Pamela Manners, (Chair), Biloxi, MS  
Aisha Maxwell, Horn Lake, MS  
Carter Myers, Oxford, MS  
Brad Stevens, Jackson, MS  
Dr. Sarah Wilborn, Ellisville, MS  
Ingrid Williams, Clinton, MS

Members absent:

Toni Kersh

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) staff members/representatives present included:

Dr. Jo Ann Malone, Executive Secretary, Office of Accreditation  
Dr. Paula Vanderford, Chief Accountability Officer  
Melissa Biggs, Office of Accreditation  
Lori Hartley, Office of Accreditation  
J. Christopher Haynes, Office of Accreditation  
Shulawnda Johnson, Office of Accreditation  
Dawn Tassin, Office of Accreditation

Other MDE staff present included:

Jonathan Dennis, Special Assistant Attorney General, served as legal counsel to the Commission.

**I. Announcement of Quorum and Call to Order**

Ms. Pamela Manners, Chair of the CSA, opened the Commission meeting and conducted a roll call of the Commission members.

Ms. Manners announced that a quorum of the Commission existed and called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

**II. Adoption of Agenda**

On a motion by Dr. Sarah Wilborn, seconded by Aisha Maxwell, the Commission unanimously voted to adopt the agenda.

**III. Action: Approval of the minutes of the December 4, 2025 meeting of the CSA**

On a motion by Anthony Bryant, seconded by Carter Myers, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2025 meeting of the CSA.

**IV. Action: Approval of the minutes of the January 14, 2026 special-called meeting of the CSA**

On a motion by Dr. Carla Evers, seconded by Jeremy Hamm, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2026 special-called meeting of the CSA.

**V. Action: Approval to downgrade the Accreditation Status of the Okolona Separate School District from ACCREDITED to PROBATION for School Year 2025-2026 in accordance with Accreditation Policies 2.5, 2.5.1, and 2.5.2 of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2025.**

On a motion by Judge Betsy Cotton, seconded by Carter Myers, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the downgrade of the Accreditation Status of the Okolona Separate School District from ACCREDITED to PROBATION for School Year 2025-2026 in accordance with Accreditation Policies 2.5, 2.5.1, and 2.5.2 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2025*.

**VI. Other Business:**

Dr. Malone informed the Commission that the State Board of Education placed the Wilkinson County School District into a District of Transformation based on poor academic performance.

**VII. Adjournment**

Commission on School Accreditation – MINUTES  
February 5, 2026

APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION

April 2 2026  
(Month) (Day) (Year)

Pamela Manners

Chair of the Commission

[Signature]  
Executive Secretary of the Commission