

**March 20, 2026**  
**MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Mississippi Community College Board was held at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, March 20, 2026, in Room 507 of the Paul B. Johnson Jr. Building, located in the Education and Research Complex at 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson.

**Members present:** Mr. John Pigott, Chairman; Mrs. Cheryl Thurmond, Vice-Chair; Mr. Bubba Hudspeth; Ms. Dolly Marascalco; Mr. Johnny McRight; Mr. Will Symmes (via telephone, Gulfport, MS); and Dr. Dianne Watson. There was a quorum of seven.

**MCCB Staff in attendance:** Kell Smith, Missy Saxton, Jason Carter, Dr. Rachel De Vaughan, Cynthia Jiles, Dr. Krista LeBrun, and Steve Martin via ZOOM.

**Guests in attendance:** Mr. Jonathan Dennis, Office of the Attorney General; Dr. Finee Ruffin, BSS Global; and Ms. Eileen Beazley (via telephone), Office of the Governor.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Pigott called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and read the meeting notice for the April 17, 2026, meeting.

**MEETING NOTICE**

The Mississippi Community College Board will hold its Monthly Scheduled Meeting on Friday, April 17, 2026, at Itawamba Community College, Belden Campus, Belden, MS. The meeting may be conducted as a teleconference meeting.

**PRELIMINARIES**

Chairman Pigott welcomed all to the meeting, Mr. Hudspeth provided the invocation, and Missy Saxton took roll.

**Approval of February 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes**

In a motion made by Dr. Watson and seconded by Mr. Hudspeth, the **MCCB voted unanimously** to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2026 meeting minutes.

**Approval of the March 20, 2026 Agenda**

In a motion made by Mr. McRight and seconded by Ms. Marascalco, the **MCCB voted unanimously** to approve the March 20, 2026 agenda.

**REPORTS/ACTIONS**

**Chairman's Report**

Chairman Pigott thanked all for being at the meeting. He yielded to Mr. Kell Smith for the Executive Director's report.

### Executive Director's Report

Mr. Smith welcomed all to the meeting. He presented **Exhibits A and B** and provided background on the two Hinds Community College self-managed construction project MOU's. The next step in the process is for the two entities, MCCB and Hinds CC, to enter into a MOU to define the roles and responsibilities. **Exhibit A** is for Irl Dean Rhodes Systems Project and **Exhibit B** is for the Gibbs Hall Systems Project.

In a motion made by Mr. Hudspeth and seconded by Mr. McRight, the MCCB voted unanimously to approve the two MOU's between MCCB and Hinds Community College for the two self-managed projects as specified in Exhibits A and B.

Mr. Smith provided the following updates on the legislative session, appropriations & bond bills, as well as general bills. The session is entering the final stages of the 2026 session, currently scheduled to conclude their work by Sunday, April 5, and the focus has shifted to the budget. Regarding appropriation bills, the agency is at a General Funding amount of \$ 5,815,481. This is a reduction of \$310K compared to FY 2026. EEF is level funded at \$356K and they are re-appropriating \$375K from the current fiscal year for the purpose of reimbursing the colleges for HSEs. For the colleges, they are at a General Fund amount of \$226,287,891. This is a reduction of \$1.3 million. EEF is level funded at \$64,785,786. There is currently \$100 million included in the bill for repair and renovations. There is not any funding for pay raises. HB 4067 is a placeholder bond bill. Currently \$1 million for each community college and university. General bills include HB 562- last-dollar scholarship and SB 2524- Mississippi Postsecondary Attainment Council. Mr. Smith provided an update on MCCB nominations. Senate U&C has approved the re-appointments for Dolly, Dianne, and Bubba. They have not been considered by the full Senate. Mr. Smith provided a revenue update. February revenue was \$65 million below the estimate. For the year, revenue is \$99 million above the estimate. This time last year, we were \$19 million below the estimate.

Last month, the Board gave approval to revise a contract with Smarter Services, contingent upon ITS' board approving it. This is an online proctoring service utilized by the colleges. The ITS board approved the contract, so we are moving forward. Mr. Smith reported that the Connecting Talent to Opportunity (CTO) Challenge Grant from the US DOE is a \$15 million national initiative. In the first round, states will receive \$1 million. The focus is connecting education to employment with the goal being to better link students, workers, employers, and training programs so people can more easily move into high-quality jobs. Governor Reeves has asked Accelerate to serve as the lead coordinator. Accelerate has asked MCCB to serve as the fiscal agent. We are the states Adult Education entity. Application is due by April 30.

Mr. Smith reported the SCC6 Grant is for community colleges aimed at strengthening workforce training across the country. A major goal is helping colleges develop programs that qualify for Workforce Pell Grants, expanding access to financial aid for short-term training. States apply with a community college submitting the application. A majority of colleges have to be a part of the submission. This is due on May 20.

Maron Lacey will provide a federal update on Tuesday, March 24 at 2:00 pm. Focus of the presentation will be on WF Pell and Earnings Premium Test. SWIB Meeting met on February 24 where Mr. Smith provided an update on data we have provided to Accelerate. Regarding ghost students, in the last few weeks, we have met with two additional vendors (Element 451 and EAB) and will provide an update at next week's MACC meeting.

Information for the April MCCB meeting hosted by Itawamba CC is as follows, tentatively. Thursday, April 16 and Friday, April 17. Stay at the Hotel Tupelo (across from the Cadence Arena as you pull into town.) An ICC bus will take us to Fulton for a windshield tour and then dinner. We will have the meeting the next morning at the Belden Center, tour the campus, and have lunch and then on the road by 12:00 pm. Mr. Smith reminded Members their Statement of Economic Interest due to the Ethics Commission by May 1 and the next MACC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday via Zoom. Mr. Smith concluded his report.

### **Finance and Administration Report**

Mr. Jason Carter presented the Finance agenda. He requested en bloc approval for the first four approval requests to which Chairman Pigott agreed.

**Attachment 1** is a request for approval of General Fund 2298 Disbursements for April 2026 in the total amount of **\$26,018,005.00**. The fund breakdown is as follows: Funding Formula, \$11,078,702.00; Health Insurance, \$8,770,587.00; Workforce Centers, \$3,375,000.00; Education Technology Funds, \$1,745,343.00; Associate Degree Nursing, \$958,847.00, Sign Language Interpreter, \$89,525.00.

**Attachment 2** is a request for approval of Education Enhancement Fund Disbursements for March 2026 in the total amount of **\$4,323,746.00**. For Fund 4080, the amount of the disbursement will be \$4,241,634.00 with the remainder coming from Fund 4110 in the amount of \$82,112.00.

**Attachment 3** is a request for approval of the CTE Advantage Disbursements from Fund 4080 for March 2026 in the amount of **\$833,333.00**.

**Attachment 4** is a request for approval of the Education Technology Funds (EEF) for March 2026 in the amount of \$1,914,554.00.

In a motion made by Ms. Marascalco and seconded by Mr. McRight, the **MCCB voted unanimously** to approve the following:

1. **Attachment 1**, the General Fund 2298 Disbursement for April 2026 from Education Technology funds in the amount of **\$26,018,005.00**,
2. **Attachment 2**, the Education Enhancement Fund Disbursements for March 2026 in the total amount of **\$4,323,746.00**,
3. **Attachment 3**, the CTE Advantage Program Disbursements request for March 2026 in the amount of **\$833,333.00** and,
4. **Attachment 4**, a request for approval of the Education Technology Funds (EEF) for March 2026 in the amount of \$1,914,554.00.

**Attachments 5a-5c** are the financial statements for Funds 2291, 4111 and Special Funds as of February 28, 2026 and are for informational purposes only. Mr. Carter concluded his report.

### Accountability Report

Mr. Smith presented **Exhibit C**, the Commission on Proprietary School and College Registrations Report from February 19 meeting. \$23K ahead from where they were this time last year. This exhibit is for informational purposes only.

Mr. Smith presented **Exhibit D**, a request from Northwest MS CC requesting a new off-campus site for Delta Academy in Marks. The new site meets MCCB policy requirements.

In a motion made by Mr. Hudspeth and seconded by Dr. Watson, the **MCCB voted unanimously** to approve the New Off-Site Campus request for Northwest MS CC for Delta Academy in Marks, MS.

Mr. Steve Martin provided the following athletic report. Men's Basketball: Jones was winner of the Region 23 championship and advances to the NJCAA National Tournament in Hutchinson, KS, March 21 – 28. Jones vs. Daytona St on March 21. Women's Basketball: Northwest was winner of the Region 23 championship and advances to the NJCAA National Tournament in Lake Charles, LA, March 24 – 31 Northwest vs Dodge City on March 25. Baseball National Rankings: 1) East Central Community College, 3) Pearl River, 7) Jones, 17) Meridian, 19) Gulf Coast. Softball National Rankings: 1) Pearl River, 3) Co-Lin, 6) Jones, 11) Itawamba, 15) Hinds, 19) Northeast, 22) Gulf Coast. Mr. Martin concluded his report.

### Programs

Dr. De Vaughan-Partrick presented **Exhibits E, F & G**.

**Exhibit E** is an approval request for a new location from Pearl River CC for the Electrical Technology program to be located at the Forrest County campus.

**Exhibit F** is a request for approval of a new program at MS Delta CC for the Cybersecurity Technology program to be located at the Greenville Higher Education Center.

**Exhibit G** is a new location request for Northwest MS CC for the Oxford location for the Cybersecurity Technology program.

In a motion made by Mr. McRight and seconded by Ms. Marascalco, the **MCCB voted unanimously** to approve the new location for Pearl River CC, the new Program for MS Delta CC and the new location for Northwest MS CC as detailed in Exhibits E, F, & G. Dr. De Vaughan-Partrick concluded her report.

### TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS

Chairman Pigott called for travel reimbursement authorizations. There were none.

### OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Pigott announced Mr. Smith had requested an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing an investigation and he asked that a Board Member make a motion for a closed session.

Mr. McRight made a motion to go into closed session to determine the need for executive session. Vice-Chair Thurmond seconded the motion and the **MCCB voted unanimously** to go into closed session for the determination of the need to enter executive session.

*The meeting was closed at 9:38 a.m.*

Following a closed determination of the need to go into executive session, Mr. McRight made the motion to enter into executive session to discuss an ongoing investigation, which was seconded by Mr. Hudspeth. **All voted unanimously.**

*The meeting went into Executive Session at 9:39 a.m.*

*The meeting was reopened to the public at 10:30 a.m.*

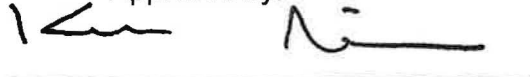
Chairman Pigott reported there was no action taken by the Board.

Having no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m. in a motion made by Dr. Watson and seconded by Ms. Marascalco. **All voted unanimously.**

Recorded by:

  
Missy Saxton, Director of External Affairs

Approved by:

  
Kell Smith, Executive Director

Approved by:

  
John Pigott, Chairman

March 20, 2026 Exhibits

Hinds CC Self-Managed Construction MOU (Rhodes)  
Hinds CC Self-Managed Construction MOU (Gibbs)  
Finance Agenda  
CPSCR Summary Report  
NWCC Off-Site Request  
PRCC, New Location Request  
MS Delta CC, New Program Request  
Northwest MS CC, New Location Request

Exhibit A  
Exhibit B  
Separate Agenda  
Exhibit C  
Exhibit D  
Exhibit E  
Exhibit F  
Exhibit G