



MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION  
**53<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
FEBRUARY 24-26, 2025

## **AGENDA FOR **IN-PERSON** ATTENDEES**

### **EARLY BIRD SEMINAR / MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24**

**12:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

**Registration; Exhibit Booth Set Up**

**2:00 PM**

**Navigating the Future: Responsible AI and Policy Insights**

*Dr. Nashlie Sephus, Applied Scientist, Amazon Web Services (AWS)*

**From Theory to Reality: Hands-On AI for Leaders**

*Ivan Walker, Engineer, AWS*

**3:45 PM**

**Break**

**4:00 PM**

**Cyber Shield: Cybersecurity in the Age of AI**

*Courtney Walker, Cybersecurity Specialist*

**5:00 PM**

**Adjourn**

### **CONFERENCE DAY 1 / TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25**

**7:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

**Registration**

**7:00 AM – 8:00 AM**

**Continental Breakfast**

**8:00 AM – 5:00 PM**

**Exhibit Booths Open**

**8:00 AM**

**Opening General Session**

- **Welcome** — *Dr. Denotris Jackson, MSBA Executive Director; and Dr. Delores McNair, MSBA President*
- **Greetings** — *Glen East, State Board President, Mississippi Department of Education (MDE); and Dr. Lance Evans, State Superintendent of Education, MDE*
- **Posting of Colors** — *NJROTC, Canton High School, Canton Public School District*
- **Recognition of Sponsors** — *Bailey Education Group, LLC*
- **Simbli Introduction** — *Mark Willis, Assistant Executive Director, Georgia School Boards Association*
- **Presentation of MSBA Student Essay Contest Winners**

**9:00 AM**

**General Session Speaker** — *Judy Newman, Chief Impact Officer, Scholastic*

**10:15 AM**

**Exhibitor Break**

**10:45 AM**

**Student Voices in Leadership: Insights from Student Board and Advisory Council Members**

*Lathan Lewis, Senior, Pass Christian High School, Pass Christian Public School District; Crosby Parker, Junior, Gulfport High School, Gulfport School District; Kate Riddle, Senior, Lafayette High School, Lafayette County School District; Amaya Whigham, Senior, Hattiesburg High School, Hattiesburg Public School District; and Kenai Williamson, Senior, Independence High School, Tate County School District*

**11:45 AM – 1:00 PM**

**Lunch on Your Own**

**1:00 PM**

**Concurrent Sessions**

- **What's on the Horizon — Transitioning to a New Governance Platform**  
*Mark Willis, Assistant Executive Director, Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA); and Sandra McGuire, Training & Support Manager, GSBA*
- **Open Meetings & Ethics: Foundations for Transparent Governance**  
*Tom Hood, Esq., Executive Director and Chief Counsel, Mississippi Ethics Commission*
- **Building Stronger School Districts Through Community Partnerships**  
*Dr. Matt Dillon, Superintendent, Petal School District*
- **Cultivating Success: Transforming School District Culture for Student Success**  
*Dr. Hilute Hudson, Superintendent, Kemper County School District*
- **Superintendent Evaluation: A Governance Tool for Student Success**  
*Dr. Denotris Jackson, MSBA Executive Director; and Dr. Tommye Henderson, MSBA Superintendent Search Manager*

**2:15 PM**

**Concurrent Sessions**

- **Building Stronger School Districts Through Community Partnerships**  
*Dr. Matt Dillon, Superintendent, Petal School District*
- **Open Meetings & Ethics: Foundations for Transparent Governance**  
*Tom Hood, Esq., Executive Director and Chief Counsel, Mississippi Ethics Commission*
- **Leading the Board: Essential Skills for Board Presidents**  
*Sondra Odom, Board President, Pearl Public School District; and Etta Taplin, Board Member, North Pike School District*
- **Let Policy Govern Your Decisions**  
*Austin Gilbert, Esq., MSBA Policy & Legislative Manager*
- **Legal Essentials: Navigating School District Legal Challenges**  
*Jim Keith, Esq., Partner, Adams & Reese, LLP; and Elizabeth Lee Maron, Esq., Partner, Adams & Reese, LLP*

**3:15 PM**

**Exhibitor Break**

**3:30 PM**

**Concurrent Sessions**

- **Superintendent Evaluation: A Governance Tool for Student Success**  
*Dr. Denotris Jackson, MSBA Executive Director; and Dr. Tommye Henderson, MSBA Superintendent Search Manager*
- **Let Policy Govern Your Decisions**  
*Austin Gilbert, Esq., MSBA Policy & Legislative Manager*
- **Legal Essentials: Navigating School District Legal Challenges**  
*Jim Keith, Esq., Partner, Adams & Reese, LLP; and Elizabeth Lee Maron, Esq., Partner, Adams & Reese, LLP*

- **Cultivating Success: Transforming School District Culture for Student Success**  
*Dr. Hilute Hudson, Superintendent, Kemper County School District*
- **Leading the Board: Essential Skills for Board Presidents**  
*Sondra Odom, Board President, Pearl Public School District; and Etta Taplin, Board Member, North Pike School District*

**5:00 PM — 6:30 PM**

**School Board Member Recognition Week Reception; Awards Photos**

*Featuring the Germantown High School Legacy Choir, Madison County School District*

*NOTE: Awards photos will be posted on the MSBA Annual Conference webpage following the conference.*

**CONFERENCE DAY 2 / WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26**

**6:45 AM — 7:45 AM**

**Board Presidents & Superintendents Networking Breakfast**

**7:00 AM — 8:00 AM**

**Continental Breakfast**

**7:00 AM — 11:00 AM**

**Registration; Exhibit Booths Open**

**8:00 AM**

**General Session**

- **Welcome** — *Dr. Denotris Jackson, MSBA Executive Director; and Sondra Odom, MSBA Vice-President*
- **Musical Presentation** — *Pearl Madrigals, Pearl Public School District*
- **Recognition of Sponsors** — *American Fidelity and Scholastic*
- **Recognition of Retiring Directors**
- **Presentation of MSBA Student Essay Contest Winners**
- **General Session Speaker** — *James Pond, President & CEO, Governor's Early Literacy Foundation (Scholastic)*

**10:00 AM**

**Exhibitor Break**

**10:30 AM**

**Concurrent Sessions**

- **Future-Ready Education: Integrating AI into the Classroom**  
*Chris Chism, Superintendent, Pearl Public School District*
- **Building Future Innovators: How Grenada School District Leverages Project Lead the Way for STEM Success**  
*Dr. David Daigneault, Superintendent, Grenada School District*
- **The Future of Leadership: Strategies for Meaningful Impact**  
*James Pond, President, Governor's Early Literacy Foundation (Scholastic)*
- **Be THE Leadership Standard**  
*Cory Uselton, Superintendent, DeSoto County School District*

**11:45 AM**

**Celebration Luncheon; Door Prizes**

**1:15 PM**

**Adjourn**

*Agenda subject to change.*