

The background of the entire page is a photograph of the Mississippi State Capitol building. The image shows the large, ornate dome with a statue on top, and the classical columns of the portico below. An American flag is flying on a tall pole to the right of the dome. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

*Legislative*  
**UPDATE** & School  
Law Review



MISSISSIPPI  
SCHOOL BOARDS  
ASSOCIATION

# PROGRAM

April 28-29, 2025

MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Dr. Denotris R. Jackson, Executive Director

380 Zurich Drive | Ridgeland, MS 39157 | 601-924-2001 | [msbaonline.org](http://msbaonline.org)





Chris Chism

**Chris Chism** has dedicated more than 27 years of his life to public school education, beginning with his time as a classroom teacher and coach. He was appointed as the superintendent of Pearl Public School District in 2022, after serving as principal of Pearl High School for seven years. He was selected as a 2020 Practitioner of Distinction by the School of Education at the University of Mississippi. His personal interest in the area of AI has evolved into educating others about the many facets of AI, which can be used to make duties and responsibilities more efficient. He is in demand as an AI presenter across the nation.



Dr. Denotris Jackson

**Denotris R. Jackson, Ed.D.** was appointed as Executive Director of the Mississippi School Boards Association in 2020 after serving as Assistant Director and Director of Policy/Advocacy and Director of Board Development. She joined the MSBA staff in 2007 after being on the board of the Clinton Public School District for seven years and on the MSBA Board of Directors. She holds a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Administration from the University of Southern Mississippi, a bachelor's degree, and a master's degree in Early Childhood from Jackson State University. She is the creator of the Prospective Superintendent Leadership Academy (PSLA), the MSBA Online Policy program, and OAgendas.



Jim Keith

**James A. Keith, Esq.**, a partner in the Adams and Reese Law Firm, LLP, serves as legal counsel for MSBA and is the lead presenter at the MSBA Hot Topics Seminars. He is a widely regarded expert, both nationally and locally, on special education matters in public schools and represents school districts in state and federal courts on matters related to the Individuals with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. He was selected as a Mid-South Super Lawyer in 2019. He received the "Friend of Education" award from both MSBA and the Mississippi Association of School Administrators. Jim serves as board attorney for several school districts and as a resource for superintendents. He is an outspoken advocate for teachers and their dedication to their students.



Anissa Young

**Anissa Young, CSRM**, joined MSBA in 2005, and currently serves as Insurance Program Manager. She has a bachelor's degree from Northeast Louisiana University and a master's degree from Mississippi State University. Anissa has a background in health and safety compliance gained from her time spent working for International Paper Company. Currently, she is serving as secretary of the Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission Advisory Council and represents the MSBA Workers' Compensation Trust on the Board of the Mississippi Association of Self-Insurers.



Dr. Tommy Henderson

**Tommye Henderson, Ph.D.**, MSBA Superintendent Search Manager since 2017, served as the superintendent of the Clinton Public School District for nine years. During her tenure, the district was recognized as one of the top academically performing districts in the state. After retirement, she worked as Assistant Professor in the Teacher Education and Leadership Department at Mississippi College and as Coordinator of the Doctor of Educational Leadership Program in Curriculum and Instruction. Dr. Henderson is a former president of the Mississippi Association of School Administrators and was selected as the 2008 Mississippi Superintendent of the Year. She has collected research on generational differences for several years.



Austin Gilbert

**Austin Gilbert, Esq.**, has served as the MSBA Policy and Legislative Manager since 2018. A graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi and the Mississippi College School of Law, he was a staff attorney for the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services in both the policy and termination of parental rights division. To keep board members and superintendents up-to-date on legislative happenings, Austin tracks bills filed during the session and attends Legislative Committee meetings. He sends weekly legislative updates to school districts and converts the laws passed into policy after the close of the session.



Sandy Halliwell

**Sandy Halliwell**, is Executive Director of the Southeastern Association of School Business Officers. Previously, she served as the Finance Director for the Clinton Public School District for 16 years and spent 11 years as Finance Director for the Brookhaven School District. She is a former Certified Public Accountant. She holds Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Professional Accountancy from the University of Southern Mississippi.



Tom Hood

**Tom Hood, Esq.**, Executive Director and Chief Counsel for the Mississippi Ethics Commission, joined the Ethics Commission in 2003. As executive director, he makes recommendations to the Commission about advisory opinions, investigations, public records opinions, open meetings decisions, and virtually all other matters coming before the Commission. Hood began his career as a prosecutor with the Public Integrity Division under former Attorney General Mike Moore. He earned a law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Millsaps College.



John Hooks

**John S. Hooks, Esq.**, heads the firm's education law practice and advises schools and universities on a range of matters including federal desegregation law, employment discrimination, and civil rights claims. He has represented educational institutions in some of the most important litigation in the field of education law. John has defended more than 35 school districts against more than 1,000 claims of violating federal overtime requirements.

## EARLY BIRD / Monday, April 28

- 2:00 p.m.            **Welcome**  
*Denotris R. Jackson, Ed.D., MSBA Executive Director*
- 2:05 p.m.            **Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Classroom**  
*Chris Chism, Superintendent, Pearl Public School District*
- 3:45 p.m.            **Break**
- 4:00 p.m.            **Responsible Use of AI: Keeping Students Safe Through Policies, Training, and Reporting**  
*Denotris R. Jackson, Ed.D., MSBA Executive Director*  
*Jim Keith, Esq., MSBA General Counsel, and Partner, Adams and Reese, LLP*  
*Anissa Young, CSRM, MSBA Manager of Insurance Services*
- 5:00 p.m.            **Adjourn**

## CONFERENCE / Tuesday, April 29

- 8:00 a.m.            **Greetings**  
*Denotris R. Jackson, Ed.D., MSBA Executive Director*  
*Delores McNair, Ed.D., MSBA President*
- Data Research and Trends**  
*Denotris R. Jackson, Ed.D., MSBA Executive Director*  
*Tommye Henderson, Ph.D., MSBA Superintendent Search Manager*
- 9:45 a.m.            **Overview of Legislation Impacting School Districts**  
*Austin Gilbert, Esq., MSBA Manager of Policy and Governmental Relations*
- 10:30 a.m.           **Break**
- 10:45 a.m.           **Financial Strategies: Budgeting, Policy, and Reports**  
*Sandy Halliwell, Executive Director, Southeastern Association of School Business Officials*
- 12:00 p.m.           **Lunch**
- 12:45 p.m.           **Understanding Mississippi Ethics Laws**  
*Tom Hood, Esq., Executive Director and Chief Counsel, Mississippi Ethics Commission*
- 2:00 p.m.            **Break**
- 2:15 p.m.            **Hot Legal Issues for Board Members and Superintendents**  
*Jim Keith, Esq., Partner, Adams and Reese, LLP*  
*John S. Hooks, Esq., Partner and Education Team Leader, Adams and Reese, LLP*
- 4:00 p.m.            **Adjourn**



# EARNING CREDIT HOURS

## AVAILABLE CREDIT:

- **Board Members** can earn up to nine (9) continuing education hours.
- **Attorneys** can earn up to six (6) hours of CLE credit hours.
- **Superintendents and Administrators** can earn up to five (5) SEMI credit hours.
- **Business Officers** can earn up to nine (9) continuing education hours.

### EARLY BIRD SEMINAR / Monday, April 28, 2025

- SIGN IN online (virtual attendees) OR register at the registration desk (in-person attendees) before the 2:00 p.m. seminar begins.
- REMAIN until the seminar adjourns to receive up to three (3) hours of credit.

### CONFERENCE / Tuesday, April 29, 2025

- SIGN IN online (virtual attendees) OR register at the registration desk (in-person attendees) before the 8:30 a.m. start of the conference.
- REMAIN until the conference adjourns to earn up to six (6) hours of credit.

## We're Here For You!

*The mission of the Mississippi School Boards Association is to ensure quality school board performance through advocacy, technical assistance, leadership training, and information dissemination.*

**Thank You, MSBA Business Affiliate Program Sponsors!**

### DIAMOND LEVEL

