

By: Senator(s) Lee (47th)

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 530

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE BOLD ACTION OF JACKSON  
2 SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT EARL WATKINS IN REORGANIZING THE STAFF AT  
3 LANIER HIGH SCHOOL.

4 WHEREAS, Jackson Municipal Separate School District  
5 Superintendent Earl Watkins announced on January 22, 2004, that  
6 every employee at Lanier High School, including 67 teachers, must  
7 reapply for their jobs. A new principal, with a transition team,  
8 will select staff members for the new school year; and

9 WHEREAS, by this "bold" move, Superintendent Watkins believes  
10 the reorganization is unavoidable for Lanier High School, which  
11 the State Department of Education rates as one of 33 Level 1  
12 low-performing schools because of poor student scores on state  
13 tests; and

14 WHEREAS, Lanier High School currently has about 950 students,  
15 3 administrators, 67 teachers and 35 classified employees; and

16 WHEREAS, Superintendent Watkins said he is counting on the  
17 reorganization to reinvigorate the school, which has some of the  
18 worst test scores in the state, and most students and staff view  
19 this directive as a positive move which will make a difference;  
20 and

21 WHEREAS, under the federal "No Child Left Behind"  
22 legislation, schools must meet specific achievement benchmarks, or  
23 adequate yearly progress, in the percentage of students scoring  
24 proficient; states must have 100% of all students "proficient" by  
25 the 2013-2014 school year, which is measured by math and reading  
26 test results for grades 3 through 8 and once at the high school  
27 level; and

28  
29 WHEREAS, Mississippi is making steady and encouraging  
30 progress in student achievement at both the state and national  
31 level. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP),  
32 Mississippi's grades 4 and 8 students have shown significant gains  
33 in both math and reading. For example, trend data from 1992 to  
34 2003 show that for math, grade 4 students gained 21 scale score  
35 points while the nation gained only 15. Grade 8 math students  
36 gained 15 scale score points while the nation gained only 9.  
37 Mississippi is making solid strides in closing the gap in national  
38 test score comparisons. At the state level, our students are also  
39 showing gains on all state assessments, both at the elementary and  
40 secondary level. For the 2003-2004 school year, over half of the  
41 schools in Mississippi met the accountability requirements of No  
42 Child Left Behind, and Mississippi currently ranks as having the  
43 12th best accountability program in the nation; and

44 WHEREAS, in order to continue this progress, the Legislature  
45 must continue to properly fund K-12 education, and it is essential  
46 to maintain the support of the business community through local  
47 accountability programs in order to support this funding; and

48 WHEREAS, the accountability measure instituted at Lanier High  
49 School by Superintendent Watkins is a perfect example of action to  
50 generate local business community support for continued state  
51 funding of the Mississippi Adequate Education Program; and

52 WHEREAS, Superintendent Watkins, the Board of Trustees of the  
53 Jackson Municipal Separate School District, the incoming  
54 administrators at Lanier High School and the Jackson  
55 Parent-Teacher organization at Lanier High School are to be  
56 commended for their cooperation in this effort to succeed in its  
57 reorganization and to rise to a higher level of school  
58 performance:

59 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
60 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That

61 we do hereby commend and congratulate the bold action of Jackson  
62 Municipal Separate School District Superintendent Earl Watkins in  
63 reorganizing the staff at Lanier High School in an effort to rise  
64 to a higher level of school performance, and extend to him the  
65 best wishes of the Legislature in this endeavor.

66 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
67 Superintendent Watkins and the Board of Trustees of the Jackson  
68 Municipal Separate School District, be forwarded to the State  
69 Board of Education and be made available to *The Clarion-Ledger* and  
70 to members of the Capitol Press Corps.