



Mississippi State Board of Optometry
Regular Scheduled Meeting
April 4, 2025
5 Old River Place, Jackson, MS 39202

MINUTES

In accordance with MCA § 25-41-11

- I. Call to Order
The Mississippi State Board of Optometry regular scheduled meeting was called to order by Board President, Kimberly Ragan, O.D. at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, April 4, 2025.
- II. Roll Call
The following Members were present at 5 Old River Place, Jackson, for public participation:
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|----------------------|----------------------|
| Lori Blackmer, O.D. | Anna Middleton, O.D. |
| Hilary Parrish, O.D. | Kimberly Ragan, O.D. |
- Also present:
Cynthia Brown, Administrative Assistant
Yvonne Laird, Executive Director
- Members of the public present via TEAMS:
Jill Bryant, O.D, MPH – Executive Director – Executive Director, National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO)
Jim Campbell, O.D., Vice President, NBEO
- III. Approval of the Agenda
Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Parrish to accept the agenda with the following changes:
1. Agenda VI. Item D – Reciprocal Qualifications for Licensure;
 2. Agenda XI. Item G – Signatory Authority for UROLA Temporary Practice Permit
 3. Agenda XI. Item H – Timesheet for Board Activities
 4. Agenda XI. Item C.3. – Non-COPE CE Credit to Board Members

IV. NBEO Update

Dr. Ragan, President of MSBO welcomed Dr. Jill Bryant and Dr. Jim Campbell of NBEO and thanked them for taking time out of their schedule to participate in today's meeting. Below is a synopsis to the TEAMS meeting and the documents contained with the agenda.

Dr. Jill Bryant provided an update regarding the NBEO scoring issues which affected approximately 10% of those who took Part II in December 2024 which included that this was due to a conversion issue rather than a scoring issue and how the problem was remediated. She further reviewed the scoring and examination development process, including but not limited to examination forms, equating – a method used to adjust raw exam scores (number of correct answers) to account for differences in difficulty across different forms of an exam, which will ensure fairness and consistency in scoring, regardless of which form of exam a candidate takes - to ensure that a candidate's score accurately reflects their performance, and score scaling and reporting. NBEO has been in the midst of information technology modernization since 2022 which has resulted in the replacement and rebuilding of the Optometric Examination Database Information System (OEDIS) which is a meticulous process. A new registration system went into effect in December 2023 which enhanced the candidate experience by allowing NBEO to serve more concurrent users during peak registration and streamlining the payment process. A new application for Part III Patient Encounters and Performance Skills (PEPS®) Examination will provide candidates with a clean, more modern examination format that balances clinical authenticity and the standardization necessary for a high stakes' performance examination. OEDIS will be decommissioned from all users by the end of 2026 to make way for more efficient replacement software. Over the course of the next two (2) years, NBEO will continue this modernization process with further enhancements to include:

- a) further expansions of the Part III PEPS testing system to allow for twice as many candidates to simultaneously perform the examination;
- b) improve integration with necessary software programs;
- c) candidate management system upgrades to simplify the exam registration and score publishing process;
- d) expand improvements to the following:
 - Part I Applied Basic Science (ABS®)
 - Part II Patient Assessment & Management and Treatment and Management of Ocular Disease (PAM®/TMOD®)
 - Injections Skills Examination (ISE®)
 - Laser and Surgical Procedures Examination (LSPE®)
 - Online State Law Exams (OSLE®)
 - Advanced Competence in Medical Optometry (ACMO®); and
- e) develop and launch an elevated data portal for candidates, schools and colleges of optometry and regulatory boards.

Alternate testing options have been considered as well as satellite testing locations; however, all of these options, including staying in the current location would

significantly increase cost. The NBEO National Center of Clinical Testing in Optometry will be located at 7910 Microsoft Way, Charlotte, North Carolina, 28273, and will begin hosting examination candidates beginning August 2025 and should generate approximately \$4 million in savings over the next decade. Those savings will enable NBEO to contain costs in its examination process. In closing, the MSBO Board was extended an invitation to attend the Open House at the new location in September 2025. Details to follow.

V. Financial Status Report

A. Effective January 1, 2025, bank reconciliations are performed in-house and a copy distributed to Board members at quarterly meetings.

B. The financial report for FY2025, period ending February 28, 2025 (8-month period), reflects the following:

Revenue	\$153,325.45
Expenditures	\$127,594.60
Balance in Clearing Account	\$387,123.96

Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Blackmer to accept the financial report as submitted. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

VI. Hearing / Executive Session / Report of Counsel

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Parrish moved to go into closed session to determine whether an Executive Session is needed. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried. Dr. Blackmer moved, seconded by Dr. Parrish, that the Board had reason under Miss. Code Ann. §25-41-7 (4)(b) and (d), as amended, to go into Executive Session namely to investigative proceedings regarding allegations of misconduct or violations of law with respect to prospective litigation or issuance of an appealable order when an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Board. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Blackmer to come out of Executive Session. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

Actions taken during Executive Session

Dr. Ragan announced the following actions taken during Executive Session:

A. 02-03-24

Pursuant to Counsel's report via Yvonne Laird, this matter remains an open investigation.

B. 2025-0000-03

Upon recommendation of the investigating Board member, Dr. Middleton, Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Parrish, to take no action as there had been no violation of regulation or law. The Board has been advised that the issue

has been resolved between the client and the optometrist. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried. Closed.

C. Rule 8.5

This rule remains under review until which time additional information can be received from Lindsey Simmons {Simmons Consulting Group}, Kim Turner, Assistant Attorney General, Leyser Hayes, Special Assistant Attorney General, Kimberly Ragan, O.D., and Yvonne Laird, Executive Director. The Board will then call a special meeting to address questions.

D. Reciprocal Applicant

For clarification, the Board has interpreted MCA §73-19-25 to reflect the following for applicants applying for Mississippi licensure through reciprocity.

1. Payment of the \$50.00 reciprocity fee is in addition to the \$400.00 prorated license fee;
2. "Without further examination" deems that no other optometric license examination is required if the Board validates that standard requirements are adopted and enforced by boards of both states;
3. Jurisprudence Examination is a requirement for licensure; and
4. "Not previously failed an examination" includes both national and state required examinations.

VII. Approval of the Minutes

- A. Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Parrish to approve the Minutes of February 4, 2025, as distributed. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

VIII. Old Business

A. President's Report

No comments not previously provided in the Minutes.

B. Committee Reports

No report required.

IX. Executive Director's Report

- A. Cynthia Brown presented the website analyst for the period March 1st through March 31st, 2025, which reflected 547 views to the MSBO website consisting of 175 new viewers. No board action required.
- B. Cynthia Brown provided an update regarding 2025 renewals which reflected the following:

447 beginning of renewal period

432 renewed for 2025

7 retired and closed their practice

7 retired

1 revoked due to non-renewal /failure to notify the board after notice provided

435 current (432 at end of 2024 + 3 new licensees in January 2025)

C. Legislative Update

Yvonne Laird provided a legislation action update as of April 4, 2025, as follows:

1. HB 924 [Creating Logic for Efficiency and Accountability (CLEAR) Act] – Motion to Reconsider Tabled;
2. SB2248 [Fresh Start Act] – Died on Calendar;

3. SN 53 [Confirmation of Hilary Parrish, O.D., to the Mississippi State Board of Optometry for the term July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2029]; and
4. HB1749 [Appropriations Bill for FY2026 of \$256,272.00].

X. Old Business

A. Performance Review – State Auditor's Office

Dr. Ragan provided the Board with a review of MSBO's meeting with members of the Performance Audit Team of the Mississippi State Auditor's Office. No action was taken as no action was required.

B. Study Guide

After review, Dr. Blackmer moved with a second by Dr. Parrish to release the MSBO Jurisprudence Study Guide to the website. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

C. Rules and Regulations

Cynthia Brown advised the Board that the Rules and Regulations have been updated and formatted. The SOS and OLRC filings will be implemented in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act no later than April 15, 2025.

XI. New Business

A. Bank Account

Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Middleton to take necessary steps to move the MSBO clearing account from Regions Bank to PriorityOne Bank due to excessive monthly service fees in excess of \$35.00 per month. Yvonne Laird will become primary signatory on the new account. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

B. Newsletter

Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Parrish to approve the release of the newsletter with minor revisions. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

C. MOA 2025 Summer Convention

Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Middleton to approve the following:

1. MOA 2025 Summer Conference, June 13 through June 15, 2025, Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores, Alabama for 10 hours COPE approved CE for optometrist which also includes 3 hours of PEP credit, namely, Anterior Segment disease Grand Rounds – 2 hours; and Eyelid Lesions: Relax or Refer – 1 hour. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
2. MOA Northwest Society, May 1, 2025, Southaven – Practice Management CE for the Society Meeting, specifically MOA Advocacy for Mississippi Optometry – 1 hour.
3. Non-COPE CE Credits to Board Members
Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Middleton to grant four (4) MSBO credit hours annually under Rule 4.1.(b)(1) all subjects of education directly related to optometry. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

- D. Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE)
Upon review, Dr. Parrish moved, with a second by Dr. Middleton to decline the call for comments of the following:
1. proposed changes to ACOE Policies and Procedures;
 2. proposed new measure to be added to the ACOE Glossary in lieu of 'ultimate pass rate';
 3. proposed changes to 2025 Professional Optometric Degree Program Standard 1.4;
 4. proposed addition to the 2025 Professional Optometric Degree Program Standards – new standard related to administrator credentials; and
 5. proposed addition of two (2) new ACOE Policies and Procedures and three (3) new Glossary terms.
- The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- E. Approval of FY26 Contracts
1. Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Blackmer to enter into a personal service agreement with J-Bar and Associates, Inc., for management services for the period July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, without change. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
 2. Dr. Parrish moved, with a second by Dr. Middleton to enter into a contract for fiscal and budgetary management services for the period July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, without change. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
 3. Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Parrish to enter into a contractual agreement for with USNext for IT support and system security at a rate of \$554.70 per month for the period March 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- F. Development of 5-Year Strategic Plan
Board members will review for revisions and final draft and action taken at the Saturday, July 12, 2025, meeting.
- G. After a review of the Universal Recognition of Occupational Licensing Act and after validation of receipt of the completed UROLA application, Dr. Blackmer moved to authorize Yvonne Laird to execute the UROLA 365-day Temporary Practice Permit. The applicant will receive full licensure upon the passage of the Mississippi Jurisprudence Examination.
- H. Timesheet for Board Activities
Yvonne Laird will develop and distribute for Board use for recording Board-related activities and per diem request as allowed by state law, as follows:
Miss. Code Section 25-3-69 provides unless otherwise provided by law, all officers and employees of state agencies, boards, commissions, departments, and institutions authorized by law to receive per diem compensation for each day or fraction thereof occupied with the discharge of official duties shall be entitled to Forty Dollars (\$40.00) per diem compensation.

XII. Approval of Expenses

Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Middleton to ratify payment of expenditures for Batch 7 through Batch 16, for the period January 3, 2025, through April 2, 2025, previously authorized by Dr. Ragan and Dr. Parrish. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.


XIII. Adjournment

Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Middleton to adjourn the meeting at 12:30 p.m. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

APPROVED:



Kimberly Ragan, O.D., Board President



Hilary Parrish O.D., Board Secretary

Distributed for Board President & Secretary's Review: Friday, April 4, 2025

Distributed to Board Members: Tuesday, April 8, 2025



PUBLIC NOTICE

Mississippi State Board of Optometry

Regular Scheduled Board Meeting

**Friday
April 4, 2025
9:00 AM**

**5 Old River Place, Suite 105
Jackson, Mississippi**

Posted pursuant to *Miss. Code Ann.* §25-41-5