SEE PAGE 5 FOR GOV. REEVES PROCLAMATION ON STATE TAKEOVER

SEE PAGES 6-19 FOR THE **2020 DELINQUENT** TAX SALE

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HOLMES COUNTY

THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2021

ONE SECTION

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Holmes County school district dismantled, state takes control

Mississippi Today by Kate Royals

Gov. Tate Reeves declared a state of emergency in the troubled Holmes County Consolidated School District on the first day of the new school year and just hours after the district announced it was suing state officials in an attempt to block the take-

Signed at 1:25 p.m. on Thursday, August 5, the declaration will immediately dismantle the school district. Interim superintendent Jennifer Wilson will take over, and the local school board will be disbanded. The State Board of Education will act as the district's governing

lightly nor one I make with any delight. Maintaining local control when possible is a foundational principle of governance; however, the serious violations of state and federal law and accreditation standards, serious financial concerns,



The Holmes County Consolidated School District Central Office

"This isn't a decision I take inappropriate standards of cation will always be a top governance, inappropriand the continued poor acamany other factors) no lonwrote on Twitter.

"Ensuring Mississippi kids lack of internal controls, have access to a quality edu- now

priority. This declaration of ate oversight by the Board, an extreme emergency situation within HCCSD will demic performance (among hopefully give the kids of this district a chance at sucger make that possible in the cess in life, because each one HCCSD," Gov. Tate Reeves of them deserve(s) nothing less!" Reeves continued.

This means the district,

Transformation," now stands to lose its accreditation. School districts that lose accreditation are limited to participation in no more than half of the regular season of any athletic and extracurricular activities. The activities' schedule will also not include the opening day

(Continued on page 5.)

closed, session.

The lawsuit points out that before the department's audit was completed and any probeing dismantled and turned ducted a two-month audit ceedings had occurred, the department advertised the job of an interim superintensolidated School District court alleges the Mississippi tioners (district) to assess dent position for a District of is suing state officials over Department of Education and respond to the audit Transformation. The deadwhat it describes as "sham, did not give the district due findings," the lawsuit states. line to apply for the job was "What is more, Petitioners July 21, several days before the department had concluded its on-site investigative audit of the district.

On Aug. 3 the State Board of Education recommended Jennifer Wilson, the former superintendent of Greenwood School District, serve as interim superintendent for the district should a state of (Continued on page 3.)

Holmes County ex-school official gets 30 years for sexual battery

Greenwood Commonwealth By Tim Kalich

A former Holmes County school administrator has received a 30-year sentence after pleading guilty last month to sexual battery against a student.

Dyana Thomas was sentenced by Leflore County Circuit Judge Richard Smith to 15 years in prison with the remaining 15 years being suspended upon completing ment. At the time, he was five years of post-release supervision.

tion and July 23 sentence tral High School. were announced Monday by District Attorney W. Dewayne Richardson.

May 2019 by the Leflore



DYANA THOMAS

County Sheriff's Departliving in Greenwood and working as assistant princi-The details of the convic- pal of Holmes County Cen-

Richardson said that an investigator with the Sheriff's Department determined that Thomas was arrested in Thomas, then 49 years old,

(Continued on page 5.)

Local schools open for in-person learning

The Central Holmes Chris- the class will be together as tian School and the Holmes a group. It is a year of mak-County Consolidated School ing memories that will last a District started the 2021- lifetime. 2022 school year with inperson learning.

solidated school District for granted because they are began classes on August 5; Central Holmes Christian School had their first day of demic choices and decisions school on Monday, August 9. that may affect or change the From K-3 to K-12, the new course of their lives forever. school year begins amidst the cloud of COVID-19 and enjoy school and be the very many unknown changes.

pation and excitement and apprehension. For many of pate. them, it was the first time to and family; yet, it is the be-

party, and the last time that

It is an opportunity to learn to appreciate the class-The Holmes County con- mates that they have taken "family."

It is a time to make aca-

It is a chance to grow and best that they can be--- to do For K-3, students came to the very best in every sport, class with a sense of antici- every activity, and every class in which they partici-

It is a specific occasion leave the comfort of home to pause and reflect on the person that they want to beginning of a great adventure. come----to be the role model For the seniors, it is the be- for those students that will ginning of a year of lasts; the follow in their footsteps. last first day of high school; And, when the time comes the last homecoming, the to leave as a graduate, to be last prom, the last senior able to look back with pride and no regrets.

Holmes County schools sues to block state takeover

Mississippi Today by Kate Royals

The Holmes County Con-Board of Education's recommendation that the governor declare a state of emergency in the district earlier this week.

The lawsuit is seeking a temporary restraining order ahead of a declaration by Gov. Tate Reeves that would result in the school district

over to the state.

unconstitutional proceed-process and violated its own ings" following the State policies and procedures in conducting an audit of the district and the subsequent hearings before the Commission on Accreditation and State Board of Education.

The Mississippi Department of Education on Thursday said it does not comment on matters in litigation.

The state department "con-

and provided less than a The lawsuit filed in federal week's notice for the Petido not receive an opportunity (to) question anyone regarding the findings. Simply put, the process afforded does not provide an opportunity for a hearing appropriate to the nature of the case."

It also states the board violated the Open Meetings Act when it conducted its deliberations in executive, or

Saturday

Sunday PM T-Storms 91/72



Monday Scattered T-Storms 90/72



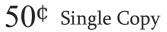
Tuesday Scattered T-Storms

Wednesday **PM T-Storms** 91/73 Precip. Chance

35%

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Precip. Chance

Friday Partly Cloudy 94/74 Precip. Chance 24%

Scattered T-Storms 93.73 Precip. Chance 40%

Precip. Chance 38%

Precip. Chance 43%

90/72 Precip. Chance 37%