



**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.  
*State Superintendent of Education*

**June 18, 2020**

**Mr. Shad White, State Auditor  
Office of the State Auditor  
Post Office Box 956  
Jackson, MS 39205-0956**

**Dear Mr. White:**

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) has reviewed the Office of the State Auditor's (OSA) performance audit report for the Office of Dropout Prevention, completed in June 2020. While we recognize there are requirements that have not been met in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-80, we have significant concerns over the lack of recognition for progress made in performance by schools, districts, and students across Mississippi.

Given that this project has been described since its inception in the fall of 2019 as a performance audit, we had expected to see performance metrics included in the report. Upon review of this report, it looks to be focused strictly on compliance, as it does not recognize the improvement in graduation rate and the reduction in dropout rate seen as a result of the work of MDE and educators across the state. As noted in the attachments, the state's graduation rate is at an all-time high of 85%, up from 74.5% in 2014, and the state's dropout rate has fallen to an historic low of 9.7%, a decrease from 13.9% in 2014.

Additionally, the MDE emphatically denies the use of inapplicable graduation rate data when reporting to the State Board of Education (SBE) and to the general public. The MDE has gone to great lengths to ensure accurate data is presented to the SBE and the public, and we take great umbrage at allegations to the contrary. As shared with OSA staff previously, Mississippi's four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is calculated each year in accordance with federal regulations.

**Attached is the MDE response to the final report, as well as several additional resources**

that we believe should have been included in the final report, and as requested after our review of the OSA draft report earlier this year. We understood that the management response was to be included in the final report, and we are greatly offended that OSA staff decided not to include this information in the final report, as it leaves any reader with inaccurate and insufficient information.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carey M. Wright". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Carey" being more prominent.

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Education

**Attachments:**

- 01.Management Responses to the State Auditor
- 02.January 2020 Press Release
- 03.May 2007 Administrative Procedures Act Filing
- 04.May 2007 State Board of Education Item
- 05.State Board of Education Strategic Plan
- 06.State Board of Education Rule 30.5

Mississippi Department of Education  
Management Responses to the Office of the State Auditor

AUDITOR COMMENT	MDE RESPONSE
<p>Key Finding 1: MDE has not adhered to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-80 since 2009.</p>	<p>The Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-80 has been revised three times since the statute was passed in 2006 (2007, 2012, 2014). The MDE acknowledges that the agency does not have an appointed director designated to a single office.</p> <p>The Office of Secondary Education is responsible for the coordination of agency-wide dropout prevention efforts, and statewide performance in the area of graduation and dropout demonstrate marked improvement.</p> <p>Mississippi has continuously improved graduation rates for students across the state (see Attachment 02); Mississippi has increased the graduation rate for students every year for the last six years. The graduation rate is 85%, and the dropout rate is 9.7% for the graduating class of 2019.</p>
<p>Key Finding 2: MDE maintained inapplicable graduation rate benchmarks when reporting progress to the State Board of Education (SBE).</p>	<p>The MDE worked closely with the SBE in its calculation and reporting of graduation rates or dropout rates, as the SBE took action in the spring of 2007 to align graduation rate calculations with federal reporting requirements.</p> <p><i>Per the submission to the Mississippi Secretary of State’s website (Attachment 03), “Pursuant to Mississippi Code §37-21-9, the Mississippi Department of Education is required to report annually to the Mississippi Legislature on the graduation and dropout rates based on grades 7 through 12 and grades 9 through 12 cohort groups statewide and by district. In December 2006, the State Board of Education adopted procedures for calculating the graduation, completion and dropout rates. The graduation rate initially included both students earning traditional diplomas as well as special education students who received occupational diplomas.</i></p> <p><i>The graduation rate calculation was revised, removing special education students receiving occupational diplomas from the population of those</i></p>

	<p><i>counted as graduates. These students will be counted as completers, along with special education students receiving certificates of attendance, and students earning a General Education Development (GED) diploma from a district program. This revision serves to align state graduation rate calculations with federal reporting requirements, in which neither students receiving occupational diplomas, GED diplomas, or certificates of attendance are included in graduation rate calculations. Federal graduation rate reporting requirements include only students graduating from high school with a regular diploma.”</i></p> <p>Additionally, page 6 of Attachment 04 reflects that the exclusion of students with an occupational diploma had negligible effect statewide, reducing the 2004-2005 graduating cohort from 61.1% to 60.8% statewide.</p> <p>In 2017, the SBE subsequently adopted long-term graduation-rate goals within the Mississippi Succeeds state plan, as required by federal law. The long-term goal is an overall rate of 90% by 2024-25.</p>
<p><b>Key Finding 3:</b> MDE has been apathetic regarding oversight of a coordinated initiative to reduce the dropout rate.</p>	<p>While the MDE does not have an individual dedicated solely to dropout prevention, the agency is coordinating all services provided to school districts, families, students, and communities. The coordinated efforts of the agency are identified in the State Board of Education’s Strategic Plan (see Attachment 05). The strategic plan is a living, working document that is implemented by all program offices. The State Superintendent of Education provides regular updates to the SBE on progress toward meeting the goals contained within the plan. The state’s dropout rate fell to an historic low of 9.7% for the senior class of 2019, a decrease from 13.9% in 2014</p>
<p><b>Key Finding 4:</b> Seventy-three percent (73%) of local districts’ dropout prevention plans do not meet requirements set forth by MDE.</p>	<p>The SBE established a Dropout Prevention Plan policy (Rule 30.5) for all districts to follow (see Attachment 06). The policy will be revised to reflect the current data surrounding dropout prevention as well as new graduation benchmarks.</p>

<p>Key Finding 5: Forty-nine percent (49%) of local school districts' dropout prevention programs are not being monitored by MDE.</p>	<p>The MDE has refined the review process, such that districts will post dropout prevention plans on their websites and submit plans for MDE review.</p>
<p>Key Finding 6: Seventy-one percent (71%) of local school districts' dropout prevention programs are not evidence-based.</p>	<p>The SBE established a Dropout Prevention Plan policy (Rule 30.5) for all districts to follow (see Attachment 06). The policy will be revised to reflect the current data surrounding dropout prevention as well as new graduation benchmarks.</p>
<p>Key Finding 7: MDE does not monitor whether evidence-based programs are implemented as designed to ensure effectiveness.</p>	<p>While the MDE has oversight of dropout prevention efforts and has seen significant gains in graduation rates and a reduction in dropouts, in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-80, "the local school district will be responsible for the implementation of dropout plans".</p>
<p>Page 2: Auditors learned that those currently responsible for implementation of the Statewide Dropout Prevention Plan were completely unfamiliar with the document.</p>	<p>The SBE adopted an updated policy (Attachment 06) in 2012, and subsequently has adopted the SBE Strategic Plan (Attachment 05) and has established a long-term graduation goal of 90% by 2024-25. As evidenced by the continued improvement in the area of graduation and dropout rates, these efforts are working well to support districts, schools, and students.</p>
<p>Page 6: Recommendation 1.a: re-establish the Office of Dropout Prevention.</p>	<p>The MDE has an Office of Dropout Prevention that operates as a part of the Office of Secondary Education.</p>
<p>Page 6 Recommendation 1.b: hire a Director for the Office of Dropout Prevention.</p>	<p>The Executive Director of the Office of Secondary Education is responsible for coordination of agency-wide dropout efforts.</p>
<p>Page 6 Recommendation 1.c.: reorganize the Office of Compulsory School Attendance (and appoint a director accordingly) so it is under the purview of the Office of Dropout Prevention.</p>	<p>According to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-80, the Office of Compulsory School Attendance is not required to be within the Office of Dropout Prevention. The Office of Compulsory School Attendance has an appointed director. The MDE is working to fill this position, which became vacant on June 1, 2020.</p>
<p>Page 6 Recommendation 1.d.iv: review and updated the Statewide Dropout Prevention Plan...to include...clarification</p>	<p>While coordination of dropout prevention efforts is the responsibility of the Office of Secondary Education, this is an agency-wide effort. The State Superintendent of Education will continue to share</p>

<p>regarding oversight instructions.</p>	<p>updates on progress regarding graduation rates and dropout rates, and the agency will adjust supports and training available to districts.</p>
<p>Page 6 Recommendation 2.a: MDE should develop policies/procedures that address the following: providing general technical assistance on dropout prevention.</p>	<p>The MDE has identified online resources and will continue to take a holistic approach to address dropout rates, including professional development and technical assistance to address literacy, math, student interventions, and meaningful high school experiences included CTE and advanced courses. Many resources are online and will be linked from the Dropout Prevention webpage.</p>
<p>Page 6 Recommendation 2.c: MDE should develop policies/procedures that address the following: monitoring of the collaborative effort between program offices within MDE by the Office of Dropout Prevention to affirm policies and initiatives are reducing the state’s dropout rate.</p>	<p>The SBE Strategic Plan guides the work of the agency. Staff from across the MDE regularly review outcomes outlined in the plan and adjust strategies accordingly.</p>
<p>Page 6 Recommendation 3.f: MDE should develop a webpage specifically for the Office of Dropout Prevention that includes links to the following: ratings of local dropout prevention plans.</p>	<p>The MDE intends to review and note approval of plans in accordance with the law.</p>
<p>Page 6 Recommendation 3.g: MDE should develop a webpage specifically for the Office of Dropout Prevention that includes links to the following: Office of Compulsory School Attendance.</p>	<p>The Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement has a webpage, available from the Directory on each page of the MDE website.</p>
<p>Page 6 Recommendation 3.j: MDE should develop a webpage specifically for the Office of Dropout Prevention that includes links to the</p>	<p>While the MDE is responsible for reviewing and approving dropout prevention plans, implementation is the responsibility of local school districts. The MDE will continue to monitor plans as a part of accreditation site visits.</p>

following: dropout prevention programs being implemented by school districts with accountability measures to ensure programs are implemented as designed.

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MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright *future* for every child

COMMUNITY

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# Mississippi's Graduation Rate Exceeds National Average

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NEWS RELEASE

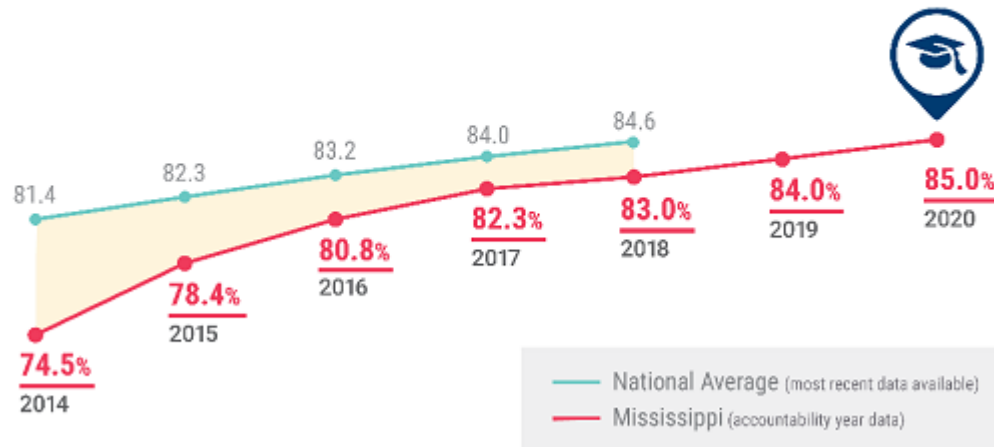
For Immediate Release: January 16, 2020



JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) released today the high school graduation rates for the 2018-19 school year, which show the state's graduation rate has hit an all-time high of 85%, higher than the most recent national graduation rate. The 2019 national graduation rate is expected to be released later this month.

The graduation rate for students with disabilities nearly doubled from 23.2% in 2014 to 42.2% this year.

## MISSISSIPPI'S GRADUATION RATE



The state's drop-out rate fell to an historic low of 9.7%, a decrease from 13.9% in 2014.

"Mississippi's rising graduation rate is the result of our students' significant academic gains in recent years. Student achievement is at an all-time high and is continuing to climb," said Dr. Carey Wright, state superintendent of education. "I congratulate teachers, school leaders and parents for helping students complete high school prepared for college, postsecondary training, the military and the workforce."

High school students now have the opportunity to earn an endorsement with their high school diploma. Starting in grade 9, students choose whether they want to work toward a traditional diploma, or take additional classes to earn an academic, distinguished academic or career and technical education endorsement. Students can earn more than one endorsement.

Each diploma option prepares students to be successful after graduation, whether that be in the workforce, a career and technical training program, the military or college.

Students who earn an academic or distinguished academic diploma endorsement from a public high school automatically qualify for admission into any of the state's public universities.

Mississippi's high school graduation rate is calculated in accordance with federal and state law using a four-year cohort method. The 2020 graduation rate is based on students who entered grade 9 for the first time in the 2015-16 school year.

Graduation rates for 2018-19 will be reflected in the accountability ratings for the 2019-20 school year.

2020 Graduation Rate Report: [mdek12.org/OPR/Reporting/Accountability](https://mdek12.org/OPR/Reporting/Accountability)

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2020

2019

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2016

2015

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NOTICE OF RULE ADOPTION—FINAL RULE



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
BUSINESS SERVICES DIVISION

Mississippi Department of Education  
c/o Sheril Smith  
Director of Office of Dropout Prevention  
Post Office Box 771  
Jackson, MS 39205-0771  
601-359-3177  
srsmith@mde.k12.ms.us

Specific Legal Authority Authorizing the promulgation of  
Rule: Mississippi Code: Title 37 Education § 37-21-9

Reference to Rules repealed, amended or suspended by the  
Proposed Rule: N/A

Date Rule Proposed: April 20, 2007

**Explanation of the Purpose of the Proposed Rule and the reason(s) for proposing the rule:** Pursuant to Mississippi Code §37-21-9, the Mississippi Department of Education is required to report annually to the Mississippi Legislature on the graduation and dropout rates based on grades 7 through 12 and grades 9 through 12 cohort groups statewide and by district.

In December 2006, the State Board of Education adopted procedures for calculating the graduation, completion and dropout rates. The graduation rate initially included both students earning traditional diplomas as well as special education students who received occupational diplomas.

The graduation rate calculation has been revised, removing special education students receiving occupational diplomas from the population of those counted as graduates. These students will be counted as completers, along with special education students receiving certificates of attendance, and students earning a General Education Development (GED) diploma from a district program. This revision serves to align state graduation rate calculations with federal reporting requirements, in which neither students receiving occupational diplomas, GED diplomas, or certificates of attendance are included in graduation rate calculations. Federal graduation rate reporting requirements include only students graduating from high school with a regular diploma.

The Agency Rule Making Record for this rule including any written comments received during the comment period and the record of any oral proceeding is available for public inspection by contacting the Agency at the above address.

An oral proceeding was held on this rule:

Date: {Insert Date}  
Time: {Insert Time}  
Place: {Insert Place}

An oral proceeding was not held on this rule.

The Agency has considered the written comments and the presentations made in any oral proceedings, and

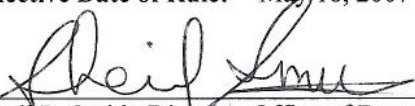
This rule as adopted is without variance from the proposed rule.

This rule as adopted differs from the proposed rule as there are minor editorial changes which affect the form rather than the substance of the rule.

The rule as adopted differs from the proposed rule. The differences however are:  
Within the scope of the matters in the Notice of Proposed Rule Adoption, the logical outgrowth of the contents of the Notice of Proposed Rule Adoption and the comments submitted in response thereto, and  
The Notice of Proposed Rule Adoption provided fair warning that the outcome of the proposed rule adoption could be the rule in question.

The entire text of the Proposed Rule including the text of any rule being amended or changed is attached.

Effective Date of Rule: May 18, 2007

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sheril R. Smith, Director, Office of Dropout Prevention  
Signature and Title of Person Submitting Rule for Filing

**OFFICE OF BUSINESS AND SUPPORT SERVICES**  
**Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items**  
**May 17-18, 2007**

**OFFICE OF DROPOUT PREVENTION**

09. Approval of the revision of the procedures for calculating graduation, completion and dropout counts and rates by tracking cohorts of students in MSIS. (Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process with no public comments)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Pursuant to Mississippi Code §37-21-9, the Mississippi Department of Education is required to report annually to the Mississippi Legislature on the graduation and dropout rates based on grades 7 through 12 and grades 9 through 12 cohort groups statewide and by district.

In December 2006, the State Board of Education adopted procedures for calculating the graduation, completion and dropout rates. The graduation rate initially included both students earning traditional diplomas as well as special education students who received occupational diplomas.

The graduation rate calculation has been revised, removing special education students receiving occupational diplomas from the population of those counted as graduates. These students will be counted as completers, along with special education students receiving certificates of attendance, and students earning a General Education Development (GED) diploma from a district program. This revision serves to align state graduation rate calculations with federal reporting requirements, in which neither students receiving occupational diplomas, GED diplomas, or certificates of attendance are included in graduation rate calculations. Federal graduation rate reporting requirements include only students graduating from high school with a regular diploma.

The backup material includes the state law, the proposed method of calculation for submission through the APA process, and a chart showing the impact on districts of the removal of students with occupational diplomas.

Backup material attached.

Recommendation: Approval

## Mississippi Department of Education

# Procedures for Calculating Graduation, Completion and Dropout Counts and Rates by Tracking Cohorts of Students in MSIS

This document presents proposed procedures for calculating graduation, completion, and graduation counts and rates. The procedures for calculating dropout and completion rates are new.

The proposed procedures for calculating graduation rates differ from those currently used by the Department of Education. Whereas earlier calculations were based on student counts, the procedures proposed in this document involve tracking individual students over time using data in the Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS).

The proposed procedures include:

- Establishing the cohort to be tracked.
- Identifying and coding events (transfer, death, drop out, completion).
- Determining appropriate denominators for calculating rates.
- Statistical estimation, where necessary.
- Calculation of rates representing different time spans (4, 5, 6 years).

November 8, 2006

*Note: Completed APA and approved by SBOE in December 2006.*

Revised March 28, 2007  
(One change – see page 5)

## Introduction

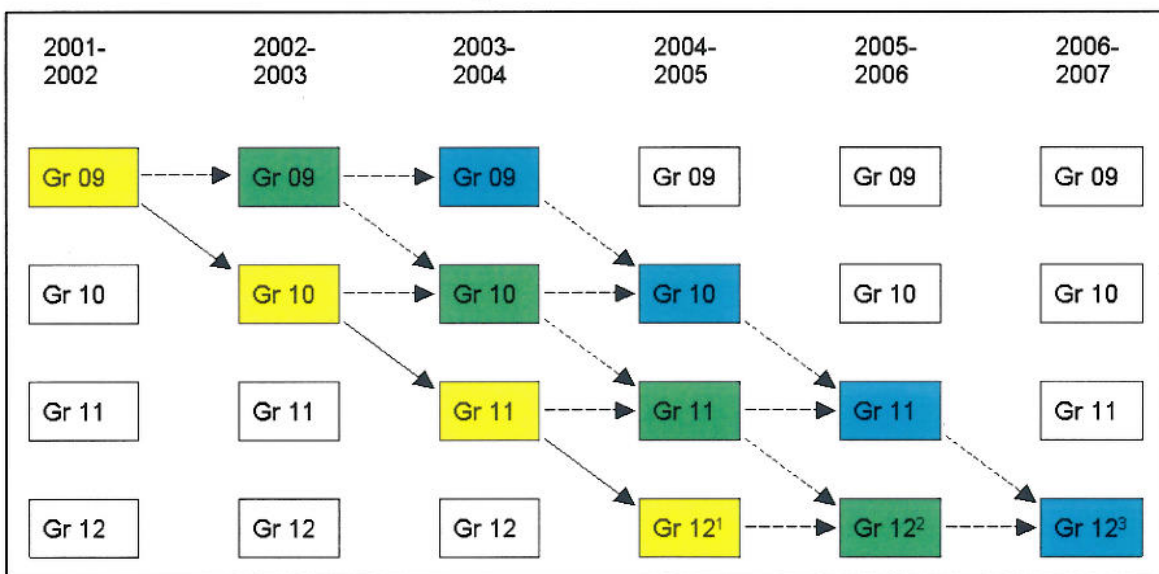
The most accurate graduation, completion, and dropout statistics result from procedures that track individual students over time. The Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) was implemented statewide at the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year. As of the end of school year 2005/2006, five complete years of student data are available in MSIS.

Accurate tracking of individual students is technically complex, especially for students who transfer into, out of, and within the state during the target time span. The figure below shows how a cohort of students would be tracked using MSIS.

School completion and graduation rates are generally calculated using 9th grade as a starting point. The box in the upper left corner of the figure represents 9th grade students during school year 2001-2002 (the first year of MSIS). Most of those students would have been 10th graders in 2002-2003, 11th graders in 2003-2004, and 12th graders in 2004-2005. At the end of the 2004-2005 school year (over a 4-year time span), most of the students who were 9th graders in 2001-2002 had completed high school and earned a high school diploma. During the four years, some students transferred out of the state public school system, a few died, and many dropped out.

In addition to those students who completed, transferred, died, or dropped out, some students fell behind and were still enrolled in school at the end of the 2004-2005 school year. The figure shows how some of the 9th grade students remained in 9th grade during the 2002-2003 school year. Likewise, the figure shows how students may have fallen behind one or more times at different grades.

Tracking Student Cohorts in MSIS





To get a complete picture of the results for the cohort beginning with 9th graders in 2001-2002, separate statistics (graduation, completion, and dropout rates) must be calculated for different time spans. Four-year rates can be computed using data available through the end of the 2004-2005 school year (represented by the box containing Gr 12<sup>1</sup>). Another set of statistics, showing what happened to the cohort over five years, can be calculated using the 2005-2006 school year data (Gr 12<sup>2</sup>) and a set of 6-year statistics can be calculated at the end of the 2006-2007 school year (Gr 12<sup>3</sup>).

### **Establishing a "Full" 9-12 Cohort**

So far, the discussion has focused on a "true" cohort of students – those who were 9th graders at the beginning of school year 2001-2002 – and what happened to those students over different lengths of time. However, other students who enter Mississippi public schools must be added to the cohort. Since students are added to the cohort based on the grade they enter the system, we use the term, "full" 9-12 cohort. For the remainder of this document, the simple term "cohort" will mean the full 9-12 cohort. The full cohort is constructed as follows.

- Start with students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade for the first time at the beginning of the starting year for the cohort.
- Add students entering as 9<sup>th</sup> graders during the rest of that school year.
- Add students entering as 10<sup>th</sup> graders the second year.
- Add students entering as 11<sup>th</sup> graders the third year.
- Add students entering as 12<sup>th</sup> graders the fourth year.

*Note: Self-contained special education students enter the cohort based on peer grade (using student's age).*

### **Student Transfers Out of the Cohort**

Students who die or who transfer to other educational settings outside the state's public school system are removed from the cohort before calculating dropout, completion, and graduation rates. School districts determine the reason and code the student appropriately in MSIS as follows.

- Valid transfers out of the cohort
  - Transfer to a private school in Mississippi
  - Transfer to a home school situation in Mississippi
  - Transfer to an approved community-based GED program
  - Transfer to a school out of state or in another country
- Student death is handled the same as a transfer out.

*Note: Students coded as valid transfers outside Mississippi public schools are removed from the cohort. Those transferring within Mississippi are simply reported at the new school district.*

## Dropouts

For students who drop out of school, districts are required to determine the reason and code the student appropriately in MSIS.

*Note: Students coded as dropouts are not removed from the cohort. However, if a student returns to school anywhere in Mississippi, the student is reported at the new enrollment location and the original dropout code is ignored.*

## Dropout Denominator

The dropout denominator represents the students from the cohort for which the state or a particular school district will be held accountable when calculating dropout rates. The dropout denominator is determined as follows.

- Begin with the full cohort N-count.
- Subtract transfers out and deaths.

*Note: The dropout rate is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by the dropout denominator. The dropout denominator will be different for different time span calculations because additional students will have transferred or died during year 5 and year 6.*

## Completion/Graduation Denominator

The completion/graduation dropout denominator represents the students from the cohort for which the state or a particular school district will be held accountable when calculating completion and graduation rates. Separate dropout and completion/graduation denominators are used because it is not reasonable to expect all students, particularly certain special education students, to complete high school within four years. The completion/graduation denominator is determined as follows.

- Begin with the full cohort N-count.
- Subtract transfers out and deaths.
- Subtract certain special education students who are expected to take longer to complete.

*Note: The completion rate is calculated by dividing the number of completers by the completion/graduation denominator. The graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of diploma recipients by the completion/graduation denominator. The completion/graduation denominator will be different for different time span calculations because additional students will have transferred or died during year 5 and year 6 and because the special education students expected to complete school at the end of years 5 and 6 are added back into the denominator for the 5- and 6-year calculations.*

## Statistical Estimation

Information entered into MSIS by school districts is used when tracking student cohorts. However, there are reasons why some information may not be available for some cohort students. For example students who were enrolled at the end of school year 2001-2002, but were not enrolled in the state at the beginning of school year 2002-2003 – and – students who were enrolled at the end of school year 2002-2003, but were not enrolled in the state at the beginning of school year 2003-2004. Although MSIS had been implemented, there was no way for districts to code a reason for students who left school during the summers of 2002 and 2003. There is now a procedure that allows (and requires) districts to code a reason for every student who leaves during the summer.

There is no way to know for sure what happened to students who left during the summers of 2002 or 2003 – some of the students transferred to private schools, home schools, and out of state schools; a few died; and some dropped out. In order to account for the cohort students with an unknown final disposition, a procedure was developed for apportioning the students into transfer/death and dropout estimates. For the state and for each individual district, apportioning was based on the percentage of students coded by districts as transfers/deaths and as dropouts when they coded students who left during the summers of 2004 and 2005. Thus, if 40% were coded as transfers and 60% were coded as dropouts in 2004 and 2005, we would estimate that 40% of the students with unknown final distributions were transfers and 60% were dropouts.

- When statistical estimation is used the calculated dropout, completion, and graduation rates are **estimates**.
- An analysis of the 4-year dropout, completion, and graduation estimates for the cohort of students beginning with 9th graders in 2001-2002 indicated that the state level values were accurate to within approximately +/- 5%.
- The number of students with unknown final dispositions will decrease significantly for calculations involving the cohort beginning with 9th graders in 2002-2003. Since students in the cohort beginning with 9th graders in 2003-2004 were subject to MSIS coding for every summer, calculations for it (and for all subsequent cohorts) should involve little or no statistical estimation.

Continued on next page.

## Students Counted as Graduates

All students completing high school are included when calculating the completion rate. That includes students earning a diploma, those earning a GED through a district GED program, special education students receiving a certificate of attendance, and students completing all state and local requirements for a diploma except for a passing score on one or more of the Subject Area Tests. However, not all completers are included when calculating the graduation rate.

- Students earning traditional diplomas are graduates.
- ~~Special Education students earning occupational diplomas are graduates.~~  
Special Education students earning occupational diplomas are not graduates, but they are counted as completers.
- Special Education students earning certificates of attendance are not graduates, but they are counted as completers.
- Students earning a GED from a district program are not graduates, but they are counted as completers.

## Reporting Schedule

For each school year, calculations will be performed for an additional year for existing student cohorts and initial calculations will be performed for the next subsequent cohort. Once enough data are available in MSIS, additional dropout calculations will be applied to a Grade 7-12 cohort. The reporting schedule for the first two cycles is presented in the following table.

Reporting Time	Target Cohort	Reporting Time Span	Reported Elements	Comments
January 2007	Cohort beginning with 9th graders in school year 2001/2002 (SY0102G09)	4-Years (through SY 2004/2005)	Dropout Rate Completion Rate Graduation Rate	All reported elements are estimates. Apportioning applied for two summers.
January 2007	Cohort beginning with 9th graders in school year 2001/2002 (SY0102G09)	5-Years (through SY 2005/2006)	Dropout Rate Completion Rate Graduation Rate	All reported elements are estimates. Apportioning applied for two summers.
January 2007	Cohort beginning with 9th graders in school year 2002/2003 (SY0203G09)	4-Years (through SY 2005/2006)	Dropout Rate Completion Rate Graduation Rate	All reported elements are estimates. Apportioning applied for one summer.
January 2008	Cohort beginning with 9th graders in school year 2001/2002 (SY0102G09)	6-Years (through SY 2006/2007)	Dropout Rate Completion Rate Graduation Rate	All reported elements are estimates. Apportioning applied for two summers.
January 2008	Cohort beginning with 9th graders in school year 2002/2003 (SY0203G09)	5-Years (through SY 2006/2007)	Dropout Rate Completion Rate Graduation Rate	All reported elements are estimates. Apportioning applied for one summer.
January 2008	Cohort beginning with 9th graders in school year 2003/2004 (SY0304G09)	4-Years (through SY 2006/2007)	Dropout Rate Completion Rate Graduation Rate	Reported elements reflect district-entered data (little or no estimation).
January 2008	Cohort beginning with 7th graders in school year 2001/2002 (SY0102G07)	6-Years (through SY 2006/2007)	Dropout Rate	Reported rate is an estimate. Apportioning applied for two summers.

The chart below shows the impact on districts of the removal of students with occupational diplomas from the 4-year cohort graduation rate calculation. This information applies to the cohort of students beginning with all ninth graders in the 2001/2002 school year.

Code	District Name	Number of Graduates	4-Year Graduation Rate Estimate	Number of Occupational Diplomas	4-Year Graduation Rate Estimate (with Occupational Diplomas Removed)	Change
0	Mississippi	25057	61.1	128	60.8	-0.3
200	Alcorn	216	70.6	3	69.7	-0.9
5920	Baldwyn	49	64.2	3	60.5	-3.7
900	Chickasaw	27	65.1	1	62.8	-2.3
220	Corinth	101	71.8	6	67.8	-4.0
1700	DeSoto	1211	80.3	22	78.9	-1.4
2100	George	177	57.2	1	56.9	-0.3
2421	Gulfport	323	63.7	3	63.2	-0.5
2300	Hancock	201	59.0	5	57.6	-1.4
2500	Hinds	330	69.2	2	68.8	-0.4
2900	Itawamba	174	58.7	1	58.4	-0.3
2520	Jackson Public	1273	50.6	1	50.5	-0.1
3600	Lafayette	130	64.3	3	62.8	-1.5
3700	Lamar	443	75.6	1	75.5	-0.1
3800	Lauderdale	356	61.8	1	61.6	-0.2
4100	Lee	302	58.3	7	57.0	-1.3
4200	Leflore	132	51.9	14	47.0	-4.9
4500	Madison	594	79.1	3	78.7	-0.4
5411	North Panola	92	50.5	2	49.5	-1.0
5200	Noxubee	126	57.3	4	55.5	-1.8
6120	Pearl	182	63.8	5	62.1	-1.7
5500	Pearl River	123	51.5	1	51.0	-0.5
5800	Pontotoc	185	77.3	6	75.2	-2.1
5820	Pontotoc City	105	75.5	9	69.5	-6.0
5530	Poplarville	101	69.5	4	66.9	-2.6
6200	Scott	189	59.6	1	59.2	-0.4
615	Shaw	46	70.6	2	67.6	-3.0
7012	South Tippah	154	72.8	1	72.6	-0.2
7100	Tishomingo	184	78.6	14	73.0	-5.6
5131	Union City	41	65.6	1	64.1	-1.5
7800	Webster	110	66.9	1	66.3	-0.6

**§ 37-21-9. Conduct of cost-benefit analysis on establishment of mandatory kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs.**

The State Department of Education shall:

(a) Conduct a total needs assessment of the state to determine what areas currently lack pre-kindergarten programs and services, and conduct a cost-benefit analysis of establishing pre-kindergarten programs on a statewide basis. Any expected costs, whether federal, state or local, associated with implementing this requirement shall be clearly outlined; and

(b) Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of implementing mandatory kindergarten on a statewide basis. Any expected costs, whether federal, state or local, associated with implementing this requirement shall be clearly outlined; and

(c) Study the feasibility of developing an optional graduation diploma, to be known as an occupational diploma that would include course requirements to ensure that students have mastered skills and employment competencies. The study shall include proposed procedures for ensuring that students may select and move between courses of study leading to a standard high school diploma or an occupational diploma. The study shall include options for continued skills training through community colleges, which shall include agreements between school districts and community colleges to minimize the circumstances under which students must repeat successfully completed high school coursework in community college. Any expected costs, both federal and state, associated in implementing these requirements shall be clearly outlined; and

**(d) Report annually to the Mississippi Legislature on the graduation and dropout rates based on Grades 7 through 12 and Grades 9 through 12 cohort groups, statewide and by district.**

**Sources:** Laws, 2003, ch. 454, § 1 eff from and after July 1, 2003.



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# MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright *future* for every child

COMMUNITY

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## Mississippi Board of Education Strategic Plan

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Plan updated and Board approved: November 8, 2018

Strategies updated: November 8, 2019

Word version for print

2019 Mississippi State Board of Education Strategic Plan Status Report

2018 Mississippi State Board of Education Strategic Plan Status Report

## Introduction

The Mississippi State Board of Education Strategic Plan for 2018-2022 sets the roadmap for changing the trajectory of public education in Mississippi. The plan describes the objectives and strategies the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) employs to help local school districts achieve the Board's vision and goals.

The outcome measures in this plan are indicators of the MDE's effectiveness and how well school districts are using the resources, support and guidance provided by the MDE.

Ultimately, the successful implementation of the Board's Strategic Plan depends on the leadership, cooperation and collaboration of the Board, the MDE, state leaders, and local school districts and their communities.

## Vision:

To Create A World-Class Educational System That Gives Students The Knowledge And Skills To Be Successful In College And The Workforce, And To Flourish As Parents And Citizens

## Mission:

To Provide Leadership Through The Development Of Policy And Accountability Systems So That All Students Are Prepared To Compete In The Global Community

## Goals:

1. All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
2. Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career
3. Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
4. Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
5. Every Community Effectively Using a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes
6. Every School and District is Rated C or Higher

## GOAL 1: ALL STUDENTS PROFICIENT AND SHOWING GROWTH IN ALL ASSESSED AREAS

**Outcome 1:** Increase the percentage of students who pass the grade 3 reading assessment (level 3 or above) at the first administration in each subgroup

**Outcome 2:** Increase the percentage of students proficient (levels 4 and 5) on statewide assessments (grades 3-8 and high school composite) in each subgroup

**Outcome 3:** Decrease the percentage of students scoring levels 1-3 on statewide assessments in each subgroup

**Outcome 4:** Increase the percentage of students demonstrating growth on statewide assessments in each subgroup

**Objective 1: Continue to implement the Literacy-Based Promotion Act with fidelity**

## Strategies:



1. Provide intensive literacy professional development and literacy resources for all pre-K-3 teachers, administrators, coaches, non-certified staff, paraprofessionals, and IHL staff related to: (1) resources for 90-minute literacy block, (2) evidence-based reading interventions, (3) protocol for extended school time, and (4) the five components of reading (5) dedicated training on multi-tiered systems of supports, (6) provision of coaching training for all schools
2. Deploy literacy coaches to all elementary schools with the highest percentage of students scoring at levels 1 and 2 on English Language Arts (ELA) assessments
3. Expand the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading across the state to inform and engage parents and community members
4. Expand the number of literacy coaches through collaboration with the Office of Special Education
5. Provide every kindergarten student the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, which can be used to help measure the quality of the early childhood program
6. Implement the Pre-K-12 State Literacy Plan and include the Governor's Task Force on Teacher Preparation for Early Literacy Instruction recommendations
7. Develop communication to all districts and schools regarding the increase in performance level needed to pass the grade 3 reading assessment starting in 2018-19
8. Strengthen parental involvement and engagement efforts through regional Parents as Partners meetings across the state
9. Strengthen parental involvement and engagement efforts through development of a parent-friendly mobile app for the Family Guides for Student Success
10. Award Summer Reading Grants to schools and districts to improve grade-level reading proficiency
11. Require schools identified as Literacy Support Schools to submit an annual School Literacy Plan
12. Monitor district records through building audits to ensure districts are documenting and implementing the Good Cause Exemption policy correctly.

## **Objective 2: Continue to implement the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards**

### **Strategies:**

1. Provide targeted professional development to teachers, coaches, non-certified staff, paraprofessionals, and administrators in all content areas based on data
2. Expand content coaches in literacy, mathematics, and science (requires additional funds)
3. Train teachers and school leaders in data-coaching model (requires additional funds)
4. Provide teachers, parents, and other stakeholders with comprehensive Family Guides for Student Success based on pre-K-8, ELA and Mathematics Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards (MCCRS)
5. Provide teachers with comprehensive Exemplar Lesson Plans based on pre-K-8, ELA and Mathematics MCCRS
6. Collaborate with districts and community organizations to engage parents
7. Provide districts with strategies to identify and address chronic absenteeism
8. Design a comprehensive system for the evaluation and implementation of high-quality standards-aligned curriculum materials and related professional development for pre-K through grade 12 (Council of Chief State School Officers/CCSSO project)
9. Develop a curated list of high-quality standards-aligned ELA and mathematics curriculum materials for distribution to districts and schools (CCSSO project)
10. Develop an intuitive platform for teachers to find and utilize high-quality standards-aligned ELA and mathematics curriculum materials
11. Develop a formal quarterly process for curriculum coordinators to support instruction aligned to the MCCRS

12. Develop assessment literacy professional development sessions for educators (item development, use of blueprints, use of data walls, screening reports, diagnostic assessments, formative/summative assessment results, alignment of instruction and formative assessments with MCCRS) and include this offering in the Professional Development Catalogue
13. Develop and publish companion document to the Outcomes for Gifted Education Programs that shows alignment to MCCRS
14. Provide training and support regarding gifted instructional connections to academic achievement
15. Provide professional development focus on the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Writing Rubric, writing strategies, and resources for grade 3-12 educators
16. Provide training for writing assessments (prompt development, interpretation of scoring rubric) and offer training guidance for district use.

### **Objective 3: Decrease achievement gaps among student subgroups**

#### **Strategies:**

1. Expand professional development to support high-quality culturally responsive instruction for all students
2. Offer blended professional development for general education and special education teachers to strengthen equitable access to advanced course instruction for students with disabilities
3. Provide district and school level training on interpreting subgroup data from assessments
4. Expand professional development on Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
  - a. School-wide behavior systems
  - b. Early Warning System training
  - c. Dyslexia Screener guidance and review
  - d. Implementation of the guidance document
5. Expand resources for teachers to include:
  - a. revised exemplar unit lessons, which include additional scaffolding supports for teachers and students;
  - b. English Learner (EL) resources and additional professional learning opportunities for EL teachers; and,
  - c. guidance for teachers of mathematics to assist them with developing students' conceptual understanding of mathematics through the use of manipulatives (mathematics manipulatives pre-K-Algebra I)
  - d. develop a state-approved list of interventions
  - e. Release updated Parent Read at Home Plan for Student Success to provide parents with suggested strategies to use to support students at during Individual Reading Plan (IRP) meetings
6. Annually publish achievement gap data to identify districts that demonstrate an increase in subgroup achievement and identify districts that need additional technical assistance
7. Annually publish the Mississippi Succeeds report card to provide stakeholders with district, school and state accountability results
13. Include school, district and state chronic absenteeism rates on the Mississippi Succeeds report card
14. Develop strategies to increase access to equitable student-centered learning specifically for students with disabilities (Broad Academy project)
15. Pilot "2/6 Initiative" to explore the efficacy of identifying and remediating the lowest deficit skills through the lens of the Simple View of Reading in grade 2-6 students

### **Objective 4: Expand virtual learning opportunities for students in rural and underserved areas**

**Strategies:**

1. Publicize availability of Mississippi Online Course Application (MOCA) process
2. Publicize availability of Mississippi Interactive Video Network hosted by Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB)
3. Continue with MOCA review, adding new courses as driven by demand
4. Provide direct MOCA process for Institutions of Higher Learning wanting to develop and deliver virtual courses
5. Offer formula grants to fund online courses, contingent upon Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) appropriation
6. Conduct an analysis of access to broadband and Wi-Fi in rural areas
7. Share opportunities about additional virtual learning opportunities offered by community colleges

**GOAL 2: EVERY STUDENT GRADUATES FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND IS READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER**

**Outcome 1:** Increase the percentage of students graduating from high school ready for college or career in each subgroup

**Outcome 2:** Increase the percentage of students ready for college as measured by ACT benchmarks in each content area (public school class data, grade 11)

**Outcome 3:** Increase the percentage of students participating in and passing dual credit in each subgroup

**Outcome 4:** Increase the percentage of students participating in and passing Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) exams in each subgroup

**Outcome 5:** Increase the number of students career ready

**Objective 1: All students enter Mississippi colleges prepared for credit-bearing courses****Strategies**

1. Provide resources to districts in how to use an Early Warning System based on student-level data to provide students with appropriate interventions
2. Collect and publish available data on all high school graduates regarding success in postsecondary education (credit-bearing course completion, persistence, degree completion)
3. Collect data regarding postsecondary success on students earning the new diploma endorsement options
4. Administer ACT to all grade 11 students and use results to plan courses for students during senior year
5. Require all high schools to offer the Essentials for College Literacy and the Essentials for College Math courses, beginning in the 2018-19 school year as adopted by State Board Policy Chapter 28, Rule 28.6, for seniors with an ACT sub-score between 15 and 18 in English/reading and mathematics
6. Recommend all high schools offer the SREB Literacy Ready and Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Math Ready courses for seniors with an ACT sub-score below 15 in English/reading and mathematics
7. Continue implementation of transition courses for grade 9 students that need intervention supports in English/reading and/or mathematics through the Ready for High School courses
8. Train teachers and encourage implementation of the SREB Ready for High School Literacy and SREB Ready for High School Mathematics courses for grade 8 and 9 students, and students transitioning from

the Mississippi Occupational Diploma (MOD)

9. Provide professional development for administrators and counselors on course-taking sequencing for ACT and advanced coursework success
10. Continue implementation of the JumpSTART Test Prep's ACT Complete Review Program (science and reading) in selected high schools to improve the ACT score for approximately 2,550 juniors
11. Continue statewide implementation of the Algebra Nation platform to improve student's Algebra I content knowledge and performance on the end-of-course assessment
12. Provide training on the 2018 MCCRS for Science being used in all public school classrooms, grades K-12; and, the corresponding grade 5 and 8 science assessments and end-of-course assessment in Biology I
13. Provide training on the 2019 MCCRS for the Social Studies, grades K-12; and, the corresponding end-of-course assessment in U.S. History
14. Provide training on the new Arts Learning Standards for dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts complete with teaching guides or music, theatre, and visual arts
15. Host writing workshops for grades 5-8 public school teachers in the area of ELA, science, and social studies to improve their practice in teaching of academic writing and helping students become more skilled at writing arguments from non-fiction sources.
16. Develop support for districts to foster social and emotional skills in a safe and supportive environment
17. Target three strands of professional learning in the middle grades to build the capacity for teachers and leaders to develop the whole child: strengthening the middle school academic experience; creating strong social and emotional development supports for students; and mentoring students as they explore authentic career pathways
18. Begin pilot implementation of the Middle School Pilot Initiative 2020 in selected middle schools throughout the state

## **Objective 2: All students graduate prepared for careers, meeting academic and employability standards**

### **Strategies:**

1. Continue training all counselors to meet the American School Counselor Association standards of practice
2. Advise districts to design programs of study that align to local industry demands
3. Establish a statewide Career Readiness Task Force
4. Establish process to evaluate new pathways to graduation and provide continued guidance to districts on helping students acquire graduation endorsement options
5. Implement the Individual Success Plan (ISP) for all grade 7 students and revise annually through grade 12
6. Expand opportunities for students to acquire post-secondary credentials that are recognized by local business and industry
7. Provide indirect support to counselors through training of district test coordinators (DTC), such as advising DTCs to ensure counselors are aware of graduation options, required assessments for graduation and State Board Policies affecting graduation
8. Provide guidance to districts on implementing work-based learning opportunities to improve student awareness of career opportunities and meet employer demands
9. Provide district support and guidance on employability skills needed for students who acquire Certificate of Completion
10. Continue the statewide chronic absenteeism awareness and prevention campaign through publications and statewide training
11. Provide the ACT WorkKeys assessment and related supports to all Career and Technical Education (CTE) completers

12. Collaborate with other states through the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the California State University Northridge, the Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) to increase knowledge of best practices to support EL student achievement and growth

**Objective 3: Increase the number and percentage of students participating in and successfully completing advanced coursework, such as Advanced Placement courses, dual credit/dual enrollment courses, articulated credit, advanced science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-related curriculum pathways and national industry certifications**

**Strategies**

1. Provide expanded access for students to dual credit/dual enrollment opportunities, AP, International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma program courses, and AICE courses, and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) pathways
2. Expand national industry certification programs tied to high-skilled, high-wage employment reflective of regional needs in Mississippi
3. Communicate to districts and parents the new opportunities available through earning college credit for AP courses and diploma endorsements
4. Implement the Advanced Technical Mathematics course for CTE students in year two or in the process of completing year two of a CTE pathway
5. Provide expanded access to computer science skills needed to prepare all students for the increasing technology influence in college and all careers.
6. Provide Pre-AP Workshops statewide for grade 8 and 9 teachers of English, mathematics, science and social studies.
7. Develop a state plan for career awareness and exploration that exposes all K-12 students to various career options with special consideration to non-traditional fields

**Objective 4: Build the capacity of counselors, educators and administrators to provide guidance and opportunities to students to help them successfully complete high school**

**Strategies**

1. Provide professional development and resources to support the transition of students with disabilities from the Mississippi Occupational Diploma (MOD) to a standard high school diploma
2. Provide district and school teams with guidance and supports on implementation of approved diploma endorsements
3. Provide professional development and resources to support students with disabilities in earning a high school diploma
4. Provide professional development and resources to support the implementation of the alternate academic achievement standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities to obtain the alternate diploma
5. Provide support and professional development for district leadership in all districts in the use of innovative practices/programs to improve student outcomes. This includes innovative activities (online and personalized learning), innovative programs (project-based and mastery-based learning), and innovative school models (career academies, early college high schools, and middle college programs).
6. Continue to support districts in applying for District of Innovation status, which produces a holistic view of programming in a district focused on equitable and appropriate opportunities for all students within the district.

7. Work with CCSSO Innovative Lab Network partners to collect data and other materials to evaluate effectiveness of goals for the Mississippi Innovative Lab Network (MS-ILN).
8. Develop a plan for supporting districts with the Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) designation due to special education subgroup performance

### **Objective 5: Collect data about the graduation options used by students to graduate**

#### **Strategies:**

1. Monitor the impact of high school diploma endorsement options on postsecondary attainment.
2. Develop a plan that supports districts' Special Education Performance Determination that focuses on the overall performance measures for students with disabilities
3. Utilize new data entry fields in Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) for better tracking of students who graduate using means other than passing the MAAP assessments.
4. Utilize new data entry fields in MSIS for tracking the delivery of dual credit courses. For the first time, MSIS will track which community colleges and IHLs are providing dual credit to each school.
5. Pursue partners to measure effectiveness of K-12 initiatives in postsecondary.
6. Review advanced curriculum participation (dual credit, AP, IB and AICE) in high schools to update the driver in the acceleration component of the accountability model.

### **GOAL 3: EVERY CHILD HAS ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM**

**Outcome 1:** Increase percentage of pre-kindergarten students in public schools attaining kindergarten readiness on the pre-K end-of-year assessment

**Outcome 2:** Increase percentage of kindergarten students achieving end-of-year target score on Kindergarten Readiness post-test

**Outcome 3:** Increase percentage of children with disabilities in general education early childhood programs while decreasing the percentage in self-contained special education early childhood classrooms

**Outcome 4:** Increase number of students enrolled in Title I or locally funded pre-K classes

**Outcome 5:** Increase the percentage of Early Learning Collaborative sites meeting required rate of readiness

### **Objective 1: Define a high-quality early childhood model and share the model with all stakeholders**

#### **Strategies:**

1. Provide professional development to public and private early childhood providers and leaders on the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Infants through 4-year-old Children
2. Implement a comprehensive monitoring process for public early childhood providers (Early Learning Collaboratives, Title-funded, special education)
3. Increase opportunities to offer blended pre-k classes for students with disabilities
4. Provide resources and professional development to teachers to effectively support EL students

### **Objective 2: Increase access to high-quality early childhood programs**

#### **Strategies:**

1. Work collaboratively with public/private partnerships to strengthen early childhood education (birth to 2 and 3 to 4 year-olds) and the transition to the public school setting
2. Request additional funds for Early Learning Collaboratives
3. Expand the number of Title I-funded pre-K programs, with an emphasis on schools rated D or F by sharing guidance on blending and braiding funding
4. Implement \$6 million W.K. Kellogg grant to provide professional development and coaching in existing early childhood programs
5. Administer the statewide Kindergarten Readiness Assessment in pre-K through Kindergarten to measure the quality of early childhood education programs and inform instructional decisions in all publicly funded pre-K classrooms
6. Participate in an early childhood network with EdCounsel to align birth through grade 12 efforts

### **Objective 3: Develop robust data profile of pre-K students to evaluate programming**

#### **Strategies:**

1. Examine existing data systems used to capture information on pre-K students and programs
2. Create a more cohesive process for data collection and reporting
3. Produce a data profile for all pre-K students to inform instructional and programmatic needs

## **GOAL 4: EVERY SCHOOL HAS EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND LEADERS**

**Outcome 1:** Increase the percentage of districts reporting Professional Growth System (PGS) ratings for teachers and leaders

**Outcome 2:** Increase the percentage of teacher candidates passing licensure exams on the first attempt

**Outcome 3:** Increase the percentage of licensed, diverse teachers and leaders

**Outcome 4:** Reduce the percentage of inexperienced teachers in schools that are both High Poverty and High Minority

**Outcome 5:** Reduce the percentage of non-certified teachers in schools that are both High Poverty and High Minority

### **Objective 1: Implement the Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System (PGS) with fidelity**

#### **Strategies**

1. Conduct pilots implementing all components of the Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System (PGS)
2. Require districts to submit PGS evaluation ratings annually
3. Provide high-quality, ongoing professional development to teachers and administrators based on PGS feedback
4. Access allowable Title II funding to implement the Superintendents' Academy, Principals' Academy, Teacher Leadership Initiative
5. Develop and pilot PGS Calibration and Assessment Tool to assess teacher observation readiness of local district leaders responsible for carrying out the observation process

6. Implement mentoring and induction statewide for new teachers and leaders.

## **Objective 2: Increase the rigor of Educator Preparation Programs**

### **Strategies:**

1. Require Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) to report licensure exam scores by the percentage of passing on first attempt
2. Link and report K-12 student outcomes to teachers' EPPs to identify strengths and weaknesses in individual EPPs
3. Require the Foundations of Reading licensure exam for special education and early childhood programs
4. Revise the process for reviewing and approving teacher and administrator programs leading to licensure, with increased emphasis on: candidates' content and pedagogical knowledge; ensuring the MCCRS are embedded throughout programs; embedding Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP) throughout programs; and, candidates' ability to provide literacy and numeracy interventions for struggling and diverse learners
5. Provide professional development to Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) faculty as related to ELA and mathematics instruction aligned with MCCRS
6. Implement recommendations from Governor's Task Force on Teacher Preparation for Early Literacy Instruction by requiring faculty teaching Early Literacy I and II to provide documentation of professional development in scientific research-based reading instruction, specifically Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training
7. Provide districts with support and resources for developing recruitment strategies to address teacher shortages
8. Partner with the newly appointed national technical assistance provider to develop strategies for building a Diverse Learner Ready Teacher (DLRT) workforce; to improve teachers' pedagogical skills in CRP
9. Partner with the Center for Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) to increase the rigor of leadership program preparation especially inclusive leadership practices

## **Objective 3: Diversify the Teacher and Administrator Pipeline**

### **Strategies:**

1. Provide districts with support and resources for diversifying the pipeline through Grow-Your-Own (GYO) strategies
2. Explore and pilot innovative performance-based pathways to licensure
3. Improve data reporting practices from districts to ensure accuracy in reporting teacher vacancies by district and supply, i.e., information about the number of graduates from colleges of education by certification
4. Pilot a Teacher Residency Model in collaboration with AmeriCorps allowing practical clinical experience to replace coursework
5. Host Minority Male Educators convenings to increase the number of African-American male teachers and leaders
6. Continue the DLRT Initiative in conjunction with newly appointed national technical assistance provider to ensure equitable access to teachers of color for all students
7. Partner CEEDAR to develop strategies to strengthen and diversify the teacher pipeline

## **Objective 4: Increase Opportunities for Teacher Leadership**



**Strategies:**

1. Implement the statewide teacher leadership initiative
2. Partner with TeachPlus to develop teacher leaders as policy advocates
3. Increase capacity for teachers to lead through statewide mentoring and induction for new teachers and coaching support for veteran teachers
4. In partnership with Student Achievement Partners and EdReports, work with selected pilot districts to identify and train teacher leaders to usher in the implementation of the High-Quality Instructional Materials and Professional Learning initiative

**Objective 5: Improve Equitable Access to Effective Teachers and Leaders for all Students****Strategies:**

1. Recommend updates to the critical teacher shortage formula State Board of Education policy so that the formula identifies current needs of the state
2. Assist in recruitment of educators to schools with disproportionate numbers of inexperienced and non-certified teachers and administrators
3. Provide Praxis training workshops through partnerships with Mississippi Association of Educators (MAE) and Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE) and other training providers as appropriate
4. Increase the number of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) in high-need schools rated D or F

**Objective 6: Decrease the Number of Incidents of Educator Misconduct****Strategies:**

1. Recommend technical amendments to include stronger sanctions, such as permanent revocation of licenses for educators violating and/or not reporting violations of standard 4 of the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct
2. Require completion of an ethics training module prior to issuing licenses, including renewals
3. Conduct Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct reporting requirements awareness training

**Objective 7: Reinforce Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards****Strategies:**

1. Establish a Task Force to review and make recommendations to revise the process standards outlined in the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards
2. Provide training to the appropriate district personnel on the revised accreditation policies and process standards
3. Add process standard that requires districts to report and update vacancy data to the MDE

**GOAL 5: EVERY COMMUNITY EFFECTIVELY USING A WORLD-CLASS DATA SYSTEM TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES**

**Outcome 1:** Create a public-facing data system for all stakeholders

**Outcome 2:** Create a user-friendly website for the public and school districts to access data to make decisions

**Outcome 3:** Create a roadmap to improve the Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS)

**Outcome 4:** Publish research results to support improved student outcomes and teacher effectiveness

**Objective 1: Modernize Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) environment to become state-of-the-art (full modernization is pending available funding)**

**Strategies:**

1. Provide efficient, automated data collection system that makes it easier for districts to submit and validate data MDE uses for state and federal reporting
2. Automate accountability and reporting to improve efficiency, consistency, and reliability of data while reducing effort to integrate, calculate and report data
3. Empower districts with the ability to see how their data informs reporting, accountability and funding at the MDE, and to certify that their data are correct
4. Increase the availability of high-quality data and expand parent-friendly, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)-compliant school and district report card tool (Mississippi Succeeds Report Card)
5. Expand State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) public dashboards to increase data use across all stakeholder groups
6. Develop an easier but more secure way for approved users to access MDE systems and applications.
7. Develop a new, more user-friendly, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 compliant website for MDE to help the agency communicate more effectively with parents, schools, communities, and other stakeholder groups
8. Develop skills within the Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS) to design, document, develop and deliver a modernized MSIS

**Objective 2: Upgrade to a secure, efficient, scalable, state-of-the-art Infrastructure (full upgrade is pending available funding)**

**Strategies:**

1. Enhance and strengthen security of MDE infrastructure and data management to better protect student data and other sensitive information
2. Upgrade data backup and replication environment to enhance OTSS's ability to restore or roll-back data for MDE quickly and reliably
3. Strengthen MDE's disaster recovery strategies that encompasses breach response, system failure, application or network inaccessibility or other infrastructure threats

**Objective 3: Improve key governance processes necessary to deliver timely, reliable, high-quality, actionable information**

**Strategies:**

1. Develop data governance to oversee data standards for collection, quality and validation rules, use and privacy policies, and overall information assurance
2. Develop project governance to evaluate IT initiatives and prioritize the development of new applications and other significant OTSS efforts

3. Develop system governance to define architecture, integration, app development standards, interoperability, and other system challenges
4. Develop technology governance to establish hardware and software standards and minimum specifications
5. Develop process governance to define the ways in which OTSS supports the onboarding of new employees and employee access, office automation, service provisioning, etc.

**Objective 4: Expand and publicize OTSS support services catalog for MDE, school districts and other external stakeholders**

**Strategies:**

1. Expand available data and technical training opportunities for MDE staff, school district personnel and other external stakeholders: including regional trainings multiple times per year, more online training materials/videos and other resources
2. Expand available technical assistance to school district personnel to improve local infrastructure, security, privacy, online safety, data entry, data submission, data quality, and data governance
3. Develop an MDE employee portal with robust help desk and self-help features to inform, train and empower MDE staff

**Objective 5: Identify and conduct research projects that align with the State Board Strategic Plan**

**Strategies:**

1. Develop SLDS research agenda that addresses subjects such as kindergarten readiness and early literacy, college and career readiness, teacher effectiveness, and teacher preparation
2. Develop research capacity with higher education partners across Mississippi and other external partnerships (such as the Southeast Regional Education Lab)
3. Establish research governance within MDE to better coordinate and prioritize research projects and requests, and to better leverage contributions of research partnerships

**GOAL 6: EVERY SCHOOL AND DISTRICT IS RATED C OR HIGHER**

**Outcome 1:** Increase the growth of D and F districts by improving the letter grade and/or increasing the number of points within a letter grade

**Outcome 2:** Increase the growth of D and F schools by improving the letter grade and/or increasing the number of points within a letter grade

**Outcome 3:** Increase the growth of Districts of Transformation by improving the letter grade and/or increasing the number of points within a letter grade

**Outcome 4:** Increase the growth of schools under Districts of Transformation by improving the letter grade and/or increasing the number of points within a letter grade

**Outcome 5:** Increase the percentage of districts rated C or higher

**Outcome 6:** Increase the percentage of schools rated C or higher

**Outcome 7:** Decrease the number of high schools rated D or F

## Objective 1: Improve academic outcomes in schools rated D or F, including schools in Districts of Transformation and the Achievement School District

### Strategies:

1. Utilize student assessment data to support districts with schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) with the development of a professional development plan aligned to the required CSI and/or Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) plan.
2. Collaborate with administrators and teachers in CSI high schools to ensure students are on track to graduate within four years
3. Provide coaching to teachers and administrators in comprehensive support and improvement schools to implement professional learning communities focused on improvement of effective ELA and mathematics instructional practices.
4. Train and place literacy coaches in K-3 elementary schools that are identified as needing literacy support based on grade 3 ELA MAAP data. Coaches will assist with training teachers to deliver effective literacy instruction and providing growth-promoting feedback to teachers.
5. Support schools and districts in collaborative efforts with community organizations to engage stakeholders in comprehensive support and improvement plan development and implementation
6. Provide professional learning opportunities to school leaders and teachers through the MDE Professional Development Catalog and program offices on ELA, mathematics, science, instructional leadership, data, and high-quality instructional materials, and other identified areas of need.
7. Develop and implement an interview protocol by which districts and local school boards-are held accountable for demonstrating targeted improvement.

## Objective 3: Participate in the Improving Low-Performing High Schools Initiative (CCSSO)

### Strategies:

1. Establish a core team to participate in a multi-state effort in collaboration with CCSSO and Johns Hopkins University to implement evidence-based innovative and successful improvement strategies in identified CSI high schools
2. Conduct robust needs assessment for each of the high schools in the multi-state project utilize needs assessment to develop/refine CSI Plan

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## Chapter 30: Dropout Prevention

*Rule 30.5 Dropout Prevention Plan.* Miss Code Ann § 37-13-80. Office of Dropout Prevention created; qualifications and responsibilities of director; date for implementation of dropout prevention program; procedures for tracking students who enter and leave detention centers; dropout prevention plan to address student transition to home school districts; legislative intent [Repealed effective June 30, 2009].

1. There is created the Office of Dropout Prevention within the State Department of Education. The office shall be responsible for the administration of a statewide dropout prevention program.
2. The State Superintendent of Public Education shall appoint a director for the Office of Dropout Prevention, who shall meet all qualifications established by the State Superintendent of Public Education and the State Personnel Board. The director shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Office of Dropout Prevention and any other regulations or policies that may be adopted by the State Board of Education (*Miss. Code Ann. §37-13-80*).
3. Each school district shall implement a dropout prevention program approved by the Office of Dropout Prevention of the State Department of Education by the 2012-2013, and annually thereafter school year (*Miss. Code Ann. §37-13-80*).
4. Each local school district will be held responsible for reducing and/or eliminating dropouts in the district. The local school district will be responsible for the implementation of dropout plans focusing on issues such as, but not limited to:
  - a. Dropout Prevention initiatives that focus on the needs of individual local education agencies;
  - b. Establishing policies and procedures that meet the needs of the districts;
  - c. Focusing on the student-centered goals and objectives that is measureable;
  - d. Strong emphasis on reducing the retention rates in grades kindergarten, first and second;
  - e. Targeting subgroups that need additional assistance to meet graduation requirements; and
  - f. Dropout recovery initiatives that focus on students age seventeen (17) through twenty- one (21), who dropped out of school (*Miss. Code Ann. §37-13-80*).
5. The Office of Dropout Prevention may provide technical assistance upon written request by the local school district. The Office of Dropout Prevention will collaborate with program offices within the Mississippi Department of Education to develop and implement policies and initiatives to reduce the state's dropout rate (*Miss. Code An. §37-13-80*).



6. Each school district's dropout prevention plan shall address how students will transition to the home school district from the juvenile detention centers (Miss. Code Ann. §37-13-80).
7. In addition, the Mississippi Department of Education recommends the following:
  - a. expand educational affiliations to include head start, parochial, private and community early childhood programs to develop a systematic approach that will support students in acquiring the child development skills that are essential for success in a K-12 program. These skills will include cognitive, social, language, behavioral, gross and fine motor skills.
  - b. develop criteria to identify students, as early as third grade that are potentially at risk of dropping out.
8. The Office of Dropout Prevention shall establish graduation rate benchmarks for each two-year period from the 2008-2009 school year through the 2018-2019 school year, which shall serve as guidelines for increasing the graduation rate for cohort classes on a systematic basis to eighty-five percent (85%) by the 2018-2019 school year.

<b>Graduation Benchmarks</b>	<b>School Years</b>	<b>Graduation Rates</b>
<b>Benchmark 1</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>Benchmark 2</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>66 %</b>
<b>Benchmark 3</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>Benchmark 4</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>Benchmark 5</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Benchmark 6</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>85%</b>

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-1-3 (Revised 11/2012)*