

STUDENTS

TEACHERS

Mississippi's Accountability System



June 2005

PARENTS

ADMINISTRATORS

Office of Instructional Programs and Services
Mississippi Department of Education

What is being said about Mississippi...

Mississippi's grade 4 students showed significant gains in math on the 2003 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation's Report Card. Trend data from 1992 to 2003 show that Mississippi is making gains while closing the achievement gap.

- *National Assessment of Education Progress*

“The big picture is making Mississippi and Mississippi students more productive. We need to do everything we can to really involve the grassroots, parents, and the business community at every school level.”

- *Blake Wilson*
Mississippi Economic Council

“Accountability for students, educators and administrators is essential in our efforts to raise student achievement. Parents and all Mississippians must be aware of what we expect our students to know and be able to do at each grade level.

Mississippi has become a national leader in the effort to raise student achievement. Let's continue to work together to provide each and every child with the quality education they deserve!”

- *Henry L. Johnson,*
State Superintendent of Education



Mississippi's Accountability System

As a nation, a state, and a community, we want the best for our children. Education is an investment in their future and plays a significant role in our hopes and dreams for them. Today's students must be prepared to enter an increasingly competitive world. For this reason, Mississippi has strengthened student assessment, school accreditation and accountability standards in an effort to raise student achievement. During the past twenty years, a series of significant legislative mandates, beginning with the Education Reform Act of 1982, have been instrumental in creating the current public school accreditation model and accountability system. Senate Bill 2156 allowed the Mississippi Student Achievement Improvement Act of 1999 to direct the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) to create a state-of-the-art school evaluation and improvement system. This legislation required that the performance-based accreditation system address both individual schools and school districts. This legislation also required the Mississippi Board of Education to set annual performance standards for every Mississippi public school and to use student growth and performance measures to measure school improvement.

Senate Bill 2488 of the 2000 Mississippi Legislative Session specified that the MDE must identify schools that do not meet expected levels of

“Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.”

-Henry Ford

student achievement and label them as Priority Schools. This legislation further clarified public school accreditation and accountability measures that require individual school accreditation ratings to be based on the following criteria: 1) the percentage of students proficient at grade level and 2) meeting an annual growth expectation in student achievement. These are known as the Achievement Model and the Growth Model respectively. The legislation also established an intensive assistance program for schools not meeting the accreditation standards. In the new accreditation model, accountability continues

to be a major focus, and all components of a school, including students, teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members, are held accountable for student learning.

Public school accreditation is two-fold: each school district is awarded an accreditation status based on compliance with process standards, and individual schools are assigned a performance classification based on student achievement.

School District Accreditation Statuses

Process standards address state and federal requirements regarding the operation of the school, including staffing, resources, and programs. These input standards reflect accepted educational principles and practices believed to promote educational quality. Each September school districts receive an accreditation status based on compliance with process standards as determined by verified data from the previous school year. School district accreditation statuses include the following:

- **Accredited status is assigned to districts that comply with 100% of the process standards.**
- **Advised status is assigned to districts that do not comply with one or more process standards.**
- **Probation status is assigned to districts that were assigned an Advised status the previous school year and the district has not taken corrective actions or has not removed the process standard deficiencies that resulted in the Advised status. These districts will be required to develop a corrective action plan to address the deficiencies.**
- **Withdrawn status is assigned to districts that have previously been on an Advised status and still do not comply with their corrective action plan.**

School Performance Classifications

Performance standards address selected components of the statewide testing program. Each fall, every school is assigned a 1-5 performance classification based on the following criteria:

- **Growth Model** – meeting annual growth expectation established for each school. The growth expectation is established by testing students annually and by following their progress.
- **Achievement Model** – the percent of students who are achieving at certain levels. The ten lowest performing Level 1 schools will be designated as **Priority Schools**.



School Performance Classifications/Levels

<p>The School Performance Classifications, which combine the achievement level and growth status, are as follows:</p>	
<p>Level 5 (Superior-Performing)</p>	<p>Achievement Level 5</p>
<p>Level 4 (Exemplary)</p>	<p>Achievement Level 4 -OR- Exceeded growth expectation and is in Achievement Level 3</p>
<p>Level 3 (Successful)</p>	<p>School met its growth expectation -OR- Failed to meet growth and is in Achievement Level 3</p>
<p>Level 2 (Under-Performing)</p>	<p>School failed to meet growth and is in Achievement Level 2</p>
<p>Level 1 (Low-Performing)</p>	<p>School failed to meet its growth expectation and is in Achievement Level 1. May be designated as a Priority School.</p>



A major strength of the accountability system is the assistance offered to Priority Schools. An appropriately trained Evaluation Team will conduct an on-site audit to collect data regarding:

- (a) Instructional Process/Curriculum Delivery
- (b) Personnel Appraisal System
 - Superintendent Appraisal System
 - Central Office Administrator Appraisal System
 - Principal Appraisal System
 - Assistant Principal Appraisal System
 - Teacher Appraisal System
- (c) Effective School Community Involvement
- (d) Public Relations
- (e) Safe and Orderly School Climate
- (f) School Board Policy and Performance
- (g) Effective School Resource Allocation
- (h) Effective School Management

Based on the findings of the Evaluation Team, a school evaluation report is produced. Using the evaluation report and a public hearing concerning its contents as a basis, the Mississippi Department of Education will then assist the school in the development and implementation of a school improvement plan intended to raise student achievement and improve school functioning.

Student Assessment

School Performance Classifications are based on student assessment data. In the spring of each year, students in grades 2 - 8 take the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT), which assesses students' knowledge and skills in reading, language and mathematics. At the secondary school level, students are assessed in the following subject areas: Algebra I, Biology I, English II and U.S. History. Writing assessments are administered in grades 4 and 7, and the English II test also includes a writing component. To ensure that the accountability system is equitable and that schools actually have the opportunity to improve a student's achievement, a school is held accountable only for the performance of students who have been enrolled for the majority of the school year. Therefore, only the scores of students who have been enrolled for approximately 70% of the instructional year are included in the state's accountability system.

Students are also held accountable for their own achievement. Student performance on the Grade 3 and the Grade 7 MCT must be considered as one part of the principal's decision to promote or retain a student. Grade 4 and Grade 8 students who did not reach the Basic Achievement Level on the Grade 3 and Grade 7 MCT reading, language and mathematics tests should be provided with instructional interventions to increase their content knowledge and strengthen their skills. These Grade 4 and Grade 8 students are re-tested in January of each school year, and their performance on the re-test is considered before making the decision to promote or retain.

(See MS Code 37-16-3 dealing with testing. See MS Code 37-17-6, 37-17-13, and 37-18-1, 3, 5, and 7 dealing with accreditation.)

Mississippi Statewide Assessment System Components

K-2 Assessment

- Informal, developmentally-appropriate diagnostic assessments that provide instructional decision-making information
- Suggested that teachers administer as a test at set intervals throughout the year to monitor progress on a continual basis

Grade Level Testing Program (GLTP)

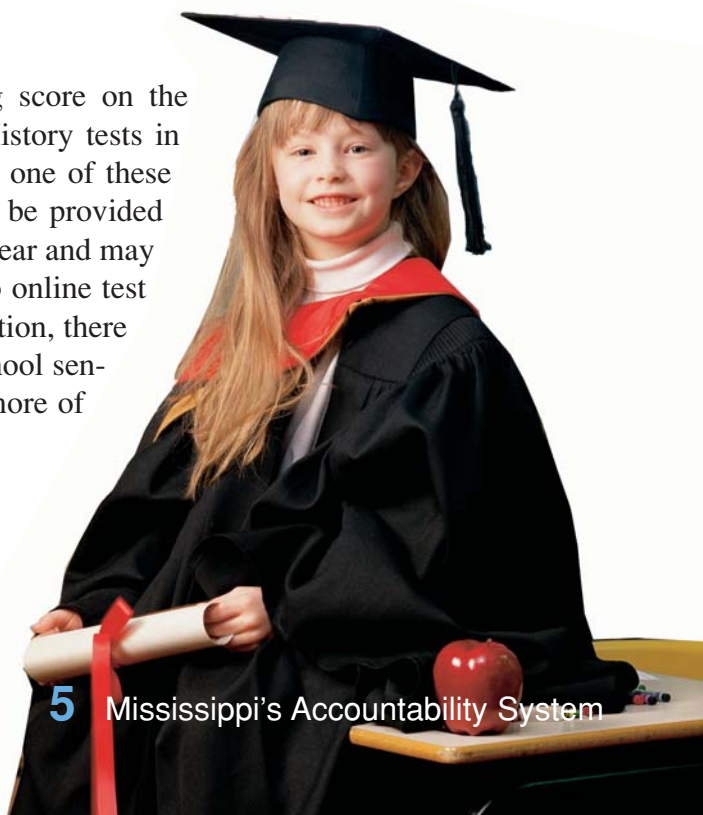
- Mississippi Curriculum Test in grades 2-8 reading, language, mathematics (**May administration**)
- Writing assessments in grades 4 and 7 (**March administration**)
- Norm-referenced test (Terra Nova) in grade 6 reading/language and mathematics (**March administration**)
- Elementary and middle grades science in grades 5 and 8 beginning in 2005-2006

Subject Area Testing Program (SATP)

- Algebra I, Biology I, U.S. History from 1877, English II with a writing component
- Writing assessment (**October** for 4X4 schools, **March** for all schools)
- SATP testing (**December** for 4X4 schools, **April** for all schools. Additional opportunities for retesters are available on-line three times a year.)

More information is available at www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/osa/.

High school students must attain a passing score on the Algebra I, Biology I, English II and U.S. History tests in order to graduate. Students who do not pass one of these subject area tests on their first attempt must be provided with at least three re-test opportunities each year and may have as many as five opportunities since two online test administrations are offered each year. In addition, there is a special online administration for high school seniors who are still attempting to pass one or more of the subject area tests.



Proficiency Levels

Student achievement is reported by proficiency levels, which are defined as follows:

- **Advanced** - students consistently perform in a manner clearly beyond that required to be successful at the next grade.
- **Proficient*** - students demonstrate solid academic performance and mastery of the content area knowledge and skills required for success at the next grade. Students who perform at this level are prepared to begin work on even more challenging material that is required at the next grade.
- **Basic** - students demonstrate partial mastery of the content area knowledge and skills required for success at the next grade. Remediation may be necessary for these students.
- **Minimal** - students perform below basic and do not demonstrate mastery of the content area knowledge and skills required for success at the next grade. These students require additional instruction and remediation in the basic skills that are necessary for success at the grade tested.

**In accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act, by 2014 all students should have reached this level.*

Assessment Requirements for Graduation

Beginning in school year 2001-2002, all SATP tests counted for graduation; however, a student's graduation requirements are determined by the year he/she enters ninth grade.

Entering 9th graders:

- 2001-02 FLE Mathematics plus U.S. History from 1877, English II, and Biology I
- 2002-03 – future U.S. History from 1877, English II, Biology I, and Algebra I (This group of students must pass all four subject area tests even if they take the course(s) prior to their ninth grade year.)

Student Progress Monitoring System

In 2004, the MDE implemented the Student Progress Monitoring System (SPMS) to help prepare students for state and national assessments. SPMS is an easy to use, web-based system that indicates which students are mastering key objectives and which are not. SPMS provides educators with a diagnostic teaching tool for grades 1-12 by assisting with the development, administration, scoring and performance tracking of practice tests that are aligned with the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks content. With this web-based approach, teachers can use tests to focus on improving instruction through rapid assessment and feedback. SPMS is an excellent diagnostic tool that is available to any school district that elects to participate in the system.

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.”

–Helen Keller

No Child Left Behind

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) was signed into law by President George Bush on January 8, 2002. Provisions of this federal legislation require that specific assessments be given to all students in schools across the country and that states establish one system of accountability for all schools. Mississippi's efforts to strengthen curriculum, assessment, and accountability, school-by-school, are consistent with the requirements of the NCLB signed into law in 2002. NCLB changes the federal government's role in K-12 education by requiring America's schools to report their success in terms of what each student accomplishes. Both NCLB and the Mississippi Accountability System require the following:

- Challenging academic content and achievement standards;
- Alignment of those standards to assessments;
- Annual assessment of student achievement in grades 3-8 and high school; and
- Accountability for schools.

Assessment Comparison

REQUIRED BY NCLB	MISSISSIPPI TESTING PROGRAM
<p>Proficiency Tests in Reading and Math (By 2005 - 2006)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 3 - 8 • Annual • Aligned with state's content standards • Data disaggregated by race, gender, income, and other subgroups 	<p>Proficiency Tests in Reading, Language, and Math Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 2 - 8 • Annual • Aligned with state's content standards • Capacity to report data disaggregated by race, gender, income, and other subgroups
<p>Proficiency Tests in Science (By 2006 - 2007)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once in grades 3 - 5 and 6 - 9 • Annual • Aligned with state's content standards 	<p>Elementary and Middle Grades Science Assessments (By 2005 - 2006)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 5 and 8 • Annual • Aligned with state's content standards
<p>NAEP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sample of students in grades 4 and 8 tested in reading and mathematics • LEAs receiving Title I funds must participate if selected • Biennial assessments beginning 2003 	<p>NAEP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sample of students in grades 4 and 8 tested in reading and mathematics • School districts receiving Title I funds must participate if selected • Biennial assessments beginning 2003

REQUIRED BY NCLB	MISSISSIPPI TESTING PROGRAM
<p style="text-align: center;">Proficiency Tests in Reading and Math (By 2005 - 2006)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 10 - 12 • Annual • Aligned with state’s content standards • Data disaggregated by race, gender, income, and other subgroups 	<p style="text-align: center;">Proficiency Tests in Algebra I, English II, Biology I, U.S. History from 1877</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 10 - 12 • Annual • Aligned with state’s content standards • Capacity to report data disaggregated by race, gender, income, and other subgroups
<p style="text-align: center;">Proficiency Tests in Science (By 2006 - 2007)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 10 - 12 • Annual • Aligned with state’s content standards • Data disaggregated by race, gender, income, and other subgroups 	

In implementing NCLB, Mississippi will ensure that there are consequences for districts and schools that do not make progress in improving the academic performance of all students. NCLB also stipulates that, within twelve years, all students will perform at the proficient level in reading and mathematics. Since states are required to establish their own proficiency levels or achievement standards, Mississippi students will be measured against performance standards established by Mississippi teacher committees. Mississippi teachers also participate in the development of the content standards that are defined in the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks.

To meet the goal of closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers, Title I funding must be spent more effectively and with greater accountability. NCLB requires state education agencies, school districts and schools receiving federal funds to ensure that all students meet high standards. Schools that do not make sufficient progress toward the goal of proficiency for all students are identified as “school improvement” schools and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) provides them with special assistance.

Additionally, a report card detailing the success of each school and district in the state is required by NCLB. Information on the achievement of students, graduation rates, and teacher qualifications are included in the report card available from each district and school at the beginning of each school year.

**“He who
moves not
forward,
goes
backward.”**

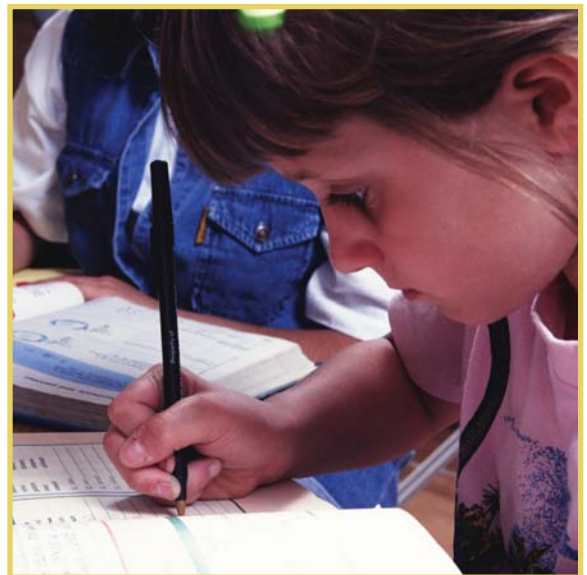
-Johann
Wolfgang
von Goethe

The MDE makes a variety of publications on topics such as expectations for learning and homework assistance available to parents. “Helping Your Child Succeed in School” is one MDE publication that you may request from your child’s school principal. Another publication produced by MDE is “Getting Involved! The Parent, School and Community Involvement Guide” that can be downloaded from the MDE website at www.mde.k12.ms.us/extrel/pub/GettingInvolved.pdf. Parents may also visit the United States Department of Education (USDE) website at www.ed.gov for additional NCLB parent resources.

Highly Qualified Teachers

The most important determiner of student success is whether or not a child is being taught by a competent teacher who is grounded in the subject knowledge he or she teaches. Research supports the link between teacher quality and student learning. NCLB requires that classrooms be staffed by a highly qualified teacher by the end of the school year 2005-2006. In response to what has resonated through current research, along with the passage of NCLB, Mississippi has developed the following definition to ensure that our students are taught by highly qualified teachers who:

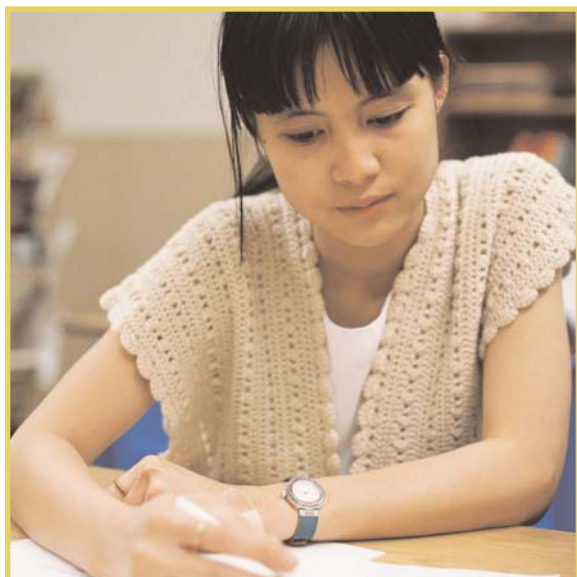
1. Hold a baccalaureate degree and
2. Acquire the necessary pedagogical skills by completing one of the following
 - an approved pre-service teacher preparation program for elementary education from a regionally/nationally-accredited institution of higher learning; OR
 - an approved alternate route to certification program (4-8 only) for middle/secondary education; and
3. Demonstrate content knowledge by passing rigorous State approved tests (PRAXIS) covering subject knowledge and teaching skills in reading, writing, mathematics and other areas of the basic elementary school curriculum.



Additionally, Mississippi has provided a menu of options for teachers not new to the profession to attain the highly qualified designation. The options include rigorous tests, advance certification or credentialing, content specific training through Middle Grades Institutes, and most recently the establishment of a High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE). The Mississippi Department of Education supports sustained high quality professional development at the local level that will ensure that teachers have quality professional development at the local level that will ensure that teachers have subject matter knowledge; are able to use state content standards; and are provided opportunities to serve as mentors to support teachers who are new to the profession. The MDE is working with school districts, colleges and universities to ensure that all teachers are fully certified to teach classes to which they are assigned.

Mississippi Teacher Center

The Mississippi Teacher Center was established in 1994 to recruit and retain quality teachers for Mississippi classrooms. The goals of the Center are to recruit new and former teachers into the teaching profession, retain quality teachers through its enhancement programs, promote the importance of the teaching profession through an annual marketing campaign and collaborate with school districts, colleges and universities, community colleges, businesses and communities to provide a quality education for all children. The Center is committed to working with all prospective educators and school district personnel to provide effective recruitment services to secure caring, competent and highly qualified teachers for the children of Mississippi.



Resources and Support

The MDE recognizes the need for support in the implementation of the accountability system. The MDE provides publications regarding curriculum and remediation, training for teachers and administrators, technology support, technical assistance in resource allocation, and program improvements, as well as parent informational brochures and guides. Additionally, each Mississippi school district receives federal funds that may be used for a variety of support activities. These funds complement competitive grants, private grants, and state and local funds that may also be used by districts to target strategies for intervention, remediation, and other program implementation efforts.

Mississippi's Accountability System Annual Implementation Timeline

Mid-July

- Districts receive score reports containing scale score and achievement level data for individual students, classes, schools, and districts (from the spring assessments).

August/September

- School performance classifications are assigned based on achievement and growth. Some schools may be designated Priority Schools.
- Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is determined. Schools are identified as meeting or not meeting AYP. School Improvement schools are contacted.

September

- Assistance teams begin working with Priority Schools and School Improvement schools.
- School level report cards are published and distributed to parents.
- School Performance Classifications/Levels and AYP statuses are assigned.

“We are
stronger
together than
we are alone.”

-Walter Payton

Improving Student Achievement

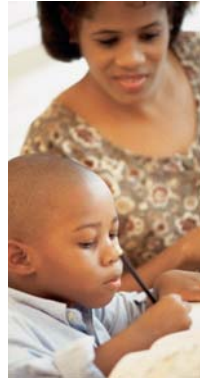
Student: I can

- Set goals for myself
- Be confident in myself
- Go to school and be on time
- Try my best each day
- Listen to my teachers
- Pay attention in class
- Do my homework
- Keep myself healthy
- Respect myself
- Respect others around me



Parent/Extended Family: I can

- Help my student achieve his/her goals
- Build the confidence level of my student
- Be there for my student
- Help my student get to school on time every day
- Talk to my student about his/her day
- Provide support for my student with his/her school work
- Attend a variety of school functions (e.g., open house, parent conferences, sporting events, plays, and special programs)
- Encourage my student to value education
- Help my student stay healthy
- Set an example by respecting myself and others around me



Teacher: I can

- Help my students achieve their goals
- Have high expectations for all students
- Understand what my students should know and be able to do
- Prepare lessons to interest students
- Remember that all students do not learn the same way
- Use the curriculum frameworks, grade-level benchmark lists, test blueprints, writing rubrics, and resources when planning lessons
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice test taking skills
- Use classroom assessments to discover student weaknesses
- Encourage students to respect themselves and others
- Show respect to my students and others



Improving Student Achievement

School Support Staff: I can

- Help students achieve their goals
- Perform my duties each day to ensure that the school day runs smoothly
- Help create a positive image for my school
- Show respect to students and others around me



Counselor: I can

- Help students achieve their goals
- Have high expectations for all students
- Show students that I care about them
- Offer students time to express themselves
- Offer parents or legal guardians opportunities to discuss their student's progress
- Keep accurate records to provide information to students and parents or legal guardians
- Show respect to students and others



Principal: I can

- Help students achieve their goals
- Have high expectations for all students and teachers
- Show students and teachers that I care about them
- Provide a clean, safe environment for students and teachers
- Provide a well disciplined atmosphere for teachers
- Be a strong instructional leader
- Recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals
- Know what my teachers are doing
- Support my teachers by providing opportunities for self-improvement
- Use test results to make informed decisions about curriculum and instruction
- Encourage parents and the community to become active participants in the educational process
- Communicate my school's needs and progress to district and community leaders
- Show respect to my students and others



Central Office Staff: I can

- Help students achieve their goals
- Have high expectations for all students
- Keep myself current on educational issues and policies
- Support school staff by locating and providing necessary resources
- Inform parents about what is happening in the schools
- Advise the superintendent of progress and of problems that may arise
- Show respect to others around me
- Respond to special needs of schools

Improving Student Achievement

Superintendent: *I can*

- Help students achieve their goals
- Have high expectations for all students
- Set district goals and provide leadership to help the district reach those goals
- Recruit and retain highly qualified professionals
- Keep myself current on educational issues and policies
- Support all school district personnel by keeping communication lines open
- Work to establish more parental and community involvement
- Advise the School Board of progress and of problems that may arise
- Show respect to others around me

School Board Member: *I can*

- Help students achieve their goals
- Have high expectations for all students
- Support the superintendent in the development of district goals and in the actions needed to reach those goals
- Visit all schools to communicate with staff and students
- Encourage more parental and community involvement
- Show respect to others around me
- Hire highly qualified professionals
- Attend all Board functions

Community Member/Business Leader: *I can*

- Help students achieve their goals
- Have high expectations for all students
- Promote education as a way to improve my community
- Show respect to others around me
- Encourage the community to provide support through volunteerism, after-school activities, programs and services, and funding
- Hire highly qualified professionals

Elected Officials: *I can*

- Help students achieve their goals
- Have high expectations for all students
- Promote education as a way to improve my state
- Support education with adequate funding
- Visit schools to communicate with staff and students
- Show respect to others around me



MDE Publications

www.mde.k12.ms.us/public.htm

- K-12 Curriculum Frameworks for all subject areas
- Intervention Guides for Algebra I, Biology I, U.S. History from 1877, and English II
- Mathematics, Reading and Writing Resources
- Helping Your Child Succeed in School

MDE Resources

- Mississippi Department of Education
www.mde.k12.ms.us
- Office of Academic Education
www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad
- Office of Accreditation
www.mde.k12.ms.us/accred/accred.html
- Office of Curriculum and Instruction
www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/id/curriculum/index.htm
- Office of Educator Licensure
www.mde.k12.ms.us/ed_licensure/index.html
- Office of Innovative Support
www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/is/index.htm
- Office of Instructional Programs and Services
www.mde.k12.ms.us/innovative_school/index.html
- Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/id/curriculum/laer/index.html
- Office of Research and Statistics
www.mde.k12.ms.us/Account/ORS/index.html
- Office of School Improvement
www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/sag/
- Office of Student Assessment, Assessment Blueprints and Sample Test Items
www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/osa
- Center for Teacher and Leadership Development (Mississippi Teacher Center)
www.mde.k12.ms.us/mtc/index.htm

For assistance in the area of school improvement contact:

Office of Instructional Programs and Services

Susan M. Rucker, Executive to the State Superintendent
(601) 359-3768
Fax: (601) 359-3712

Office of Academic Education

Bonita Coleman-Potter, Director
(601) 359-9714
Fax: (601) 359-9716

Office of Accreditation

Beth Sewell, Director
(601) 359-3764
Fax: (601) 359-1979

Office of Innovative Support

Nikisha G. Ware, Director
(601) 359-3499
Fax: (601) 359-2587

Office of Research and Statistics

Steve Hebbler, Director
(601) 359-6077
Fax: (601) 359-6740

Office of School Improvement

Pamela Felder, Director
(601) 359-3078
Fax: (601) 359-2944

Office of Student Assessment

Kris Kaase, Director
(601) 359-3052
Fax: (601) 359-2471

“We stand
tallest when
we stoop
to help
others.”

-Author Unknown

The Mississippi Board of Education, the Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi School for the Arts, the Mississippi School for the Blind, the Mississippi School for the Deaf and the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age or disability in the provision of educational programs and services or employment opportunities and benefits. The following office has been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding the non-discrimination policies of the above mentioned entities:

Director, Office of Human Resources
Mississippi Department of Education
359 North West Street
Suite 359
Jackson, Mississippi 39201
(601) 359-3511

COUNSELORS

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

COMMUNITY

BUSINESS LEADERS

SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

Mississippi Department of Education

Henry L. Johnson

State Superintendent of Education

P. O. Box 771 • Jackson, MS 39205

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us>

(601) 359-3513