

**OFFICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL ENHANCEMENT AND INTERNAL OPERATIONS**  
**Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items**  
**February 16-17, 2012**

12. Approval to submit the ESEA Waiver Flexibility Request to the U.S. Department of Education

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

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# ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

**FEBRUARY 28, 2012**

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**MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION**

*Ensuring a bright future for every child*

U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202

OMB Number: 1810-0708  
Expiration Date: March 31, 2012

## Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0708. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 336 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537.

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For each attachment included in the *ESEA Flexibility Request*, label the attachment with the corresponding number from the list of attachments below and indicate the page number where the attachment is located. If an attachment is not applicable to the SEA's request, indicate "N/A" instead of a page number. Reference relevant attachments in the narrative portions of the request.

**Attachments are available on the webpage at [www.mde.k12.ms.us/esea/index.htm](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/esea/index.htm) and are not included in this document.**

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**COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST**

Legal Name of Requester: Mississippi Department of Education	Requester's Mailing Address: Post Office Box 771 Jackson, MS 39205-0771
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request  Name: Lynn J. House, Ph.D.  Position and Office: Deputy State Superintendent Instructional Enhancement and Internal Operations  Contact's Mailing Address: Mississippi Department of Education Post Office Box 771 Jackson, MS 39205-0771  Telephone: 601/359-3077  Fax: 601/359-2566  Email address: <a href="mailto:lhhouse@mde.k12.ms.us">lhhouse@mde.k12.ms.us</a>	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Tom Burnham, Ed.D.	Telephone: 601/359-1750
Signature of the Chief State School Officer:  X_____	Date:  February 28, 2012
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility.	

## WAIVERS

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

- ☒ 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.
- ☒ 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.
- ☒ 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.
- ☒ 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.
- ☒ 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its Priority and Focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.
- ☒ 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State's Priority and Focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.



- ☒ 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State's Reward schools that meet the definition of "reward schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.
- ☒ 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.
- ☒ 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.
- ☒ 10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State's Priority schools that meet the definition of "priority schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

Optional Flexibility:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

- ☒ 11. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.
- ☒ 12. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA's State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools that are not reward schools, priority schools, or focus schools.
- ☒ 13. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not rank sufficiently high to be served.

## ASSURANCES

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that:

- ☒ 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.
- ☒ 2. It will adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)
- ☒ 3. It will develop and administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
- ☒ 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)
- ☒ 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)
- ☒ 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify Priority and Focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)
- ☒ 7. It will report to the public its lists of Reward schools, Priority schools, and Focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its Reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)



- ☒ 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)
- ☒ 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)
- ☒ 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.
- ☒ 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (Attachment 2).
- ☒ 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (Attachment 3).
- ☒ 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.
- ☒ 14. It will report annually on its State report card, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the “all students” group and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State’s annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. It will also annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively.

If the SEA selects Option A in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:

- ☒ 15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. (Principle 3)

## CONSULTATION

*An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State's Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:*

- 1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.*

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) has taken a variety of steps to engage input and support from teachers and their representatives while developing the ESEA Flexibility Request. As noted in Assurances 11 and 12 above, prior to submitting the ESEA Flexibility Waiver request, the Mississippi Department of Education provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (**Attachment 1**) as well as copies of any comments received from LEAs (**Attachment 2**). Additionally, prior to submitting the request, the Mississippi Department of Education provided notice and information regarding the request to the public on the MDE website and has attached a copy of that notice (**Attachment 3**). The MDE has intentionally reached out to teachers, not only through their districts and schools, but also through the Mississippi Association of Educators and the Mississippi Professional Educators organizations, both of which includes teachers as their primary membership.

The information regarding the waiver has been posted on the MDE website at [www.mde.k12.ms.us](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us) since mid-November, with the documents in **Attachment 1** available for input and review. Additionally, at each of the regional ESEA Flexibility Waiver Stakeholder (Town Hall) Meetings, input was gathered on-site through presentations, discussion, and feedback forms. The MDE has a dedicated email address for stakeholders to submit input ([nclbwaiver@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:nclbwaiver@mde.k12.ms.us)), which is checked on a daily basis.

In addition to the regional Stakeholder Meetings, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) has taken every opportunity available to present the Waiver information to stakeholder groups that included teacher representatives. The first discussions on the waiver with school superintendents and other district staff occurred through a webinar held October 6, 2011, and presentations at the Mississippi Association of School Administrators' Fall Conference on October 18, 2011. The first public dissemination of information began with the State Board of Education Meeting on October 20, 2011, followed closely by other educational advocacy groups that included teachers in their membership. The MDE garnered input with the following teacher-inclusive stakeholder groups on the dates indicated below:

- Commission on School Accreditation, October 26, 2011, and February 2, 2012
- Educator Licensure Commission, November 4, 2011
- Federal Programs Committee of Practitioners, November 9, 2011
- Mississippi Professional Educators Advisory Board, November 10, 2011
- State Board of Education Meeting, November 17, 2011
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Advisory Committee, December 1, 2011
- Special Education Advisory Council, December 7, 2011, and February 15, 2012
- ESEA Flexibility Waiver Stakeholder Meetings  
November 15, 2011: Meridian, Riley Center  
November 30, 2011: Biloxi, Biloxi High School  
December 1, 2011: Ellisville, Ron Whitehead Tech Center  
December 5, 2011: Oxford, Oxford Conference Center  
December 6, 2011: Cleveland, DSU, Jobe Hall  
December 8, 2011: Summit, Southwest CC (added after handout was posted)  
December 13, 2011: Pearl, HCC, Muse Center
- Mississippi Association of School Superintendents/Alliance Winter Conference, January 23-25, 2012
- Statewide Teacher Appraisal System Focus Groups  
January 31: Jackson, Universities Center  
February 15: Meridian, MSU-Meridian Campus

Additionally, the following dates are planned post-submission, where input will continue to be garnered from teachers regarding teacher appraisal:

February 27:	Oxford, Oxford Conference Center
March 6:	Cleveland, DSU, Ewing Hall
March 20:	Gulfport, Handsboro Community Center
March 26:	Hattiesburg, PRCC Lowery Woodall Advanced Technology Center

Focus group meetings will also be held in February and March 2012 to gain input on the Principal Evaluation System.

Included in **Attachment 2** are all the comments and feedback received through these various meetings, emails, and the public comment process. The following changes were made to the waiver request based on input from teachers and their representatives:

- Addressed ways to simplify teacher appraisal system
- Determined how to identify Reward schools and incentivize schools at all levels
- Included interventions that make lasting improvements for instruction and the resources needed to make quality improvements

- Increased transparency of accountability and made the system more understandable for all constituents
- Other components of the waiver were impacted by stakeholder feedback, primarily through affirmation of the plan.

*2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.*

***The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) has engaged a variety of stakeholders in meaningful ways to garner perspectives, input, and commitment throughout the planning and implementation process.***

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) continues the ongoing effort to acquire meaningful input from all communities in the state. In addition to the presentations listed in item 1 above, the MDE reached out to the community members at large through the following member groups:

- Regional Federal Programs Consortium, Gulfport, November 4, 2011
- Regional Federal Programs Consortium, Tupelo, November 18, 2011
- Regional Superintendent's Meetings  
November 1, 2011, Jackson and Meridian  
November 7, 2011, Biloxi and Hattiesburg  
November 8, 2011, Tupelo  
November 9, 2011, Senatobia and Cleveland
- Stakeholder Roundtable Discussion, December 9, 2011, and February 13, 2012

**Attachment 2** includes feedback from parents and community leaders who attended the Regional ESEA Waiver Stakeholder Meetings, hosted by Mississippi's six Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs).

The Special Education Advisory Council is a standing council for the MDE Office of Special Education that includes parents of children with disabilities, individuals with disabilities, teachers, representatives of Institutions of Higher Education, and other key stakeholders. A complete list of the Advisory Panel Membership may be found on the MDE website at [http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/special\\_education/advisory\\_board.html](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/special_education/advisory_board.html). The MDE reached out to the group on two separate dates to receive feedback on the ESEA Flexibility Waiver.

The MDE has been intentional in efforts to ensure active, quality engagement of the civil rights advocacy community. One such effort was the waiver-specific Roundtable Discussion held December 9, 2011, to which the MDE invited representatives of various stakeholder groups, including the following:

- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People ([www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org))
- Southern Echo (<http://www.southernecho.org>; a leadership development, education and training organization working to develop effective accountable grassroots leadership in the African-American communities in rural Mississippi and the surrounding region)
- Mississippi Economic Council ([www.msmecc.org](http://www.msmecc.org); the State Chamber of Commerce)
- Children's Defense Fund-Southern Regional Office Headquarters (<http://cdf.childrensdefense.org>; a non-profit child advocacy organization working to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities)
- Southern Poverty Law Center (<http://splcenter.org/>)
- Mississippi Center for Education Innovation (<http://mscei.com>; an agent for sustainable change in communities where poverty, low educational attainment and a lack of infrastructure intersect thus, leading to a low quality of life; funded by the WK Kellogg Foundation to focus on improving education in Mississippi)
- Mississippi Association of Educators (<http://maetoday.nea.org/>)
- Parents for Public Schools (<http://www.parents4publicschools.com/sts.html>)
- Mississippi PTA (<http://www.misspta.org/>)

The Roundtable participants were so engaged in the waiver process that the MDE elected to host a follow-up meeting on February 13, 2012, to provide the group with the opportunity to react to a completed draft of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver. Activity feedback was recorded from these Roundtable meetings and is included in **Attachment 2**.

Dissemination of documents and requests for feedback included listservs for advocacy groups that reached literally thousands of stakeholders throughout the state, including parents, community based organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders.

The Mississippi State Board of Education reviewed the final draft of the ESEA Waiver Request on February 17, 2012. Prior to the review, the Mississippi Department of Education posted the Mississippi ESEA Flexibility Request to the MDE's ESEA Waiver webpage on January 30, 2012, along with a request for public comment through February 10, 2012. All public comments were collected for State Board consideration. The MDE recognizes the importance of including all stakeholders in the development of the waiver request. Additionally, stakeholder engagement will continue to play an important role in the implementation and refinement of the waiver components.



## EVALUATION

*The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.*

☒ *Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.*

## OVERVIEW OF SEA'S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

*Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:*

- 1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and*
- 2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.*

### **Comprehensive Approach to Implementing the Waivers and Principles**

#### **Vision**

The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) has as its vision "To create a world-class education system that gives students the knowledge and skills that will allow them to be successful in college and the workforce and flourish as parents and citizens," with its mission statement indicating that the SBE is "to provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community." With this vision and mission in mind, the SBE selected Dr. Tom Burnham as the State Superintendent of Education in November 2009. In January 2010, Dr. Burnham began his tenure as State Superintendent of Education, and his goal has been to systemically attack all barriers that impede success for every student in the state.



Further, Mississippi's Governor Phil Bryant adopted **Rising Together** as his 2012 inaugural theme. Through his inaugural address, he identified education as one of the four opportunities for his work in Mississippi:

*... And if we are to rise together, we must do so with the inherent characteristics of Mississippi. We are a people of character who value hard work and treasure loyalty to our families, state and country.... every Mississippian should have the opportunity to actually learn from the best educational system we can offer...*

For the first time in recent memory, policy makers across the state agree on the importance of education and the need to support comprehensive reform efforts. The unification of the legislative body, Governor's office, and the heads of the education sectors has presented a unique opportunity for Mississippi to work toward a common goal: *Ensuring a bright future for every child.*

### ***Barriers to Implementation***

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) began developing the waiver request by identifying and addressing barriers to learning across the state:

- strong, consistent leadership at the district and building level,
- completing high school ready for college and careers,
- sound literacy and numeracy for students by the end of third grade,
- instructional quality for all students, and
- safe and appropriate learning environments in all schools.

All of these barriers are focal points for the improvement strategies being implemented under Dr. Burnham's leadership. The educational leadership of decision makers at the school and district level is crucial to overcoming these barriers. To that end, the MDE asked a variety of stakeholders, advocates, and educators to give input on these barriers and other areas of education that needed to be addressed through the waiver.

### ***Enhancing Quality Instruction through the Flexibility***

Through the various areas of input and support, specific strategies emerged:

- Redesigning teacher and leader preparation programs and linking the redesign to the evaluation of practitioners
- Devoting appropriate resources to implementation of the Common Core State Standards, assessments, and multiple opportunities for high school completion
- Identifying those schools with the greatest needs and then providing differentiated interventions to meet those needs

- Intentionally restructuring the services offered by the MDE to ensure that accountability and improvement are at the forefront of expectations and to reduce duplication and redundancy

Through the flexibility of the waiver, MDE will hold schools more accountable for addressing learning gaps while providing high quality, differentiated, on-going interventions, technical assistance, and support to ensure that practitioners have the knowledge and skills needed to meet the needs of a growingly diverse student population. By increasing the focus on quality instruction through the redesign of practitioner preparation and the evaluation of implementation, while increasing content and performance standards to align with career and college-ready standards, Mississippi will meet Governor Bryant's education goal: *every Mississippian will have the opportunity to actually learn from the best educational system we can offer.*

## PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

### 1A ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	Option B
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.  i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)	<input type="checkbox"/> The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.  i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)  ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)

The Mississippi Department of Education has adopted college- and career-ready standards, as evidenced by the June 2010 and August 2010 minutes of the Mississippi State Board of Education. **Attachment 4** includes minutes indicating the approval for immediate adoption and to begin the period of public comment for the State Board of Education to adopt fully the Common Core State Standards (June 2010–**Attachment 4a**). After the public comment process was completed, the Common Core State Standards received final approval with the August 2010 meeting of the State Board of Education (**Attachment 4b**), and the timeline for statewide training and implementation of the Common Core State Standards began (**Attachment 4c**).

## 1.B TRANSITION TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

*Provide the SEA's plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.*

### **General Information:**

The Common Core State Standards initiative is underway in Mississippi to help students compete on a level playing field and prepare them for college and workforce expectations. It will also ensure that all students have the opportunity to meet internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that are clear, understandable, and consistent.

### **Adoption of the Common Core State Standards**

The State Board of Education in Mississippi took action for final adoption of the *Common Core State Standards for Mathematics* and the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/ Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* in August of 2010. This decision was a bold move that is consistent with the State Board of Education's vision and mission "to create a world-class education system that gives students the knowledge and skills that will allow them to be successful in college and the workforce, compete in the global community, and flourish as parents and citizens." See **Attachment 4d** for the State Board of Education's vision, mission, and goals, as adopted in November 2009.

### **Implementation of the Common Core State Standards**

Since 2005, the state has been working to increase the rigor and relevance of standards and assessments, thus preparing practitioners for the transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Mississippi began providing awareness sessions and training on the CCSS in October 2010, after the SBE's final adoption of the standards. As a part of the initial awareness sessions, practitioners gave feedback on the quality of the standards, timelines for implementation, and training needs for school staff. Feedback from awareness sessions and trainings indicated that educators are very receptive to the state's decision to adopt the Common Core State Standards; in fact, most teachers and administrators are enthused that Mississippi will be using a common set of rigorous standards. Upon approval of the CCSS, the MDE began statewide awareness and overview sessions for schools and districts to ensure that multiple constituencies were familiar with the CCSS and to garner input on the

timeline for implementation. The K-2 grade band was selected as the initial implementation grade span for multiple reasons:

1. Participant feedback from overview sessions was highly favorable to begin with grades K-2.
2. 2011-2012 kindergarten students will be the first 3<sup>rd</sup> graders to participate in the CCSS Assessments for grades 3 - 11 during the 2014-2015 school year.
3. High stakes testing does not occur at the K-2 grade levels, which creates a more receptive environment for new initiatives.

The CCSS stakeholder group suggested that MDE implement grades 3-8 in the 2012-2013 school year because the CCSS for Mathematics in the middle grades are much more rigorous than the current Mississippi standards for mathematics, thus providing middle school teachers with more time to prepare for implementation.

Through the feedback from the awareness sessions, the CCSS Suggested Implementation Timeline for Mississippi was created:

2011 - 2012	<b>Grades K-2</b>
2012 - 2013	<b>Grades 3-8</b>
2013 - 2014	<b>Grades 9-12</b>
2014 - 2015	<b>Full Implementation of CCSS and PARCC Assessments</b>

MDE staff members are helping school districts to think of implementation as a multi-year process of weaving the Common Core State Standards into the fabric of classroom instruction until the CCSS replaces the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks for mathematics and English language arts.

Practitioner's reception of the CCSS has been so great that educators are already making adjustments at the local level by examining existing resources and revising pacing guides to align with the CCSS. Several districts in the state are moving beyond implementing CCSS in the suggested grade levels K-2 during the 2011-2012 school year to beginning the implementation process in grades K-12.

In an effort to support school districts during the transition to the CCSS, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) requested and received funding to employ curriculum content specialists, develop training materials, and conduct training sessions throughout the state. School districts are given many opportunities to provide input through a dedicated email address for Common Core, email to MDE staff, presentation feedback forms, and electronic surveys. The MDE utilizes feedback and suggestions from educators to make improvements along the way. The response from other stakeholders such as higher education, early childhood educators, etc., has also been very positive. As a result, the MDE is working tirelessly



to involve thousands of educators and stakeholders during the transitional period.

***Mississippi has a high-quality plan to transition from the current Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks to college- and career-ready standards, as embraced in the Common Core State Standards.***

#### **Alignment of current state standards to the CCSS**

In October 2010, the MDE worked with SEDL's Southeast Comprehensive Center to conduct an alignment study, which revealed that the overall alignment between the Mississippi Language Arts Framework and the CCSS *for English Language Arts and Literacy* is strong and that the rigor is comparable. The alignment study revealed that the overall alignment between the Mississippi Mathematics Framework and the CCSS *for Mathematics* is not tightly aligned because many specifics in the CCSS *for Mathematics* are addressed at a lower grade level(s). The CCSS *for Mathematics* are more rigorous than the Mississippi Mathematics Framework objectives, which will make the transition to the CCSS *for Mathematics* challenging for Mississippi educators. The alignment study, being used during the transition to the CCSS, was posted to the MDE website in March 2011 to help school districts determine how to realign local resources to support curriculum and instruction. The alignment results are being used by the MDE to inform decisions such as revising the timeline for the textbook adoption process to ensure that materials that are aligned to the CCSS are available by full implementation in the 2014-2015 school year.

Additionally, to support teachers, particularly in grades/subjects where the teacher may not have a thorough content knowledge base, SEDL has developed videos for each grade level on the CCSS *in Mathematics*. Each grade level video begins with an in-depth introduction of a featured CCSS *for Mathematics*. The on-line videos for mathematics provide support for teachers by clarifying vocabulary, identifying prerequisite skills, and recommending instructional strategies. The videos are being incorporated into the MDE trainings to help teachers with standards that may be challenging in terms of teacher content knowledge. Each training participant receives a thumb drive that includes the videos. These videos, available online at [http://secc.sedl.org/common\\_core\\_videos/](http://secc.sedl.org/common_core_videos/), will continue to be updated by SEDL.

The MDE has developed instructional materials aligned with the CCSS grades K-2, grades 3-5, and grades 6-8. MDE staff members are currently developing training and materials for grades 9-12, along with professional development modules on the improvement of writing instruction. The



materials are designed to help teachers with the implementation of the CCSS. The materials include examples of how the CCSS can be unpacked or deconstructed, writing teaching tools, alignment documents, teaching strategies for standards identified as being difficult to teach, and suggestions for starting points based on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) model content frameworks. The training materials are provided in hard copy and electronic format by grade band.

All documents related to CCSS are available on the MDE website at <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/ACAD/ID/Curriculum/ccss.htm>.

***Mississippi, through participation in the WIDA Consortium, intends to analyze the linguistic demands of the State's college- and career-ready standards to inform the development of ELP standards corresponding to the college- and career-ready standards and to ensure that English Learners (EL) will have the opportunity to achieve to the college- and career-ready standards on the same schedule as all students.***

The Mississippi Department of Education, as a member of the **World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)** Consortium, is committed to implementing English language proficiency (ELP) standards that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. In November 2011, the USDE approved Mississippi's revised Title III Plan for Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs), based upon the WIDA achievement standards, to ensure that English Learners (EL) have the opportunity to achieve college- and career-ready standards. The commitment of the WIDA project is clear from **Attachment 4e WIDA News**.

The WIDA ELP Standards are designed for the many audiences in the field of education who impact ELs. These audiences include ELs and their family members; teachers; principals; program, district and regional administrators; test developers; teacher educators; and other stakeholders in the educational lives of ELs. By developing the ELP standards, the WIDA Consortium has responded to demands to link language learning with state academic content standards and to address educators' needs in three different areas: 1) Pedagogy, 2) Assessment, and 3) Educational Policy.

The development of WIDA's ELP standards has been in response to recent educational change brought about through theory, research and legislation. First, the vision of language proficiency has expanded to encompass both social contexts associated with language acquisition and academic contexts tied to schooling in general, and particularly to standards, curriculum and instruction. Second, the WIDA ELP Standards have been designed, in part,

to guide the development of test blueprints, task specifications and ELP measures. Thus, the language proficiency standards are envisioned as the first step in the construction of reliable and valid assessment tools for ELs. Finally, the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and corresponding state statutes currently mandate that states administer a standards-based English language proficiency test annually to all ELs in Kindergarten through grade twelve in public schools.

In fall 2011, the MDE conducted four regional trainings on WIDA. Over 300 participants, including district test coordinators, content area teachers, and teachers of English Learners, received training focused on scaffolding academic language. The agenda from this training is attached as **Attachment 4f**.

***The MDE has analyzed the learning and accommodation factors necessary to ensure that students with disabilities will have the opportunity to achieve to the college- and career-ready standards; and the results of this analysis is informing the on-going training and support for students with disabilities in accessing the college- and career-ready standards on the same schedule as all students. (Please see related PARCC definitions on the following page.)***

The Mississippi State Board of Education will require all teachers, including special education teachers, to use the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Instruction for students with disabilities will be designed according to the students' individualized education plan (IEP). The MDE's adoption of the CCSS, along with the participation in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium, has facilitated the analysis of learning and accommodation factors for students with disabilities. PARCC is committed to providing all students with equitable access to high-quality, 21st century PARCC assessments. Through a combination of Universal Design for Learning principles and computer embedded supports, PARCC intends to design an assessment system that is inclusive for all participating students by considering accessibility from the beginning of initial design through item development, field testing, and implementation, rather than trying to retrofit the assessments for students with disabilities and English language learners. Accessible assessments will allow all individuals taking the assessments to participate and engage in a meaningful and appropriate manner, with the goal being to make valid inferences about the performance of students with diverse characteristics and to allow students to demonstrate what they know and can do.

In order to ensure the development of an accessible and fair assessment system, PARCC has created the following two working groups: The Accessibility, Accommodations, and Fairness Operational Working Group

(AAF OWG) and AAF Technical Working Group (AAF TWG). The AAF OWG, comprised of governing and participating state representatives, manages the day-to-day work stream while the AAF TWG, comprised of national experts, provides expert guidance to the OWG and the Technical Advisory Committee on technical issues related to accessibility and fairness.

The working groups are guided by the following principles:

1. Minimize/eliminate features of the assessment that are irrelevant to what is being measured and that measure the full range of complexity of the standards so that students can more accurately demonstrate their knowledge and skills;
2. Design each component of the assessment in a manner that allows ELs and students with disabilities to demonstrate what they know and can do;
3. Use Universal Design for Learning for accessible assessments throughout every stage and component of the assessment, including items/tasks, stimuli, passages, performance tasks, graphics and performance-based tasks; and
4. Use technology for rendering all assessment components in as accessible a manner as possible.

PARCC Definitions:

- Universal Design for Learning Principles: principles guiding the design environments, products, and communications in a way that is inherently accessible to all intended users.
- Universal Design for Assessment: refers to principles that support a flexible design approach for test items such that all participating students are able to demonstrate what they know and can do regardless of physical, sensory, behavioral, or cognitive impairment, and recognizing that no single model will meet all students' needs.
  - Accessible development includes consideration of questions such as:
    - Does the item or task measure what it intends to measure?
    - Does the item or task respect the diversity of the assessment population?
    - Does the item or task material have a clear format for text?
    - Does the item or task material have clear directions indicating what the student is supposed to do to answer the item or task?
    - Does the item or task material provide enough information for the students to respond to the item or task?
    - Does the item or task material have clear visuals (when essential to the item?)
    - Does the item or task material have concise and readable text?
- Embedded Support: Any tool, support, scaffold, link, or preference that is built into the assessment system with the explicit expectation that the feature will help many diverse students; some whom cannot be predicted

in advance will use and benefit from the support. Embedded supports will be readily available on-screen, stored in a tool palette, or accessible through a menu or control panel as needed. To the extent possible, supports will be consistent through subtests. When an embedded support is made available to all users, it is considered a function of Universal Design. When a support is made available to only a subset of users based on their learner profile, it is considered an accessibility feature.

### ***Three Tier Instructional Model***

Mississippi has a State Board of Education Policy on intervention (**Attachment 4g**) that requires all school districts to utilize a three tier instructional model to meet the needs of every student.

#### **Tier 1**

Tier 1 is *quality classroom instruction* and describes the school-wide efforts and practices that are available to all students. Students who are successful at Tier 1 are making expected progress in the general education curriculum and are demonstrating behavioral expectations. With Tier 1 school-wide practices in place, data should indicate when and where a student is experiencing difficulty.

#### **Tier 2**

Tier 2 is strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction designed for those students who are not progressing or responding to Tier 1 efforts as expected. In these cases, instruction and/or behavior management within the general classroom setting may not be sufficient for these students, and additional strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction may be necessary.

#### **Tier 3**

Tier 3 focuses on intensive interventions through academic and behavioral strategies, methodologies, and practices designed for students who are having significant difficulties with the established grade-level objectives in the general education curriculum or who demonstrate significant difficulties with behavioral and social competence. Tier 3 interventions are more intensive than those in Tier 2 and are introduced when data suggest that a student has failed to make progress or respond to the interventions in Tier 2 or the rate of progress or growth and level is such that the student is unlikely to narrow the performance gap. Students may receive Tier 3 interventions by “skipping” Tier 2 when the school can demonstrate through data that the students’ current level of performance is highly discrepant from peers. Finally, State Board Policy 4300 states specifically which students should be referred to the Teacher Support Team (TST) to determine if Tier 3 interventions are needed.

MDE recommends progress monitoring of all Tier 2 and Tier 3 students in the target area(s) of the supplemental instruction or intervention. Because a trend line must be determined from the established baseline, progress monitoring twice a week is recommended. At a minimum, there should be one assessment per week. The district has the flexibility to select appropriate progress monitoring assessments based on the interventions being used. The results of the assessment are used by the TST to recommend student placement in the tiered process.

### ***Training on Response to Intervention***

In an effort to support school districts with meeting the needs of **all** students, including students with disabilities, the MDE has trained approximately 3,000 school staff, including district and school level administrators, interventionists, behavior specialists, counselors, teachers, and school psychologists, in the area of Response to Intervention (RtI). The in-depth training was conducted over three years to address universal screening, effective instruction, differentiated instruction, planning, teaming, data based decision making, and positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS). The training was offered through collaboration with the MDE's Office of Special Education and Office of Curriculum and Instruction. The training sessions provided at six locations throughout the state include the following topics (lengths indicated are per training site):

- General Overview sessions of RtI (half-day)
- Training on Tier 1 (8 days)
- Training on Tier 2 (2 days)
- Training on Tier 3 (2 days)
- Principal Institutes (included Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3) (5 days)
- Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (2 days)

The MDE has a website with materials and resources related to the Three Tier Instructional Model and RtI for practitioners to utilize as well:

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/RtI/index.html>.

***The MDE has conducted outreach on and dissemination of the college- and career-ready standards, which is planned to reach all appropriate stakeholders, to increase awareness of the State's college- and career-ready standards.***

The State Board of Education has made a tremendous commitment to prepare Mississippi children to compete on a national and international level by adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in June 2010. In January 2012, the state approved early learning standards for programs



serving three-year old children and four-year old children that are aligned with the CCSS for kindergarten in mathematics and English language arts. As the state implements the CCSS, there will be alignment across early childhood education, K-12 education, and postsecondary education.

The Board is also devoted to committing resources to ensure the standards are reaching all educators. The timeline below provides an overview of the dissemination process, in addition to the information provided in the proceeding sections.

### **Timeline for statewide outreach and dissemination**

August 2010: Posted the CCSS to the MDE website and notified all stakeholders (institutions of higher learning, school district superintendents, curriculum coordinators, principals, teachers, parent advocacy groups).

November 2010: Posted a list of ten quick facts about the CCSS.

November 2010: Conducted first webinar to provide overview of the CCSS and assessments.

Oct 2010-June 2011: Conducted awareness sessions and institutes throughout the state. The MDE solicited feedback from participants on training needs and scenarios for transitioning to the CCSS.

February 2011: Conducted a meeting with a CCSS stakeholder group to review the findings of the alignment study, make recommendations for the high school courses that will be based on the CCSS, and identify standards that will be most difficult for teachers.

Webinars and awareness sessions have already been conducted to provide stakeholders with more details on Common Core. These sessions have greatly increased awareness of the CCSS. Initial feedback from Mississippians has been very positive. The MDE has developed a plan to transition to the Common Core over the next few years with assessments expected to be in place in 2014-15. Presentations on the CCSS have also been made at state conferences and meetings for stakeholder groups and organizations such as the Mississippi Parent Teacher Association, the MDE Special Education Parent Advisory Council, Mississippi Association for Mathematics Teachers Educators, Mississippi Association for School Superintendents, Mississippi Association for School Administrators, Mississippi Association of Secondary School Principals, Mississippi Association of Elementary School Administrators, Head Start Directors, Mississippi Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Parents for Public Schools, State Literacy Team, School District Communication Directors, Institutions



of Higher Learning, Community College Presidents Council, and the Higher Education Literacy Council. In an effort to ensure parents are well informed, access to the national PTA's parent guides for the CCSS is available via the MDE website.

November 2011: **CCSS Training** sessions for **higher education faculty** (community college and four-year university faculty) occurred in two regional sites for 200 participants. The next phase of training on CCSS for higher education faculty, providing a deeper understanding of the standards, is planned for March-April 2012.

On-going: The MDE has **a dedicated webpage** that houses all training materials regarding the Common Core State Standards initiative at <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/ACAD/ID/Curriculum/ccss.htm>.

***The MDE has provided professional development and other supports to prepare teachers to teach all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, to the new standards. The professional development and supports prepare teachers to teach to the new standards, use instructional materials aligned with those standards, and use data on multiple measures of student performance (e.g., data from formative, benchmark, and summative assessments) to inform instruction.***

The State Board of Education has a clear expectation that teachers will ensure that all students have an opportunity to meet the high expectations established through the Common Core State Standards. Instruction for students with disabilities will be designed according to the students' individualized education plan (IEP). See training timeline below for the CCSS Training of the Trainers (TOT) sessions. Each school district sends a team to be responsible for training at the local level. The Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) help with the facilitation of the training sessions. Training materials in print and electronic form and video resources are being provided. Training content includes an overview of the CCSS and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), activities on how to unpack the CCSS and scaffold instruction for all learners, videos to help with understanding the CCSS, and an overview of the alignment between the CCSS and the current Mississippi standards. Materials also include practical classroom activities, instructional planning materials, and guidelines for developing quality formative assessments. Follow-up sessions will be conducted to help districts facilitate problem solving, implement support mechanisms, and use data to drive instruction.

### **Training on the CCSS**

- **CCSS Grades K-2 Training-of-the-Trainers** sessions occurred in June-July 2011 in three regional sites for 600 participants.
- After the initial training for grades K-2, a follow-up session was provided on November 29, 2011, via webinar for participants to identify and discuss challenges and opportunities related to implementation as well as hear from a panel of practitioners about their school's implementation through the professional learning community model.
- **CCSS Grades 3-5 Training of the Trainers** sessions occurred in October-November 2011 at three regional sites for 500 participants.
- **CCSS Grades 6-8 Training of the Trainers** sessions will occur in January-March 2012 in three regional sites for 500 participants.
- **CCSS Grades 9-12 Training of the Trainers** sessions will occur in June-July 2012 in three regional sites for 500 participants.

It is anticipated that the training for all grades will follow the same basic pattern of training with improvements that are learned along the way. All grade levels will be trained by summer 2012 and will have completed follow-up activities by the summer of 2013, well before starting the new assessments in the 2014-15 school year. Additional training will be provided as details related to the PARCC assessment are released.

Evaluations are conducted after each training session to collect information that will be used to design future training and to develop resources.

In June 2010, the MDE released a publication to help school districts with the continuous implementation of State Board Policy 4300 on Intervention (**Attachment 4g**). The publication was developed around three general themes regarding RtI.

1. RtI provides opportunities for educators to learn new and different ways to provide quality services to children.
2. RtI is a process that involves the early identification of students who need assistance with academics or behavior, provides scientifically research-based efforts to help students, and monitors progress of their responses to those efforts.
3. Finally, RtI is not a linear process but is a recursive process in that any student may move throughout the three tiers several times in his or her educational career.

Additionally, the Office of Special Education (OSE) provides on-going training for schools and districts in appropriate learning and accommodation factors necessary to ensure that students with disabilities will have the opportunity to access the college- and career-ready standards on the same schedule as all students. These training sessions have included the following on-going opportunities:

- **Accommodating Students in an Inclusive Classroom** (provided at seven regional locations across the state during the 2010-11 School Year)
- **IEP and Inclusionary Practices** (provided at six regional locations across the state during the 2010-11 School Year)
- **Accommodating Students in an Inclusive Classroom** (provided at four regional locations across the state during the 2011-12 School Year)
- **Basic IEP Practices** (provided at six regional locations across the state during the 2011-12 School Year)
- **Response to Intervention** (provided at five regional locations across the state during the 2011-12 School Year)

During the 2008-2009 school year, OSE provided all districts with *Tool Kits for Success*, a set of professional development resources designed to help foster effective educational practices for all students. The tool kits include resources on inclusion, accommodations, RtI, co-teaching, differentiating instruction, classroom management and more. Training on effectively using the resources was provided by OSE regionally during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. OSE has continued to identify and add resources to the tool kits. The tool kits are available on the website at [http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/special\\_education/Tool%20Kit/tool\\_kit\\_list.pdf](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/special_education/Tool%20Kit/tool_kit_list.pdf).

***The MDE has provided professional development and supports to prepare principals to provide strong, supportive instructional leadership based on the new standards.***

The MDE continues to take opportunities to provide professional development and support on instructional leadership, including the following activities:

- **Overview Sessions** on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Assessments both “live” and via webinar have been offered throughout the state to over 3000 participants, including **principals**.
- **Two Day K-12 Institutes** delving deeper into the Common Core State Standards and Assessments have taken place at six regional sites for 1200 district administrators, including superintendents, curriculum coordinators, **principals**, and lead teachers. The Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) helped with the facilitation of the training sessions.
- **Presentations** on various aspects of Common Core State Standards and Assessments have been made to **principals**, local **school district staff**, **professional organizations**, and **conference breakout sessions** across the state as mentioned in the section on outreach and dissemination.

School districts continue to support the effort by actively including principals and lead teachers in the Train-the-Trainers model of professional development being used by the state to disseminate all CCSS information.

### **iTunes U: Professional Development to Principals and Teachers**

The MDE envisions iTunes U becoming the communication hub for professional development for educators in the state of Mississippi. As the Mississippi Department of Education is launching a new web site, logo and branding in spring 2012, iTunes U will be an integral part of this massive public relations effort.

From a programmatic standpoint, iTunes U will dramatically accelerate Mississippi's efforts in implementing the Common Core State Standards. As the MDE seeks to engage every teacher and administrator in the state, all available media will be leveraged. Undertaking this immense training challenge for over 32,000 teachers will be virtually impossible without an intuitive and robust content delivery model like iTunes U.

The portal will also serve as a central storehouse for all professional development efforts of the MDE, providing practitioners with a single platform for all training resources offered by the MDE, including webinars, training materials, and event registration.

The Mississippi Department of Education stands ready to launch the initiative and usher in a new era of collaborative teaching and learning opportunities that Mississippi's students, teachers, and administrators so desperately want, need, and deserve.

***The MDE has developed and disseminated high-quality instructional materials aligned with the new standards. These materials were designed with the purpose of supporting the teaching and learning of all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students.***

The MDE has developed instructional materials aligned with the CCSS for grades K-2, grades 3-5, and grades 6-8. The materials are designed to help teachers with the implementation of the CCSS. The materials include examples of how the CCSS can be unpacked or deconstructed, writing teaching tools, alignment documents, teaching strategies for standards identified as being difficult to teach, and suggestions for starting points based on the PARCC model content frameworks. The training materials include printed materials and video clips, and are provided in hard copy and electronic format by grade span. All documents related to CCSS are available on the MDE website at <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/ACAD/ID/Curriculum/ccss.htm>.

The MDE is working with SEDL's Southeast Comprehensive Center to provide video clips on the teaching of the CCSS for Mathematics. In order to support the teaching and learning of all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, the MDE is

developing a list of scaffolding objectives that will help students to reach the learning outcomes in the CCSS.

As noted previously, Mississippi is launching iTunes U, a platform to provide practitioners with a variety of tools to support learning. Among these materials are the **Mississippi ELL Guidelines** ([http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/innovative\\_support/TitleIII/ELL-Guidelines-January-2011%20Final-revised-3-21-11.pdf](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/innovative_support/TitleIII/ELL-Guidelines-January-2011%20Final-revised-3-21-11.pdf)), the **Special Education Tool Kits for Success** ([http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/special\\_education/Tool%20Kit/tool\\_kit\\_list.pdf](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/special_education/Tool%20Kit/tool_kit_list.pdf)), and the **What Works Clearinghouse** (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>) resources.

Further, Mississippi's textbook adoption timeline has been revised in order to have materials aligned to the CCSS available prior to the 2014-2015 school year. As directed through state law, a review panel including practitioners and content experts review texts for alignment with CCSS and make recommendations to the State Board of Education for only the texts that meet the criteria for inclusion in the state adoption list. During the 2011-2012 school year, textbooks will be adopted in the area of Reading and Literature. During the 2012-2013 school year, textbooks will be adopted in the area of Mathematics. During the 2013-2014 school year, textbooks will be adopted in the area of English Language Arts. These materials will be available for teachers to meet the needs of all students, including English Learners, low-achieving students, and students with disabilities.

***Mississippi is making great strides to expand access to college-level courses or their prerequisites, dual enrollment courses, or accelerated learning opportunities, in an effort to lead to more students having access to courses that prepare them for college and a career.***

With the idea that students and schools need options for success, the State Board of Education and State Superintendent have worked with legislative groups to determine any barriers to a variety of pathways to success for Mississippi's students. As further reiterated in Governor Bryant's recent inaugural address, *"We must also attack the dropout rate by allowing children to take standard high school classes and workforce learning in community colleges at the same time. A dropout who would otherwise be preordained as a societal failure could be valued as a craftsman with such programs."*

Statewide decision makers clearly understand that postsecondary skills are required for the highly competitive economy in the world today. A strong predictor of college credential completion is the accumulation of the first 20 credits within the first year of college. The return on investment suggests significant financial benefits to students and their families, to communities, and to states based on greater high school and college completion rates. The



Mississippi Department of Education has enacted several initiatives to expand access to college preparatory course work and experiences and has plans to add further options for success.

### **Existing Options for Success**

#### **Advanced Placement**

Advanced Placement (AP) is a rigorous academic program of the College Board that allows high school students to earn college credit through rigorous courses taught at their local high school. Students have the opportunity to submit AP exam results to colleges and universities for consideration for accepting the course work in lieu of college course requirements for graduation. Since 1955, the AP Program has enabled millions of students to take college-level courses and exams, and to earn college credit or placement while still in high school.

A 2008 study found that AP students had better four-year graduation rates than those who did not take AP. For example, graduation rates for AP English Literature students were 62 percent higher than graduation rates for those who took other English courses in high school. Taking AP also increases eligibility for scholarships and makes candidates more attractive to colleges:

- 31 percent of colleges and universities consider a student's AP experience when making scholarship decisions.
- 85 percent of selective colleges and universities report that a student's AP experience favorably impacts admissions decisions.

In 2006, MDE established State Board Policy 2903, the *Access to a Substantive and Rigorous Curriculum Policy*. It mandates that every high school offer at least one Advanced Placement (AP) course in each of the four core academic subject areas: Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. Mississippi participates in the Federal Advanced Placement Test Fee Grant program that subsidizes the Advanced Placement Test Fee for students who qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch program. These steps have proven successful in expanding opportunities for students to gain access to courses that would prepare them for college success. Since 2006, the number of students taking AP exams has grown 49%. In the 2009-2010 school year, a total of 5,483 public school students took AP exams in Mississippi. In spring 2010, 39% of the AP exam takers were minorities.

#### **International Baccalaureate**

The International Baccalaureate (IB) aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end, the IB works with schools, governments, and international



organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, lifelong learners who understand that other people with their differences can also be right.

The IB works in four areas.

- Development of curriculum
- Assessment of students
- Training and professional development of teachers
- Authorization and evaluation of schools

Upon successful completion of the IB program, students are issued a certified IB program designation certificate that, along with their regular high school diploma, signifies to prospective colleges and universities that these students are well prepared for successful matriculation in even the most selective colleges and universities around the world.

While Mississippi has supported the development and expansion of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, during the years from 1996 to 2007 only one school district in the state implemented an IB program. In 2008, three additional school districts embraced the program and now offer IB coursework and experiences to their students. The MDE has worked with these school districts to remove any barriers to successful implementation of the IB course of study.

### **Dual Enrollment**

Mississippi offers opportunities for students to be enrolled dually in high school and postsecondary education programs. Dual Enrollment allows students the opportunity to earn both high school and college credit for college level courses taken while still enrolled in high school. School districts enter into agreements with public four-year colleges and universities or community colleges to allow for students to take courses taught by college faculty. The students earn credit towards high school graduation and a college degree while in the program. The strong partnership between and among two- and four-year colleges and high schools in Mississippi has allowed the program to flourish. This program was recently revised to allow for smoother transition from high school to community college and on to a four-year college. Mississippi plans to expand Dual Enrollment opportunities for Mississippi's students through a variety of outlets.

### **Pathways to Success**

The Mississippi Department of Education, through the leadership of the Office of Career and Technical Education, is committed to improving the success for all students and is implementing the Pathways to Success

system, combining high academic standards with career exploration. The components of the Pathways to Success model include the following:

- Career Clusters for Schools: A strong career cluster system transcends all K-12 schooling and links to postsecondary education and the workplace. It focuses on career awareness and preparation in elementary school, high school, and beyond.
- Career Pathways: Each cluster is divided into Career Pathways, which represent more specific slices of the job market. In a comprehensive cluster system, each high school student, by the 10th grade, has chosen a career major on which to focus his or her studies and career planning. Completion of a major usually requires at least four units of study in that area as well as complementary electives.
- Organize Curricula and Courses around Career Clusters: In a comprehensive cluster system, schools or districts reorganize curricula and other elements of education around the careers students will pursue after graduation. Rather than focusing just on traditional disciplines, career cluster systems combine rigorous academics with relevant career education. The programs of study include opportunities for dual or articulated credit at the postsecondary level for all students and meet college and career readiness standards. They may also lead to an associate's or a bachelor's degree, a certificate at the postsecondary level, or an industry-recognized credential. Alignment to national academic and career and technical education standards is required.
- Require Individual Graduation Plans for All Students: Working with school guidance personnel, each student in a cluster system, along with his or her parents or guardians, develops an individual Career and Academic Plan (iCAP) in middle school. The plan is reviewed and updated annually. The iCAP records the student's career cluster, career major, planned or completed courses from 9th to 12th grade, postsecondary objective, planned and completed extracurricular activities, and work-based learning experiences.
- Align K-12 Schooling, Postsecondary Education, and Workplace: An effective cluster system offers all students clear pathways for K-12 schooling, as well as into college or other postsecondary options and into employment. Educational institutions use articulation agreements to align programs and seamlessly transition students as they accumulate the knowledge and skills needed for independent adulthood.

### **Pilot Programs**

#### **Excellence for All**

As one of several new options being piloted in Mississippi to afford students with multiple pathways for successful exit from high school, three school districts in Mississippi are piloting Excellence for All, formerly known as the Mississippi State Board Examination System. Through this program,

districts will offer students rigorous coursework during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade year that would allow them to then take the State Board Exam. Depending on performance on the exam, students could progress to IB, AP, or career and technical education programs during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade year, exit high school to begin a community college program, or pursue employment. The curricula for the Excellence for All program in Mississippi incorporates the Cambridge International Secondary Curriculum and the ACT Quality Core Curriculum.

### Cambridge International Secondary Curriculum

- The Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) curriculum is designed for 14-16 year olds and has two sub-components:
  - Cambridge O Level is an internationally recognized qualification equivalent to the UK General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Cambridge O Level provides learners with excellent preparation for academic progression to Cambridge Advanced including Cambridge International AS and A Levels and Cambridge Pre-U.
  - Cambridge ICE is the group award of the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and requires the study of subjects drawn from the five different IGCSE subject groups. It gives schools the opportunity to benefit from offering a broad and balanced curriculum by recognizing the achievements of students who pass examinations in at least seven subjects, including two languages, and one subject from each of the other subject groups.
- Cambridge International AS and A Levels are internationally benchmarked qualifications providing excellent preparation for university education. They are part of the Cambridge Advanced stage. This level is primarily for 16-19 year olds. It is also divided into 2 subgroups:
  - Cambridge Pre-U is an exciting new post-16 qualification. It prepares learners with the skills and knowledge they need to make a success of their subsequent studies at university
  - Cambridge AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education) Diploma provides a high-quality English-medium qualification, which prepares young people for honors degree programs.

### ACT Quality Core

The Quality Core is part of the ACT College and Career Readiness System that uses periodic summative assessments in order to gauge student preparedness of college and career. ACT's College and Career Readiness System provides a longitudinal approach to educational and career planning through assessment, curriculum support, and student evaluation. The research-based solutions are designed to help schools, districts, and states prepare every student for college and career by focusing on academic and

non-cognitive measurement and instructional improvement. The quality core program is aligned to the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards and Benchmarks. Quality Core offers five flexible components to improve and align the current high school curriculum and instructional materials: English, science, mathematics, writing, and reading.

### **Early College High School and Mississippi Diploma High School**

Additional options to be planned in 2012-13 and piloted in the 2013-14 school year are the Early College High School and the Mississippi Diploma High School.

An Early College High School (ECHS) is a small, autonomous school, operated on a college campus or in close connection with a postsecondary institution that targets low-income youth, first-generation college students, students of color, and other young people underrepresented in higher education. However, ECHS campuses are open to all students. The schools are designed so that students have the opportunity to earn an associate's degree or up to two years of transferable college-credit along with a high school diploma. Local school districts operate the early college high schools, which may start in Grade 9. An ECHS must have approval for operation from the State Board of Education, as the school functions as a separate school located on a college campus and operated in cooperation with a postsecondary institution through a memorandum of understanding. An ECHS provides support services necessary to prepare for and complete college-level work successfully. The postsecondary partners provide college courses as substitutes for some high school classes. Opportunities exist for students to earn up to 60 college-credit hours, all at no cost to the student. Clearly, at the core of every ECHS program is the opportunity of dual-credit courses and greater success in the postsecondary environment.

One such opportunity will be piloted during the 2012-2013 school year. Hinds Community College and Rankin County School District are partnering to implement an Early College model funded through the Gates Foundation. The program, a part of the Gateway to College National Network, will provide students who would potentially drop out of high school with a fulfilling educational experience.

The Mississippi Diploma High School (MDHS) provides students who have dropped out or who are about to withdraw with an opportunity to gain a high school diploma, while being dually enrolled in a career and technical education program. MDHS is a program of instruction offered collaboratively by local school districts and community colleges and operated as a means to help students who are between the ages of 16 and 21 needing credits for graduation. The typical student entering the Diploma High School will need course work usually provided during the last two years of study at a traditional high school. Upon completion of state requirements, these

students will be issued a standard diploma as approved by the Mississippi State Board of Education.

The legislature enacted House Bill 1163 in 2011 to have a report on the feasibility of these options presented to the legislature in January 2012. Based upon the reception of the January 2012 report, Mississippi anticipates implementing ECHS in three or four pilot sites.

***The MDE has worked with the State's IHEs and other teacher and principal preparation programs to better prepare incoming teachers to teach all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, to the new college- and career-ready standards; and incoming principals to provide strong, supportive instructional leadership on teaching to the new standards.***

Understanding the linkage between quality instruction and appropriate preparation programs, the MDE is in the midst of redesign efforts for both teacher and leader preparation programs, as noted in the information for Principle 3. Additionally, higher education faculty from both two- and four-year institutions have participated in overview sessions and training opportunities for Common Core State Standards and assessments, including strategies to ensure teachers can meet the needs of all students.

CCSS Training sessions for higher education faculty occurred in November 2011 in two regional sites for 200 participants to provide an overview of the CCSS. Training sessions will be offered in the spring of 2012 specifically for higher education faculty, two days for mathematics and two days for English language arts.

***The MDE has reviewed current assessments to identify areas of alignment with the State's college- and career-ready standards. In order to better prepare students and teachers for the upcoming PARCC assessments, the MDE has implemented the following strategies:***

- ***Coordinating with the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) through representation of higher education faculty and system staff in PARCC assessment planning***
- ***Revising the statewide writing assessment***
- ***Partnering with IHL, State Board of Community and Junior Colleges, and the Governor's Office on College Readiness issues***

#### **Increasing the rigor of the state standards and assessments**

Since 2006, Mississippi has been working to raise the rigor and relevance in state standards. Each objective for the 2007 Mississippi Mathematics



Framework Revised and the 2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework Revised has been assigned a Depth of Knowledge (DOK) level based on the work of Norman L. Webb. DOK levels help administrators, teachers, and parents understand the objective in terms of the complexity of what students are expected to know and do. Standards (i.e., competencies and objectives) vary in terms of complexity. Teachers must know what level of complexity is required by an objective in order to ensure that students have received prior instruction or have had an opportunity to learn content at the level students will be expected to demonstrate or perform. External reviewers have recognized the improved of the state curriculum. Based upon the 2012 Quality Counts report from *EdWeek*, Mississippi's standards, assessments, and accountability rating of A is in the top 12 ratings for the nation, tied with California and North Carolina at number 10.

Mississippi has worked to revamp the state's assessment system by developing assessment items in English language arts and mathematics to ensure that what is elicited from students on the assessment is as demanding cognitively as what students are expected to know and do as stated in the objectives. The transition from the Mississippi Curriculum Test to the Mississippi Curriculum Test, Second Edition (MCT2) took place in 2007. The transition from the Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) to SATP2, which includes Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and United States History, also occurred in 2007. This earlier transition will help schools as the state moves towards full implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Further, the MDE has revised the state's science and social studies standards with rigor and relevance. Dr. Norman Webb conducted a DOK analysis for these standards as well. As a result, the state is implementing a revised assessment for science (grade 5, grade 8, and Biology I) and social studies in the area of United States History, all with increasing rigor.

During the transition years to the PARCC assessments (2011-2013), Mississippi will continue to administer the current state assessments, the MCT2 and SATP2. Due to the increased instructional rigor associated with the CCSS, the MDE believes that implementation of the CCSS will have a positive impact on the results of the current state assessments.

### **Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)**

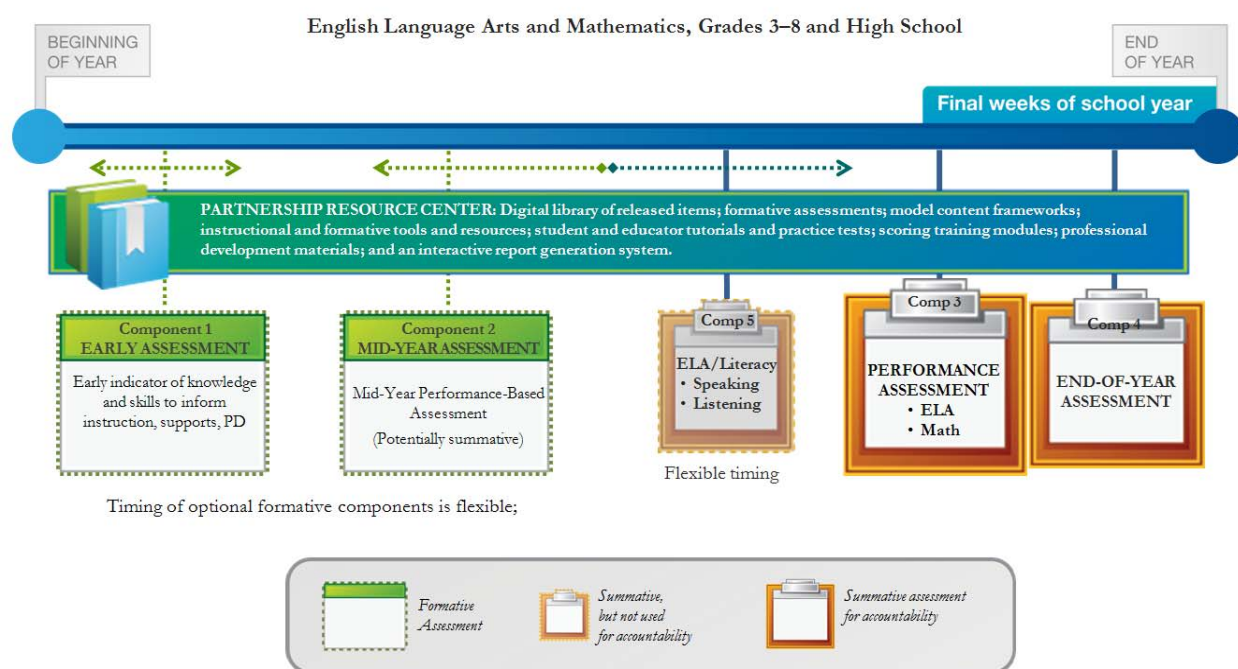
Mississippi recently became a governing state in the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium. PARCC is developing an assessment for grades 3-11 that will be aligned to the CCSS. The new assessments will be implemented during the 2014-

2015 school year. Mississippi is scheduled to participate in the field test of the next generation assessments in 2012-2014.

As noted in the graphic below, the planned PARCC assessments include formative and summative assessments, some with performance-based components.

## Assessment of the Common Core: The PARCC System

(July 2011 revision, pending USED approval)



Developed by The Center for K–12 Assessment & Performance Management at ETS, version 4, July 2011. For detailed information on PARCC, go to <http://PARCCOnline.org>.<sup>6</sup>

***The MDE has reviewed the factors that need to be addressed in preparing teachers of students with disabilities participating in the State's alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards (AA-MAAS) in order to ensure these students can participate in the assessments that will be aligned with college and career-ready standards.***

The MDE Offices of Special Education and Student Assessment have collaborated to provide regional and statewide high-quality technical assistance and training for district and school staff on Mississippi's current Alternate Assessment. Participants, including special education directors, district test coordinators, building principals, and classroom teachers, have

received written guidance, manuals, and suggested forms for quality implementation, as well as a series of webinars for on-going support. The MDE Offices of Special Education and Student Assessment will continue to collaborate to provide training and assistance as the state transitions to the common core.

### **Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment System Consortium (DLM)**

Mississippi is a governing member of [The Dynamic Learning Maps \(DLM\) Alternate Assessment System Consortium](#). DLM is a multi-state consortium awarded a grant by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to develop a new alternative assessment system. DLM is led by [The Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation \(CETE\)](#) and includes experts from a wide range of assessment fields as well as key partners, such as The Arc, the University of Kansas, Center for Literacy and Disability Studies at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and Edvantia).

The Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AAS) differs from the current alternate assessments in several ways. First, DLM-AAS will be based on learning maps. Learning maps allow students to demonstrate their knowledge, even when they take alternate pathways to achieve that knowledge. These alternate pathways give students more opportunities to show that they can learn challenging content linked to the Common Core State Standards.

Second, DLM-AAS provides an instructionally embedded assessment integrated into the teaching process, thus allowing the teacher to know what students can do and make adjustments to instruction in real time. A stand-alone summative assessment will also be available.

Third, DLM-AAS will incorporate instructionally relevant item types. These items will be similar to what students actually do during instruction. These item types will also utilize technology tools such as drag-and-drop, hot spots, keyword lists, numerical responses, as well as other types to be determined. These new item types will allow the rigor and challenge of the assessment to be aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

There are two types of assessments that are being developed for DLM. The first is a stand-alone adaptive, summative assessment, to be given in the spring of the year to assess the knowledge and skills learned throughout the year. The second is an instructionally embedded assessment that will take place throughout the year. Regardless of which assessment is used, students, parents, and teachers will be given detailed information to help guide learning. The timeline for administration is currently aligned with the PARCC implementation.

***Mississippi is implementing additional activities in its CCSS transition plan to support implementation of the standards.***

In addition to the Career Pathways and college transitions options discussed earlier in this section, the Mississippi Department of Education, in collaboration with literacy experts and practitioners, has developed a Statewide Literacy Plan to guide efforts in the literacy of students from birth through grade 12. Even though the state did not receive federal funding for literacy, the MDE is committed to working with school districts, parents, other state agencies, and private partners to implement the plan. As reinforced through Governor Bryant's Rising Together inaugural address, Mississippi *"must re-focus our efforts on the most important factor in education: a child's ability to read. We know a child who cannot read at a standard level by the fourth grade is almost always destined to failure. We cannot continue to stand-by and allow this failure. The future our children live in will be written, and I want every child in Mississippi to be able to read it."*

Efforts to address actions in the State Literacy Plan are already underway. The Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Curriculum and Instruction, in collaboration with the Early Childhood Institute at Mississippi State University, has developed early learning standards. The *2012 Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Three-Year Old Children* and the *2012 Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year Old Children* represent the expertise and experience of a task force of early childhood professionals.

While the *2012 Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year Old Children* are aligned to the kindergarten Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, the standards for four-year old children serve as the basis for the standards for three-year old children. Each document defines what young children should understand and be able to do before entering kindergarten. The standards correspond to the CCSS for ELA strands for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language and the CCSS for Mathematics Domains.

## 1.C DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER ANNUAL, STATEWIDE, ALIGNED, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS THAT MEASURE STUDENT GROWTH

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition.</p> <p>i. Attach the State's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)</p>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.</p> <p>i. Provide the SEA's plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014-2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.</p>	<p><b>Option C</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)</p>
<p><b>Attachment 6</b> is the Mississippi Department of Education's Memorandum of Understanding for the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium.</p>		



## PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

### 2.A DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STATE-BASED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A.i *Provide a description of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA's plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.*

***The MDE's accountability system provides differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for all districts in the state and for all Title I schools in those districts based on student achievement, graduation rate, and school performance. The Mississippi plan includes measures to address the achievement gap between the lowest and highest achieving subgroups, as measured by the state's performance assessments, and will be implemented beginning with 2012-13 school year.***

Included in Mississippi's proposed system is a plan for setting new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs). The new AMOs will drive an amended Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) model for the state. As required, AYP determinations will be made annually and reported for every public school and every district. The AMOs will also be used as required under the new ESEA flexibility for identifying Reward Schools, and for determining interventions for Focus and Priority schools, as well as for other schools not making progress.

The amended AYP model that will be proposed under the ESEA flexibility has many advantages over the original (and subsequently amended) NCLB AYP model and will produce reliable and accurate classifications for schools and districts in the state. Further, the metric used for the amended model will include a "Quality of Distribution Index" (QDI) to measure achievement for all schools in Mississippi.

#### **Overview**

The proposed amended AYP model and the proposed Differentiated Accountability (DA) model use both the scale score distribution for a state assessment and the four defined proficiency levels (Minimal, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced) for the assessment, eschewing the reduction of the student achievement information into crude categories that impede the ability of the models to use sensitive measures of student achievement and growth.

Each student's scale score is used to determine his/her exact position within the score distribution and to classify students into "highest" and "lowest" performing groups for purposes of accurately assessing achievement gaps.

Each student's assigned proficiency level is incorporated into a formula for calculating each achievement index, based on the full range of proficiency levels and is called a "Quality of Distribution Index" or QDI. A Quality of Distribution Index (QDI) value is calculated using data from the state assessments. The QDI value ranges from 0 (100% of students scoring in the lowest proficiency level on the assessments) to 300 (100% of the students scoring in the highest proficiency level on the assessments). The QDI is based on a relatively simple concept—if more students score in the higher proficiency levels on the test, the distribution of scores is more "positive." No credit is given for students scoring in the Minimal (lowest) proficiency level and the greatest credit is given for students scoring in the Advanced (highest) proficiency level. The QDI value can range from 0 (100% of students scoring Minimal) through 300 (100% scoring Advanced), and is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{QDI} = (1 \times \% \text{ Basic}) + (2 \times \% \text{ Proficient}) + (3 \times \% \text{ Advanced})$$

The QDI value has been used within the State Accountability System since the 2008-2009 school year and is known to school and district staff, parents, the public and other stakeholders within Mississippi.

QDI Values used in the Differentiated Accountability (DA) Model are the following:

**QDI Overall (QDI<sub>O</sub>)** -The QDI value calculated using all of the students within a school, district or state and represents overall achievement (the "all students" group)

**QDI High (QDI<sub>H</sub>)** -The QDI value calculated using only the "Highest Performing Students" within a school, district or state

**QDI Low (QDI<sub>L</sub>)** -The QDI value calculated using only the "Lowest Performing Students" within a school, district or state

**QDI Gap (QDI<sub>Δ</sub>)** -The QDI value calculated by subtracting the achievement index for the lowest performing students (**QDI<sub>L</sub>**) from the achievement index for the highest performing students (**QDI<sub>H</sub>**); The **QDI<sub>Δ</sub>** represents a measure of the achievement gap at the school, district, or state levels.

As noted previously, each student's scale score is used to determine his/her exact position within the score distribution and to classify students into

“highest” and “lowest” performing groups for purposes of accurately assessing achievement gaps.

## **The new achievement measures and their use within ESEA Flexibility**

### **Principle 2 (DA)**

The four QDI values for each school and district (as well as the state)—along with measures based on the new AMOs—provide all the student achievement information necessary for implementing an accurate and reliable accountability model reflecting the principles established by the USDE Waiver documents.

**QDI<sub>o</sub>** is necessary for creating the school rankings for identifying Title I schools falling within certain areas of the performance distribution.

In addition to QDI measures for school accountability, the MDE will also use, as directed through the ESEA Flexibility Guidance, the graduation rates over a period of three years to identify schools for differentiated accountability levels. Mississippi’s current graduation rate uses the USDE-approved cohort graduation rate. In an effort to remove barriers to college- and career-readiness, the MDE proposes to waive CFR section 200.19(b) regarding the calculation of graduation rate. The proposed definition of a “regular high school diploma” would include successful completion of the GED (General Educational Development test) option either at the high school or in partnership with local community colleges in the graduation rate calculations. The strong community college system in Mississippi and its close working relationship with local school districts offers a robust GED partnership, eliminating virtually all barriers to high school completion.

Combining additional accurate and reliable information (e.g., graduation rates) with the achievement information (overall achievement improvement and closing achievement gaps) allows the assignment of Title I schools to the categories specified and defined in the USDE Waiver documents. The MDE is still exploring a valid student growth model for use in the Differentiated Accountability system and for use in the educator evaluations discussed in Principle 3.

### **Characteristics of the Proposed Model**

The proposed model complies fully with the following requirements for ESEA flexibility approval.

- (1) The proposed system represents a fair, flexible, and focused accountability and support system with incentives for continuously improving the academic achievement of all students, closing persistent achievement gaps, and improving equity.
- (2) The proposed system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support [DA] ... looks at student achievement in ... reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and [for the students in] all

subgroups ... identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II); graduation rates for all students and [for the students in] all subgroups; and school performance and progress over time, including the performance and progress of [the students in] all subgroups.

- (3) The proposed amendment to the state's AYP model sets new ambitious but achievable AMOs in ... reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all [districts], [all] schools, and [all of the students in all] subgroups, that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts.
- (4) The proposed amendment to the state's AYP model includes an algorithm (similar to that used in the state's currently approved AYP model) that ensures that proficient and advanced scores of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (SCD) based on alternate academic achievement standards included for AYP proficiency calculations do not exceed 1% of all students in the grades assessed within a district.
- (5) The proposed system of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support (DA) includes appropriate and statistically valid measures of student achievement (and cohort graduation rates) that allow for reliable and accurate classifications of Title I schools as:
  - a) Reward Schools
  - b) Priority Schools
  - c) Focus Schools
  - d) Other Title I schools not making progress (TINMP) in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, based on the State's new AMOs and other measures
- (6) While the proposed system of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support (DA) includes all of the specific [required] components, the system was designed to incorporate innovative characteristics that are tailored to the needs of the state, [districts], schools, and students. The proposed DA system is designed to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps ... and support continuous improvement for all schools.
- (7) The state's annual [NCLB] report card will be revised to delete information related to "Title I Improvement Status" (based on NCLB §1116) and add the DA School Category (Reward School, Focus School, Priority School, TINMP School).
- (8) Reward Schools, Focus Schools, and Priority Schools under the proposed DA system will be identified (using achievement and graduation data from SY 2010-2011 and earlier years) and the list of identified schools will be included in the state's waiver request.
- (9) The proposed system of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support [DA] will take into account student growth once high-quality assessments have been adopted. The student level growth model will be developed and pilot tested using the 2013-2014 pilot and 2014-2015 live administrations of the state's high quality assessments.

### **Ensuring Improvement for Students in all NCLB Subgroups**

It is possible to ensure that students in each NCLB subgroup make progress and that the achievement gaps among students in those subgroups are closed without actually including all of the separate subgroups within an accountability model. The proposed AYP model amendment and the proposed DA system outlined in the Mississippi Statewide Accountability Technical Document (**Attachment 8a**) use sensitive and reliable measures of student achievement and reliable measures of school and district level achievement within a contrasting achievement group paradigm to meet the NCLB goal of ensuring that students in each subgroup make progress and that the achievement gaps among students in those subgroups are closed.

Mississippi's accountability system requires an n-count of 40 for data to be included in a given subgroup, as supported by research. Under the old AYP model, 74% of the schools in Mississippi were not held accountable for the IEP subgroup, due to having an n-count fewer than 40; likewise, 98% of the schools were not held accountable for the LEP subgroup. Under the proposed model only 2% of schools would have fewer than 40 students in the "lowest performing" subgroup (0.4% of the lowest performing students). See **Attachment 8a** for more data on this issue.

Under the proposed system, "Quality of Distribution Index" (QDI) values are calculated for the overall achievement at the school, district, or state (**QDI<sub>O</sub>**), the achievement of the "Lowest Performing Students" (**QDI<sub>L</sub>**), and the achievement of the "Highest Performing Students" (**QDI<sub>H</sub>**). A measure of the achievement gap at the school, district, or state (**QDI<sub>A</sub>**) is calculated by subtracting the achievement index for the lowest performing students (**QDI<sub>L</sub>**) from the achievement index for the highest performing students (**QDI<sub>H</sub>**).

Separate sets of QDI values are calculated for the current school year and for several earlier school years. Once the QDI values have been calculated, they are used for making AYP determinations and for identifying schools under the DA system using the steps described on the following pages.

As shown in **Attachment 8a**, schools and districts must improve overall student performance and close the achievement gaps between the highest and lowest performing students (including the performance of students in all NCLB subgroups) in order to reach the AMO goal. If students in some of the NCLB subgroups are allowed to perform poorly, the achievement gap cannot be closed and the "lowest performing students" subgroup will not reach the AMO goal.

Although the proposed amended AYP model and the proposed DA system incorporate only two achievement subgroups to accomplish the goals of closing achievement gaps and ensuring improved performance of the students in all NCLB subgroups, supplemental analyses will be run to



determine the percentages of students in each NCLB subgroup with scores in the high and low contrasting achievement subgroups. Interventions for each subgroup not performing will be established for each school.

In summary, the proposed amended AYP model and the proposed DA system are designed to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps and support continuous improvement for all schools.

***Mississippi's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system creates incentives and provides support to close achievement gaps for all subgroups of students.***

**Incentives:**

To actively encourage schools to close achievement gaps for all subgroups of students, the MDE plans to recognize schools that reach Reward status. While financial incentives are desirable, due to current economic and fiscal restraints, the MDE is pursuing other avenues of recognition, including banners, recognition at board meetings, designations noted on the website and/or included in a publication, staff serving on councils of excellence, flexibility on some state requirements, and other areas of encouragement, as identified by district personnel, which may include additional funds as available. The MDE is actively working with school and district personnel, through focus groups and on-line surveys, to identify additional supports and incentives. Further, information will be gathered through research such as the *Closing the Expectations Gap* annual report from Achieve, Inc.

Current state accountability procedures include incentives for overall school performance. Section 4 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2010* includes the following items on recognition and rewards that incentivize schools and districts to improve:

**4.0 RECOGNITION AND REWARDS**

The State Board of Education shall provide special recognition and/or rewards to individual schools or school districts meeting the highest levels of accreditation standards as defined by the State Board of Education. A school or district with a QDI in the top two ranges will be identified as meeting the highest level of accreditation standards.

**4.1 RECOGNITION**

Special recognition will be provided to all schools meeting the highest levels of accreditation standards. Examples of recognition include, but are not limited to the following:

- Public announcements and events;
- Special recognition of student progress and effort;
- Certificates of recognition and plaques for teachers, principals, superintendents, support and classified personnel and parents; and
- Media announcements utilizing the services of the Mississippi Educational Television.

## 4.2 REWARDS

Rewards may be provided for schools and school districts assigned the highest levels of performance as defined by the State Board of Education as follows:

4.2.1 Exemptions for Schools Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance. Schools meeting the highest levels of performance may be exempted from citations of noncompliance with [certain] process standards.

4.2.2 Exemptions for School Districts Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance.

School districts assigned the highest levels of performance may be exempted from citations of noncompliance with [certain] process standards.

4.2.3 Financial Rewards

If funds are appropriated by the legislature, schools meeting the highest levels of performance may apply to the State Board of Education for monetary incentives to be used for selected school needs, as identified by a vote of all licensed and instructional personnel employed at the school.

### **Support:**

Mississippi has been working since 2008 towards a statewide system of support (SSOS). Early efforts involved conducting a thorough evaluation of existing support, identifying gaps for informing strategic planning, exploring a tiered model for district assistance, and collaborating across MDE offices. Due to change in MDE staff and reorganization of the agency in 2010, the work on the SSOS was placed on hold. Just recently, the MDE established the Office of Instructional Enhancement to focus on developing and implementing a statewide system of support. The next step will be to select external stakeholders and MDE representatives to serve on a SSOS Roundtable to determine how to coordinate support services with a unified delivery system. Also recently, the MDE conducted a survey of district-level staff to solicit insight and recommendations for how the agency can improve services, reduce duplication, and increase efficiency. Results from the survey will be used to initiate the dialogue with the SSOS Roundtable about areas such as collaborating with offices on deadlines for multiple projects, providing consistency across offices, and improving communication. The SSOS Roundtable will also provide feedback on the best way to provide support for all schools based on needs.

In order to better support the needs of school districts and schools in Focus, Priority, and Reward status, and schools not in the identified school categories, as well as to reduce duplicated services and paperwork burdens, the Mississippi Department of Education is undergoing another review of the staff, offices, and support mechanisms to realign MDE's capacity and structure to most effectively address gaps, at-risk populations, and "bubble schools" or those near to entering the Focus and Priority status.

One of the key components of flexibility to be garnered through the waiver is the ability to leverage funds from a variety of state and federal sources. With approval of the waiver request, the MDE plans, as part of the review and realignment noted above, to include Title I, Part A, 1003a, and Consolidated Federal Cost Pool funds to support a streamlined effort of support for schools identified as Priority or Focus. Through the flexibility of coordinated funding, services from the MDE will ensure that all schools will receive the support needed to address the needs of all subgroups, including schools that have overall high performance, but lagging scores for one or more subgroups. To reduce duplication and paperwork expectations, offices across the MDE will coordinate submissions of plans and district monitoring, including activities from accreditation, federal programs, special education, school improvement, and school recovery, to ensure that support efforts are reaching each subgroup in the state and targeting continuous improvement.

***The MDE's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system includes interventions specifically focused on improving the performance of English Learners and students with disabilities.***

English Learners: The MDE has developed the *Mississippi Guidelines for English Language Learners* (revised March 2011), which have been disseminated through regional training and via the website ([http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/innovative\\_support/TitleIIIELL\\_policy.html](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/innovative_support/TitleIIIELL_policy.html)). Focused technical assistance and support for practitioners working with English Learners are provided throughout the school year. The MDE continues to work with all practitioners to support the needs of English Learner populations, including working with SEDL to design quality interventions for teachers of EL students to use in the mainstream classroom.

Students with Disabilities: As noted previously, the MDE Office of Special Education has provided extensive training, technical assistance, and support on interventions teachers may implement to best meet the needs of students with disabilities. Specifically, the OSE has developed *Tool Kits for Success* ([http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/special\\_education/Tool%20Kit/tool\\_kit\\_list.pdf](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/special_education/Tool%20Kit/tool_kit_list.pdf)) for educators, with a series of video files to support the use of the tool kits. Further, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction partnered with the Office of Special Education to create a series of training sessions focused on appropriate implementation of the Three Tier Instructional Model and the corresponding RtI process.

***All of these plans and initiatives will continue to be implemented in districts and schools during the 2012-13 school year and beyond.***

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA only includes student achievement on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify Reward, Priority, and Focus schools.</p>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify Reward, Priority, and Focus schools, it must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. provide the percentage of students in the “all students” group that performed at the proficient level on the State’s most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and</li> <li>b. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.</li> </ul>
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***The Mississippi Department of Education is proposing the inclusion of student achievement on science assessments (currently Biology I and 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science) in the Mississippi differentiated accountability system, in addition to reading language arts and mathematics.*** The table below includes the percentage of students in the “all students” group that performed at each performance level on the 2010-11 administration for each assessment.

2010-2011 Student Level Proficiency Distributions<sup>2</sup>

Test <sup>1</sup>	N-Count	% Minimal	% Basic	% Proficient	% Advanced
MCT2 Language	212,463	12.8	33.8	43.6	9.8
MCT2 Math	212,341	14.4	24.3	47.0	14.3
Science Test 5/8	68,073	16.8	27.5	38.2	17.4
English II	32,074	21.0	21.7	39.3	18.0
Algebra I	33,422	6.9	15.5	43.6	34.0
Biology I	32,037	13.6	30.7	45.4	10.3

<sup>1</sup> Test results in this table are collapsed across grades.

<sup>2</sup> N-Counts and results include students enrolled for a full academic year only.

***The MDE's weighting of the included assessments will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve the State's college- and career-ready standards.*** Given the importance of science, along with all areas of STEM, in a student's overall educational program, the decision to include state science assessment results in the DA model will send a strong message: Mississippi makes the right choices for its students. Working with various STEM partnership initiatives, including collaborative efforts between Career and Technical Education, the US Navy, and postsecondary education, Mississippi has set an example following the national focus on STEM. By including science in the on-going focus on assessment and accountability, the state supports the instructional practices that are necessary to take students to the next level of instruction and truly ensures that all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.

***Assurance 6 of the ESEA Waiver is checked,*** and as it indicates, the MDE proposes to include student achievement on science assessments (currently Biology I and 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science) in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. The achievement on all the assessments will be used to identify Priority, Focus, and Reward schools, and the MDE has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system.



## 2.B SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

*Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.*

Option A	Option B	Option C
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the “all students” group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.  i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.  i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups.  i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.  ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below.  iii. Provide a link to the State’s report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the “all students” group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8)

## Method for Setting AMOs

For every school in the state, the 2010-2011 data were used to set a baseline. A trajectory was calculated that represented decreasing the percentage of non-proficient students by half by 2017. Separate AMOs were established for the “all students” group and “lowest performing students” subgroup—the same QDI-Overall (**QDI<sub>o</sub>**) and QDI-Low (**QDI<sub>L</sub>**) subgroups identified for the overall DA model.

The proficiency target QDI for “all students” (**QDI<sub>o</sub>**) and “lowest performing students” (**QDI<sub>L</sub>**) subgroups is 200. Therefore, each **QDI<sub>o</sub>** and **QDI<sub>L</sub>** are subtracted from 200, then divided by two to establish the growth measure needed to cut the proficiency gap in half by 2017. This value is then divided by six and rounded to the nearest integer to determine the annual increase in QDI required to meet Annual Measurable Objectives. The annual increase is then added to the current year’s QDI to establish the next year’s objective.

For the statewide average, the “all students” subgroup (**QDI<sub>o</sub>**) is 158. The information below works through the formula for establishing the annual increase required for the statewide **QDI<sub>o</sub>**:

$$200 \text{ minus } 158 = 42$$

$$42 \text{ divided by } 2 \text{ (cut in half)} = 21$$

$$21 \text{ divided by } 6 \text{ (for annual goal)} = 3.5, \text{ rounded to } 4$$

The table below includes the annual measurable objectives established for the statewide average.

For the statewide average, the “lowest performing students” subgroup (**QDI<sub>L</sub>**) is 58. The information below works through the formula for establishing the annual increase required for the statewide **QDI<sub>L</sub>**:

$$200 \text{ minus } 58 = 142$$

$$142 \text{ divided by } 2 \text{ (cut in half)} = 71$$

$$71 \text{ divided by } 6 \text{ (for annual goal)} = 11.8, \text{ rounded to } 12$$

The table below includes the annual measurable objectives established for the statewide average.

Details of the calculations are included in **Attachment 8a**.

### Mississippi's Proposed AMOs for the State

<b>QDI for AMOs OPTION A</b>	<b>2011 (baseline)</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<i>annual growth rate</i>
<b>All Students (QDI<sub>o</sub>)</b>	158	162	166	170	174	178	<b>182</b>	4
<b>Lowest Performing Subgroup (QDI<sub>L</sub>)</b>	58	70	82	94	106	118	<b>130</b>	12

To ensure appropriate, differentiated accountability and interventions, the MDE has applied this same model to set goals for each school in the state. Therefore, schools that are not at the state **QDI<sub>o</sub>** and **QDI<sub>L</sub>** (158 and 58, respectively) are not held to the same standard as schools that are. For example, the lowest performing school in the state on 2011 assessments had a **QDI<sub>o</sub>** of 65 and a **QDI<sub>L</sub>** of 0. The lowest performing school's goals are necessarily different from the statewide average indicated above, with annual growth rate expectations of 12 (**QDI<sub>o</sub>**) and 16 (**QDI<sub>L</sub>**). Conversely, the highest performing school in the state on 2011 assessments had a **QDI<sub>o</sub>** of 242 and a **QDI<sub>L</sub>** of 171. The highest performing school's goals differ from the statewide average indicated above and from the lowest performing school's goals, with annual growth rate expectations of 0 (**QDI<sub>o</sub>**) and 2 (**QDI<sub>L</sub>**). Therefore, the expected rates of growth for LEAs, schools, and subgroups that are further behind have greater rates of annual progress.

## 2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as Reward schools. If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in ESEA Flexibility (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

**The Mississippi Department of Education will use the following methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as Reward schools, as directed through the ESEA Flexibility Waiver Documents provided by the USDE:**

- **Highest-Performing**
  - Highest **QDI-Overall (QDI<sub>O</sub>)**: The school's **QDI-Overall (QDI<sub>O</sub>)** over a three-year period falls within the highest 20% of all schools.
  - AND**
  - High Graduation rate (if high school): The school's **graduation rate** over a three-year period falls within the highest 20% of all schools.
  - AND**
  - Met AMOs for overall and all subgroups
  - AND**
  - Lowest **QDI-Gap (QDI<sub>Δ</sub>)**: The school's **QDI-Gap** over a three-year period falls within the lowest 20% of all schools.
- **High-Progress**
  - Highest increase in **QDI-Overall (QDI<sub>O</sub>)**: The school's growth as measured by **QDI-Overall (QDI<sub>O</sub>)** over a three-year period falls within the highest 10% of all Title I schools.
  - OR**
  - Highest increase in Graduation rates (if high school): The school's growth in graduation rate over a three-year period falls within the highest 25% of all schools.
- AND**
  - **QDI-Gap (QDI<sub>Δ</sub>)** has decreased by one or more points over a three-year period.

2.C.ii Provide the SEA's list of Reward schools on page 68.

*2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.*

As noted in response 2.a, the MDE is currently working with school district practitioners to develop a recognition and rewards program that will truly incentivize schools to improve and reach Reward status. In addition to the information presented in 2.a regarding the statewide plan for rewarding high performing schools and districts, the MDE has a board-approved methodology to provide monetary awards to Title I schools that have significantly closed the achievement gap between the sub-groups of students; or exceeded their AYP for two or more consecutive years.

- Funding provided based on increase in Title I Part A funding from preceding year (maximum of 5%)
- Generally award twelve schools annually (depending on funding)
- Highest two awarded schools recognized at National Title I Conference
- All awarded schools recognized by State Board of Education



## 2.D PRIORITY SCHOOLS

*2.D.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State’s Title I schools as Priority schools. If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in ESEA Flexibility (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.*

***The Mississippi Department of Education will use the following methodology for identifying at least five percent of the State’s Title I schools as Priority schools:***

Per the ESEA Flexibility definition, the Mississippi Department of Education will identify a Priority School as “a school that, based on the most recent data available, has been identified as among the lowest-performing schools in the State. The total number of Priority schools in a State must be at least five percent of the Title I schools in the State.” Mississippi served 720 Title I Schools in 2010-11; thus, the number of Priority schools identified will be a minimum of 36, or 5% of the Title I schools in the State.

Criteria for Priority School Status

- Lowest **QDI-Overall (QDI<sub>o</sub>)**: The school’s overall QDI falls within the lowest 5% of all schools in the state. **AND**
- Lack of progress on **QDI-Overall (QDI<sub>o</sub>)**: The school’s growth as measured by **QDI-Overall (QDI<sub>o</sub>)** over a three-year period falls within the lowest 27% of all schools. **OR**
- Graduation rate below 60% (if high school) over a three-year period **OR**
- Current SIG schools

Category of Priority Schools	Number of Schools
Total number of Title I schools	720
Total number of Priority schools required to be identified	36
Total number of schools on list generated based on overall rating that are currently-served Tier I or Tier II SIG schools	18
Total number of schools on list generated based on overall rating that are Title I-eligible or Title I-participating high schools with a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years	6
Total number of schools on list generated based on overall rating that are among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools	12

*2.D.ii Provide the SEA's list of Priority schools on page 68.*

*2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with Priority schools will implement.*

**a. SEA Interventions**

The Mississippi Department of Education is committed to providing a coordinated, seamless system of intervention and support to Priority schools. Under the new waiver, multiple offices will consolidate efforts to support intervention implementation in the Priority schools. Through the identification process for these schools, a minimum of 36 schools (or 5% of the 720 Title I-participating schools) will be identified for Priority status. Of those 36 schools, 18 schools are Tier I or II SIG participants for 2012-13. SIG Priority Schools are bound by the turnaround principles through SIG awards. Each SIG school has an approved plan describing how the school will meet each requirement. Each school has a three-year (annually renewable) grant to support the inventions. All schools have at least \$500,000 a year but no more than \$2,000,000 available through 1003g. SIG schools must use any additional federal funds to support their approved school improvement implementation plan.

The non-SIG Priority schools will also receive technical assistance and continuous monitoring services, based on SIG turnaround principles. State and local funds, along with up to 20% of the districts' Title I, Part A budget and portions of the 1003a set-aside, will be leveraged to implement the turnaround principles the non-SIG funded schools. Each of these schools will be required to implement a three-year action plan, focusing intervention efforts on identified implementation practices that meet the turnaround principles (cross-walked with federal guidance, as well as supplemental turnaround resources).

**Mississippi's Turnaround Principles**

The **bold** font text below indicates a federal principle. Under each federal principle, the Mississippi indicators used to measure each school's progress toward meeting the turnaround principle are listed.

**1. Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model.**

- Principal promotes a culture of shared accountability for meeting school improvement performance objectives.
- Principal communicates a compelling vision for school improvement to all stakeholders.
- Principal possesses the competencies of a transformation leader.

- 2. Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that a) take into account data on student growth as a significant factor as well as other factors, such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high school graduation rates; and b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.**
  - LEA/school has a process in place for recruiting, placing, and retaining school teachers and principals with skills needed for school transformation.
  - LEA/school has a rigorous and transparent evaluation system with input from teachers and principals that includes evidence of student achievement/growth.
  - LEA/school implemented the new evaluation system for principals and teachers.
- 3. Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so.**
  - LEA/school has a system of rewards for school staff who positively impact student achievement and graduation rates.
  - LEA/school identifies and supports school staff who are struggling or removes staff who fail to improve their professional practice.
- 4. Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies.**
  - All teachers meet in teams with clear expectations and time for planning.
  - LEA/school aligns professional development programs with teacher appraisal results.
  - LEA/school provides induction programs for new teachers and administrators.
  - LEA/school provides all staff with high-quality, job-embedded, differentiated professional development to support school improvement.
  - LEA/school monitors extent that professional development changes teacher practice.
- 5. Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible**

**work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation model.**

- LEA/school has developed a plan/process to establish a pipeline of potential turnaround leaders.

**6. Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with state academic standards.**

- School leadership continuously uses data to drive school improvement.
- Principal continuously monitors the delivery of instruction in all classrooms.

**7. Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) in order to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of individual students.**

- LEA/school leadership teams collect and monitor benchmark/interim data on all SIG leading and lagging indicators.
- LEA/school established annual goals for student achievement in all core areas.
- LEA/school has a process for the selection of research-based instructional programs/strategies.
- LEA/school aligns curriculum, instruction, and assessment with state standards.
- All teachers routinely assess students' mastery of instructional objectives.
- All teachers adjust instruction based on students' mastery of objectives.
- All teachers integrate technology-based interventions and supports into instructional practice.
- All teachers provide all students with opportunities to enroll in and master rigorous coursework for college and career readiness.
- All teachers incorporate instructional strategies that promote higher-level learning for all students.
- All teachers actively engage students in the learning process.
- All teachers communicate clearly and effectively.

**8. Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time.**

- LEA/school has increased learning time for all students.
- School continuously evaluates the effectiveness of increased learning time.
- All teachers maximize time available for instruction.

- All teachers establish and maintain a culture of learning to high expectations
- School accesses innovative partnerships to support extended learning time.

**9. Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.**

- School and teachers provide parents with regular communication about learning standards, the progress of their children, and the parents' roles in supporting their children's success in school.
- School includes parents in decision-making roles for school improvement.
- School engages community members in partnerships that benefit students.
- School partners with community groups to provide social-emotional supports for students.
- School implements approaches to improve school climate and discipline

**10. Give the school sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates.**

- LEA/school conducted a needs assessment to inform the SIG implementation plan.
- LEA personnel are organized and assigned to support schools in their SIG implementation.
- LEA modified policies and practices to support full and effective implementation.
- LEA provides sufficient operational flexibility to the principal to lead transformation or turnaround.
- LEA has established a district turnaround office to support SIG implementation.

**11. Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, the SEA, or a designated external lead partner organization (such as a school turnaround organization or EMO).**

- LEA/school recruits, screens, and selects external partners.
- LEA/school clearly specifies expectations of external partners in contracts and continuously evaluates their performance.
- School leadership team meets regularly to manage SIG implementation.
- LEA and district transformation specialists provide intensive, ongoing assistance to support school improvement.



- LEA/school ensures that external service providers deliver intensive, ongoing assistance to support school reform strategies.
- LEA/school aligns allocation of resources (money, time, personnel) to school improvement goals.

#### **b. Practices to be implemented**

The Mississippi SIG program is in the early implementation phase of the Center on Innovation and Improvement (CII) resource called Indistar®, a nationally recognized school improvement system for reporting, monitoring, and ultimately driving comprehensive school improvement efforts. CII worked with Mississippi to design a state-specific Indistar®-based system named *Mississippi Star*. The system has the potential to be the vehicle for developing, implementing, and evaluating a singular, comprehensive school improvement process within Mississippi.

The use of the online resource for differentiating intervention support efforts and focusing on the critical elements of school reform in all Priority schools will provide streamlined planning and reduce duplicity as well as the paperwork burden currently felt by school districts with schools served by the varying offices across the MDE. The federal turnaround principles and corresponding Mississippi indicators for implementation are pre-loaded into the *Mississippi Star* platform. In addition, the implementation indicators are aligned with research-based strategies from resources such as *Wise Ways, Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants, Turnaround Competencies*, and *What Works Clearinghouse* (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>).

Through the online system, schools will build a comprehensive database of information designed to direct their school improvement actions. Specifically, school leadership teams will establish three-year performance goals with interim annual benchmarks for the leading/lagging indicators identified within the SIG requirements. The extensive analysis of data elements serves as the core of the school's comprehensive needs assessment. Leadership teams within each Priority school will assess their progress relative to the implementation of indicators/turnaround principles. Indicators that are rated as "fully implemented" must be supported with extensive evidence, whereas detailed action plans will be developed for indicators rated as "limited implementation." Action plans will indicate the research-based best practices being implemented to guide reform efforts for rapid school improvement.

Consistent support for each Priority school/district will come primarily through an MDE-placed implementation specialist who will provide on-site differentiated technical assistance and support designed to continually monitor the fidelity of implementation of the school's action/improvement

plan and provide support on needed corrections. To support the reduction of paperwork, the required action plan will be supported through the *Mississippi Star* online program, and the turnaround plan required will also serve as the school improvement (action) plan. Each district will establish a community-based prekindergarten through higher education council to influence the action plan. Districts and their councils will utilize *Mississippi Star*, a quality on-line tool for districts/schools to use in writing the action plan and tracking progress toward meeting goals.

***The MDE expects each Priority school to implement the turnaround principles within the first two years of implementation, and continue that implementation for a minimum of three years.***

Priority schools will design a three-year comprehensive school improvement plan that explicitly addresses each of the turnaround principles. Plan components will include narratives, implementation milestones/timelines, action plans, measures of progress, and responsible parties. Continuous assessments of implementation actions by the school will be monitored through on-line reports submitted in *Mississippi Star*, on-site technical assistance visits by MDE implementation specialists, and annual monitoring visits.

The action plan will include strategies to meet the school's annual goals toward the following indicators:

Leading Indicators:

- Number of minutes within the school year and school day;
- Student participation rate on State assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by student subgroup;
- Number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework (e.g., AP/IB), early-college high schools, or dual enrollment classes;
- Dropout rate;
- Student attendance rate;
- Discipline incidents;
- Truants;
- Distribution of teachers by performance level on an LEA's teacher evaluation system;
- Teacher attendance rate;

Achievement Indicators

- Percentage of students at or above each proficiency level on State assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics, by grade and by student subgroup;
- Average scale scores on State assessments in reading/language arts and

mathematics, by grade, for the “all students” group, for each achievement quartile, and for each subgroup;

- Percentage of limited English proficient students who attain English language proficiency;
- School improvement status and AYP targets met and missed;
- College enrollment rates; and
- Graduation rate.

MDE will review each school based on whether the school has satisfied the requirements in regards to its annual performance targets or on a trajectory to do so.

- *Leading Indicators*—A school must meet 6 of 9 leading indicator goals.
- *Achievement Indicators*—The school must also meet a minimum of 50% of applicable achievement indicators.

*2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more Priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each Priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA’s choice of timeline.*

As noted earlier, the use of the online resource for differentiating intervention support efforts and focusing on the critical elements of school reform in all Priority and Focus schools will provide streamlined planning and reduce duplicity as well as the paperwork burden currently felt by school districts with schools served by the varying offices across the MDE. The indicators for implementation from 2.D.iii.a are pre-loaded into *Mississippi Star* platform and include all of the turnaround principles. In addition, the implementation indicators are aligned with research-based strategies from resources such as *Wise Ways*, *Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants*, *Turnaround Competencies*, and *What Works Clearinghouse* (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>).

*2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits Priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.*

Given that a school enters Priority status and is expected to implement the turnaround strategies for three years, schools identified as Priority for the 2012-2013 School Year will remain Priority through the 2014-2015 School Year, unless all the Exit Criteria are met.

#### **Criteria for Exiting Priority Status**

- No longer in the bottom 5% of schools based on performance (**QDI<sub>0</sub>**),
- Two consecutive years of academic improvement as measured by QDI/graduation rate,
- Two consecutive years of “no material findings” in an annual monitoring review
- Meeting goals established for Leading and Achievement Indicators, **AND**
- Community-based council in place and functioning

Once a school exits Priority Status, the school will continue to receive technical assistance from the Statewide System of Support for an additional three years for sustainability.

## 2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

*2.E.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State’s Title I schools as “Focus schools.” If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in ESEA Flexibility (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.*

***The Mississippi Department of Education will use the following methodology for identifying at least ten percent of the State’s Title I schools as Focus schools:***

Per the ESEA Flexibility definition, the Mississippi Department of Education will identify a Focus School based on four criteria:

- Greatest **QDI-Gap (QDI<sub>Δ</sub>)**: The school’s QDI-Gap falls within the highest 20% of all schools in the state.

**AND**

- Lowest **QDI-Low (QDI<sub>L</sub>)**: The school’s QDI-Low falls within the lowest 20% of all schools in the state.

**OR**

- Graduation rate below 60% (if high school) over a three-year period

**AND**

- Not identified as a Priority School

Category of Focus Schools	Number of Schools
Total number of Title I schools	722
Total number of schools required to be identified as Focus schools	72 (MDE tentatively has 80.)
Total number of schools on list generated based on overall rating that are Title I-participating high schools that have had a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years	None, all are Priority
Total number of schools on the list generated based on overall rating that have the greatest within-school gaps	43
Total number of schools on the list generated based on overall rating that have a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, low graduation rates	37



2.E.ii Provide the SEA's list of Focus schools on page 68.

2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more Focus schools will identify the specific needs of the SEA's Focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions Focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

### **Interventions for Focus Schools**

The Mississippi Department of Education is committed to providing a coordinated, seamless system of intervention and support to Focus schools. Under the new waiver, multiple offices will consolidate efforts to support interventions in the schools. The coordination will also serve to reduce duplication and paperwork expectations for school districts.

Consistent support for each Focus school/district will come primarily through an MDE-placed support specialist who will visit the school/district on an on-going basis (at least twice monthly), evaluating the fidelity of implementation of the school's action/improvement plan and providing support on needed corrections. The district will establish a community-based prekindergarten through higher education council to influence the action plan. Districts and their councils may utilize *Mississippi Star*, a quality on-line tool for districts/schools to use in developing the action plan and tracking progress toward meeting goals.

### **In-depth Performance Review and Support**

The intervention model to be employed with Focus schools includes a comprehensive needs assessment and qualified support specialists to assist schools in the implementation of the school improvement (action) plan. Each school, with the support of its district, may also conduct a self-evaluation, through *Mississippi Star*, of the level of need/performance on the turnaround principles. Focus school sites will be trained on strategies such as turnaround principles as part of their targeted interventions to address student achievement gaps.

Focus schools will be required to use a minimum of 10% of the school's Title I, Part A allocation for specific interventions related to achievement gaps. Job-embedded professional development will play a role in supporting instructional best practice. As funds are available, these schools may also receive 1003a funding to support specific interventions for achievement gaps.

*2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits Focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.*

Once a school enters Focus status, the school will not exit until all the Exit Criteria are met.

**Criteria for exiting Focus Status**

- No longer identified as a Focus school, based upon gap data,
- Academic improvement as measured by QDI/graduation rate,
- Narrowing the achievement gap, **AND**
- Community-based council in place and functioning

Once a school exits Focus status, the school will continue to receive technical assistance from the Statewide System of Support for an additional year for sustainability.

## REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS TABLE

Provide the SEA's list of Reward, Priority, and focus schools using the template. Use the key to indicate the criteria used to identify a school as a Reward, Priority, or Focus school.

**Note:** Mississippi's school identification lists are based upon 2010-2011 school year data. Therefore, the completed list below is redacted to conceal school-specific information for three reasons:

1. The final listing of Reward, Priority, and Focus schools will be compiled based upon 2011-12 school year data, and those data are not yet available.
2. The USDE has recommended redaction of school names.
3. The proposed accountability process within the waiver is not officially approved.

**Total # of Title I schools in the State: 722**

**Total # of Title I-participating high schools in the State with graduation rates less than 60%: 6 based on 2010-2011 data (final number to be determined with 2011-2012 data)**

### Key

<b>Reward School Criteria:</b> <b>A.</b> Highest-performing school <b>B.</b> High-progress school  <b>Priority School Criteria:</b> <b>C.</b> Among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on proficiency and lack of progress of the "all students" group <b>D.</b> Title I-participating or Title I-eligible high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years <b>E.</b> Tier I or Tier II SIG school implementing a school intervention model	<b>Focus School Criteria:</b> <b>F.</b> Has the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup(s) and the lowest-achieving subgroup(s) or, at the high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in the graduation rate <b>G.</b> Has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, a low graduation rate <b>H.</b> A Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years that is not identified as a Priority school
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## REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

Srt	District	School	School Code	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
1	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		C	
2	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		C	
3	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		C	
4	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		C	
5	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		C	
6	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		C	
7	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		C	
8	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		C	
9	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		C	
10	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		C	

<b>Srt</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School Code</b>	<b>REWARD SCHOOL</b>	<b>PRIORITY SCHOOL</b>	<b>FOCUS SCHOOL</b>
11	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		C	
12	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		C	
13	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		D	
14	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		D	
15	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		D	
16	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		D	
17	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		D	
18	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		D	
19	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
20	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
21	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
22	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
23	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
24	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
25	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
26	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
27	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
28	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
29	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
30	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
31	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
32	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
33	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
34	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
35	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
36	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS		E	
37	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
38	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
39	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
40	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
41	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
42	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
43	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
44	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
45	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
46	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
47	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
48	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
49	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
50	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
51	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
52	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
53	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
54	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
55	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F
56	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS			F

<b>Srt</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School Code</b>	<b>REWARD SCHOOL</b>	<b>PRIORITY SCHOOL</b>	<b>FOCUS SCHOOL</b>
57	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
58	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
59	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
60	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
61	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
62	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
63	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
64	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
65	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
66	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
67	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
68	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
69	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
70	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
71	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
72	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
73	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
74	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
75	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
76	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
77	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
78	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
79	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			F
80	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
81	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
82	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
83	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
84	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
85	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
86	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
87	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
88	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
89	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
90	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
91	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
92	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
93	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
94	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
95	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
96	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
97	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
98	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
99	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
100	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
101	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
102	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G



<b>Srt</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School Code</b>	<b>REWARD SCHOOL</b>	<b>PRIORITY SCHOOL</b>	<b>FOCUS SCHOOL</b>
103	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
104	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
105	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
106	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
107	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
108	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
109	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
110	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
111	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
112	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
113	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
114	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
115	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
116	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS			G
117	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
118	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
119	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
120	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
121	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
122	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
123	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
124	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
125	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
126	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
127	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
128	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
129	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
130	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
131	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
132	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
133	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
134	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
135	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
136	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
137	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	A		
138	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	B		
139	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	B		
140	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	B		
141	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	B		
142	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	B		
143	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	B		
144	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	B		
145	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	B		
146	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	B		
147	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	B		
148	District X	School Y	DDDDSSSS	B		

<b>Srt</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School Code</b>	<b>REWARD SCHOOL</b>	<b>PRIORITY SCHOOL</b>	<b>FOCUS SCHOOL</b>
149	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
150	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
151	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
152	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
153	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
154	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
155	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
156	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
157	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
158	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
159	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
160	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
161	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
162	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		
163	District X	School Y	DDDDSSS	B		

## 2.F PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR OTHER TITLE I SCHOOLS

*2.F Describe how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA's new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.*

***The MDE's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system provides incentives and supports for other Title I schools that, based on the SEA's new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps.***

### ***Incentives:***

As noted in response 2.a, the MDE, in collaboration with school district practitioners, is refining the recognition and rewards program to incentivize schools to improve student achievement and narrow achievement gaps. While financial incentives are desirable, due to current economic and fiscal restraints, the MDE is pursuing other avenues of recognition, including banners, recognition at board meetings, designations noted on the website and/or included in a publication, staff serving on councils of excellence, flexibility on some requirements, and other areas of encouragement, as identified by district personnel, which may include additional funds as available. The MDE is actively working with school and district personnel, through focus groups and on-line surveys, to identify additional supports and incentives. Further, information will be gathered through research such as the *Closing the Expectations Gap* annual report from Achieve, Inc.

### ***Supports:***

State Superintendent Dr. Tom Burnham has shared the seven successful strategies of the highest performing schools in the world with legislators, school boards, district leaders, and principals throughout the state. Marc Tucker's report *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants*, commissioned by the USDE, and the corresponding book *Surpassing Shanghai: An Agenda for American Education Built on the World's Leading Systems*, have served as the basis for Dr. Burnham's presentations. Included in the seven strategies is the finding that schools must operate along professional lines. To that end, the Mississippi Department of Education is launching an intensive effort to guide training and support for all districts in the state to implement the professional learning communities framework. The MDE Office of Associate Superintendent for Instructional Enhancement is a newly created position designed to offer guidance on a statewide level to meet the needs of

schools. The office will coordinate efforts to sustain technical assistance for all schools that might not be in the Focus or Priority designation, yet need support in focusing on gaps, instructional interventions, best practice instructional strategies, and other emerging initiatives. The office, working with offices across the MDE, will focus interventions on the subgroups not meeting AMOs, as identified through the required report cards.

The Flexibility Request will provide the Mississippi Department of Education with a variety of options in supporting not only Priority, Focus, and Reward schools, but also other schools not making progress. For example, the Waiver Request includes the *Optional Flexibility* as relates to ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The Mississippi Department of Education requests that the requirement be waived so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

As noted in the USDE FAQ Addendum 3, “the flexibility allows for an additional use of funds for the 21st CCLC program—to provide activities that support high-quality expanded learning time. Expanded learning time is the time that an LEA or school extends its normal school day, week, or year to provide additional instruction or educational programs for all students beyond the State-mandated requirements for the minimum number of hours in a school day, days in a school week, or days or weeks in a school year.” The MDE will work with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grantees to utilize this flexibility in ways to increase enrichment for students while allowing teachers time for engaging professional collaboration.

## **2.G BUILD SEA, LEA, AND SCHOOL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING**

*2.G Describe the SEA's process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:*

- i. timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in Priority and Focus schools;*
- ii. ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in Priority schools, Focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and*
- iii. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their Priority schools*

*Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.*

### ***Monitoring and Technical Assistance for Priority and Focus to Increase Capacity***

The MDE provides a variety of resources for SIG awardees to use in selecting and evaluating external providers, including MDE-produced webinars and questionnaires as well as materials from the American Institutes for Research. These materials are available for all schools, and Priority and Focus Schools will use all the resources available to make the soundest educational decisions for their needs.

### **Priority Schools**

The MDE is undertaking an integrated approach to School Improvement Grant 1003g (SIG) monitoring and school accountability, which will be applied to all Priority schools. The approach is intended to assess the district/school's progress in the implementation of the school improvement intervention model and to determine the types of support needed in order for the school to meet the goals identified in its action plan.

The integrated approach to school improvement grant monitoring and school accountability ensures a comprehensive evidence base. The MDE will make use of existing data sources where possible. Evidence will be gathered through site visits by Implementation specialists, the collection of progress data, the completion of implementation progress reports, and an annual site visit by staff from the Mississippi Department of Education that includes gathering and reviewing documentation, conducting interviews, and visiting classrooms.

MDE staff will share findings from the information gathered with the



districts and schools to help them understand where implementation is successful, where implementation challenges exist, how challenges may be addressed, and how plans for subsequent years may be improved. The integrated approach will establish common data collection processes to gather information that will be immediately useful to schools in their work, as well as useful to long-term accountability requirements and grant renewal decisions.

The full description of the process is included in **Attachment 8b**.

### ***Sufficient Support for Interventions***

As noted in 2d, the Mississippi Department of Education is committed to providing a coordinated, seamless system of intervention and support to Priority schools. Under the new waiver, multiple offices will consolidate efforts for consistent, unduplicated support. The coordination of services will include leveraging Consolidated Federal Cost Pool, 1003a, 1003g, and state funds to ensure capacity for success.

Specific to Priority Schools, implementation specialists will conduct monthly site visits throughout the school year, following the guidelines established in the attached Monitoring Plan (**Attachment 8b**). The purpose of the site visits is to provide support to districts and schools as they implement their improvement plans and to gather information on implementation progress to determine further support to be extended. Implementation specialists will use the *Indicators of Implementation* (**Attachment 8b**) as the basis for determining implementation progress of the districts and schools. The *Indicators of Implementation* are aligned with the U.S. Department of Education's *Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs (SASA) Monitoring Plan for School Improvement Grants* (published on January 12, 2011) that identifies various indicators of progress for school improvement intervention models.

After conducting each district and school site visit, Implementation specialists will complete and submit a site visit report. Following MDE review, site visit reports will be submitted to the superintendent, district school improvement specialists, and principal. Notes recorded on the *Indicators of Implementation* form during each site visit provide the basis for completing the site visit report on district and school implementation status and recommendations.

For all schools in the state, the Statewide System of Support will ensure that schools identified through the state's differentiated system receive the technical assistance needed to improve instruction and student achievement.

## ***Holding LEAs accountable***

The MDE ensures LEA accountability through the following measures:

- Reporting:
  - Districts must make monthly reports to the local board on the progress of the action plan (and submit evidence to the MDE).
  - District and School Report Cards must be posted on-line and in print.
  - Accountability data are required to be posted on-line and in print through multiple dissemination strategies to parents and the community.
- On-site support, technical assistance, and monitoring facilitate intervention implementation, including the use of *Mississippi Star* reports.
- State accountability laws ensure district accountability by requiring more stringent oversight and additional training for superintendent and school board after consecutive years of low performance.
- All school districts undergo resource allocation reviews, and districts with concerns and findings receive intensive on-site technical assistance.
- Failing to implement interventions appropriately or failing to allocate resources appropriately could result in grant non-renewal.

## PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

### 3.A DEVELOP AND ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has not already developed any guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the SEA's plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year;</li> <li>ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and</li> <li>iii. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students;</li> <li>ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and</li> <li>iii. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.</li> </ul>
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#### 3.A.i Has the SEA developed and adopted guidelines consistent with Principle 3?

The Mississippi Teacher Appraisal guidelines are currently in the pilot phase. However, the State Board of Education adopted the draft guidelines (**Attachment 10**) at the November 2011 Board Meeting, and the minutes indicating so are **Attachment 11a** (Item 23).

The guidelines for the Mississippi Principal Evaluation will be submitted after approval by the State Board of Education, planned to occur by the end of the 2011-12 school year.

These guidelines are based upon research based best practices that increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement. Further information on the research supporting the 360-degree component of the Principal Evaluation model may be found on the VAL-ED website at <http://www.valed.com/research.html>. Research supporting the Teacher Appraisal Systems is included in Attachments 11b, 11c, and 11d.

***The MDE's development process for the teacher and principal guidelines includes multiple focus group meetings with educators to ensure extensive opportunity for involvement in the development of***

**these guidelines.** Multiple focus groups, stakeholders meetings, professional organizations, and councils have been actively engaged in the development and refinement of the guidelines.

### **Overview of the Teacher Appraisal System**

Mississippi is working diligently to improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for all students. Study after study confirms that students who have high quality teachers show significant and lasting achievement gains, while those with less effective teachers continue to fall behind. The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) embraces the research and is dedicated to ensuring that each Mississippi child is taught by an effective teacher.

To accomplish this goal, MDE commissioned the establishment of the Statewide Teacher Evaluation Council (STEC) in June 2010. The purpose of the council was to seek broad stakeholder input and guidance in the development of a rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation system for teachers.

The STEC was comprised of a broad range of stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and representatives of teacher unions, community, preparation programs, the superintendents' organization, and the Governor's Office. The group felt that the primary objective should be to improve the practice of teachers and administrators—and ultimately increase student achievement.

The group met on several occasions to develop Guiding Principles that identified the characteristics of an effective educator evaluation system. They determined that the new system should include the following components:

1. Drive growth in student achievement at the classroom, department, school, and district levels.
2. Focus on effective teaching and learning based on national and state standards that target high expectations and meet the diverse needs of every learner.
3. Use multiple rating tools to assess levels of productivity, including 1) measures of teamwork and collaboration; 2) student assessment data including student growth; 3) school and classroom climate; 4) leadership.
4. Include comprehensive training on evaluation system components that provide fair, transparent scoring mechanisms and produce inter-rater reliability.
5. Promote and guide individual and collaborative professional learning and growth based on educator content knowledge and the use of research established best practices and technology.

6. Provide appropriate data to differentiate compensation in a fair and equitable manner.
7. Differentiate the evaluation process based on the educator's expertise and student assessment results.
8. Provide appropriate and timely feedback at multiple levels to detect individual and systemic strengths and weaknesses.

In addition, STEC recommended that the educator evaluation system incorporate multiple rating tools to assess the productivity and effectiveness of educator performance. These rating tools should include the following components:

- Student growth (value added)
- Classroom and/or school observations
- Positive student work habits
- Achievement gap reduction
- Participation in collaborative activities with peers
- Individualized and personalized support for students
- Peer evaluations
- Usage of artifacts as objective evidence of meeting agreed upon goals

The complete STEC Recommendations are included in **Attachment 11b**.

In collaboration with American Institutes for Research, a draft evaluation instrument was created in spring 2011. The draft included twenty standards within five domains (Planning, Assessment, Instruction, Learning Environment, and Professional Responsibilities). These domains are consistent with national standards and practice and are identified as being of primary importance for Mississippi's teachers. Detailed descriptors for each standard at each performance level were created using numerous resources including the Danielson Framework and National Board and Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards. Four teacher performance levels were determined: *Distinguished*, *Effective*, *Emerging*, and *Unsatisfactory*.

To ensure that the teacher appraisal framework captured and reflected teacher practice, a core group of external expert practitioners reviewed the draft and offered suggestions for improvement. In addition, a larger group of expert practitioners from Mississippi provided feedback on the Framework. In September 2011, AIR convened a panel of subject matter experts to participate in a validation process for the new performance standards, rubric and evaluation guidelines. The training helped to ensure that the standards and guidelines (1) measured a representative sample of teacher behaviors and (2) used sensible methods for assessing these behaviors. These validation descriptions are included as **Attachment 11c**.



The Framework was posted for public comments, and in November 2011, the State Board of Education approved the instrument for use in ten pilot schools. Evaluators and master teachers received training in January 2012 to ensure understanding of the purpose and use of the instrument and to produce inter-rater reliability.

In collaboration with Dr. Damian Betebenner, National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, MDE is developing a protocol to measure student growth that can be linked to teacher performance. The state presently has a data-management system, the Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) database, linked to individual schools, districts, and data such as student demographics, attendance, discipline records, personnel demographics, degrees, salaries, and schedules. In addition, the Mississippi Achievement and Accountability Reporting System (MAARS) assessment information component contains links to all documents relating to the Statewide Assessment System, including disaggregated subgroup data and participation statistics. Student information on the MAARS system is also maintained by student identification number, which can then be compiled at the teacher level using the interface with MSIS. Appropriate confidentiality protocols are maintained for all aspects of data.

The accountability information component contains links to all documents relating the Statewide Accountability System. The combining of MSIS student and teacher information and MAARS student assessment information provides adequate information for local school district human resources/payroll systems to identify teachers and principals eligible to receive compensation under the Performance Based Compensation System (PBCS). The eligibility criteria based on assessment results, evaluation results, and other identified factors can then be linked to these systems for determining compensation amounts under the PBCS. The Performance Based Compensation System (PBCS) Model is included as **Attachment 11d**.

The state will convene a committee of stakeholders representing those specific non-tested areas to share their input regarding possible measures to use. In the TIF pilot sites, the non-tested content teachers have decided to work in partnership with tested area teachers. After the teachers have collaborated about which measures to use, the MDE will implement a process to validate the measures, provide guidance on the appropriateness of the measures, or approve the measures selected by districts, to ensure that they are valid and reliable.

The information gathered from Mississippi's pilot sites in 2011-2012 will be instrumental in determining the strengths and weaknesses of the new system before statewide implementation.

## **Overview of the Principal Evaluation System**

Over the last two decades, Mississippi has invested considerable energy and resources in strengthening school leadership. The purpose of this investment has been to improve schools and ratchet up the achievement of students. The work began in 1994 with a report sponsored by the Department of Education entitled *Improving the Preparation of Mississippi School Leaders*. Based on the recommendations in that report, considerable work has been undertaken in the legislature and the Department of Education to craft designs and strategies to improve the quality of school leadership throughout the state. In 2008, the Mississippi Blue Ribbon Commission for the Redesign of Administrator Preparation added new insights for continuing the essential work.

Across this time, a consensus position has emerged that improvement in school leadership will occur only if a broad set of strategies are employed. That is, no matter how well done, no single line of work can be successful by itself. Thus, improvement efforts in Mississippi have been broad based and tightly aligned. New standards capturing best practice and research about effective leadership have been developed and have become the focus for all efforts to strengthen leadership throughout the state. Major changes have been made in the ways that school administrators are prepared to lead schools and districts. Certification of new leaders has been strengthened through the adoption of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Assessment. Considerable investments have also been made to improve the quality of the continuing education school leaders receive once they are on the job.

Over the last few years, it has become increasingly clear that additional gains in leadership quality can be garnered if more attention is given to the evaluation of school administrators. Research throughout the nation has shown that evaluation can be an especially powerful leverage point for improving leadership. Research has also revealed that, in general, this reform area has not received nearly the attention as have other design elements, such as preparation programs and continuing education. In addition, studies consistently document that leader evaluation across the nation leaves a good deal to be desired. Evaluations of school leaders are often not focused on the “right things.” That is, they do not underscore the actions of principals that are linked to student academic and social learning. The processes employed in principal evaluations are often less than robust, perfunctory in many cases, and evaluation results often lay fallow. These systems do not direct work to the betterment of those being evaluated nor to the improvement of the schools that they lead. To address the need, the Mississippi Department of Education is developing new evaluation systems for school leaders, beginning with school-based administrators.

## **Guiding Principles of the Evaluation System**

The Mississippi Principal Evaluation System will adhere to well-established principles of effective personnel assessments. For example, the new system will rely on multiple sources of data, not a single measure. It will also be tightly linked to the Mississippi Standards for School Leaders. These guiding principles give meaning to the evaluation system. The principles that animate the system can be clustered into three categories, as noted below: foundational principles, process principles, and outcome principles.

### Foundational Principles

- focused on strong instructional leadership
- grounded on the Mississippi Standards for School Leaders, which are aligned to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards

[http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/State\\_Consortium\\_on\\_Education\\_Leadership\\_\(SCEL\).html](http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/State_Consortium_on_Education_Leadership_(SCEL).html)

### Process Principles

- evidence based
- set benchmarks agreed upon in advance
- transparent
- fostered culture of collaboration between the principal and the supervisor
- valid and reliable
- comprehensive but not overly complex
- both formative and summative
- multiple measures, including student achievement
- viewpoints of multiple constituents
- well-defined timelines
- ongoing feedback to the principal
- site specific, connected to the needs of the specific school
- flexible enough to allow for adjustments

### Outcome Principles

- promote school improvement
- enhance academic and social learning of students
- motivate principals to improve
- promote targeted professional growth opportunities
- result in meaningful consequences

The four pillars for the process are 1) student achievement/growth, 2) a 360-degree evaluation process, including teachers, peers, supervisors, etc., 3) professional growth, and 4) reaching jointly set goals. The components of the Evaluation System are still under development and will be assessed by a variety of focus groups and review teams as the state moves toward a quality evaluation system that includes multiple measures. The MDE recognizes that these systems will necessarily evolve to ensure continuous improvement.

*3.A.ii For any teacher and principal evaluation and support systems for which the SEA has developed and adopted guidelines, consistent with Principle 3, are they systems that:*

- a. Will be used for continual improvement of instruction?*
- b. Meaningfully differentiate performance using at least three performance levels?*
- c. Use multiple valid measures in determining performance levels, including as a significant factor data on student growth for all students (including English Learners and students with disabilities), and other measures of professional practice (which may be gathered through multiple formats and sources, such as observations based on rigorous teacher performance standards, teacher portfolios, and student and parent surveys)?*
- d. Evaluate teachers and principals on a regular basis?*
- e. Provide clear, timely, and useful feedback, including feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development?*

**The MDE has selected Option A, and 3.A.ii only applies to Option B responders.**

### 3.B ENSURE LEAs IMPLEMENT TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

*3.B Provide the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines.*

***The MDE has a process for reviewing and approving an LEA's teacher and principal evaluation and support systems to ensure that they are consistent with the state's guidelines.***

To ensure consistent statewide implementation, the Mississippi Department of Education will establish procedures to communicate and deliver training to teachers and administrators on the educator evaluation systems. The process will include focus group sessions to be held across the state to gather additional input from teachers and principals about the systems. Feedback will be used to ensure consistency and alignment with teacher and administrator standards. The training will begin during the summer of 2012, and topics will include evaluation protocols, expectations, and implementation guidelines to establish inter-rater reliability and consistency. Further, training will focus on the use of results to support professional growth.

***The MDE has a process for ensuring that an LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements its teacher and principal evaluation and support systems with the involvement of teachers and principals.***

The state received a Teacher Incentive Fund Grant (TIF) to assist schools with improving the outcomes of students and improving the instructional practices of teachers. The grant schools participated in a process that allowed each teacher to provide input. Teacher feedback encompassed implementing the evaluation system, student growth measures, professional development, and performance based compensation.

The state began training on the system in January 2012 for evaluators and representative teachers from the pilot sites. Additionally, focus groups of teachers from around the state received informational overviews of the process. Specific technical training will take place beginning the summer 2012. All LEAs will be required to pilot the system at the same time during school year 2013-2014.



The state began redesigning the Principal Evaluation System in January 2012 to be used in all LEAs beginning in 2013-2014. The developmental stage, through the spring of 2012, includes extensive work with practitioner focus groups and committees in the process adoption. Training on the system will take place during the summer of 2012 and piloting will take place in 2012-2013. Full implementation on the system will take place in 2013-2014. Throughout the process, practitioner feedback will be utilized to refine the standards and procedures.

***The MDE will ensure that all measures used in an LEA's evaluation and support systems are valid, meaningful measures clearly related to increasing student academic achievement and school performance and implemented in a consistent and high-quality manner across schools within an LEA.***

The teacher appraisal system is currently being piloted in ten schools across the state. During this time period, the schools will be participating in a validation process to ensure inter-rater reliability and clarity of the process. The implementation process will be monitored by appraisal coaches and external evaluators to ensure consistency and quality.

Prior to use in the pilot districts, a team of Mississippi teachers participated in the validation process for the observation rubric. **Attachment 11c** includes the validation plan conducted through American Institutes of Research. The principal evaluation system will also go through a similar validation process prior to full implementation.

### ***Development and Implementation Timeline***

The full timeline for the implementation of the Teacher Appraisal System is in **Attachment 11e**.

<b>Teacher Appraisal System Timeline:</b>	
Intensive training for pilot site evaluators and teachers on the use/scoring of the rubric	January-August 2012
Training for district administrators	July-August 2012
Training for teachers via online podcasts and district level training	September 2012-August 2013
Field Test Statewide	September 2013-June 2014
Full Implementation	August 2014

**Principal Evaluation System Timeline:**

Review of Draft System	February 2012
Focus Group Review and Feedback	February-March 2012
Initial Refinement of System	April 2012
Presentation to SBE	May 2012
Training for Pilot Sites	July 2012
Implementation in Pilots	2012-2013 School Year
Refinement of System	May-June 2013
Full Implementation	Fall 2013

***Guidance and other technical assistance***

The state will provide training for representatives from each LEA using a train-the-trainer model. Each team of representatives will be responsible for training at the district and school level.

Currently, the teacher appraisal system is being piloted in ten schools across the state. The first pilot will allow the state to gather sufficient data to inform any revisions before going statewide. The second pilot will include all LEAs in the state and will provide opportunities for broader input.

The principal evaluation system is being implemented on an accelerated timeline, given that the major components such as VAL-ED have been implemented successfully in other states. Additionally, the resultant training encompasses a smaller population of educators. While receiving the TIF grant allowed the work on the teacher system to begin earlier, the feedback received through several stakeholder sessions highlighted the value of a school leader emulating the evaluation process. While resources were limited, the MDE was so committed to demonstrating the value of stakeholder feedback that the State Superintendent Dr. Tom Burnham prioritized available funds to ensure the principal system would be in place and positively impact the teacher appraisal process.

**Attachments** for Mississippi's ESEA Flexibility Waiver may be found on-line at <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/esea/index.htm>.

- 1a. Town Hall Meetings Schedule
- 1b. Town Hall for Educators presentation
- 1c. Town Hall for Community presentation
- 1d. Town Hall Feedback form
- 1e. Town Hall Feedback form for Parents
- 2a. Town Hall Session Input, November (compiled educator feedback)  
Town Hall Session Input, Parents, November (compiled parent feedback)  
Town Hall Session Input, December (compiled feedback)
- 2b. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Practitioners Survey Results
- 3. Notice regarding ESEA Request from MDE Website
- 4a. State Board Minutes June 2010
- 4b. State Board Minutes August 2010
- 4c. CCSS Training Timeline
- 4d. State Board Vision, Mission, and Goals
- 4e. WIDA News
- 4f. WIDA Training Agenda
- 4g. State Board Policy 4300 on Intervention
- 6. PARCC Signed MOU and Documents
- 8a. Mississippi Statewide Accountability Technical Document
- 8b. Support for Priority and Focus: Accountability Plans
- 10. Mississippi Teacher Performance Evaluation Process Manual
- 11a. State Board Minutes November 2011
- 11b. Evaluation Council Final Recommendations
- 11c. AIR-MS Project Validation Plan (with descriptions)
- 11d. TIF PBCS Leadership Recommendations
- 11e. Timeline for Performance Evaluation