

OFFICE OF CHIEF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
October 15, 2015

OFFICE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

02. Report of supports being provided to low performing schools [Goal 4 – MDE Strategic Plan]

Executive Summary

This Board item includes a report from the Office of School Improvement on the processes used to identify the supports for low performing schools, the process for evaluating the supports being provided to low performing schools, and the evaluation of the processes used by the Office of School Improvement to support low performing schools.

This item references Goal 4 of the *Mississippi Board of Education 2016-2020 Strategic Plan*.

No Action: Discussion Only

Back-up material attached

Office of School Improvement Supports for Low Performing Schools

October 15, 2015



Lowest Performing School Designations

- The Office of School Improvement (OSI) is responsible for supporting the systemic improvement of the lowest performing schools and districts in the State of Mississippi, as well as all turnaround efforts in the state.
- Mississippi's lowest performing schools are those identified as priority (including SIG), at-risk, or focus schools.

Process for Supporting Low Performing Districts and Schools

- Ninety-five schools across 56 districts qualify to receive services from the OSI.
- Fifty-three schools across 26 districts identify as the lowest performing for the OSI (i.e. SIG, priority, and at-risk schools).
- These 26 districts have been divided regionally, and each region has been assigned an implementation specialist. The specialist will provide onsite support at least twice monthly to the targeted districts and schools. Support beyond the minimum two days will be differentiated based on need.

Process for Supporting Low Performing Districts and Schools

- The OSI has designed a new approach that gives more consistency in supporting and monitoring school improvement efforts across the SIG, priority, at-risk, and focus schools.
- As part of the new process the OSI is implementing, the superintendent is directly involved in all site visits with the implementation specialist and oversees the implementation of the school's action plan, or the superintendent may assign a district administrator with decision-making authority on behalf of the superintendent to fill this role.

Process for Supporting Low Performing Districts and Schools

- The OSI implemented a baseline assessment process for the districts and schools which are identified under the OSI.
- The baseline assessment results will be used:
 - to determine and differentiate support to the districts and schools that qualify for services from the OSI;
 - to gauge the progress towards implementing the turnaround principles across the year.
- Quarterly trainings that align to the turnaround principles are being planned for all OSI districts and schools.



OSI Targeted Support

The OSI in collaboration with other MDE program offices provides training and support that includes but is not limited to:

- strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with Mississippi's College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)
- using data to inform instruction for continuous improvement

OSI Targeted Support

The OSI in collaboration with other MDE program offices provides training and support that includes but is not limited to:

- providing strong leadership
- ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction
- redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration

OSI Targeted Support

The OSI in collaboration with other MDE program offices provides training and support that includes but is not limited to:

- establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addresses other non academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs
- providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement



OSI Assigned Support

Implementation specialists:

- provide technical assistance and support to the district and school's action plan development and implementation;
- provide coaching support to district and school leaders on the turnaround principles;
- work collaboratively with districts to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate the school's action plan;
- identify the needs of the assigned district in order to prioritize, schedule, organize and provide technical assistance to support improvement efforts;
- provide professional development for identified schools and districts.

Process for Training Implementation Specialists

- Implementation specialists attend monthly training sessions/meetings with the OSI.
- Training sessions and meetings for implementation specialists are designed around the turnaround principles and the new processes the OSI is implementing to support the 26 targeted districts.

- Implementation specialists will be evaluated on an annual basis based on
 - Feedback from districts and schools being supported
 - Assigned districts and schools progress toward implementation of the success indicators for the turnaround principles
 - Quality of feedback to schools and districts
 - State test data



Process for Evaluating Supports

- OSI is implementing quarterly meetings with each external educational consultant who is paid with federal funds and is supporting the 26 OSI targeted districts/schools.
- The consultants are asked to prepare for OSI
 - a data presentation that includes the contracted scope of work;
 - progress toward meeting the goals outlined in the RFP or contract as evidenced by data;
 - recommendations the consultant has made that have been implemented;
 - recommendations that have been made that have not been implemented.
- Consultants are also allowed to share any other pertinent information relative to their scope of service for the OSI schools and/or districts they were supporting.



Process for Evaluating Supports

- Meetings were held during late spring 2015 with each external educational consultant that was paid using federal funds and contracted for more than 5 days. Superintendents were invited to attend with their contracted external educational consultants.
- The OSI will continue the meetings this school year. Superintendents will be invited to attend all of the meetings along with their contracted external educational consultant(s).
- The OSI has developed and implemented training specifically for district and school leaders on how to screen, select, and evaluate external educational consultants (providers).



Process for Evaluating Supports

- In addition to the onsite monitoring visits throughout the year, the 26 OSI targeted districts and schools will be monitored at the end of the year to determine their status towards fully implementing the turnaround principles. The end of year monitoring process mirrors the beginning of year baseline assessment process.
- To gauge the effectiveness of the new process being used by the OSI, an evaluation is being conducted through the Research and Curriculum Unit (RCU) at Mississippi State University.
- The evaluation will include formative and summative data which will provide on-going feedback for continuous program improvement. Data will be gathered and monitored on an ongoing basis to identify the need for any adjustments to the processes.



Questions for OSI evaluation

The research conducted by the RCU will answer the following questions:

- What activities best support training for implementation specialists?
- What activities best support training for school and district administrators?
- What evidence is available to support fidelity of implementation within schools?



Questions for OSI evaluation

- What are the strengths and challenges of the school improvement process, as perceived by those directly involved in the work (i.e. district leaders, school leaders, teachers, implementation specialists, and the OSI)?
- How are implementation specialists impacting the school improvement process at the district and school level?
- What evidence supports the alignment of the School Turnaround Principles Rubric to school quality?



Evaluation Report

- The OSI will receive feedback and on the process throughout the evaluation process and will make adjustments as the data dictates.
- The OSI anticipates having the final report of the evaluation project June 2016.