

**OFFICE OF CHIEF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OFFICER  
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items  
July 16, 2015**

**OFFICE OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

I. Approval to contract with a Harvard Data Fellow as provided by House Bill 1648, 2013 Legislative Session [Goals 1, 2, and 5– MDE Strategic Plan]

Awarded Vendor: Kathryn Johnson  
New York City, New York  
(Jackson, MS address TBD)

Scope of Project: The purpose of this contract is to retain the services of Kathryn Johnson as a consultant to the Mississippi Department of Education relative to serving as a Harvard Strategic Data Fellow for research and accountability.

Personnel associated with this contract are not former Department employees or related to any Department employees.

Scope of Contract:

- Term of Contract: September 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016
- Total Amount to be Awarded: \$84,090.59
  - Personnel Services: \$75,328.00
  - FICA: \$ 5,762.59
  - Travel: \$ 3,000.00
- Method of Award: Harvard Strategic Data Fellowship Selection Process/Pool of Service Providers

Funding Source: Federal funds

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

## Kathryn Johnson

894 Sterling Place #3  
Brooklyn, NY 11216

617-671-5652  
kjohnson06@gmail.com

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**EDUCATION:** **New York University, Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service** **New York, NY**

Master of Urban Planning, Focus: Economic Development, May 2011

- Relevant coursework: Program Evaluation; Multiple Regression and Introduction to Econometrics; Demographic Analysis, Schools and Community Planning; Economics of Education

**Boston University, College of Arts and Sciences** **Boston, MA**

Bachelor of Arts, Economics, Summa Cum Laude, May 2006

- Minor focus: Geography

**WORK EXPERIENCE:** **NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, OFFICE OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT, New York, NY**

**Director of Admissions Analytics, 12/2013-Current**

**Analytics Team Lead, 7/2012-12/2013**

**Data Analyst, 5/2011-7/2012**

- Manage a team of four data analysts
  - Hire, train and assess the performance of analysts
  - Delegate tasks to analysts and review their work for accuracy and clarity
  - Develop tools to improve the accuracy and efficiency of the team's work, e.g. analyst checklist, process calendars, communication protocols
- Manage data on approximately 250,000 students and 1,500 schools that participate in the elementary, middle, and high school admission processes each year
- Perform regular data collecting, checking, cleaning, and reporting throughout the admission processes
- Query data from several sources, including SEMS, ATS, SQL Server and Microsoft Access, to compile and analyze relevant student, school or district level information
- Create centralized data resources, including data dashboards
- Respond to requests for information on the admission processes from a variety of education stakeholders, both internal and external
- Summarize and present requested data in clear, concise and easy to understand formats
- Produce process summaries for public release
- Prepare data and coordinate across teams to produce paper and electronic correspondence to students and schools, including the High School, Middle School, Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten directories

**NYC DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, New York, NY**

**Planning, Research and Program Development Intern, 8/2010-5/2011**

- Conduct literature reviews and informational interviews to produce a summary of the latest research on elementary after school programs
- Gather and analyze data from various sources to inform the development of requests for proposals
- Review and evaluate program proposals for government contracts
- Organize and maintain records for external focus groups and internal meetings

**HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION, Boston, MA**

**Evaluations Specialist/Accreditation, 5/2006 – 8/2009**

- Coordinate with course directors and assistants to draft, edit and produce course evaluation forms
- Collect and analyze course evaluations data
- Summarize evaluation responses and report results
- Organize and maintain records for departmental meetings and retreat
- Create and submit annual department report
- Manage six year reaccreditation review process
- Manage annual renewal process for 350+ regularly scheduled conferences
- Supervise temporary staff to assist with data entry needs

**SKILLS:** Microsoft Office, SQL Server, ATS, ArcGIS, Adobe Acrobat, Photoshop, SPSS & STATA statistical software, Tableau

## **APPLICATION: PARTNER QUESTIONNAIRE -- DUE APRIL 30, 2015**

To better understand your desired outcomes of the SDP Fellowship, we ask that you answer the questions below. These questions are intended to help us understand how the SDP mission supports your organization's strategic plan. Thus we, find it most meaningful if the questions are completed by the cabinet-level leader to whom the fellow(s) will report. Brevity is encouraged. We ask that it not exceed four pages (excluding the designated attachments listed below).

### **Organization Overview**

1. Please attach a copy of your most recent strategic plan (or similar document). If you do not have one appropriate for sharing, please answer the following questions:
  - a. What are the top three priorities of your organization's leadership?
  - b. What are the top three priorities for teaching and learning within your organization?

The Five-Year Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is available on the Mississippi Department of Education website at <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/MBE/goals-objectives-and-strategies>. The Vision, Mission, and Goals are the following:

- Vision: To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens
  - Mission: To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community
  - Goals:
    - All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
    - Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career
    - Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
    - Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
    - Every Community Effectively Using a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes
2. Describe your organization's point of view and goals for using data and analysis to support decision-making. Is this a function of the research and evaluation division or do analytic responsibilities and expectations exist in other divisions as well?

It is the intent of the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) to use data analysis, research, and evaluation as a foundation for all decisions, including all program offices of the MDE. Analytic responsibilities and expectations exist in all program offices in the MDE. The Office of School Performance performs the majority of the analytic responsibilities regarding accountability data, which directly affects all other program offices of the MDE.

- a. Describe how you anticipate participation in SDP will further your organization's strategy and lead to improved student outcomes. Define what success looks like after two years of partnership with SDP.

The MDE anticipates that participation in the SDP will lead to improved student outcomes by supporting our efforts to improve data management, data access, and data quality. We also look forward to the SDP partnering with the MDE in the revision and implementation of a single statewide accountability system. The SDP will also benefit the MDE by supporting its efforts in the transition to the Mississippi College- and Career-Readiness Standards and aligned assessments.

**SDP Data Fellow (If enrolling an Agency Fellow only, please skip to the section below.)**

1. Please briefly describe up to two or three potential focus issues (e.g., college readiness, human capital management) for which a data fellow may take leadership during his or her time in your organization. Briefly describe the core question or issue, and for each issue note:
  - a. Who within the organization has senior leadership responsibility for these issues?

The MDE would like for the data fellow to take leadership, mainly with two focus issues: the implementation of the Mississippi Accountability System and the design of data processes and data management in the Office of Technology and Strategic Services. However, the MDE would also like for the data fellow to support the implementation of college- and career-ready standards and assessments. The Chief School Performance Officer provides senior leadership in the area of accountability, while the Interim Chief Information Officer leads efforts in data processing and management. The Chief Academic Officer has senior leadership in the areas of curriculum and assessment.

- b. What progress would you like your organization to make on these issues during the next couple of years? What decisions does your organization need to make on these issues in the next year, and the following year?

The MDE would like to improve the accuracy and efficiency of data processing and management, as well as improving the accuracy and reliability of the Mississippi Accountability System, which measures school performance. The MDE also needs to make progress in building capacity among staff members relative to both of these issues. Decisions regarding the documentation of coding practices, the development of a complete business intelligence system, and the use of a longitudinal data system will continue to be made over the next two years.

The MDE will also be making decisions regarding implementation of a college/career readiness component, an acceleration component, and other metrics in the revised Mississippi Accountability System.

c. Why would a fellow be a good match for these issues?

The MDE looks forward to the data fellow being a good match because he/she would bring an external view of operations, as well as experience in the field of data management, data research, and data policy decision-making. These attributes would help the MDE build capacity and human capital among the MDE staff members working in these areas.

d. Please describe some of the tasks and responsibilities you envision the fellow(s) could be given to push this work forward.

The MDE envisions the data fellow being given the following tasks that will push the two focal issues forward:

- Conduct research and analyses regarding data management, data access, and data quality
- Serve as a data policy advisor to the Office of the Chief School Performance Officer
- Serve as a data policy advisor to the programmers pertaining to the Mississippi Accountability System
- Serve as a liaison to Office of Student Assessment's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Conduct impact data research and analysis regarding the Mississippi Accountability System
- Serve as a data policy advisor to the Office of Technology and Strategic Services

e. We envision Fellow(s) working as direct reports to a cabinet-level leader in your organization. Please describe where you will place the Fellow(s) in your organization in order to achieve maximum impact.

- i. To whom would the fellow(s) report, and how much interaction with that person should they expect?
- ii. What is the relationship between the office or team where you envision the fellow(s), and the focus issues you envision for the fellow(s)?
- iii. How would you measure success for the fellow(s)?
- iv. Do you anticipate any re-organization that would impact the fellows' work?

The data fellow will report directly to the Chief School Performance Officer, as part of the School Performance team, but will also have a supporting role in other program offices of the MDE. As a part of the School Performance team reporting directly to the Chief School Performance Officer, the fellow should expect weekly, if not daily, interaction with department leadership.

The School Performance staff is the support staff for the Mississippi Accountability Task Force, which is leading the revision of the Mississippi Accountability System. The team also works very closely with the Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS) to support the improvement of data access, data quality, and the use of data. These offices meet weekly during peak times to ensure collaboration and communication.

Success for the data fellow would be measured by his/her ability to:

- A. Build capacity among MDE staff members regarding data research, data calculations, data analyses, the usage of data, and the management of data
- B. Support the focus program offices in their efforts to reform/revise existing programs and practices
- C. Assist with the implementation of the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System

The MDE shifted to the current organizational structure during the past year. While re-organization is always possible, a complete re-organization which would affect the fellow's work is not expected.

### **SDP Agency Fellow (if applicable)**

1. Please briefly describe current projects that potential Agency Fellow(s) are involved in, directly connected to college readiness and human capital efforts. Briefly describe the core question or issue, and for each issue note:
  - a. Who within the organization has senior leadership responsibility for these issues?
  - b. What progress would you like your organization to make on these issues during the next couple of years? What decisions does your organization need to make on these issues in the next year, and the following year?
  - c. Why would the selected Agency Fellow be a good match for these issues?
  - d. Please describe some of the tasks and responsibilities you envision assigning the Agency Fellow(s) in addition to their current position to push this work forward. How would you measure success for the Agency Fellow(s)?
  - e. Do you anticipate any re-organization that would impact this work?

### **Not applicable**

2. If your potential Agency Fellow(s) are not involved in college readiness or human capital efforts, please describe the key projects they are supporting and reference how you imagine the fellowship will support this work.
  - a. To whom does the Agency Fellow(s) report, and how much interaction with that person do they have?
  - b. What is the relationship between the office or team of your Agency Fellow(s), and the focus issues you envision for the Agency Fellow(s)?
  - c. How would you measure success for the Agency Fellow(s)?

- d. Do you anticipate any re-organization that would impact the Agency Fellows' work?

Not Applicable

### **Sustainability and Risks**

1. How will your agency invest in, prioritize, and sustain projects initiated under the SDP Fellow(s)?

The projects in which the SDP Fellow will be involved have already been initiated and are considered "top" priority by the MDE staff members. The MDE staff has invested a substantial amount of time and human capital in these projects. The success of these projects directly and indirectly affects the ability of Mississippi schools to make decisions that will lead to positive student outcomes. These projects will be sustained until completion and will be the foundation for similar projects in the future.

2. Are there risks associated with your organization's successful participation in the SDP Fellowship?

The MDE does not anticipate any major risks in the participation in the SDP Fellowship. There are always risks associated with funding, human capital and failure; however, the MDE assumes these risks are manageable.

3. What can SDP do to help you overcome these barriers?

The on-going support from the SDP should assist the MDE in managing the risks involved in the partnership.

### **Supporting Documentation**

Please include the following supporting documentation with your written application:

1. Organization's strategic plan

The Five-Year Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is available on the Mississippi Department of Education website at <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/MBE/goals-objectives-and-strategies>.

2. Organization chart, including an indication of the proposed positioning of the fellow(s)

See attached School Performance Office Organizational Chart

3. Contact information for the senior leader(s) responsible for the proposal, and (if different), the individual(s) to whom the Fellows would report within your agency

Pat Ross, Chief School Performance Officer

[pross@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:pross@mde.k12.ms.us)

601.359.1879 Phone

601.576.2180 Fax

4. Signed letter of commitment affirming the agency will hire the data fellows referenced in the application in the requisite salary range, and/or identifying the number of Agency Fellow placements you are committed to supporting.

See attached the signed Letter of Intent