

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
Consent Agenda
November 12, 2021

MISSISSIPPI SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

- C. Approval of the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind admissions policy as an addenda within the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind Operations Manual, Mississippi School for the Deaf Student Handbook, and the Mississippi School for the Blind Student Handbook

Background and Purpose: The current Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) admissions policy is vague and lacks clarity toward the overarching purpose of serving children whose primary disability is a hearing and/or vision loss. MSDB is proposing the attached revised policy as an addenda to all three manuals. This policy is more aligned nationally with policies in other schools for the deaf and the blind.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached



Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

State Superintendent of Education • Carey M. Wright, Ed. D.
Office of Chief Academic Officer • Nathan Oakley, Ph.D.
Superintendent • Jeremy Stinson, Ph.D.



GENERAL CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION & CONTINUED ENROLLMENT

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) has been designated by the State of Mississippi as a program that serves children whose primary disability is either a hearing loss or a vision loss. Program design and selection of staff is based on that premise. Not all children who apply are eligible to attend the MSDB. Below is a summary of MSDB's enrollment criteria.

A: All students must meet these requirements:

1. Live in the state of Mississippi.
2. Be between 3 and 21 years of age.
3. Can finger feed self, chew and swallow most food, indicate awareness of being soiled or wet, assist with dressing, and cooperate in bathing.
4. Is not determined to be a danger to self or others or disruptive to the educational process.
5. Does not show an uneven developmental profile and pattern of social, communication, and restricted or repetitive behaviors or interests.
6. Does not have a medical or mental health condition that prohibits the student from attending school on a daily basis.
7. Does not have a standard score of three (3) standard deviations below the mean on standardized intellectual and adaptive behavior assessments.
8. Does not have medically related health or safety needs beyond the scope of the Health Clinic or the educational program.
9. Parent gives consent for emergency medical treatment or for a Health Care Plan, if needed.

B. Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing must also meet the following requirements:

1. Have a permanent or fluctuating hearing threshold level as evidenced by:
 - a. Deaf (severe impairments in processing linguistic information through hearing with or without amplification) - OR -
Hearing impairment (permanent or fluctuating hearing impairment)
- AND -
 - b. Adverse impact on educational performance.



Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

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

Office of Chief Academic Officer • Nathan Oakley, Ph.D.

Superintendent • Jeremy Stinson, Ph.D.



2. The supporting evidence must contain an audiometric evaluation conducted by an audiologist (MDE license in audiology, MSDH license, ASHA- CCC, or AAA certification) or physician with expertise in audiological exams using appropriate audiological equipment explaining each of the following: (a) type of loss, (b) age of onset (if known), (c) severity of loss, (d) speech reception or speech awareness thresholds (if obtainable), (e) speech discrimination scores (if applicable), (f) recommendations regarding amplification, and (g) other recommended interventions, if any, including the need for assistive technology: a description of a follow-up examination and results, including how the conditions noted during the examination might interfere with educational testing and performance and recommendations for accommodations, modifications, and educational programming; acoustic immittance measures; an audiogram and/or measures of auditory evoked potential, such as Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR), Auditory Steady State Response (ASSR), and Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) that would define the hearing loss; a description of how the hearing loss impacts educational performance; and communication abilities and needs including the need for assisted communication.
3. Have a hearing threshold that interferes with progress in developmental skills or academic performance, social-emotional development, or linguistic and communicative skills.
4. Evidence of genetic deafness in the student's family and/or early identification of progressive hearing loss.

C. Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired must also meet the following requirements:

1. Have a documented eye condition that causes an impairment as manifested by:
 - a. Blind (little or no vision), - OR -
Partially sighted (significant vision loss of 20/70 or worse in the better eye after correction) - OR -
Legally blind (visual acuity of 20/200 or worse in the better eye after correction or contracted peripheral field of <math><20^\circ</math>) - OR -
Other severe visual problems.
- AND -
 - b. Adverse impact on educational performance.
2. The supporting evidence must contain a statement from an ophthalmologist or optometrist supporting eligibility that includes descriptions of visual acuity, diagnosed visual problems, a statement of how the child's visual problems affect educational performance and recommendations for educational programming.
3. Have a functional vision loss which inhibits optimal processing of information through the visual channel and requires the use of specialized techniques, textbooks, materials, or equipment.
4. An ophthalmologist and/or optometrist statement of a visually impaired diagnosis.



Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

State Superintendent of Education • Carey M. Wright, Ed. D.
Office of Chief Academic Officer • Nathan Oakley, Ph.D.
Superintendent • Jeremy Stinson, Ph.D.



D. Students who are Deaf-Blind must also meet the following requirements:

1. Evidence of **Deaf/Hard of Hearing** as described above.
2. Evidence of **Blind/Visually Impaired** as described above.

E. General Inquiries for School Districts & Parents/Guardians:

1. Steps for enrollment at MSDB

Prior to requesting an IEP meeting to determine the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), local school districts must fax the following information to LaQuandra Jones at (601) 984-8020:

- a. In-state eligibility determination form
- b. In-state Individual Education Program (IEPs) or Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs-preschool) *(past three school years)*
- c. Ophthalmologist or Optometrist reports for students who are Blind or have Visual Impairment
- d. Audiologist reports for students who are Deaf or have Hearing Loss
- e. Psychoeducational Report *(an intelligence measure should be attempted)*
- f. Related Services Assessments, if applicable
- g. Discipline Report *(last two school years)*
- h. Attendance Report *(last two school years)*
- i. Medical records *(include medications)*
- j. Academic records
- k. Other

2. The local school district should complete their child find procedures prior to seeking enrollment at MSDB. An MSDB representative will contact the district to schedule a review/revision meeting within three (3) business days of receiving the items listed above.

3. The assessment of suitability period at MSDB is up to 60 school days from the student's initial day of school at MSDB. Enrollees will be observed to determine if continued placement at MSDB is appropriate.

4. Parents/guardians are welcome to inquire about our district. Entry is determined by the local school district when considering Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and state board policy requirements for special education and MSDB's general admission criteria and continued enrollment. Please contact MSDB school counselors for information regarding academic learning and student life.

5. The Mississippi Department of Education Office of Special Education offers a Parent Outreach and Support Center that is available to assist parents at 601-359-3498.



Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

State Superintendent of Education • Carey M. Wright, Ed. D.
Office of Chief Academic Officer • Nathan Oakley, Ph.D.
Superintendent • Jeremy Stinson, Ph.D.



MSDB Contact Information

Name	Title	Email	Phone
LaQuandra Jones	MSDB Director of Special Services	laquandra.jones@msdb12.org	601-984-8131
Pamela Jones	MSD School Counselor	pamela.jones@msdbk12.org	601-984-8000
Teresa Thomas	MSB School Counselor	teresa.thomas@msdbk12.org	601-984-8212

Failure to provide all information or falsification of information will prevent applications from being processed and/or result in disenrollment if the student is found eligible based on incomplete or inaccurate information.