

OFFICE OF CHIEF OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
April 20, 2017

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION

L. Recommendations on exceptions to pupil-teacher ratio requirements for grades 1 – 4

Background Information: Miss. Code Ann. § 37-151-77 and Miss. Admin. Code 7-3:19, State Board Policy Chapter 19, Rule 19.1 – *Class Size* indicates that the State Board of Education is authorized to waive the pupil-teacher requirements for districts with exceptions to the enrollment ratio of 27:1 in grades 1 – 4.

Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) staff reviewed the report of sections for twenty-eight (28) districts out of compliance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-151-77. Ten (10) districts were exempt for A or B Performance Classifications.

Total sections out of compliance in 18 districts	61
Sections that corrected data input errors	03
Sections with dropped enrollment since data entry	14
Sections corrected the excessive enrollment	15
Sections over the maximum due to a rotating schedule	01
Remaining sections not able to reduce the classroom ratio	28

An interdepartmental committee met on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, to consider requests from nine (9) districts for exceptions to the enrollment ratio of 27:1 in grades 1 – 4. The waiver requests are detailed in the attached backup material.

If a school district does not meet the class size requirement for grades 1 – 4, as required by Miss. Code Ann. § 37-151-77, the state aid for the following fiscal year will be reduced. The reduction will be based on the required pupil-teacher ratio mandated in the statute. A waiver may be granted by the State Board of Education if school districts are making a good faith effort to comply with the statute but complying with the statute is physically impossible, and the cost of temporary classroom space cannot be justified.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

SY 2016-2017 CLASS SIZE OVERLOAD WAIVER REQUESTS

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
Alcorn County	Biggersville Elementary	C	4 th	1

Alcorn County School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 4th grade class at Biggersville Elementary.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload. There are only two excessive students. There is no available classroom space. Funding will not allow for another teacher unit for the spring semester.

2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload. In the Fall of 2016, the district consolidated two schools which affected the student/teacher ratio at Biggersville Elementary. Until January, we were compliant but new enrollees caused the class overage.

3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year. The district is discussing departmentalization as a resolution to any further overload.

SY 2016-2017 CLASS SIZE OVERLOAD WAIVER REQUESTS

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
Clarksdale Municipal	Heidelberg Elementary	D	3 rd	2

Clarksdale Municipal School District is requesting a waiver for two (2) 3rd grade classes at Heidelberg Elementary.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload. The current overload has occurred with less than three months left in the school year. Due to the timing of the overload occurring and not being able to find qualified applicants this late in the year, the lack of qualified applicants and the financial impact the hiring of a teacher was not financially feasible. Our enrollment tends to fluctuate by one or two students throughout the year.

2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload. The district's 3rd grade classes are at the maximum allowable limit district wide. Moving a student to another school would only make that school be over by one or two students. The district was not able to find a qualified applicant to serve the 3rd grade students.

3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year. The district will continue to actively recruit qualified licensed personnel for this school and all our schools. The district is working with our state universities to increase our pool of applicants and will advertise all vacancies and post on our website.

SY 2016-2017 CLASS SIZE OVERLOAD WAIVER REQUESTS

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
Covington County	Hopewell Elementary	C	4 th	2

Covington County School District is requesting a waiver for two (2) 4th grade classes at Hopewell Elementary School.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload. At month nine (9) of SY 2015-2016, fifty-one (51) students were enrolled in 3rd grade at Hopewell Elementary. Once month one (1) of SY 2016-2017 revealed an enrollment of fifty-six (56) in the 4th grade, the expense of adding a 3rd grade teacher was determined to be fiscally untenable.

2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload. The hardship is a fiscal hardship. An additional teacher was determined to be fiscally untenable.

3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year. Based on the trend in the lower grades enrollment, the need for a 3rd grade teacher will be alleviated. SY 2016-2017 enrollment is as follows: Kindergarten – 49 students, 1st grade – 47 students, 2nd – 50 students, 3rd grade – 41 students.

SY 2016-2017 CLASS SIZE OVERLOAD WAIVER REQUESTS

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
Hattiesburg Public	Hawkins Elementary	C	4 th	2

Hattiesburg Public School District is requesting a waiver for two (2) 4th grade classes at Hawkins Elementary.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

- 1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* The principal recommended that we not disrupt children's learning environment by having them be transferred to another teacher in the school year.

- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The district was not able to secure a highly-qualified teacher or long term substitute with the capacity to deliver high quality instruction.

- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district will staff based on projected enrollment.

SY 2016-2017 CLASS SIZE OVERLOAD WAIVER REQUESTS

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
Holmes County	William Dean Elementary	D	1 st	1

Holmes County School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 1st grade class at William Dean Jr. Elementary School.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

- 1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* The district was not able to recruit a qualified or certified teacher for this position.

- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The district was not able to recruit enough teachers to come to Holmes County School District to teach.

- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district is in the process of recruiting teachers for the upcoming school year.

SY 2016-2017 CLASS SIZE OVERLOAD WAIVER REQUESTS

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
Jackson Public	McLeod Elementary	D	1 st	1
			2 nd	3

Jackson Public School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 1st grade class and three (3) 3rd grade classes at McLeod Elementary School.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did request a waiver for this school last year and it was granted by the State Board of Education. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* There is no physical space to accommodate an additional classroom. Also, it is not fiscally sound to add a teacher unit.
2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* There was an increase in student population.
3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* Zone lines will be revisited in the area to reduce overcrowding in addition to adding another grade if student population dictates or students will be reassigned to nearby schools where space is available.

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
Jackson Public	Spann Elementary	F	4 th	3

Jackson Public School District is requesting a waiver for three (3) 4th grade classes at Spann Elementary School.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did request a waiver for this school last year and it was granted by the State Board of Education. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* There is no physical space to accommodate an additional classroom. Also, it is not fiscally sound to add a teacher unit.

2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* There was an increase in student population.

3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* Zone lines will be revisited in the area to reduce overcrowding in addition to adding another grade if student population dictates or students will be reassigned to nearby schools where space is available.

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
Jackson Public	Sykes Elementary	D	3 rd	1

Jackson Public School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 3rd grade class at Sykes Elementary.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did request a waiver for this school last year and it was granted by the State Board of Education. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* There are three (3) 3rd grade units at this school, however, we do not have a certified staff member to fill one of the units.

2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The principal could not find a certified teacher to fill the position.

3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* Units will be added when necessary to resolve the overload. The principal will also aggressively recruit a certified teacher for the next school year.

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
Jackson Public	Timberlawn Elementary	F	3 rd	1

Jackson Public School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 3rd grade class at Timberlawn Elementary School.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload. A 3rd grade class size reduction teacher will be added.
2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload. There was a high failure rate in the 3rd grade due to 3rd grade reading assessment.
3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year. The district will aggressively recruit a certified teacher for the next school year.

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
Jackson Public	Walton Elementary	D	2 nd	2

Jackson Public School District is requesting a waiver for two (2) 2nd grade classes at Walton Elementary School.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did request a waiver for this school last year and it was granted by the State Board of Education. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload. Limited service retiree was used for the first term. The school has been unable to secure a limited service employee for the second semester.

2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The district could not find a certified candidate to fill the vacancy.

3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district will aggressively recruit a certified teacher for the next school year. The position has been posted on the JPS website and on MDE's website.

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
Jackson Public	Watkins Elementary	D	1 st	2
			2 nd	1

Jackson Public School District is requesting a waiver for two (2) 1st grade classes and one (1) 2nd grade class at Watkins Elementary School.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did request a waiver for this school last year and it was granted by the State Board of Education. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* A slot was there, but the district could not find a certified teacher.

2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The district could not find a certified teacher to fill the vacancy.

3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district will aggressively recruit a certified teacher for the next school year. The position has been posted on the JPS website and on MDE's website.

SY 2016-2017 CLASS SIZE OVERLOAD WAIVER REQUESTS

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
Leake County	Leake Central Elementary	D	4 th	3

Leake County School District is requesting a waiver for three (3) 4th grade classes at Leake Central Elementary.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload. The projected enrollment did not justify a need for an additional teacher unit in the 4th grade. Due to budget concerns, additional teacher units were not in the 2016-2017 budget.

2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload. The enrollment increased during the school year. An additional teacher unit was not needed when school started in August 2016.

3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year. The district is in the process of planning for the 2017-2018 school year. This includes student and teacher ratio. If feasible, the district will add another teacher or teacher assistant.

SY 2016-2017 CLASS SIZE OVERLOAD WAIVER REQUESTS

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
North Tippah	Walnut Elementary	C	3 rd	1

North Tippah School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 3rd grade class at Walnut Elementary School.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

- 1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* At Walnut Elementary, all the classes are full.

- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* At Walnut Elementary, this class has eight (8) special education students.

- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district will add another teacher if this class size stays twenty-nine (29).

SY 2016-2017 CLASS SIZE OVERLOAD WAIVER REQUESTS

District	School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload
South Tippah	Blue Mountain Elementary	D	3 rd	2

South Tippah School District is requesting a waiver for two (2) 3rd grade classes at Blue Mountain Elementary School.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload. At Blue Mountain Elementary, there are two specific hurdles that make alleviating the overload a significant issue. Our budget cuts that we have faced, as well as, not having additional space.

2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload. Blue Mountain school is a very small K-12 school where the enrollment can be hard to predict. In the third and fourth grade, the students rotate between the two teachers reported as having overloads so the two teachers are not teaching an overload all day.

3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year. We are always mindful of trying to make improvements on our class loads across the district. We are happy to make necessary changes as our budget improves.