

**OFFICE OF CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER**  
**Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items**  
**January 17, 2019**

**OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION**

- 01.B. Action: Consideration of the appeals of the final accountability results in accordance with Policy 3.1.4 of the *Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Standards, 2018* [Goals 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan]

01.B. Harrison County School District

Background Information: On October 11, 2018 the SBE approved the 2017-2018 Mississippi Statewide Accountability results, with the exception of four (4) schools with special populations, three (3) schools within the Corinth School District and the Corinth School District. On November 8, 2018 the State Board of Education approved the final accountability results for the Corinth School District, the three (3) schools within the Corinth School District and the four (4) schools with special populations. The Office of Accreditation received appeals of the final results in accordance with Policy 3.1.4 of the *Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Standards, 2018* from three (3) of the Districts.

Harrison County School District appealed the final accountability results for one (1) school, Harrison County Child Development Center.

On December 10, 2018, the Internal Review Committee met to consider the appeal from the Harrison County School District and voted unanimously to deny the District's appeal.

The Commission on School Accreditation (CSA) met on January 10, 2019 in a special-called meeting to consider the Internal Review Committee's decision of the appeal. In accordance with Policy 3.1.4 of the *Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Standards, 2018*, each superintendent was given an opportunity to address the CSA during this meeting. After presentations by Mr. Roy Gill, Superintendent of the Harrison County School District, and the MDE, the CSA voted unanimously to grant the appeal to the Harrison County School District.

This item references Goals 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 of the *Mississippi Board of Education 2018-2022 Strategic Plan*.

Recommendation: Disapproval

In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6, a simple "A," "B," "C," "D" and "F" designation, shall be applied to the current school and school district statewide accountability performance classifications. There is no provision in state law that provides for an exemption for special schools or special student populations. In addition to the requirements of state law, federal law and Mississippi's ESSA plan require inclusion of all schools in the accountability model. Violation of federal law could result in the loss of federal funding.

Back-up material attached

# HARRISON COUNTY CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

## HARRISON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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**Rebecca M. Parker**  
Principal

**94 29<sup>TH</sup> STREET, GULFPORT, MS 39507**  
Phone: (228) 863-0583  
Fax: (228) 863-9868

**Roy Gill**  
Superintendent

Date: September 19, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

Harrison County Child Development Center is a separate school facility established in 1970 to assist the five districts in Harrison County in providing services for students with disabilities from infancy to age 21 who could not be provided Least Restrictive Environments (LRE) in their home schools yet were not appropriate for homebound services and did not require behavioral interventions. Many of these students typically would be placed in residential facilities, but the Child Development Center provided another option for parents as well as school districts.

To provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the LRE, the Child Development Center now functions as an educational facility that focuses on providing services for students with significant developmental, cognitive, and/or physical delays. Students engage in instruction around pre-academic skills to prepare for kindergarten or functional life skills (including the DLM Essential Elements) to assist in fostering independence to the maximum extent possible.

The largest percentage (78%) of students who attend CDC are identified as having significant developmental delays or Autism. These students are pre-school aged from infancy to 4 years of age or 5 after September 1<sup>st</sup>. They receive services and interventions from certified Special Education Teachers. Other services, upon eligibility, are provided by certified Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Registered Nurses. There is also a Psychologist who is on staff on a part-time basis. The goal is to close the developmental gaps and prepare them to be referred to the home school district to attend a regular or special education kindergarten class.

Our smallest population (22%) are students with significant developmental and cognitive disabilities and range from 18 months to 21 years of age. These students are in the Severe/Profound range of functioning. Most of these students (15 out of 22) are confined to wheelchairs and have significant limitations. Most of these students need to be fed by others and have no way of providing self help due to the significance of the disabilities. While these

are the students that will take the MAAP-A (Alternate Assessment), the DLM Essential Elements is the state chosen alignment for the Alternate Assessment. However, even scaffolding to the most basic skills prove to be too difficult or challenging for these students. In most cases being able to hold a utensil is a skill most will not master. They receive instruction based on attempts to stimulate, expose, and engage them to provide some level of education. They also engage in community-based outings to expose them to different environments they may encounter in adulthood. However, these students will always need a caregiver to survive.

We have had the unfortunate experience of students expiring due to illnesses related to their disabilities. We have a few students currently that are very medically fragile and others who leave the school an hour early to attend a pediatric day health center for medically fragile children. In many instances, the parents of these children want to keep them in the home if possible without sending them to a residential facility. Here at HCCDC, we do whatever we can to keep students in their home environment and attempt to work cohesively with the parents.

I have been in Special Education for 32 years and have never seen a more caring and excellent group of teachers and staff than at the Harrison County Child Development Center. The students that are required to take the Alternate Assessment have the most severe disabilities that children can have. To determine their progress based on a test that is so totally inappropriate is not only cruel and unfair, but unethical and against the law since it is not assessing the actual needs of the students. Transition planning, community-based activities, and functional life skills should be the goals being assessed through person-centered and strategic planning with mastery determined through demonstration with teacher observation. Texas, as well as other states, realize the value of this type of instruction and evaluation. Those students are assessed with this type of programming which needs to be relevant to the student; having goals based on of scaffolded benchmarks for all severely involved students is a "cookie cutter" approach. This type of IEP is not based on the individual needs of the student; which makes it an illegal IEP. Additionally, the parents (tax payers) have the burden of accepting the child's limitations and struggling to decide on the best educational program. Ranking the Child Development Center based on the Alternate Assessment Test Scores of these severely involved students is saying to the parents that their children are not capable or worthy of a relevant educational program and fair assessments.

Lastly, it should be known that the funding for the Harrison County Child Development Center is provided by the Harrison County Board of Supervisors. There is no ADA funding. Approximately 45% of our teachers are funded by IDEA (federal) due to the pre-school students enrolled that reside in the Harrison County School District; the rest of the funding is provided through the Harrison County Board of Supervisors with the other districts having a portion of their ad valorem taxes being deducted for the Child Development Center. Therefore, the total funding for over half of the education staff, administration, office support staff, related

services, transportation, and building ***expenses come strictly from the Harrison County Board of Supervisors.***

I implore the Mississippi State Department of Education and the powers that be to look at the school rating for the Harrison County Child Development Center for what it should be and not attempt to put it in a category that is not a legally sound or a viable decision when the criteria for the rating is not applicable to the educational needs of these students.

Sincerely,

Rebecca M. Parker, Ed.S  
Principal, HCCDC

# Harrison County School District

ROY GILL  
SUPERINTENDENT

11072 Highway 49  
Gulfport, MS 39503  
(228) 539-6500  
Fax (228) 539-6507

E. MITCHELL KING  
ASST. SUPERINTENDENT

November 19, 2018

MS Department of Education  
P.O. Box 771  
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

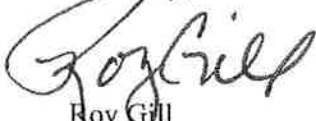
Internal Review Committee:

Please let this notice serve as an official appeal of the "Unofficial" Performance Classification for the Child Development Center, 2400-020. This center is a unique facility that was established to serve those students who are medically fragile to attend public schools. This facility was established by the Board of Supervisors for the entire County of Harrison. This includes the five school districts that make up the entire county. These districts include Biloxi, Gulfport, Harrison County, Long Beach and Pass Christian. All students who reside in the county that are too fragile to attend their home school are housed at this center. This center is in the Gulfport School District, and Harrison County School District serves only as the fiscal agent.

This facility only serves a limited number of students in grades 3-12. Using the data file sent from the Mississippi Department of Education, it defines the student denominator in every category below 10 students for the three-year period reviewed. Regarding the business rules that define the n-count. How does this center reach a numerical rating of zero? Was this same three-year calculation used for other schools? Please provide the timeline of business rules that once stood for this type of center? In addition, how will the business rules be applied moving forward? We are aware of the accountability obstacle for this center but trying to apply a model that does not fit this center is unacceptable. In summary, this formal request is to remove any official or unofficial performance classification for the Harrison County Child Development Center. For this school year and future school years, we are also requesting clear guidance and business rules that address this unique center.

Using the current assessment, MAAP-A, does not measure the wealth of services provided to these students and to label this center a 0/F is fatal to the moral of this center. Teachers and staff provide exceptional care to our most delicate students, and we are proud of the services they deliver each day.

Sincerely,



Roy Gill  
Superintendent.

December 11, 2018

Mr. Roy Gill, Superintendent  
Harrison County School District  
11072 Highway 49  
Gulfport, MS 39503

Re: Special-Called Meeting of the Commission on School Accreditation

Dear Mr. Gill:

The Mississippi Department of Education's Internal Review Committee met on December 10, 2018 to consider the Harrison County School District's appeal of the 2017-2018 final (unofficial) accountability results. The committee voted unanimously to deny the Harrison County School District's appeal of the final (unofficial) accountability results for the Harrison County Child Development Center.

In accordance with Accreditation Policy 3.1.4 of the *Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Standards, 2018*, the district superintendent may request to address the Commission on School Accreditation (Commission) regarding the appeal of the final results.

During their December 6, 2018 regularly-scheduled meeting the Commission voted to hold a special-called meeting on **January 10, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.** to consider the appeals and the decision of the Internal Review Committee. During their meeting the Commission also voted to allow superintendents who wish to address the Commission a time limit of fifteen (15) minutes to do so. Therefore, we are asking you please confirm by December 21, 2018 if you wish to address the Commission at the special-called meeting on January 10, 2019.

Regards,



Jo Ann Malone, Executive Secretary  
Commission on School Accreditation

CC: Dr. Paula Vanderford  
Dr. Nathan Oakley  
Erin Meyer, Special Assistant Attorney General

## Jo Ann Malone

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**From:** Gill, Roy <RGill@harrison.k12.ms.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 11, 2018 9:13 AM  
**To:** Jo Ann Malone  
**Cc:** King, Mitchell; Parker, Rebecca  
**Subject:** RE: Special-Called Commission Meeting - January 10, 2018

Good Morning Dr. Malone,  
Please let this serve as notice that I would like to be placed on the agenda to appear before the Commission to appeal the decision. Please let me know if I need to do anything else.

Thanks,  
Roy Gill  
Superintendent of Education  
Harrison County School District  
228-539-6503

**From:** Jo Ann Malone <JMalone@mdek12.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 11, 2018 9:04 AM  
**To:** Gill, Roy <RGill@harrison.k12.ms.us>  
**Cc:** Paula Vanderford <PAVanderford@mdek12.org>; Erin Meyer <EMeyer@mdek12.org>; Nathan Oakley <NOakley@mdek12.org>; Alan Burrow <ABurrow@mdek12.org>  
**Subject:** Special-Called Commission Meeting - January 10, 2018

Good morning Mr. Gill:

The Mississippi Department of Education's Internal Review Committee met on December 10, 2018 to consider the Harrison County School District's appeal of the 2017-2018 final (unofficial) accountability results. The committee voted unanimously to deny the Harrison County School District's appeal of the final (unofficial) accountability results for the Harrison County Child Development Center.

In accordance with Accreditation Policy 3.1.4 of the *Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Standards, 2018*, the district superintendent may request to address the Commission on School Accreditation (Commission) regarding the appeal of the final results.

During their December 6, 2018 regularly-scheduled meeting the Commission voted to hold a special-called meeting on **January 10, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.** to consider the appeals and the decision of the Internal Review Committee. During their meeting the Commission also voted to allow superintendents who wish to address the Commission a time limit of fifteen (15) minutes to do so. Therefore, we are asking you please confirm by December 21, 2018 if you wish to address the Commission at the special-called meeting on January 10, 2019.

(Note: The attached letter will be sent to you via mail today.)

**Jo Ann Malone, Ed.D., Executive Director**  
Office of Accreditation  
Division of Accountability

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
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Office of Accreditation  
**Jo Ann Malone, Ed.D.**  
Executive Director  
**Paula A. Vanderford, Ph.D.**  
Chief Accountability Officer

January 11, 2019

Mr. Roy Gill, Superintendent  
Harrison County School District  
11072 Highway 49  
Gulfport, MS 39503

Re: Commission on School Accreditation's Review of Appeals of Final 2017-2018 (Unofficial)  
Accountability Results

Dear Mr. Gill:

The Mississippi Department of Education's Commission on School Accreditation (CSA) met on January 10, 2019 to consider the Internal Review Committee's decision regarding the Harrison County School District's appeal of the 2017-2018 final (unofficial) accountability results. The CSA voted unanimously against the Internal Review Committee's decision, and instead, the CSA granted the Harrison County School District's appeal of the final (unofficial) accountability results for the Harrison County Child Development Center.

In accordance with Accreditation Policy 3.1.4 of the *Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Standards, 2018*, the State Board of Education makes the final determination of the appeal's decision. The CSA's decision will be provided to the State Board of Education at its upcoming regularly scheduled meeting Thursday, January 17, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

Regards,

Jo Ann Malone, Executive Secretary  
Commission on School Accreditation

Cc: Dr. Carey M. Wright  
Dr. Paula A. Vanderford  
Dr. Nathan Oakley  
Erin Meyer, Special Assistant Attorney General, Counsel to the CSA