

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER
Summary of the State Board of Education Agenda Items
March 28, 2019

OFFICE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

06. Action: Approval of District of Innovation for 2019-2020 [Goal 2 – MBE Strategic Plan]

Background Information: In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-179-1, et seq., the purpose of a District of Innovation is to better prepare students for success in life and work. Innovative programs shall focus on reducing achievement gaps by expanding learning experiences for students; increasing participation of subgroups of students in innovative instructional components to enhance student achievement; increasing the number of students who are college- and career-ready; reducing the number of students that exit high school in need of remediation; and motivating students by expanding curriculum choices and learning opportunities for students.

Mississippi Code Ann. § 37-179-1 provides for exemptions from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions as approved by the MDE to allow flexibility for Districts of Innovation and Schools of Innovation. Mississippi Code Ann. § 37-179-3(4) includes areas of innovation which the State Board of Education may consider for exemptions. Districts or schools may request additional waivers if the waiver is needed to support innovative practices and does not violate state or federal regulations. Districts or schools are not allowed to request a waiver from state assessment requirements required by state or federal regulation. Absent any waivers, districts shall meet the requirements of the current Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards.

This item references Goal 2 of the *Mississippi Board of Education 2018-2022 Strategic Plan*.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

Oxford School District District of Innovation plan Executive Summary

The Oxford School District plan involves several innovative components: a modified district calendar, a middle college program, a career academy, a personalized education pathway counseling program, and a robust professional development program for teachers.

Proposed Innovative Model:

Oxford School District is in the early stages of designing a model of continuous improvement for all Oxford schools. A partnership with the University of Mississippi and the Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching solidified the idea that we needed a systematic approach to improvement for our school stakeholders. Oxford School District has long operated as a system of schools instead of a school system. As a result, problems that hinder student academic performance have been left unattended. As a part of the continuous improvement model, all Oxford School District personnel will be trained on utilizing improvement science principles to solve problems in education that are both unique to the Oxford School District as well as shared with other educational institutions across the country. Education is often seen as an entity that relies on the “next best thing” to solve problems. The implementation of the improvement science methodology of understanding the system, identifying root causes of educational issues, and then testing possible change agents in 45-day plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycles provides practitioners the opportunity to be involved in the improvement work. It is the goal of the Oxford School District to spread and scale solutions to educational issues to other schools and districts across the state of Mississippi once change agents are identified and proven by the improvement science model.

Since adopting the industrialized model of educating students, school calendars have reflected time as the constant in the learning equation while student learning remained the variable. Research is clear that all students learn at different rates. In order to meet the needs of ALL students, districts must provide adequate time for students to master content as well as eliminate long continuous stretches where student learning is not taking place. As a result, the Oxford School District proposes to move from a traditional school calendar to an academic calendar divided into quarters that allows 3-week intercessions during the school year and no more than 6 weeks of time between student learning opportunities during the summer months. Students not meeting academic standards will be provided academic supports by Oxford School District teachers during the intercessions. Such a model will provide more one-on-one learning opportunities for struggling learners.

It is the belief of the Oxford School District staff that all students deserve a personalized learning experience and therefore, we must provide an educational pathway that best meets their individual needs. As a result, the Oxford School District seeks to add educational pathways for OSD students that include but are not limited to Middle College and Career Academies, while maintaining a traditional pathway that consists of a guaranteed and viable curriculum comprised of rigorous standards and a robust advanced placement program.

Portrait of an Oxford School District Graduate:

The school board recently approved the Oxford School District Portrait of a Graduate (the only one in the state of Mississippi) which outlines the qualities the members of the Oxford community expect to see in a graduate from the Oxford School District. The traits were developed by a team of forty-eight community members that included Oxford High School students and teachers, parents of OSD students, University of Mississippi officials and professors, local business owners, pastors, and other community members. The Oxford community expects OSD graduates to be:



The Oxford School District Curriculum & Instruction Department has constructed a curriculum team to develop transdisciplinary goals and cornerstone performance tasks for grades Pre-K - 12 to measure each Portrait of a Graduate trait. The goals of the OSD Portrait of a Graduate symbolize what is important to the Oxford Community. The District of Innovation distinction will provide the Oxford School District with the necessary flexibility to meet the expectations of our Oxford stakeholders.

Waivers Requested to Implement the Innovative Model:

Process Standard	Rationale for Waiver Request	Approved Yes/No
<p>2.2 With the exception of academic core subjects, the professional staff in each school is comprised of no more than 5% of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) units working outside the area or areas of endorsement. Assistant principals and administrative interns who are not properly endorsed may be included in the 5% FTE working outside their area of endorsement, provided that they do not act in the place of the principal. An appropriate license is required for superintendents, principals, librarians, and guidance counselors.</p>	<p>When hiring instructors to teach the career technical education courses, we want to ensure we hire the best instructors for the students of Oxford High School. The best instructors will be individuals with experience in the field and may not have a teacher's license.</p>	<p>Yes, with the district recognizing that instructors paid through Perkins funds cannot hold licensure waivers</p>
<p>13.2 The school district must ensure that during the academic school year a minimum of 140 hours of instruction is provided for each Carnegie unit of credit offered and 70 hours for each one-half (½) unit offered, except for remedial instructional programs, dual enrollment/dual credit, correspondence courses, MS Virtual Public-School courses, and innovative programs authorized by the State Board of Education.</p>	<p>Due to our nontraditional block schedule, all of our courses may not meet the required minimum number of minutes listed in the accreditation standards. The nontraditional schedule allows students more credit opportunities and a more personalized learning experience. Due to requesting additional 60% days for professional development purposes, OSD students will not meet the seat time requirement. We want to ensure our students receive Carnegie unit credit for their coursework.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>13.3 No more than two (2) of the 180 days may be 60% days. Both teachers and pupils must be in attendance for not less than 60% of the normal school day. {Miss. Code Ann. § 37-151-5(j)}</p>	<p>Professional development is vital in the implementation of new initiatives in a school district. Due to the magnitude of the changes being instituted in the Oxford School District, more professional development opportunities are needed to support full implementation of OSD's Portrait of a Graduate and District of Innovation plan.</p>	<p>Yes, two additional 60% days can be added to the OSD's schedule for PD</p>