Mississippi Strategic Plan for Pre-K through Grade 12 Education

2026–2031

MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

THE MISSISSIPPI STRATEGIC PLAN FOR PRE-K THROUGH GRADE 12 EDUCATION articulates the state's vision, mission, values, and goals for improving outcomes for all students. This plan updates the Mississippi State Board of Education Strategic Plan, which has driven academic achievement since it was first adopted in 2014. The plan has been updated to incorporate new priorities for education while ensuring the state builds upon its historic academic achievements. Moving forward, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) will work to create and implement programs that advance the goals of the updated plan.

The MDE developed this Strategic Plan after gathering broad stakeholder input, including a survey and focus group interviews with approximately 100 Mississippians in fall 2025. Participants represented a cross-section of the education community and included students, teachers, principals, superintendents, legislative representatives, business leaders, community college and university representatives, and education stakeholder group leaders.

The updated plan reflects Mississippi's ongoing commitment to building a world-class education system where every student, in every community across our state, is prepared for success in college, careers, and life. Five of the six goals in the updated plan reflect the same priorities as the original strategic plan: high-quality early childhood education, reading and mathematics proficiency, graduates prepared for success, schools and districts with strong academic outcomes and continuous improvement, and effective teachers and leaders. The updated plan includes a new goal focused on whole child support. Additional focus areas for actions include promoting consistent school attendance, integrating technology and career learning from pre-K through grade 12, developing school and district leaders, and providing a system of support for low-performing schools and districts.

Mississippi students have earned national recognition for their gains over the past decade, proving that high expectations, strong instruction, and a commitment to equity improve outcomes. The work ahead builds upon that momentum and demands the same focus and dedication of teachers, school leaders, families, community partners, and policymakers working together with a common purpose.

Vision

Every student is prepared for success.

Mission

To build a world-class education system that equips every student with the knowledge and skills to succeed in college, careers, and life in Mississippi and the world.

Core Values for Mississippi Graduates

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Excellence
- Innovation
- Work Ethic
- Communication

Goals

1. Every child has access to a high-quality early childhood program and is prepared for kindergarten

2. Every student develops strong literacy and mathematics skills in all grades

3. Every student graduates prepared for success in college, career, or military service

4. Every school and district demonstrates strong academic outcomes and continuous improvement

5. Every school is fully staffed with qualified, effective teachers and leaders

6. All students attend schools and districts with safe, engaging, and supportive environments

Every child has access to a high-quality early childhood program and is prepared for kindergarten

ACTIONS

1. Strengthen partnerships between public school districts and all early childhood providers to expand access, improve pre-K quality, and ensure kindergarten readiness.
2. Expand MDE's blended pre-K grant program to increase the number of students with disabilities in general education pre-K programs.
3. Coach and train early learning providers to effectively use state-adopted curriculum to help children become kindergarten ready.
4. Strengthen the monitoring process for public pre-K providers.
5. Collaborate with the Mississippi Department of Health to help children who receive early intervention services (birth to age 2) smoothly transition into school-based services when they turn 3.

MEASURES

1. Enrollment in Early Learning Collaboratives (ELC), State-Invested Pre-K (SIP), and district-based pre-K
2. Percentage of public pre-K providers meeting all quality standards from the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)
3. Percentage of pre-K students in ELCs, SIPS, and district-based pre-K attaining kindergarten readiness on the pre-K end-of-year assessment
4. Percentage of kindergarten students achieving end-of-year target score on Kindergarten Readiness post-test
5. Percentage of children with disabilities in general education early childhood programs
6. Percentage of IDEA eligible children successfully transitioning from Part C (birth through age 2) to Part B (age 3 through 21)
7. Percentage of IDEA-eligible preschool students demonstrating progress in social-emotional skills, academic knowledge and skills, and appropriate behaviors aligned to age-appropriate peers

Every student develops strong literacy and mathematics skills in all grades

ACTIONS

1. Provide literacy instructional coaching support to general and special education teachers in elementary and middle schools to build capacity through modeling, co-teaching, observations, High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), co-planning, and data analysis.

2. Provide K-12 educators with professional learning in the science of reading, including courses for English Learners (EL) and students with dyslexia.

3. Provide professional learning to K-12 educators to implement effective, evidence-based writing instruction.

4. Provide math instructional coaching support in grades 2-6 to build teacher capacity through professional learning, modeling, co-teaching, co-planning, data analysis, and other instructional focuses.

5. Provide K-12 educators with professional learning in math instruction.

6. Strengthen instructional leadership through administrator training on the Mathematics Instructional Observation Protocol (MIOP), which helps leaders conduct meaningful classroom observations, provide actionable feedback, and align professional learning with coaching decisions.

MEASURES

1. Percentage of students who pass the grade 3 reading assessment at the first administration in each subgroup

2. Percentage of students proficient or advanced on English Language Arts, mathematics, and science statewide assessments (grades 3-8 and high school) in each subgroup

3. Percentage of students demonstrating growth on English Language Arts, mathematics statewide assessments in each subgroup

GOAL 03

Every student graduates prepared for success in college, career, or military service

ACTIONS

1. Continually review and update academic standards in all content areas and identify aligned HQIM to teach the standards.

2. Provide professional learning and resources to secondary educators to effectively teach the academic standards.

3. Develop technology standards to integrate into the existing academic standards.

4. Provide K-12 educators with professional learning and implementation resources for technology standards.

5. Support teachers and administrators to increase student participation and performance in advanced coursework and to understand the benefits of each accelerated program.

6. Integrate career awareness, exploration, preparation, and training into preK-12 instruction to connect classroom learning with the real world, including using HQIM at the K-8 level and Career and Technical Education at the secondary level.

7. Enhance and align Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs of study to provide students with industry-aligned pathways connected to academics, credentials, work-based learning, and postsecondary options.

8. Create a statewide workforce and career pathways resource site.

9. Strengthen the Individual Success Plan (ISP) framework to support students in identifying career interests, selecting aligned coursework and experiences, and revisiting secondary and postsecondary goals annually.

10. Strengthen the Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals to support coordinated and measurable goals and services for postsecondary outcomes

11. Support schools in implementing the Bridge-to-Career Course, providing second-semester seniors an alternative pathway to meet graduation requirements while preparing for workforce entry.

MEASURES

1. Percentage of students graduating from high school in each subgroup

2. Percentage of students ready for college as measured by ACT benchmarks in each content area (public school class data, grade 11)

3. Percentage of students scoring silver level or above National Career Readiness Certificate based on ACT WorkKeys

4. Percentage of students participating in and passing dual credit in each subgroup

5. Percentage of students participating in and passing Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and Cambridge exams in each subgroup

6. Percentage of students achieving an eligibility score (of 31 or higher) on the ASVAB

7. Number of Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentrators

8. Number of CTE students earning a national certification or participating in Work-Based Learning

9. Percentage of students earning diploma endorsements

10. Percentage of students with disabilities engaged in higher education, employment, or training one year after exiting

Every school and district demonstrates strong academic outcomes

ACTIONS

1. Administer an accountability system that drives continuous student improvement and achievement to ensure students are prepared for success after graduation.
2. Strengthen school and district leadership through professional learning and leadership coaching.
3. Provide professional learning to educators on comprehensive Tier I instruction to help schools close achievement gaps.
4. Provide a unified, coordinated system of support to low-performing schools and districts tailored to their specific academic, leadership, and operational needs.
5. Implement a standardized improvement plan focused on leadership, instruction, and sustainability for districts at risk of becoming a District of Transformation.
6. Support Districts of Transformation through an improvement process that includes prescriptive guidance, technical assistance, and ongoing progress evaluation.

MEASURES

1. Percentage of schools and districts rated C or higher
2. Percentage of A, B, C, D and F-rated schools and districts with an improved letter grade or increased points within a letter grade
3. Percentage of schools and districts in Districts of Transformation with an improved letter grade or increased points within a letter grade
4. Progress toward state long-term goal to close achievement gaps

Every school is fully staffed with qualified, effective teachers and leaders

ACTIONS

1. Advance the Leading Education Achievement in Districts and Schools (Mississippi LEADS) initiative to ensure an effective leadership development continuum.

2. Implement the Mississippi Administrator and Educator Professional Growth System (PGS) to strengthen state-wide system coherence for effective practice.

3. Strengthen collaboration with Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) to align preparation and coursework with preK-12 instructional priorities and workforce needs.

4. Support funding for the Mississippi Teacher Residency (MTR) to ensure high-quality clinical preparation and content knowledge in elementary and special education.

5. Expand equitable access to quality instruction through remote synchronous teaching and learning.

6. Develop and expand traditional and non-traditional licensure pathways.

7. Continue to conduct a comprehensive policy review of current Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 with a focus on key shortage areas.

8. Promote MECCA Educator Talent Portal and TeachMS. org to make teacher recruitment and licensure more accessible than ever.

MEASURES

1. Percentage of effective administrators and educators with a PGS rating of three or higher

2. Percentage of teacher candidates passing licensure exams on the first attempt

3. Proportion of inexperienced and non-certified teachers in schools

All students attend schools and districts with safe, engaging, and supportive environments

ACTIONS

1. Provide guidance, professional learning, and support services resources to assist districts in adopting strategies and policies for family engagement to promote consistent school attendance.

2. Provide clear statewide guidance and professional learning on attendance statutes, regulations, and compulsory school attendance requirements.

3. Strengthen early identification systems and attendance monitoring practices through targeted training, technical assistance, and refined statewide attendance data systems.

4. Support districts through professional development and resources, in implementing high-quality Tier I instruction and evidence-based Tier II and Tier III interventions aligned to academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.

5. Provide ongoing professional learning and resources to districts to ensure all students receive developmentally appropriate and data-driven counseling services that support academic achievement and student well-being and college and career – and military – readiness.

6. Implement Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) program in districts statewide.

7. Provide support, professional learning, and resources for IDEA Behavioral Programs.

8. Collect and analyze district-reported reasons for excused absences on a quarterly basis to identify systemic barriers to attendance, guide targeted supports, and reduce chronic absenteeism statewide.

MEASURES

1. School and district chronic absenteeism rates

2. Percentage of districts and schools with local board-approved crisis management plans

3. Percentage of elementary and secondary schools with counselors/mental health staff

4. Average student-to-counselor/mental health staff ratio in elementary and secondary schools

5. Percentage of students identified for Tier II and Tier III intervention in elementary, middle, and high school

6. Percentage of schools with Positive Behavior Support personnel supporting students with disabilities