

**OFFICE OF CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER**  
**Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Item**  
**Consent Agenda**  
**March 19, 2026**

**OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION**

I. Approval of recommendations on exceptions to pupil-teacher ratio requirements

Background Information: Mississippi Code Ann. § 37-151-213 and Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 19.1 State Board Policy Chapter 19 Rule 19.1 - Class Size, indicate that the State Board of Education is authorized to waive the student-teacher requirements upon a finding that a good faith effort is being made by a school district to comply with the ratio provision but, due to a lack of classroom space which is beyond the district's control, it is physically impossible for the district to comply, and the cost of temporary classroom space cannot be justified.

If a school district does not meet the class size requirement as required by Miss. Code Ann. § 37-151-213, the state share in support of the funding formula for the next succeeding fiscal year to that school district must be reduced by the percentage variance that the actual student-teacher ratios in the school district is to the required student-teacher ratios established under accreditation standards.

If a school district meets the highest levels of performance classification, as determined by the State Board of Education in the state's accountability standards, the State Board of Education, in its discretion, may exempt the school district from the maximum student-teacher ratio required under this section.

Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) staff have reviewed the records of districts out of compliance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-151-213 and have determined that six (6) districts meet the requirements to qualify for a waiver allowed in Standard 28 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2025*.

Back-up material attached

Recommendation: Approval

## CLASS SIZE WAIVER REQUEST SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026

### Clarksdale Municipal School District

School	School Accountability Grade	Grade Level	Total number of Class Periods with overload	Number of Students in Each Class Periods
Kirkpatrick Elementary	D	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2	28, 28
		2 <sup>nd</sup>	1	28

Clarksdale Municipal School District is requesting a waiver for eight (8) 2nd grade classes at Kirkpatrick Elementary School.

**Other Factors Related to the Overloads:** The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. 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 overload consists of only 2 students and does not justify creating another section.*
- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload. The other schools were at capacity as well.*
- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year. Enrollment and staffing will be adjusted during planning to prevent future overloads.*

# CLASS SIZE WAIVER REQUEST SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026

## Cleveland School District

School	School Accountability Grade	Grade Level	Total number of Class Periods with overload	Number of Students in Each Class Periods
Pearman Elementary	C	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1	28

Cleveland School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 2nd grade class at Pearman 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 the class with an overload. 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 space for another classroom. Another kindergarten class has already been created at Pearman.

*2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* Pearman is only one student over the limit. There is no pool for another teacher. Also, there is no space for adding another classroom.

*3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* Next year Grade 3 has two (2) sections. The grade prior to Grade 2 is nowhere close to the state limit.

# CLASS SIZE WAIVER REQUEST SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026

## George County School District

School	School Accountability Grade	Grade Level	Total number of Class Periods with overload	Number of Students in Each Class Periods
L.C. Hatcher Elementary	C	2 <sup>nd</sup>	4	28 (x4)

George County School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 2nd grade class at L.C. Hatcher 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 the class with an overload. 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 edit is a result of the enrollment of a single student within the school's attendance one. Due to limited certified applicants and teacher shortage issues, we are not able to add a unit this late in the current academic session.

*2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* There is an immediate error resulting from a single student enrollment in our K-2 elementary school located within our city limits. We do not find it feasible to add an additional teaching unit to this location so late in the academic session that would have to dissolve for the upcoming academic session. The other two (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> grade units currently have 27 students. The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students will be moving to our 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade school location next year where teaching units will be implements to accommodate the class sizes.

*3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The students will be moving to our 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade school location (L.T. Taylor Intermediate School) where an additional teaching unit will be implemented to alleviate the 28.2 edit error.

# CLASS SIZE WAIVER REQUEST SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026

## Natchez-Adams School District

School	School Accountability Grade	Grade Level	Total number of Class Periods with overload	Number of Students in Each Class Periods
Gilmer McLaurin Elementary	C	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2	28, 28
		2 <sup>nd</sup>	2	29, 27
		2 <sup>nd</sup>	2	28, 28

Natchez-Adams School District is requesting a waiver for three (3) 2nd grade classes at Gilmer McLaurin 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 the class with an overload. 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 currently no qualified teacher available to staff an additional class.
- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* A teacher resigned causing an overload.
- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* We are in the process of hiring a teacher to fill the vacancy for next school year.

# CLASS SIZE WAIVER REQUEST SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026

## North Panola School District

School	School Accountability Grade	Grade Level	Total number of Class Periods with overload	Number of Students in Each Class Periods
Como Primary	D	1 <sup>st</sup>	4	28 (x4)

North Panola School District is requesting a waiver for four (4) 1st grade classes at Como Primary 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 the class with an overload. 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.* Como Primary School serves Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade students. All Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers are only licensed within those areas. Adding an additional First Grade class would require a teacher with a license in that area. There are currently no viable teacher candidates.

*2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The North Panola School District is currently impacted by the statewide teacher shortage. At the beginning of the 25-26 academic term, all classes met the established ratio. Later in the semester, enrollment increased. Despite valid efforts, securing an additional teacher has been unsuccessful.

*3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* At this time, representatives from the North Panola School District are attending recruitment events at colleges and universities throughout the state to identify viable candidates. The district has also launched recruitment efforts through its website and social media platforms.

# CLASS SIZE WAIVER REQUEST SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026

## Noxubee County School District

School	School Accountability Grade	Grade Level	Total number of Class Periods with overload	Number of Students in Each Class Periods
Earl Nash Elementary	D	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2	28, 28
		2 <sup>nd</sup>	3	29, 29, 29
		2 <sup>nd</sup>	2	29, 29
		2 <sup>nd</sup>	2	28, 28

Noxubee County School District is requesting a waiver for four (4) 1st grade classes at Earl Nash 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 the class with an overload. 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.* While we recognize the concern of the overload, adding an additional class section is not feasible at this time because Mississippi compliance requires a properly licensed teacher and a safe appropriate instructional space. Due to our applicant shortage and the limitations of our older facility (no available classroom space that meets instructional and safety needs) we cannot add another section without risking staffing, noncompliance, and facility/safety concerns.

*2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The school serves a rural community with a limited- to- non-existent applicant pool making it impossible to hire after the start of the school year, increasing class sizes after master schedules and staffing assignments were finalized. Due to the age and design of the school facility there is no available classroom space that meets instructional and safety requirements to add another section. Collectively, these conditions create a hardship that necessitates a temporary overload while the district proceeds to pursue staff and instructional support solutions that maintain student safety and instructional continuity.

*3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* Earl student registration drive and early registration and enrollment drive will be conducted in the Spring to obtain accurate enrollment projections prior to staff and master schedule finalization. This will allow the district to determine the appropriate number of class sections needed and reduce the likelihood of overloads caused by post-start enrollment.