MVPS | MISSISSIPPI VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

MVPS Handbook

2006-2007

In compliance with Title IX and Section 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972, all participants of MVPS are advised that MVPS provides equal educational opportunities to students regardless of race, color, national origin, age, gender, religion, or handicap.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

The Mississippi State Board of Education, the Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi School of the Arts, the Mississippi School for the Blind, the Mississippi School for the Deaf, and the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability in the provision of educational programs and services or employment opportunities and benefits. The following office has been designated to handle inquires and complaints regarding the non-discrimination policies of the above mentioned entities.

Director, Office of Human Resources
Mississippi Department of Education
359 North West Street, Suite 359
Jackson, Mississippi 39201
(601) 359-3511

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Part I: General Overview

Mississippi Virtual Public School (MVPS) is a web-based educational service offered by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) to provide Mississippi students and educators with the following services: access to a wider range of course work, more flexibility in scheduling, and opportunity to develop capacities as independent learners.

MVPS Mission Statement

All students and educators in Mississippi public schools will have access to an online learning community that will provide educational opportunities to expand the boundaries of the traditional classroom through web-based delivered courses and instructional support.

MVPS Evaluation and Accountability

The Mississippi Virtual Public School is committed to an annual evaluation to ensure compliance with the following criteria:

- To meet state academic and operational goals
- That all students enrolled meet or exceed the state's academic standards
- That the student achieves a mastery or completion of the subject regardless whether student has achieved the recommended number of hours for the academic year
- Subject to appropriation:
  - MVPS is state and sponsor funded and free to students interested, including materials.
  - Sponsored public schools must include the necessary technology, including computer, printer, and Internet connection
- The State Board of Education approves all coursework and policies
- All interactive teachers will be held to the same high standard of qualification as required by the SBE Accountability standards, meeting any licensing and certification requirements
- The program is open to all state residency students who meet the Mississippi state residency regulations
- Enrollment is free to the students through funding from Bell South Grant and Mississippi legislature *Senate Bill 2602 Section 10*

Admission into MVPS

Public high school students from the state of Mississippi are welcome to enroll in courses through the Mississippi Virtual Public School with prior approval from the local public school administrator. MVPS is ***not*** a credit issuing or diploma-granting institution. The awarding of credit for successful course completion is determined by the local public school district. ***Note: Students enrolled in MVPS are limited to earning two (2) Carnegie units of credit during the academic year and one (1) Carnegie unit of credit during the summer public school session.***

Policy regarding participation in MVPS courses is established by each local public school district. Students interested in taking MVPS courses should contact their local public high school counselor or administrator.

Home school and private school students currently have access to online courses as a result of private foundation support.

Attendance, Participation, and Withdrawals

A. Attendance

Students may take online courses in a variety of settings. (1) Students may take online courses as a regularly scheduled class during the school day. (2) Students may take online courses outside of the regular school day. (3) Students may take online courses in an alternative education setting such as evening school, home, hospice, or Saturday school.

B. Participation

If the student is not participating or completing assignments as expected, the Online Instructor will contact the parent/guardian and the Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor by phone, U.S. mail, or email. The Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor must follow up with the student and parent/guardian and inform the Online Instructor of the action(s) taken.

C. Withdrawal

An online Course Withdrawal Form must be completed and submitted to the Mississippi Virtual Public School staff. A student may withdraw from a course within ten (10) days after the course has begun without penalty. Withdrawals after the ten-day period will result in a withdraw/fail (W/F) status.

Tuition

The Mississippi Department of Education received multiple sources of funding to support the MVPS Program. The BellSouth Foundation contributed $2.5 million and the Mississippi Legislature allocated $1 million towards this effort. As a result, all students in grades 9-12 currently have tuition–free access to MVPS online courses.

Minimum System Requirements

A. **Computer:** To take full advantage of the interactivity of the courses, the following *minimum* system profiles are required:

PC
Windows Me, 2000, or XP
128 MB of RAM (512 recommended)
56K or High Speed Internet Access (Recommended)
Sound Card & Speakers
Real Player, Windows Media Player or Quick Time

MAC
Mac OS 9.1 or OS X
128 MB of RAM (512 recommended)
56K or High Speed Internet Access (Recommended)
Sound Card & Speakers

Note: Coursework cannot be accessed using Web TV. Accessibility is also limited with America Online (AOL), Prodigy, and CompuServe.

B. **Internet Service Provider (ISP)**: An ISP is a company that can provide the connection and software necessary for accessing the Internet. Internet access is required to take the online courses.

C. **Email account**: An email address is established when a student signs up with an ISP. Visit Yahoo! Mail or MSN for information on free email providers. The email account must be checked regularly.

D. **Browser:** The browser must be capable of handling the data and graphics presented in the online coursework. Please refer to www.mvps.mde.k12.ms.us for the most current information regarding the specifications.

MVPS Academic Integrity and Ethics Agreement

Prior to registration for all online courses, each MVPS student must sign a waiver to ensure the integrity of the educational experience *(See Appendix B).* As a condition of participating in MVPS courses, students must accept the terms of the MVPS Academic Integrity and Ethics Agreement. This agreement states that a student agrees to abide by all rules and regulations published in the MVPS Student Handbook. If the Online Instructor suspects a problem, the parent/guardian, Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor, and Local Public School Principal will be contacted by the Online Instructor.

Part II: Description of Roles and Responsibilities of MVPS Personnel

MVPS Administration

The Mississippi Department of Education, through the Office of Leadership and Professional Development has the primary responsibility for the administration of the MVPS. The MDE Office of Academic Education reviews MVPS courses to ensure that courses are aligned with the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks.

Local Public School Principal

A. Overall Purpose

The Local Public School Principal's primary responsibility is to ensure that the local level implements the program successfully. The Local Public School Principal shall also ensure that all local staff and students adhere to guidelines stated in the MVPS participating public schools and student handbooks.

B. Key Responsibilities

- Acts as a facilitator
- Understands all roles and responsibilities of local public school personnel
- Assigns staff
- Understands guidelines, procedures, and concepts of online courses
- Participates in training for the support of online learning

Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor for MVPS

A. Overall Purpose

The Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor is the primary local contact for the MVPS Program. This individual oversees the policies/guidelines, registration, and implementation of MVPS courses for the students.

B. Key Responsibilities

- Works with local public school/district to establish policies/guidelines regarding credit issuance, calculating and weighting of grades into the student grade point average and the allocation of space, time, and technology for the student to complete MVPS coursework.
- Promotes MVPS among teachers, parents, students, and community members through public relations initiatives.
- Provides information to students and parents regarding MVPS offerings.
- Reviews course offerings through MVPS and determines student need/interest.

- Works with students and instructors to determine if course is appropriate for the student *(See page 11, "Student Self-Assessment: Is Online Learning For Me?").*
- Registers students for MVPS courses and assigns credit.
- Monitors student coursework and communicates on a regular basis with MVPS staff to provide timely feedback on student progress.
- Acts as MVPS's first point of contact for any online disciplinary issues (i.e., plagiarism, inappropriate chats, and etcetera).
- Ensures that students have the required textbooks or other instructional materials before class begins. Required textbooks will be supplied by MVPS; however, any supplemental resources will be the responsibility of the local public school and/or parent.
- Proctors **midterm and final** exams.
- Receives progress reports and grades from the MVPS instructors.

Local Public School Technical Coordinator

A. Overall Purpose

The Local Public School Technical Coordinator's responsibility is to ensure that all MVPS students have access to and assistance with necessary equipment; up-to-date browser, plug-ins, and software for on campus access. (See the Technical Requirement link at www.mvps.mde.k12.ms.us).

B. Key Responsibilities

- Verifies that the workstation at the local public school meets the minimum standards for MVPS content.
- Ensures adequate bandwidth.
- Acts as a resource for the installation of programs, MVPS interfaces and log-ins, and helps resolve any technical difficulties throughout the course.
- Communicates with MVPS and vendor technical support personnel.
- Informs the Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor of problems and issues that may interrupt the learning process.
- Establishes an email account for students taking courses through MVPS.
- Provides ongoing troubleshooting and support.

Part III: MVPS Procedures

Step 1: Establishing MVPS in the Public School/District

Task	Responsible Person(s)
1. Establish Local MVPS Team (Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor, and Technical Coordinator) for public school	Local Public School Principal
2. Review existing local policies that pertain to implications for online learning. **Issues to consider:** • Establish a location for student to complete work and accessibility of necessary technology. • Issue credits and grades, including potential drops and withdrawal grades. • Monitor coursework for student success. • Establish value of MVPS grades and integration of the grades into the local public school grade point average *(See Appendix D).*	Local MVPS Team
3. Review curricular offerings of MVPS (www.mvps.mde.k12.ms.us).	Local MVPS Team
4. Evaluate existing technology and make recommendations for upgrades if necessary to the Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor.	Local Public School Technical Coordinator
5. Submit signed Contact Form to MVPS.	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor
6. Provide program awareness to teachers, students, parents, and community.	Local MVPS Team
7. Approve and register students for appropriate MVPS courses.	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor

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MVPS Contact Information Form

Public School Name:_____ County/Region_____

Public School Address:_____
Street Address City State Zip

In order for a public school to participate in the Mississippi Virtual Public School, the following building contacts are required.

MVPS Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor

This person is responsible for approving the enrollment of students in MVPS. This approval constitutes the appropriateness of the course for the student and the responsibility of the district and/or local public school to support and monitor student progress.

MVPS Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor's Name:_____

Email:_____ Phone:_____ Fax:_____

MVPS Local Public School Technical Coordinator Contact

This person is responsible for providing local technical support to students, and/or teachers involved in Mississippi Virtual Public School courses accessed through the district/public school local area network.

Local Public School Technical Coordinator's Name:_____

Email:_____ Phone:_____ Fax:_____

The above are authorized to carry out district and public school site requirements for participation in MVPS.

_____ _____
District Superintendent Date

_____ _____
Public School Principal Date

Please fax this information to MVPS staff at 601.359.2337.

Step 2: Recruiting students to participate in MVPS

Task	Responsible Person(s)
1. Develop criteria for student eligibility for MVPS.	Local MVPS Team
2. Communicate information about MVPS to faculty and other public school staff. Refer to http://mvps.mde.k12.ms.us	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor

Tools and Resources

Districts have received information on MVPS courses. For additional information, please contact the MVPS staff at 601-359-3667.

Testimonials from MVPS Students

"Being in the AP Online English Literature class has been very challenging. However, I do enjoy the pressure and the knowledge this class offers. The staff involved in the program assisted us tremendously...well worth the challenge."

Barbara Cooper, AP Online English Literature student, Holly Springs Public High School

"When I reached my senior year, I was afraid that the instant independence of college would eat me alive. The Advanced Placement Online English Literature class forced me to work hard. It not only gave me the challenge I needed, but also taught me to think and to work on my own. I feel that I am realizing my full potential through this class, and I recommend it to anyone brave enough to challenge themselves."

Justin Dawkins, AP Online English Literature student, Holly Springs Public High School

Student Self-Assessment: Is Online Learning For Me?

To help identify students for the MVPS program, have students complete the following survey, "Is Online Learning for Me?" (Also available at www.mvps.mde.k12.ms.us).

Please answer the following yes/no questions. Then read the statements at the bottom of this page to identify if you are a candidate for online learning.

☐ Yes ☐ No	1.	I have ready access to a computer with Internet and email.
☐ Yes ☐ No	2.	I know how to use the computer.
☐ Yes ☐ No	3.	Typing is not an overwhelming task for me.
☐ Yes ☐ No	4.	I enjoy exploring new things.
☐ Yes ☐ No	5.	I am motivated and self-directed.
☐ Yes ☐ No	6.	I can set my own schedule, and I complete my work on time.
☐ Yes ☐ No	7.	I write well and I have good communication skills.
☐ Yes ☐ No	8.	I like to solve problems on my own.
☐ Yes ☐ No	9.	I can read and follow detailed directions on my own.
☐ Yes ☐ No	10.	I like the freedom to choose when I study.
☐ Yes ☐ No	11.	I think online courses will be easier than regular classes.

- If you answered YES to questions 1 -10 and NO to question 11, ONLINE LEARNING may be for you!
- If you answered YES to question 11 and/or NO to any other question, you may need to reconsider ONLINE LEARNING. Research indicates that students who are successful in an online course spent 8-10 hours per weeks, per course studying and completing assignments.

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 28, 2006

Anytown High School to join ranks with
MISSISSIPPI VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

Provides expanded educational opportunities to students throughout Mississippi via the Internet

Anytown – Superintendent ----------today announced that Anytown High will become one of the public high schools in Mississippi offering courses through Mississippi Virtual Public School (MVPS).

The Mississippi Virtual Public School is providing expanded opportunities for Mississippi public high school students , both inside and outside the classroom walls, by delivering classes to students throughout the state with the technology of the Internet.

All MVPS courses place emphasis on content needed to ensure that students can meet the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks Standards, including courses in Advanced Placement, Foreign Languages, Computer Applications, and other subjects that might not otherwise be available to all students.

According to Superintendent ----------"Offering courses through Mississippi Virtual Public School is one tool to help accomplish district and local public school improvement plans to expand student opportunities and raise achievement levels for our students."

"The Mississippi Virtual Public School provides a unique opportunity to assure that we can offer expanded course offerings to our students and professional development opportunities for our teachers not otherwise available in the district.

"I look forward to watching the development of additional course offerings as student enrollments in these programs soar over the coming months," ------said.

Students interested in pursuing online learning should discuss their educational plans with their counselor and receive approval before enrolling in courses.

More information may be obtained by logging on to the Mississippi Virtual Public School website, www.mvps.mde.k12.ms.us or by contacting MVPS staff at 601.359.3667 or 866.856.2213.

Step 3: Counseling and Registering Students

Task	Responsible Person(s)
1. Determine if a student is eligible for a specific course. Review student characteristics for what it takes to be successful in an online class.	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor
2. Approve or deny students who have requested registration for a specific course.	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor
3. Inform students of required MVPS Academic Integrity and Ethics Agreement, course expectations, expected conduct, and procedures for handling problems.	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor
4. Have students and parents sign required MVPS Academic Integrity and Ethics Agreement (*See attachment B).*	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor
5. Visit http://www.mvps.mde.k12.ms.us/ to login and enroll students.	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor
6. Monitor student progress. Students who do not begin a specific course within (10) days after the course has started will be dropped *(See page 14 for more information).*	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor

Common Problems, Questions, and Issues

What are specific problems, issues, and questions that may arise during this step of the process?	How should these problems, issues, and questions be addressed?
What is the average rate of notification from the time a counselor completes an online registration form?	The local public school will receive an instant confirmation that a student has been officially enrolled in a specific course.
What should students do when the system is not available during assigned class time?	Local public schools should establish contingency plans for before and after the MVPS term starts and concludes. If technical difficulties preclude a student from accessing MVPS during his/her assigned time, the student should have assignments to complete without MVPS access.
What should a student do if he or she is notified that a class is dropped, closed, or full?	Students are encouraged to select another course or be placed on a waiting list for a class.
If a local public school does not recommend a student for MVPS, can he or she enroll independently?	No, the student must have permission from the local public school in order to participate in an MVPS course.

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Notification for Course Drop

Date: _____

Student's Name: _____

MVPS Course: _____

Instructor's Name: _____

The above student has permission to drop the course through MVPS according to the following drop policy:

> *Up to the 10th day following the initial log-in into the class, the student may drop the course without penalty. The student must have approval from the local public school administrators to drop an online course and MVPS* ***must*** *be notified in writing. Drops after the 10-day period of time will result in a withdraw/fail (W/F) being issued by MVPS. MVPS will maintain the student in the database as a W/F. It is the discretion of the public school to accept the withdrawal or issue a failing grade. If the student drops (or becomes inactive) after completing 50% of the coursework, he/she will be issued an F and considered a "Non-completer".*

_____

Signature of Superintendent **Date**

_____

Signature of Principal **Date**

_____

Signature of Local Public School Site Coordinator **Date**

Please fax this information to the MVPS staff at the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Leadership and Professional Development, 601.359.2337.

Step 4: Getting Students Started on the System

Key Tasks

Task	Responsible
1. Set up materials and make sure that computers meet minimum standards and have correct software. See Minimum Technology Requirements in Part I *(See Page 5)* of the handbook and on the MVPS website, www.mvps.mde.k12.ms.us .	Local Public School Technical Coordinator
2. Ensure students have all required textbooks, which will be distributed by the MVPS Staff.	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor
3. Distribute login information to students.	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor
4. Direct student to the Orientation Course on www.mvps.mde.k12.ms.us to ensure knowledge of tools.	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor

Common Problems, Questions, and Issues

What are specific problems, issues, and questions that may arise during this step of the process?	How should these problems, issues, and questions be handled?
Who should be contacted if a student has not received materials for the course?	The Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor should contact the MVPS Help Desk at 1.866.856.2212.
What if a student cannot navigate the orientation course?	The student should contact the MVPS Help Desk at 1.866.856.2212.

Step 5: Taking the Course

Key Tasks

Task	Responsible Person(s)
1. Encourage student to use good time management skills to meet deadlines for assignments and examinations.	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor, and Parent(s)
2. Notify Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor assigned to work with MVPS and/or MVPS instructor if problems arise in logging on, using bulletin board/chat room, and submitting assignment submission as needed.	Local public school personnel assigned to work with MVPS
3. Monitor student progress, both in terms of work productivity and success rates and communicate with the MVPS Staff.	Local MVPS Team, Parent(s)
4. Submit assignments, quizzes, and examinations in a timely manner.	Student
5. Communicate continually with the MVPS instructor.	Student, Local MVPS Team

Common Problems, Questions, and Issues

What are specific problems, issues, and questions that may arise in this step of the process?	How should these problems, issues, and questions be addressed?
What if the student has difficulty in navigating the tools in the course?	The student has access to the online tutorial. If problems persist, the course instructor should refer the student to the MVPS Help Desk.
What if a student forgets/loses their log-in information?	Log-in information can be obtained from MVPS at http://www.mvps.mde.k12.ms.us/ or the Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor.
What are the requirements for dropping a student from a course after the course has started?	A drop form must be completed and sent to the MVPS Staff *(See Page 14)*.

Step 6: Completing the Course

Key Tasks

Task	Responsible
1. Local public schools can view instructor's final grade report from MVPS within ten (10) days after the semester ends. Public Schools requiring alternate deadlines should communicate calendar needs to the instructor and MVPS Educational Outreach Coordinator.	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor
2. Analyze results and make any significant corrections, problems, or concerns known to the MVPS staff.	Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor

Common Problems, Questions, and Issues

What are specific problems, issues, and questions that may arise in this step of the process?	How should these problems, issues, and questions be addressed?
What if a student does not complete the course?	The student will be issued an F and the percentage of coursework completed will be reported to the local public school.

Appendix A:

MVPS CONTACTS

Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Leadership and Professional Development
Mississippi Virtual Public School
359 North West Street
Jackson, MS 39201
601.359.3667 or 866.856.2213

Gwenda B. Purnell
Special Assistant to Superintendent
Office of Leadership & Professional Development
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IT Planner
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Educational Specialist
mwansley@mde.k12.ms.us

Demetrice Watts
Projects Officer
mvpssupport@mde.k12.ms.us

Appendix B:

MVPS Academic Integrity and Ethics Agreement

ETHICS: As a student enrolled in a Mississippi Virtual Public School course, I will abide by all rules and regulations published by the Mississippi Virtual Public School as well as the rules and regulations published by my local public school. I agree that I am subject to the jurisdiction of all disciplinary panels and procedures established by the Mississippi Virtual Public School and/or my local public school to address violations of rules or the honor code of the Mississippi Virtual Public School. All assignments I submit to the instructor and all tests I take shall be solely performed by me, except where the instructor has requested that I participate in a group project. I will not submit work that is plagiarized or otherwise violates copyright laws of the United States of America.

As a user of the Internet courses of the Mississippi Virtual Public School, I agree to access Mississippi Virtual Public School Internet courses only for lawful purposes. I will respect the privacy of other users, and I will respect the integrity of the computer systems and other users' data. It is my responsibility to respect the copyright protection of licensed computer software. I will not obstruct, disrupt, or interfere with the teaching and learning occurring on the website, through computer "hacking" or any other nefarious methods. I will not harass, stalk, threaten, abuse, insult, or humiliate anyone using the Mississippi Virtual Public School computer system or any other computer system utilized by the Mississippi Virtual Public School. This includes, but is not limited to, demeaning written or oral comments of an ethnic, sexist, or racist nature as well as unwanted sexual advances or intimidation. I understand I may be held liable for monetary damages for any wrongful actions I undertake.

As a member of the Mississippi Virtual Public School community, I am solely responsible for adhering to all relevant laws, statutes, rules, and regulations, as well as Mississippi Virtual Public School's standards, rules, and regulations. Enrollment does not confer either immunity or special consideration with reference to civil and criminal laws. Disciplinary action by the Mississippi Virtual Public School or my local public school will not be subject to postponement on the grounds that criminal charges involving the same incident have been dismissed, reduced, or are pending in a civil or criminal court. In addition, the Mississippi Virtual Public School and the local public school reserve the right to pursue disciplinary action if a student violates a standard and withdraws from the Mississippi Virtual Public School before administrative action is final.

ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS: All assignments that I submit to the Online Instructor and all tests I take shall be solely performed by me, with the exception of work completed as part of an assigned group project. Failure to comply with the requirement that all assignments and tests that are submitted will be solely performed by the student with the exception of group work may result in the student losing credit for specific assignments or even the entire course.

SEMESTER AND FINAL EXAMS: I understand that MVPS requires online students to take their semester and/or final course exams with an approved proctor.

PLAGIARISM: I understand plagiarism is taken seriously and any cases of suspected plagiarism will be investigated. Should plagiarism be confirmed, I may lose credit for specific assignments or even the entire course.

COPYRIGHT: I understand the MVPS website comprises and contains copyrighted materials. All course materials have been licensed for use by the Mississippi Virtual Public School and are the property of the respective course provider. The MVPS website is provided solely for the use of students and prospective students of the Mississippi Virtual Public School. I may not distribute, publish, or reuse the materials, audio files, images or design, or any part of the materials, audio files, images, or design of this website whatsoever. I am only authorized to view, copy, and print documents contained within this website subject to the agreement that:

1. My use is for the performance of coursework as required by the instructor teaching the course for which I am registered;
2. I will display all copyright notices and retain any other copyright and other proprietary notices on all copies I make;
3. I will not reuse any material contained on this website including, but not limited to, the 'look and feel' of the course delivery system and the functionality of the course delivery system;
4. I will not copy any codes or graphics contained in this site, except those graphics used in courses, subject to the above terms;
5. I have not gained access to this website for the purpose of copying the contents of the courses or the course delivery system for personal commercial or noncommercial use;
6. I will not share any information about the functionality of the courses in this website with any party outside of the Mississippi Virtual Public School system; and
7. I understand I am subject to the copyright laws of the United States of America and will not violate those laws.

NONCOMPLIANCE: Noncompliance with the procedures and standards stated in this agreement is proper cause for disciplinary action. In the event there is a claim that I have violated this agreement, I will be provided with notice of the alleged violation and have an opportunity to present an explanation.

Disciplinary actions may include, but not be limited to, a telephone call to parent/guardian(s), loss of privileges, restitution, suspension and/or expulsion from the online course, and/or criminal prosecution.

MVPS students are subject to all local, state and federal laws. Anything posted to the courses offered through the Mississippi Virtual Public School will be treated as public comments and are thus subject to criminal prosecution if they so warrant. Copyright violation is taken seriously and may result in actions taken by the course provider(s).

The Mississippi Virtual Public School staff will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through Internet access.

DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of any information contained in the MVPS website and to maintain the functionality of the website, MVPS is not responsible for any inaccuracy or breakdown of the website or its functions. I agree that my use of the Mississippi Virtual Public School website or Mississippi Virtual Public School Internet courses IS AT MY OWN RISK. The MVPS website is provided "as is," without any warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied, including, but not limited to, implied warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose, and non-infringement. I assume all risks associated with the use of this website. MVPS shall not be liable for any losses caused by any use of the website or any information contained in the website. In no event shall MVPS, its directors, officers, employees, or agents be liable to me for any direct, indirect, incidental, special, or consequential damages resulting from my use or inability to use the MVPS or local public school website. I understand that it is my responsibility to:

- Read course announcements regularly;
- Communicate with my instructor via email and/or phone as needed; and
- Be familiar with instructor's expectations.

I have read, understand and agree to comply with the MVPS Academic Integrity and Ethics Agreement.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

_____

Local Public School Site Coordinator/Counselor Signature: Date:

Appendix C:

Essential Principles of Quality

Guidelines for Web-based Courses for Middle Grades and High School Students

As the World Wide Web increasingly is used to provide academic courses for students in the middle grades and high school, standards and guidelines are more important than ever. States, school districts and schools need to be able to identify high-quality, effective Web-based courses and the *Essential Principles of Quality* are designed to help them. **Web based courses in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) region should be measured initially against the *Essential Principles* and ultimately by the achievement of students who take the courses.** The *Essential Principles* are intended to assure states, school districts and schools that courses complying with the principles will be high-quality courses that effectively help students meet academic goals. The principles also are intended to ensure that the characteristics of good teaching and learning are addressed during the development and use of electronically delivered courses. Web-based courses should be at least the same quality as traditional courses. *Essential Principles of Quality* focuses on three primary areas in assessing the quality of Web-based courses:

- curriculum, instruction, and student assessment;
- management; and
- evaluation of delivered courses.

Web-based courses will meet students' needs across the SREB region if they are designed carefully, supported appropriately, and used effectively. Quality and effectiveness are the cornerstones upon which courses should be developed and used. A checklist to determine the quality and effectiveness of Web-based courses and their implementation is available from Bill Thomas at bthomas@sreb.org.

Curriculum, instruction and student assessment

1. The course content and assessments are aligned with the state's academic standards.
2. The course engages students in learning activities that address various learning styles.
3. The course provides students with opportunities to engage in abstract thinking and critical reasoning.
4. The course structure includes fair, adequate, and appropriate methods and procedures to assess students' mastery of content.
5. Each course will provide appropriate teacher-to-student interaction, including timely, frequent feedback about student progress.
6. Each course will provide appropriate student-to-student interaction and a plan for monitoring that interaction.

7. The teacher of the Web-based course can adapt learning activities to accommodate students with disabilities.
8. Students have access to resources that enrich the course content.
9. A complete, clearly written course syllabus is available for review.
10. Issues associated with the use of copyrighted materials are addressed.

Management

1. The course provider is authorized to operate by the state where the course originates or is received, or the provider is accredited by a regional accrediting agency.
2. School districts or state departments of education will review a course to ensure its quality before it is used.
3. The school or school district where a student is enrolled or resides will accept the course for credit.
4. Procedures for fees and payment are established before students enroll in a course.
5. Student work and personal data are secure from access by others.
6. Students are monitored to ensure academic honesty.
7. A teacher or other educator in the school will coordinate and assist students with instructional, technical and management requirements.
8. The company or organization that offers the Web-based course will provide the course teacher and school coordinator with technical and course-management assistance.
9. Necessary, relevant learning materials are available to help students meet the course requirements.
10. The course provider has identified prerequisite technology skills for students.
11. There are technical requirements for acceptable access.
12. The teacher is trained to use the course and resources effectively to deliver instruction.
13. The teacher and students receive technical support to ensure easy use of the course.
14. There is a policy for recourse or appeal if the Web-based course is not delivered as described.
15. The academic calendar of the students and teacher is coordinated before the course begins.

Evaluation

1. A Web-based course's success should be measured by the achievement of students taking it.
2. Each course is evaluated over time by the state agency or its designee.
3. A new course will provide documentation that validates its reliability and completeness.
4. A company or other organization offering a Web-based course that was taught previously will provide evidence of its effectiveness, reliability and completeness.
5. Each teacher of a Web-based course will be evaluated at least once a year.
6. The school and the state can verify a student's participation and performance in a Web-based course during the course and upon its completion.

The *Essential Principles of Quality* were developed based on the *Principles of Good Practice* of the *Electronic Campus* of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB); on SREB's *Essential Elements for Web-based Courses for High School Students;* and on the work of SREB Educational Technology Cooperative representatives who have developed, administered and used Web-based courses.

Appendix D:

MVPS Grading Scale

93 – 100	A
85 – 92	B
75 – 84	C
70 – 74	D
Below 70	F

Mississippi Department of Education

Dr. Hank Bounds
State Superintendent of Education

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