DESCRIPTOR TERM:	CODE:
EFFECTIVE AT-RISK PROGRAMS	4905
ADOPTION DATE:	REVISION:
March 23, 2009	

STATE BOARD POLICY

School Districts shall budget and spend Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) At-Risk funds, earned as prescribed by Section 37-151-7(1)(d), on effective programs specifically targeted to serve at-risk students. These programs must be in addition to all other regular or required programs offered by the school district to all students. The accounting of the expenditure of these funds shall be as required by the Mississippi School District Financial Accounting Manual as prescribed by the Department of Education.

The definition of an at-risk student will be as determined by each individual school district. Examples of student groups a school district could use as a guideline in making a determination as to whether a student is considered at risk are:

A student who is currently participating in the USDA Free and Reduced Lunch Program (if the school or district is 100 percent free and reduced lunch an additional at-risk determination is required).
A student who is not meeting the requirements necessary for promotion to the next grade level or graduation from high school.
A student whose education attainment is below other students of their age or grade level.
A student who is a potential dropout.
A student who is failing two or more courses of study.
A student who has been retained.
A student who is not reading on grade level.
A student who is pregnant.
A student who is a parent.

The definition of an effective at-risk program shall be any program designed to target the unique needs of the student in order to allow that student to perform on grade level and ultimately graduate from high school. These programs may be offered before, during or after school, but cannot be any regular course offering available to all students. An example of an allowable program is an after school program designed to accelerate a student's reading grade level. An example of a non-allowable program is a regularly offered English class made up entirely of students currently participating in the free and reduced lunch program.

School districts are required to make annual reports to the Department of Education on the district's programs serving at-risk students. The form, content and due dates of these reports will be prescribed by the Department of Education.

STATE BOARD POLICY - MAEP AT-RISK FUNDS

As a guideline, at-risk programs may include, but are not limited to: Alternative School Programs, Dropout Prevention Programs, Drug Awareness Programs, GED Programs, School Nurse Programs, Social Work Services, Mentoring Programs, Summer School Programs, After-School Programs, Homebound Programs, School Counselors, Class Size Reduction, Extra Support within a Class, Career Counselors, Classroom Intervention, Parent Center, Extended Year, Assistant Teachers, Software Programs, Tutorial Assistance, Curriculum Development, Professional Development (specifically addressing at-risk student needs), Remedial Instruction, Safety & Health, School Attendance, Performance Assessments, Screening Assessments, Homeless/Migrant, Crisis/Behavioral Intervention, Dyslexia.

The Department of Education shall review each district's At-Risk program request and based upon the district's ability to logically explain the purpose, stated goals and objectives, and the methodology for determining success of the program will make a determination as to whether the program is a valid use of MAEP At-Risk funds. In the event that the Department of Education determines that the program is not valid then the Department will notify the district in writing of that determination. The Department of Education will provide assistance to these districts by providing information on programs determined to be valid.

Before a school district can spend MAEP At-Risk dollars on any program targeting at-risk students other than what was originally approved by the Department of Education, the school district must seek approval from the Department. The district's request must include documented research as to the effectiveness of the program.

Districts failing to comply with any requirements of this policy shall be in violation of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards and upon determination of a violation the district's accreditation level will be downgraded by the Accreditation Commission.