Title 7: Education K-12
Part 24

MISSISSIPPI

PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS

2012

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright future for every child

MISSISSIPPI

PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS

2012

Revised August 2012

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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THE HISTORY OF ACCREDITATION IN MISSISSIPPI

1896-1959

Since the early 1900s, accreditation has sought to improve schools through the requirements of the accrediting agency. In Mississippi, the roots of school accreditation are found in the institutions of higher learning and state teachers' associations. It all began in 1896 when the University of Mississippi first published a program of studies for an approved high school. The schools that met the University's prescribed program of studies were officially listed as affiliated high schools, and the graduates of those schools were admitted to the University on the basis of their records (certificates), without examination. The list included white high schools in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee, and it was soon recognized as the approved list by the other colleges in the state.

The effort to regulate the program of studies in secondary schools was strengthened in 1918 when the University requested the Mississippi Education Association to appoint a committee to classify the affiliated high schools. The Association appointed five members to a High School Classifying Committee and required this group to establish standards of classification, to devise a system for grouping high schools, and to assign each high school to its appropriate group. The responsibilities and workload of this subsidiary committee of the Mississippi Education Association continued to grow, and the need for full-time statewide supervision of high schools soon became apparent. This need was met in 1919 when the position of state supervisor of secondary schools was created in the Mississippi Department of Education. In May of 1920, the High School Classifying Committee became the State High School Accrediting Commission, a standing committee of the Mississippi Education Association. The State Supervisor of Secondary Schools chaired the first Commission, whose membership consisted of representatives from two high schools, the A and M College, Millsaps College, Mississippi College, the Mississippi State College for Women, and the University of Mississippi. This Commission required high schools to meet eleven minimum standards before being accredited and defined an accredited high school as one that meets all requirements and, after inspection, has been approved by the Commission.

Accreditation of elementary schools was not addressed until 1926. During that year, the Mississippi Education Association created the Elementary School Accrediting Commission to perform the same duties in regulating programs for elementary schools that the High School Accrediting Commission did for secondary schools. The Elementary Commission consisted of ten members, with the newly appointed State Elementary School Supervisor serving as executive secretary of the group.

Operating as separate entities, these two Commissions regulated the elementary and secondary programs in white schools until 1949 when they were discontinued by the Mississippi Education Association, and the Mississippi Accrediting Commission was formed.

The first efforts to accredit black schools began in 1935 when the Mississippi Association for Teachers in Colored Schools organized the Negro Accrediting Commission. In 1947 the Mississippi Association for Teachers in Colored Schools became the Mississippi Teachers Association, and the Commission continued to operate under the renamed Teachers' association until 1959. During that year, the name was changed to the State Accrediting Commission, and one of the first official actions of this group was to adopt the existing rules and regulations of the Mississippi Accrediting Commission.

1960-1980

The decade of the sixties found these two Commissions sharing responsibilities for accrediting black and white schools; and, in carrying out their duties, both groups made extensive use of officials in the Mississippi Department of Education. The director of the Division of Instruction and his staff served as liaison personnel in distributing, collecting, and processing accreditation information. This practice of "separate but equal" accreditation terminated in the summer of 1970 when the State Board of Education assumed the responsibility, thus adding a legal dimension to a voluntary process designed to improve schools.

The accreditation law of 1970 gave the State Board of Education the power and authority to prescribe the standards and procedures for the accreditation of schools and placed the responsibility for enforcement in the Mississippi Department of Education. The law further mandated the Board to appoint a Commission on School Accreditation, whose membership would consist of four representatives from each of the five Congressional districts and whose primary purpose would be to continually review the accreditation system. Contrary to the general perception of the public, the law did not make accreditation compulsory for any school. The process continued to be voluntary and open to any elementary, secondary, or special school in the state.

In the decade following the passage of the accreditation law of 1970, the accreditation system (although now legal) continued to emphasize quantitative factors (specific resources and personnel) as the means by which school improvement was to be accomplished. The provision of adequate resources and personnel was assumed to be a sufficient indicator of the quality of the school program, but, as accreditation information was evaluated, it was found that the quality of the school program was not a direct correlate of the required quantitative factors. However, the system was successful in assuring the presence of adequate resources and in standardizing the organization and operation of school programs. These assurances were not enough to soothe a growing disgruntled public, which was constantly evaluating the products of accredited schools – its students.

1980-Present

As the decade of the eighties approached, the state was set for reform in education and, ultimately, in school accreditation. The public wanted the emphasis in accrediting schools shifted from measures of quantity to those of quality. A series of significant legislative mandates passed during the past twenty years have been instrumental in not only creating the current public school accreditation model and accountability system, but also establishing Mississippi as a nationally recognized leader in the school improvement and accountability movement.

Governor William Winter recognized the need for education reform and initiated the accountability movement in Mississippi beginning with the Education Reform Act of 1982. This landmark legislation established a task force to study and propose a plan to establish guidelines and criteria for a permanent performance-based system of school accreditation for all public elementary and secondary schools. The legislation created and authorized the Commission on School Accreditation to establish a system for assuring the quality of school programs in Mississippi. This new system, appropriately deemed performance-based school accreditation, was based upon measures that focus on the extent to which schools help students master defined content and objectives. The law clearly shifted the emphasis in school accreditation to the outcomes of education, specifically those related to student achievement, and changed the accreditation process from voluntary to compulsory for all public elementary and secondary schools.

Legislation enacted in 1994 maintained the emphasis on student achievement and mandated that the Mississippi State Board of Education strengthen and expand the performance-based accreditation system. The 1994 legislation required the system to include: rigorous minimum standards; levels above the minimum that demand High Performing performance; and strict accountability measures for districts that fail to meet minimum standards. Due to continued low student achievement and failure to meet minimum accreditation standards, two public school districts were taken over by the State Board of Education under the conservatorship section of the law and remained under state control until 2002.

During the 1999 Legislative Session, the Mississippi Student Achievement Improvement Act of 1999 was passed requiring the State Board of Education to create a state-of-the-art school evaluation and improvement system. The act required the State Board of Education to implement a performance-based accreditation system for both individual schools and school districts. This legislation also required the State Board of Education to set annual performance standards for each of the schools in the state and to measure the performance of each school against itself, using student growth and performance measures. Before new standards and tests were developed, hundreds of teachers helped to re-write the curriculum for mathematics and language arts.

Additional legislation passed in 2000 further clarified requirements for establishing new accountability standards, making accreditation levels reflective of student performance at the school level rather than the district level. This 2000 legislation required individual school performance accreditation levels to be based on two criteria: (1) meeting an annual growth expectation in student achievement and (2) the percentage of students scoring at the basic and proficient level. These will be identified as the Achievement Model and the Growth Model. This legislation also established an intensive assistance program for schools not meeting the accreditation standards. Support and training for teachers, administrators, and school board members have been and will continue to be offered to local school districts.

In this accountability system, public school accreditation was two-fold: Each school district was awarded an accreditation status based on compliance with process standards, and individual schools are assigned a school performance classification based on student achievement. District accreditation statuses were awarded under the new accreditation model in October 2001, and individual school performance classifications were assigned in September 2003. For the first time, all components of a school - students, teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members – were held accountable for student learning.

In 2007, an Accountability Task Force began working on what a new accountability system should look like in light of the new curriculum framework in Language Arts, Mathematics and corresponding assessments that were being implemented. Furthermore, the Mississippi Board of Education had established three Bold Goals to (1) Reduce the dropout rate to 13% by 2013, (2) Reach the national average on national assessments by 2013, and (3) Ensure that all students exit 3rd grade reading on grade level by 2020. Based on this commitment, the Accountability Task Force and the Commission on School Accreditation (CSA) shaped an accountability system aimed at moving Mississippi schools toward national performance standards.

In the fall of 2008, the Accountability Task Force began developing recommendations for the revised accountability system. These recommendations were finalized by the Commission on School Accreditation and submitted for approval to the State Board of Education (SBE). The new accountability system received SBE approval on March 20, 2009.

The new accountability system focuses on a number of key issues. It was determined that a performance classification designation would be issued to both schools and districts. In addition to an achievement component and a growth component, a graduation/dropout component was included for high schools and school districts. Another key point for consideration in the new accountability system was that the performance classification issued to schools and districts should differ from the previous labeling system so there could be no comparisons between the two models. A final consideration was that the district performance classification should be based on the performance of all students in the district, treating the district as one K-12 school.

The Mississippi Board of Education has set a very bold goal of reaching the national average on national assessments by 2013. When the State Board passed the new accountability rating system on March 20, 2009, they took an important step toward reaching that goal and made a tremendous commitment to prepare Mississippi children to compete on a national and international level. With the new system in place, Mississippi standards will be on par with standards in other states and there will be greater transparency in school, district and state performance than there has ever been.

1.0 ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

1.1 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION ON SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

The Commission is composed of fifteen (15) members, with three representatives from each of the five Congressional Districts as established at the time the Commission was authorized by MS Code 37-17-3. The membership consists of two classroom teachers, two principals of schools, two school district superintendents, two local school board members, and seven individuals who are not actively engaged in the education profession. All appointments to the Commission shall comply with Section 37-17-3, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

1.2 APPOINTMENT

Each member of the Commission is appointed by the State Board upon recommendation of the State Superintendent of Education.

1.3 TERMS OF OFFICE

The length of a regular term is four years. Upon acceptance of appointment, each member is eligible to serve for two consecutive terms. If a member changes employment or accepts a position that is no longer reflective of the category for which he or she was appointed, or if a member moves out of the Congressional district he or she was appointed to represent, that member must resign, and a new member will be appointed to fill the unexpired term. A member of the Commission who is appointed to fill an unexpired term is eligible for appointment to his or her own term of office.

1.4 GENERAL DUTIES OF COMMISSION

The State Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School Accreditation, shall establish and implement a permanent performance-based accreditation system, and all public elementary and secondary schools shall be accredited under this system. It shall be the purpose of the Commission on School Accreditation to continually review and enforce the standards on accreditation and to make recommendations to the State Board of Education.

1.5 OFFICERS

The Commission annually elects a chairperson and vice-chairperson.

1.6 MEETINGS

The Commission meets on call of the State Superintendent of Education. Any official action taken by the Commission requires the presence of a quorum, which is defined as a majority of the present membership. Superintendents of school districts will receive written notice of the place, time, and date of each Commission meeting. Individuals and/or groups who request a time slot on the agenda are required to submit such in writing to the executive secretary. All requests for agenda consideration must be received by the executive secretary no later than seven days prior to the meeting of the Commission. Agenda items received after this deadline may be added if approved by a majority vote of the Commission.

1.7 EXPENSES

According to Sections 25-3-41 and 25-3-69, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended, each member of the Commission is reimbursed for per diem, travel, and other allowable expenses that are incurred when attending meetings of the Commission. The expenses are paid out of any funds available for the operation of the Mississippi Department of Education.

1.8 STAFF

Staff assigned to the Commission consists of personnel in the Mississippi Department of Education. The State Superintendent of Education designates one staff member to serve as executive secretary.

2.0 DISTRICT ACCREDITATION POLICY

The State Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School Accreditation, is required to establish and implement a process for accountability at the public school district level. School districts are held accountable for Accreditation Policies and Process Standards and receive an annual accreditation status. Standards of the performance-based accreditation system recommended by the Commission and adopted by the State Board of Education are contained in the current edition of *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards.*

2.1 ASSIGNMENT OF DISTRICT ACCREDITATION STATUSES

The Commission on School Accreditation determines the annual accreditation status of all public school districts in the fall of each school year based on verified accreditation data from the previous school year. An annual district accreditation status is assigned based on compliance with Process Standards. Information concerning district compliance with Process Standards is reported to the Commission on an annual basis. See Policy 2.2 below.

The district superintendent and school principals are responsible for ensuring that all data reported to the Mississippi Department of Education are true and accurate as verified by supporting documentation on file in the school district. Reporting false information is a violation of the accreditation requirements set forth by the State Board of Education and may result in the downgrading of the district's accreditation status.

After the Commission takes action on accreditation records presented, the district superintendent and the chairperson of the local school board are notified of the status assigned. The decision of the Commission is final unless appealed by the school board of the school district to the State Board of Education in accordance with the appeal procedures in Policy 6.4 of this document.

2.2 PROCESS STANDARDS

Process (input) Standards address accepted educational principles and practices that are believed to promote educational quality. Any verified violation of a Process Standard is noted on the record of a school district at the time of discovery within any school year, but does not affect the current accreditation status of the district. (See Policy 2.5 for the exceptions.) If a noted violation of a Process Standard has not been corrected by the following school year when accreditation statuses are assigned, the violation is reported to the Commission for appropriate action.

The State Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School Accreditation, reserves the right to suspend school district compliance of any accreditation Process Standard that is not directly mandated by state or federal law. See Policy 4.2 for Rewards.

2.3 ANNUAL ACCREDITATION STATUSES

In the fall of each year, every public school district will be assigned an annual accreditation status based on compliance with Process Standards and Accreditation Policies.

ACCREDITED is assigned to a district that complies with Accreditation Policies and 100% of the Process Standards (See exceptions in Appendices F and H).

PROBATION is assigned to a district that complies with fewer than 100% of the Accreditation Policies and Process Standards. The district will be required to develop and implement a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) with defined timelines to address the deficiencies. (See Policy 2.8)

WITHDRAWN is assigned to a district that has previously been assigned a **PROBATION** status and still does not comply with its Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Any school district placed in

conservatorship will have its accreditation withdrawn. The district will be required to develop and implement a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) with defined timelines to address the deficiencies. (See Policy 2.8).

2.4 NOTIFICATION OF DEFICIENCIES AFTER ASSIGNMENT OF STATUS

After the annual assignment of a district's accreditation status, the process of determining statuses for the following school year begins. When information on file in the Mississippi Department of Education indicates that a school district may be in violation of a standard, the superintendent and the school board of the district are informed in writing by appropriate staff in the Department responsible for monitoring compliance with the standard. School district officials are given thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of notification to provide a written response verifying accuracy or inaccuracy of the notice of possible noncompliance with the standard.

If the written response includes appropriate evidence to correct or refute the alleged violation, the superintendent of the district is notified by appropriate staff in the Department responsible for monitoring compliance with the standard. Any verified violation of a standard is reported in writing to the Office of Accreditation, where it is noted on the current Accreditation Record Summary of the district. (See Glossary for definition of Accreditation Record Summary.) The appropriate staff member in the Office of Accreditation notifies the superintendent of the district in writing of the verified violation.

2.5 FACTORS THAT MAY AFFECT AN IMMEDIATE CHANGE IN ACCREDITATION STATUS

An assigned accreditation status may remain unchanged during that school year except in those cases where verified noncompliance of accreditation standards may downgrade an accreditation status immediately, in accordance with Sections 2.5.1 or 2.5.2.

2.5.1 Recommended Accreditation Status – PROBATION

Districts in violation of any of the following standards will be presented to the Commission on School Accreditation for action. That action may include downgrading the district's accreditation status to Probation.

- Accreditation Policy 2.1, reporting false information,
- Standards 1 and 3, failure to implement appropriate standards of governance,
- Standard 2, failure to comply with school board policies that meet state and federal statutes, rules and regulations,
- Standards 10 and 11, failure to comply with financial accountability requirements,
- Standard 20, failure to comply with graduation requirements,
- Standard 22, failure to comply with test security procedures required by the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System,
- Standards 23.1-23.9, failure to comply with state/federal regulations, or
- Standards 35, 36, and 37.1, failure to comply with standards that sustain a safe school climate.

2.5.2 Recommended Accreditation Status – WITHDRAWN

Districts in violation of any of the following standards will be presented to the Commission on School Accreditation for action. That action may include withdrawal of the district's accreditation.

- Standards 1 and 3, failure to implement appropriate standards of governance,
- Standard 2, failure to comply with school board policies that meet state and federal statutes, rules and regulations,
- Standards 10 and 11, failure to comply with financial accountability requirements of a serious nature,
- Standard 20, failure to comply with graduation requirements specified in Standards 20.1, 20.2, and 20.4,
- Standard 22, failure to comply with test security procedures required by the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System in Appendix F, numbers 8 and 9,

- Standards 23.3-23.5, federal programs whose regulations call for strong sanctions for continued patterns of noncompliance, or
- Standards 35, 36, and 37.1, failure to comply with standards that pose life-threatening conditions for students and staff.

2.6 RESOLVING ACCREDITATION CONTROVERSIES

All controversies involving the accreditation statuses of school districts are initially heard by a duly authorized representative of the Commission in accordance with Section 37-17-5, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended, and Policy 6.0.

2.7 CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS OR TRANSFER OF GRADES

When two or more school districts consolidate or when two or more school boards approve the transfer of a grade or grades, the affected school district(s) may be allowed to maintain its accreditation status for a period of time to be determined upon application to the Commission on School Accreditation. The Commission on School Accreditation shall review the application of any such affected school district(s) and submit a recommendation to the State Board of Education for approval.

2.8 CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN (CAP) AND WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION

2.8.1 Corrective Action Plan (CAP) with Definitive Timelines

When a school district has been assigned a PROBATION or WITHDRAWN accreditation status, the Mississippi Department of Education, in conjunction with the school district, shall develop a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) with defined timelines in which to correct the district's deficiencies. The State Board of Education implements the program of development in each district assigned a PROBATION or WITHDRAWN status in accordance with Section 37-17-6(10), *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

The school district is required to submit a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) within sixty (60) days of notification. The plan must stipulate what will be done to remove the deficiencies and the time line required. The plan must be approved by the local school board as documented by official minutes and bear the signatures of the school board chairperson and district superintendent. When corrective action has been implemented to remove a citation, the school district must submit documentary evidence confirming such to the Office of Accreditation. Assigned MDE staff may conduct follow-up visits as necessary to verify corrective action and compliance.

2.8.2 Withdrawal of Accreditation

If the district's deficiencies are not removed during the time specified in the Corrective Action Plan (CAP), the school district is subject to having its accreditation withdrawn by the Commission on School Accreditation in accordance with Section 37-17-6, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended. The status of the district will be listed as WITHDRAWN NOT ACCREDITED, and the record of that district will continue to be maintained.

2.8.2.1 Hearings

Before requesting approval from the State Board of Education to withdraw the accredited status of a district, the Commission on School Accreditation conducts a hearing (See Policy 2.9 for exception) to allow the officials of the affected district to present evidence or other reasons as to why its accreditation should not be withdrawn. {MS Code 37-17-6(11) (a)}

2.8.2.2 Results of Hearings

Within forty-five (45) calendar days of the conclusion of the hearing and after consideration of the results of the hearing, the Commission on School Accreditation shall be authorized, with the approval of the State Board of Education, to withdraw the accreditation of the district and may issue a request to the Governor that a state of emergency be declared in that district in accordance with Section 37-17-

6(11)(a), *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended. If the decision is made not to withdraw the accredited status of the district, a new timeline is established in the district's Corrective Action Plan (CAP).

2.8.2.3 Public Notice

After a state of emergency has been declared, the Commission files a public notice at least once a week for at least three consecutive weeks in a newspaper published within the immediate or general vicinity of the affected school district in accordance with Section 37-17-6(12), *Mississippi Code of 1972,* as amended.

2.8.2.4 Access to School District Records

School districts are required to produce necessary reports, correspondence, financial statements, and any other documents necessary for the Commission to implement this section on withdrawal of accreditation and conservatorship.

2.8.2.5 Reinstatement of an Accredited Status

Based on the recommendation from the Office of Accreditation or the State Superintendent of Education, the superintendent and school board president of a school district whose accreditation has been withdrawn may file a petition with the Commission on School Accreditation for reinstatement of accreditation to be effective on January 1 or July 1. The Commission on School Accreditation shall require all school districts that petition for reinstatement of accreditation to appear before the Commission on School Accreditation to furnish evidence satisfactory to the Commission that the school district is in compliance with all accreditation standards prior to the reinstatement of accreditation.

2.9 CONDITIONS OF EMERGENCY STATUS AND WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION

2.9.1 Declaration of State of Emergency

The State Board of Education may request the Governor to declare a state of emergency in any school district when any of the following emergency situations occur. Upon the declaration of the state of emergency by the Governor, the State Board of Education may take all such action for dealing with the school districts as authorized under subsection (11) or (14) of Section 37-17-6, *Mississippi Code of 1972,* as amended, including the withdrawal of the district's accreditation.

2.9.1.1 Emergency Situation

The State Board of Education and the Commission on School Accreditation determine that an extreme emergency situation exists in a school district which jeopardizes the safety, security, or educational interests of the children enrolled in the schools in that district, and such emergency situation is believed to be related to a serious violation or violations of accreditation standards or state or federal law. For purposes of this paragraph, the declarations of a state of emergency shall not be limited to those instances when a school district's impairments are related to a lack of financial resources, but also shall include serious failure to meet minimum academic standards, as evidenced by a continued pattern of poor student performance. (Section 37-17-6(11)(b), *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended).

2.9.1.2 Failing School District

A school district meets the State Board of Education's definition of a failing school district for two (2) consecutive full school years. (Section 37-17-6(11)(b), *Mississippi Code of 1972,* as amended).

2.9.1.3 Schools At-Risk

A school continues to be designated a School At-Risk after three (3) years of implementing a school improvement plan, or in the event that more than fifty percent (50%) if the schools within the school

district are designated as Schools At-Risk in any one (1) year. (Section 37-18-7(2), *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended) (See Policy 3.4.1 for Schools At-Risk designation).

2.9.2 Penalty for the Withdrawal of Accreditation

The withdrawal of a school district's accreditation by the Commission on School Accreditation will result in the following:

- A school or schools within a district shall be limited to participation in no more than fifty percent (50%) of the regular season of any interscholastic activity, which shall include division/district/regional games,
- The interscholastic season schedule for a school or schools within a district shall not include the opening day of season or any type of post season participation, as determined by the Office of Accreditation, and
- Cheerleading, drill, and dance squads, speech and debate, choral music and band may participate in district or state contest, but shall not be eligible to receive ratings.

All schedule requests must be submitted in writing to the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Accreditation, at least thirty (30) days prior to the beginning of the season. **The Office of Accreditation shall pre-approve all schedules and participation in interscholastic activities.** In addition to the suspension of all post season activities, the school district shall not be allowed to participate in jamborees, special games, parades, tournaments, holiday tournaments, or competitions of any nature.

Failure to comply with section 2.9.2 will result in the suspension of ALL interscholastic activities.

Failure of a district to have its accreditation reinstated by the Commission on School Accreditation after a period of two (2) calendar years from the date of the withdrawal of accreditation shall result in the immediate suspension of ALL interscholastic activities until the district's accreditation status is reinstated.

Note: Interscholastic activities include, but are not limited to, football, basketball, baseball, track and field, cross country, tennis, golf, volleyball, softball (fast pitch and slow pitch), soccer, wrestling, swimming, power lifting, bowling, archery, cheerleading, drill, and dance squads, speech and debate, choral music, and band.

2.9.3 Public Notice

After a state of emergency has been declared, the Commission files a public notice at least once a week for at least three consecutive weeks in a newspaper published within the immediate or general vicinity of the affected school district in accordance with Section 37-17-6(12), *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

2.9.4 Access to School District Records

School districts are required to produce necessary reports, correspondence, financial statements, and any other documents necessary for the Commission to implement this section on withdrawal of accreditation and conservatorship.

2.9.5 Reinstatement of an Accredited Status

Based on the recommendation from the Office of Accreditation or the State Superintendent of Education, the superintendent and school board president of a school district whose accreditation has been withdrawn may file a petition with the Commission on School Accreditation for reinstatement of accreditation to be effective on January 1 or July 1. The Commission on School Accreditation shall require all school districts that petition for reinstatement of accreditation to appear before the Commission on School Accreditation to furnish evidence satisfactory to the Commission that the school district is in compliance with all accreditation standards prior to the reinstatement of accreditation.

3.0 PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATION POLICY

The State Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School Accreditation, is required to establish and implement a process for accountability at the individual public school level and district level. Individual schools and districts are held accountable for student growth and performance and receive an annual School Performance Classification and District Performance Classification. (See Glossary for definitions of an attendance center and school.)

When the district establishes a new school and/or the district reconfigures the specific grades or students assigned to an existing school(s) within the district, the student achievement data used to assign school performance classifications will follow the guidelines established in the School Performance Standards and School Performance Model.

3.1 ASSIGNMENT OF PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATIONS

3.1.1 School Performance Classification

Information concerning school performance is reported to the Commission on an annual basis, and annual performance classifications will be assigned in the fall of each school year. Each public school that has both achievement and growth data will be assigned an annual performance classification. In addition, the Graduation Rate and the High School Completion Index (HSCI) will be included in determining the performance classification of schools with any grade configuration of 9-12. Available assessment data will be reported for those schools that do not have both achievement and growth data, but a school performance classification will not be assigned. An alternative school will not be assigned a school performance classification. (See State Board Policy 901 and 902 and the Glossary for definition of alternative school.)

3.1.2 District Performance Classification

Information concerning district performance is reported to the Commission on an annual basis, and annual performance classifications will be assigned in the fall of each school year. Each public school district will be assigned an annual performance classification based on achievement, growth, and graduation rate or High School Completion Index. A district performance level is assigned based on the performance of all students in the district (i.e., the district will be treated as one K-12 school).

3.1.3 Internal Review of Preliminary Accountability Results

If the school district has reason to believe the results of the state or federal accountability system applied to a district or school are incorrect due to a calculation or data error or other substantive reasons, the school district may submit written evidence to the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Educational Accountability to support the position of the school district. All requests must be submitted in writing based on the timeline published each year by the Office of Accreditation. The Office of Accreditation will review these requests and present them to an Internal Review Committee for consideration. The Internal Review Committee will consist of, at minimum, one (1) external chairperson and four (4) Mississippi Department of Education representatives.

3.2 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Performance (output or product) standards address selected components of the statewide testing program and other outcome measures related to the performance of a school. (See Performance Standards pages 34-41.) The State Board of Education may also take into account such factors as graduation rates, dropout rates, completion rates, the extent to which the school or district employs qualified teachers in every classroom, and any other factors deemed appropriate by the State Board of Education.

3.3 PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATIONS

The performance classification assigned to a school or district will be determined by (a) the percentage of students who are performing at criterion levels (minimum, basic, proficient, and advanced) and (b) the degree to which student performance has improved over time (based on an expected growth value for the school). The results from the Achievement Model and the Growth Model are combined to assign performance classification as follows:

A	(Star School)
B	(High Performing)
C	(Successful)
D	(Academic Watch)
F	(Low Performing)
F	(At-Risk of Failing)
F	(Failing)

(See State Accountability Rating System and Performance Classification Models)

A school will not receive a school performance classification if the test data have been invalidated, and the school performance classification will be noted as Test Data Invalidated. (See Appendix F)

3.4 SCHOOLS AT-RISK

Following an analysis of school data each year, the Mississippi Department of Education shall identify those schools that are deficient in educating students and are in need of improvement in accordance with Section 37-18-3, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended. This analysis shall indicate individual school performance in two areas: (a) meeting its assigned yearly growth expectation and (b) percentage of the students in the school that are proficient.

3.4.1 Designation

A school shall be identified as a School At-Risk and in need of assistance if the school:

(a) Does not meet its growth expectation and has a percentage of students functioning below grade level, as designated by the State Board of Education;
(b) Is designated as a Failing School; or
(c) Is designated as At-Risk of Failing or Low Performing for two (2) consecutive years.

3.4.2 Notification

Within fifteen (15) days after a School At-Risk has been identified, written notice shall be sent by the State Board of Education by certified mail to the school principal, the superintendent, and the chairperson of the local board of education.

3.4.3 Evaluation Teams and Evaluation Report

Within fifteen (15) days after notification, the State Board of Education shall assign an evaluation team to the school, subject to the availability of funding. The evaluation team shall be independent of the school being evaluated and may include employees of the State Department of Education. The team may include retired educators who have met certain standards and have completed all necessary training.

The evaluation team shall analyze the School At-Risk's data to determine probable areas of weakness before conducting an on-site audit. After completing the evaluation of the School At-Risk, the team shall prepare and adopt its school evaluation report, which shall be submitted to the State Superintendent of Education for approval within ninety (90) calendar days. The evaluation report shall identify any

personnel who were found by the evaluation team to be in need of improvement and need to participate in a professional development plan.

Following the State Superintendent's approval of the report, a representative of the State Superintendent and the evaluation team leader shall present the report to the principal of the School At-Risk, the school district superintendent, and school board members of the local school district. Following this presentation, the evaluation report shall be presented to the community served by the School At-Risk at an advertised public meeting.

3.4.4 School Improvement Plan

Based on the findings of the evaluation report and the results of the public meeting, the Mississippi Department of Education and evaluation team leader shall assist the school principal and other local school officials in the development of a school improvement action plan.

The school improvement action plan shall be developed and approved by the principal of the School At-Risk, the superintendent of the local school district, the local school board, and a majority of the teachers of the school. If the plan is not approved, the State Board of Education may approve and implement the plan in the school.

The State Department of Education shall provide technical assistance and shall assist in identifying funding to the School At-Risk in the implementation of the school improvement action plan, including the implementation of any recommended professional development plan, and the department may contract with the Institutions of Higher Learning to provide such technical assistance. The assistance team shall collaborate with school and school district employees in the implementation and monitoring of the school improvement action plan and the State Department of Education shall ensure that a report is issued monthly to the local school board and the local community-based advisory council.

A school district that has been designated as failing as defined by the State Board of Education or a district and/or a school designated below the successful level, shall establish a community-based pre-kindergarten through higher education (P-16) council comprised of a broad spectrum of the community, including economic developers, elected officials, civic leaders, business leaders, faith-based leaders, social services, nonprofit organizations, school attendance officers, law enforcement officials, health department officials, day care providers, librarians, parents and others with the knowledge and resources that can be leveraged to build strong communities. The State Board of Education shall develop procedures for appointments to the council, which shall not be appointed solely by the school board. The council will serve as a community-led group that is inclusive, accountable, and required to publicly report progress to the community as a whole.

3.4.5 Professional Development Plan for Educators

As part of the school improvement action plan for a School At-Risk, a professional development plan shall be prepared for those school administrators, teachers, or other employees who are identified by the evaluation team as needing improvement.

4.0 RECOGNITION AND REWARDS

The State Board of Education shall provide special recognition and/or rewards to individual schools or school districts meeting the highest levels of accreditation standards as defined by the State Board of Education. A school or district with a QDI in the top two ranges will be identified as meeting the highest level of accreditation standards.

4.1 RECOGNITION

Special recognition will be provided to all schools meeting the highest levels of accreditation standards. Examples of recognition include, but are not limited to the following:

- Public announcements and events;
- Special recognition of student progress and effort;
- Certificates of recognition and plaques for teachers, principals, superintendents, support and classified personnel and parents; and
- Media announcements utilizing the services of the Mississippi Educational Television.

4.2 REWARDS

Rewards may be provided for schools and school districts assigned the highest levels of performance as defined by the State Board of Education as follows:

4.2.1 Exemptions for Schools Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance.

Schools Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance may be exempted from citations of noncompliance with the Process Standards listed below. For specific details, refer to each process standard referenced below.

- Library Media/Organized Collection (Standard 24.1)
- Library Media Program of Service (Standard 24.2)
- High School Science Laboratory (Standard 25)
- Limit on Course Preparations (Standard 31)
- Student Teacher Ratios in Grades 1-4 (Standard 34.2)
- Limit of 150 Students Per Teacher in Academic Core Subjects (Standard 34.5)

4.2.2 Exemptions for Districts Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance.

School districts assigned the Highest Levels of Performance may be exempted from citations of noncompliance with the Process Standards listed below. For specific details, refer to each process standard referenced below.

- Community Involvement, Parental Communication, and Business Partnerships (Standard 18)
- Senior Preparation for Graduation Ceremonies (Standard 19.5)
- Summer School Program Requirements (Standard 19.6)
- Professional Development Plan/Program (Standard 21)
- Early Childhood Programs (kindergarten and teacher assistant) (Standard 23.1)
- Instructional Management System (Standard 27)
- Suggested Teaching Strategies, Resources, and Assessment Strategies (Standard 27.2)

4.2.3 Financial Rewards

If funds are appropriated by the legislature, Schools Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance may apply to the State Board of Education for monetary incentives to be used for selected school needs, as identified by a vote of all licensed and instructional personnel employed at the school. These incentive funds may be used for specific needs, including, but not limited to the following:

- Funding for professional development activities; staff participating in such activities will report to the school and school district about the benefits and lessons learned from such training;
- Technology needs;
- Sabbaticals for teachers or administrators, or both, to pursue additional professional development or educational enrichment;
- Paid professional leave; and
- Training for parents, including, but not limited to, curriculum, Title I, special need students, student rights and responsibility, school and community relations, and effective parenting.

5.0 ACCREDITATION MONITORING PROCEDURES

Staff in the Mississippi Department of Education continuously monitor school districts to verify compliance with applicable accreditation requirements and state and federal laws.

5.1 ON-SITE EVALUATIONS

The State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, or the Commission on School Accreditation has the authority to call for an on-site evaluation or investigation of a school district at any time. If deficiencies are found in meeting accreditation standards or state and federal laws, the superintendent is notified in writing and given thirty (30) days from the receipt of notification to provide a written response. The report of findings is filed in the current accreditation records in the Office of Accreditation.

5.2 INVESTIGATIVE EVALUATIONS (COMPLAINTS AGAINST DISTRICTS)

All formal complaints made against schools or districts must be submitted to the Office of Accreditation in writing and bear the signature of the individual(s) filing the complaint. The written complaint shall contain specific details concerning alleged violations. When the complaint is received, the superintendent is notified in writing of the nature of the complaint and informed that the district is subject to an unannounced audit to investigate the allegations.

5.2.1 Areas Over Which the Commission Has No Authority

If the complaint addresses an area over which the Commission has no authority, the individual filing the complaint is acknowledged and the complaint is filed in the Office of Accreditation.

5.2.2 Areas Over Which the Commission Does Have Authority

If the complaint addresses an area over which the Commission does have authority, the superintendent may be notified in writing of the nature of the complaint and given thirty (30) days to provide a written response to the allegations and to present documentation of compliance. The superintendent may also be notified that the district is subject to an unannounced audit to investigate the allegations.

5.2.2.1 If the deficiencies are found in meeting accreditation standards or state and federal laws, a report of findings is filed in the current accreditation records in the Office of Accreditation and the complainant will be notified of the findings.

5.2.2.2 If no deficiencies are found in meeting accreditation standards or state and federal laws, the district and the complainant will be notified.

5.2.3 Unannounced On-Site Investigative Evaluations

The State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, or the Commission on School Accreditation has the authority to call for an on-site evaluation or investigation of a school district at any time. Procedures for conducting investigative audits are as follows:

5.2.3.1 The auditors may arrive in the district without prior notification.

5.2.3.2 The auditor(s) inform the superintendent of the purpose of the audit and of the procedures to be followed.

5.2.3.3 The auditor(s) discuss procedures with the principal of the school if appropriate.

5.2.3.4 The auditor(s) use various methods to collect the data needed to verify or discredit the complaint, including examination of official records, interviews with school personnel, and observations.

5.2.3.5 Upon completion of the audit, the auditor(s) compile a written report that is sent to the superintendent, the chairman of the school board, and the Commission on School Accreditation.

5.3 SPECIAL TEST AUDITS

Reports regarding potential testing irregularities or test security violations are referred to the Office of Student Assessment. Such reports include statistical analyses of test data conducted after each test administration, self-reported incidents, third-party allegations regarding violations of testing requirements, and irregularities noted during test security audits. Regular test security audits may be conducted prior to, during, and following each test administration in order to promote the integrity and security of the Mississippi Assessment System. The Office of Student Assessment will report to the Office of Accreditation each testing irregularity that has been verified as a violation of a testing requirement.

5.3.1 Self-reports or third-party allegations regarding testing irregularities may be either formal written reports (signed or unsigned) or verbal reports or complaints that may be made officially or anonymously and with or without documentary evidence.

5.3.2 If a third-party allegation addresses an area over which the State Board of Education has no authority, the individual filing the allegation will be notified.

5.3.3 A self-report or allegation must identify specific details concerning alleged violations of test security and/or testing irregularities in order to warrant an investigative audit.

5.3.4 Any statistical analysis that indicates a potential testing irregularity or test security violation will be reviewed and evaluated by staff in the Office of Student Assessment. If the review and evaluation of the statistical analysis indicate that further information is required in order to resolve or confirm the testing irregularity, the Office of Student Assessment may require that a school district investigate the potential irregularity and report its findings to the Office of Student Assessment. Any verified testing irregularity is reported to the Office of Accreditation for appropriate action.

5.3.5 Procedures for test security audits are as follows:

5.3.5.1 The auditor may arrive at the school without prior notification.

5.3.5.2 The auditor informs the school administrator of the purpose of the audit and of the procedures to be followed.

5.3.5.3 The auditor requests that the superintendent be notified that a test audit is in progress.

5.3.5.4 The auditor uses the same methods to collect data as described in policy.

5.3.5.5 The auditor reports the audit findings to the Office of Student Assessment. If the audit findings indicate that a testing irregularity has occurred, the Office of Student Assessment will notify the district superintendent. If the response from the superintendent does not resolve the irregularity, the irregularity is reported to the Office of Accreditation for appropriate action.

5.4 SUMMER PROGRAM AUDITS

Each school district providing educational programs during the summer is required to report summer program data, including types of instructional programs provided, staffing, and enrollment. School districts offering summer programs may be audited to verify information contained in the annual Summer School/Extended Year Report.

5.5 OTHER STATE/FEDERAL PROGRAM AUDITS/EVALUATIONS

When audits or evaluations of other state or federal programs reveal verified noncompliance with state or federal program regulations, the incidents of noncompliance are filed with the Office of Accreditation.

5.6 ANALYSIS AND VERIFICATION OF ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

Accreditation staff in the Mississippi Department of Education review annual personnel/accreditation information and other annual reports submitted by school districts. Staff will analyze and compare this information with any other accreditation data on record and notify responsible officials of any inconsistency in reporting or any apparent deficiency in meeting standards. Any information submitted by a school district may be verified through on-site visits. Upon request the school district must provide documentation necessary to validate compliance with accreditation requirements.

6.0 HEARING AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

All controversies involving the accreditation of schools or school districts are initially heard by a duly authorized representative of the Commission before whom a complete record is made.

6.1 REQUEST FOR HEARING

The school board of a school district may request a hearing by filing written notice with the executive secretary of the Commission on School Accreditation within ten (10) calendar days of the written notification of the recommended Commission action.

6.2 AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMISSION

Upon receipt of the written request for hearing, the chairman of the Commission assigns, in writing, a duly authorized representative previously appointed by the Commission to hear the controversy.

6.3 HEARING PROCEDURES

6.3.1 The Commission's representative sets the time, place, and date for a hearing and notifies all parties of the time, place, and date of the hearing by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested. All parties may be represented by counsel at the expense of the party. The hearing is conducted in such a manner as to afford all parties a fair and reasonable opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence pertinent to the issues and to cross-examine witnesses presented by the opposing party. The Commission's representative may permit any portion of the evidence to be submitted in the form of depositions or affidavits; and in case affidavits are received, an opportunity to present counter-affidavits is provided.

6.3.2 It is the responsibility of each party at the hearing to secure the attendance of such witness or witnesses as the party deems necessary or appropriate, and any expense connected with the attendance of such witnesses is borne by the party responsible for the attendance of the witness.

6.3.3 In conducting the hearing, the Commission's representative is not bound by common law or by statutory rules of evidence or by technical or formal rules of procedure, provided, however, hearsay evidence, if admitted, is not the sole basis for the determination of facts by the Commission's representative.

6.3.4 After presentation by the executive secretary of the Commission regarding recommended action and policy in support thereof, the party filing the written notice of hearing has the burden of going forward with the evidence, and at the conclusion of the hearing, the Commission's representative grants any party the opportunity to present a statement in such party's own behalf, either in person or by such party's attorney.

6.3.5 All hearings held before the Commission’s representative are recorded and transcribed by a court reporter whose fees and costs of transcription are paid by the school district involved within forty-five (45) days after having been notified of such costs and fees by the Commission. Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the transcribed record of the hearing, the Commission’s representative files a written recommendation to the Commission as to the resolution of the controversies. Upon consideration of the transcribed record and recommendation of its representative, the Commission makes its decision

and notifies all parties in writing by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the Commission is final unless the school board of the school district involved elects to appeal to the State Board of Education. The school board of the school district may appeal to the State Board of Education by filing a written notice of appeal with the State Superintendent of Education within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of the decision of the Commission on School Accreditation.

6.4 APPEAL PROCEDURES

6.4.1 An appeal to the State Board of Education is on the record previously made before the Commission's representative or the Commission. Upon written application, the State Board of Education may consider new factual evidence.

6.4.2 Upon receipt of the transcript, the State Board of Education, through the State Superintendent of Education, notifies the parties involved that the transcript has been filed and that the appealing party has fifteen (15) calendar days to file any written argument not to exceed twenty-five (25) pages in length. The Commission is allowed thirty (30) calendar days from the filing of the transcript with the State Board of Education to file a responsive written argument not to exceed twenty-five (25) pages in length. Any written argument in rebuttal by the appealing party must be filed within forty (40) calendar days of the filing of the transcript. The appealing party may not exceed twenty-five (25) pages as the combined total for its original and rebuttal arguments. An original and nine (9) copies of the written argument must be provided. The State Board of Education considers all appeals within thirty (30) calendar days of the last written argument filed. The written decision of the State Board of Education is transmitted to the parties involved within fifteen (15) calendar days of its decision.

7.0 ANNUAL REPORT

By November 1 of each year, each local school district shall be required to develop and publish an annual report as prescribed by the State Board of Education. The report shall be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the county and posted on the school district's web site in a printable format. The public notice shall include information on the report's availability on the district's web site, with the web site address, and the location(s) in the school district where a copy of the report can be obtained. (SB Policy 2051)

PROCESS STANDARDS

ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

1. School board members complete required basic and continuing education programs in order to effectively perform their duties in the manner prescribed by law. {MS Code 25-41-1 et. al; 25-61-1 through 17; 37-3-4(5); 37-6-7, 9, 11, and 15; and 37-7-306(1-4)}

2. School board policies that comply with state and federal statutes, rules, and regulations serve as the basis of operation for the district, and current copies of school board policies are published and available for public review. {MS Code 25-41-7; 25-61-1 through 17; 37-9-1 through 75; 37-9-101 through 113; 37-7-301(p)(w); and Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964}

3. The school board assigns all executive and administrative duties to the superintendent, who is properly licensed and chosen in the manner prescribed by law. {MS Code 37-6-3(3-4); 37-9-7, 13, 14; 37-61-9; and 37-151-5(h)}

4. The school district employs an appropriately licensed full-time principal at each school. {MS Code 37-9-7, 37-9-15, and 37-151-5(g)}

   Note: The principal may not have any other job duties assigned in areas that require a specific work area code. This standard does not apply to assistant principals.

5. The school district employs in each school a licensed librarian or media specialist who devotes no more than one-fourth of the workday to library/media administrative activities. {MS Code 37-17-6(3)(a-e)}
   5.1 If the student enrollment is 499 or less, a half-time licensed librarian or media specialist is required.
   5.2 If the student enrollment is 500 or more, a full-time licensed librarian or media specialist is required.

6. Student support services (appraisal, academic, and/or personal advisement, and educational and/or career planning and referral) are provided in each school by qualified student support personnel. {MS Code 37-9-79}
   6.1 DELETED.
   6.2 DELETED.

   Note: Student support personnel may only provide those services and activities in the area(s) that each individual is specifically qualified to provide. All student support personnel will use appropriate job titles that reflect their area of training, expertise, and license. For example, a Social Worker will be referred to as the School Social Worker and may not use the title of or be referred to as the School Guidance Counselor.

7. The school district employs a school business officer/administrator whose qualifications meet the criteria established by the Mississippi Department of Education and whose primary job responsibilities are conducting, supervising, and/or directing the financial affairs and operations of the school district. (SB Policies 6900 & 6901)

8. All district professional positions requiring licensed staff are filled by staff that are properly licensed and endorsed as required by state law and federal requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). {MS Code 37-9-7} (SB Policies 7801 and 7802, NCLB, and Federal Code)
   8.1 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. An appropriate license is required for superintendents, principals, librarians, and guidance counselors**.** (Refer to process standards 3, 4, 5, and 6.)

8.2 Secondary teachers endorsed in an academic subject area may teach in their academic subject area in departmentalized elementary grades 5 and 6. (SB Policy 4903)

8.3 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.

9. The school district implements a formal personnel appraisal system for licensed staff that includes assessment of employee on-the-job performance. {MS Code 37-3-46(b)}

10. The school district operates with a uniform system of accounts as specified in state law and as prescribed by the State Auditor's Office. {MS Code 37-9-18, 37-37-1, 37-37-3, 37-17-6(17), 37-37-7, 37-37-13, 37-61-19 and 37-61-23}

10.1 The board of education has implemented a fixed asset system of accountability that complies with the standards established by the State Auditor's Office for the verification of fixed assets and the auditing of fixed assets records. {MS Code 37-17-6(17)}

10.2 The financial accounting data and the corresponding annual audit report as submitted to the Mississippi Department of Education reflect no less than a zero fund balance (as defined by generally accepted accounting principles) for all funds of the school district. {MS Code 37-61-19}

10.3 The most recent annual audit report of the school district, as conducted under the guidelines of the State Auditor's Office, indicates that the auditor has issued an unqualified opinion (as defined by generally accepted auditing standards) on the general purpose financial statements of the school district. {MS Code 37-9-18, 37-37-1, and 37-61-23}

10.4 The most recent annual audit report of the school district, as conducted under the guidelines of the State Auditor's Office, verifies the accuracy, validity, and timely reporting of all student data submitted to the MDE, including but not limited to the electronic transmission of student enrollment, attendance, transportation, absenteeism, graduation, dropouts, and any other student data and administrative functions as deemed necessary. {MS Code 37-37-7(2)(b)(c)(d) and 37-37-13}

10.5 The most recent annual audit report of the school district, as conducted under the guidelines of the State Auditor's Office, verifies the accuracy and timely reporting of all reports, other than student data, required for submission to the MDE in accordance with state law and/or State Board of Education policies. {MS Code 37-37-7(2)(e) and 37-37-13}

11. The local school board budgets and expends funds as follows:

11.1 The local school board of education budgets and expends from the District Maintenance Fund (Fund #1120) a minimum of $20.00 per student for instructional/library supplies, materials, and equipment.

11.2 Funds available for classroom supplies, materials, and equipment from the Education Enhancement Fund (Fund #2440) are allotted and expended in compliance with Section 37-61-33, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended, and SB Policy 3400.

11.3 The local school board budgets and expends funds under the Public School Health Insurance Plan as required by state law and State Board policy. Failure to remit premiums, interest penalties and/or late charges in a timely manner may result in withholding a school district's adequate education program funds. {MS Code 37-151-95} (SB Policy 4904)

SCHOOL OPERATIONS

12. The school district complies with state law and State Board of Education policy on enrollment requirements.

12.1 Residency requirements {MS Code 37-15-29} (SB Policy 6600)

12.2 Immunization requirements {MS Code 37-7-301(i), 37-15-1, and 41-23-37}

12.3 Age of entry requirements {MS Code 37-15-9}

13. Any transfer student from a school or program (correspondence, tutorial, or home study) not accredited regionally or by a state board of education [or its designee(s)] is given either a standardized achievement test(s) or teacher-made special subject test(s) to determine the appropriate classification of the student within 30 days after filing for transfer. Notice of the administering of such test(s) shall be given to the applicant not less than five days prior to the date of the administration of such test. {MS Code 37-15-33} (SB Policies 3801 & 3802)

14. Permanent records and cumulative folders for individual students contain all required data and are collected, maintained, and disseminated in compliance with state law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, and the Confidentiality Section of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, 1997 Amendments. (See Appendix E and the current edition of *Mississippi Cumulative Folders and Permanent Records Manual of Directions*.) {MS Code 37-15-1 through 3; 37-15-6; 37-15-10}

15. The school district engages in planning to review the educational status of each school in the district and to address specific actions relative to accreditation and performance separately. {MS Code 37-3-49(2) (e)}

16. The school district implements procedures for monitoring and reporting student absences as specified in the Mississippi Compulsory Attendance Law. {MS Code 37-13-91} (SB Policies 3101 and 3102)

17. The school district develops a dropout prevention plan and implements programs designed to keep students in school and to lower student dropout rates in accordance with MS Code. {MS Code 37-13-80} (SB Policy 3105)
    17.1 DELETED.
    17.2 DELETED.
    17.3 DELETED.

18. There is an organized system to encourage community involvement, parental communication, and business partnerships in school district decision-making. {MS Code 37-7-337} **(Districts Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance are exempted.)**
    18.1 DELETED.
    18.2 A school district that has been designated as Failing as defined by the State Board of Education shall establish a community-based pre-kindergarten through higher education (P-16) council. {MS Code 37-18-5(4)}
    18.3 A district and/or a school below the Successful level (*includes Academic Watch-D, Low Performing-F, At-Risk of Failing-F, and Failing-F)* shall establish a pre-kindergarten through higher education (P-16) council.

    Note: Refer to the pilot edition of the *Guidelines for P-16 Community Engagement Council.*

19. The academic year provides a minimum of 180 teaching days in which both teachers and pupils are in regular attendance for scheduled classroom instruction. {MS Code 37-3-49, 37-13-61 through 69, 37-151-5(j), and 37-151-7(3)(c)}
    19.1 DELETED.
    19.2 The teaching day must provide at least 330 minutes of instruction per day or 27.5 hours per five-day week. {MS Code 37-13-67}
    19.3 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 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.
    19.4 No more than two 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. (Effective with school year 2013-14.)
    19.5 The school district schedules preparation for graduation ceremonies in such manner that graduating seniors are absent from classes for no more than three days prior to the end of the school year). **(Districts Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance are exempted.)**
    19.6 The summer school/extended year program meets all applicable requirements of the regular school program. {MS Code 37-3-49}
    - Students from other schools enrolled in summer programs provide written approval from the principal of their home schools.
    - Students enrolled in an extended year program complete all remaining course/subject requirements/objectives before credit for the course/subject is issued. {MS Code 37-3-49}

- Students enrolled in a summer program are limited to earning one Carnegie unit of credit during a traditional summer school session, which does not apply to Extended Year programs and approved MS Virtual Public School courses. **(Districts Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance may be exempted under MS Code 37-17-11.)**

19.7 Districts utilizing an Early Release Schedule or a Delayed Start School Day Schedule must have the schedules approved by the school board and published and disseminated.

Note: Any request for an exception to the above standard must be submitted in writing to the Commission on School Accreditation for review and action.

Note: If the Governor has declared a disaster emergency or the President of the United States has declared an emergency or major disaster to exist in this state, the local school board may request approval from the State Board of Education to operate the schools in its district for less than one hundred eighty (180) days. {MS Code 37-151-7(3)(d)}

20. The school district requires each student, in order to receive a high school diploma, to have met the requirements established by its local board of education and by the State Board of Education. {MS Code 37-16-7} (SB Policy 3801, 3802, 3803)

20.1 Each student receiving a standard high school diploma has earned the minimum number of Carnegie units as specified in Appendix A. (See Appendix A.) (SB Policies 2902 and 2903) Students receiving a standard diploma may select from three graduation pathways as specified by the local school district's graduation requirements.

- Entering ninth graders in 2005-2006 and thereafter (seniors of school year 2008-2009 and later) are required to have a minimum of 21 Carnegie units as specified in Appendix A-1.
- Entering ninth graders in 2008-2009 and thereafter (seniors of school year 2011-2012 and later) are required to have a minimum of 24 Carnegie units as specified in Appendix A-2, unless, in accordance with school board policy, their parent/guardian requests to opt the student out of Appendix A-2 requirements. This student would be required to complete the graduation requirements specified in A-1.
- Entering eleventh graders in 2010-2011 and thereafter (seniors of school year 2011-2012 and later) who chose the Career Pathway Option are required to earn the minimum graduation requirements specified in Appendix A-3. {MS Code 37-16-17}
- Beginning in school year 2011-2012, all eighth grade students are required to have an Individualized Career and Academic Plan (iCAP) prior to exiting the eighth grade.

20.2 Each student receiving a standard diploma has achieved a passing score on each of the required high school exit examinations. {MS Code-37-16-7} (SB Policies 3600, 3801 and 3803)

20.3 Each student who has completed the secondary curriculum for special education may be issued a special diploma or certificate of completion, which states: "This student has successfully completed an Individualized Education Program." {MS Code 37-16-11(1)}

20.4 The student who fails to meet the graduation requirements is not permitted to participate in the graduation exercises.

20.5 Each student with disabilities receiving a Mississippi Occupational Diploma has successfully completed all minimum requirements established by the State Board of Education. {MS Code 37-16-11(2)} (See Appendix G.)

Note: Carnegie units will be awarded in the seventh grade for the following courses: Pre Algebra, Algebra I, Biology I, ICT II (Information & Communication Technology), and first year Foreign Language provided course content is the same as the high school course.

Note: Carnegie units will be awarded in the eighth grade for the following courses: Pre Algebra, Transition to Algebra, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology I, ICT II (Information & Communication Technology), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Science), first year Foreign Language, and second year Foreign Language provided course content is the same as the high school course.

21. The school district implements a professional development program aligned with the Learning Forward *Standards for Professional Learning*. **(Districts Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance are exempted.)** {MS Code 37-17-8} (SB Policy 4500)

22. The school district adheres to all requirements of the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System. (See Appendix F.) {MS Code 37-16-1 through 4 and 37-16-9} (SB Policies 3600, 3801, 7601, and 7607)

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

23. The school district is in compliance with state and/or federal requirements for the following programs:
    - 23.1 Early Childhood Programs (kindergarten and teacher assistant) {MS Code 37-21-1 et. seq.} (SB Policies 4400, 4401, and 6301) (Refer to *Mississippi Kindergarten Guidelines*.) **(Districts Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance are exempted from provisions of subsection (4) of MS Code 37-21-7.)**
    - 23.2 Vocational-Technical Education {MS Code 37-31-1 et. seq.} (SB Policies 8100, 8200, 8300, 8400, 8500, 8600, 8700, 8800, 8900, 9000, 9100, 9200, 9300, 9400, and Federal Code)
    - 23.3 Special Education {MS Code 37-23-1 through 9} (SB Policies 7201, 7203, 7204, 7205, 7206, 7208, 7210, 7211, 7212, 7213, 7214, 7219, and Federal Code) (See *State Policies Regarding Children with Disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of* 2004 *(IDEA* 2004) and the Mattie T. Consent Decree.)
    - 23.4 Child Nutrition {MS Code 37-11-7} (SB Policies 2001, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2009 and Federal Code)
    - 23.5 *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*: Titles I, II, III, IV, V, VI, X, and any other federally funded programs and grants (SB Policies 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, and Federal Code)
    - 23.6 Technology in the Classroom {MS Code 37-151-19(3)} (SB Policy 7500)
    - 23.7 Driver Education {MS Code 37-25-1 et. seq.} (SB Policy 3000)
    - 23.8 Pre-Kindergarten {MS Code 37-7-301(ss)} (SB Policy 2904) (Refer to *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines*.)
    - 23.9 Gifted Education {MS Code 37-23-171 through 181} (SB Policy 3700) (Refer to the current edition of the *Regulations for Gifted Education Programs in Mississippi*, and the *Gifted Education Program Standards*.)

24. Each school has a library-media center. Refer to the current edition of the *Mississippi School Library Media Guide*. {MS Code 37-17-6(3)(a-e)}
    - 24.1 Each school has a library-media center with an organized collection of materials and equipment that represents a broad range of current learning media, including instructional technology.
    - 24.2 The library staff offers a systematic program of service to students and staff by providing access to the materials and equipment, by providing instruction in the use of the materials and equipment, and by working with teachers and other staff members to provide learning activities for the students.

25. The school district provides each student with appropriate equipment and laboratory experiences to meet the instructional requirements of the science program. (See the current edition of the *Mississippi Science Framework*.) **(Schools Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance may be exempted under MS Code 37-17-11.)**

Note: Any request for an exception to the above standard must be submitted in writing to the Commission on School Accreditation for review and action.

26. The school district is in compliance with state law and State Board of Education policies for state adopted textbooks. {MS Code 37-43-1, 37-43-24, 37-43-31(2), 37-43-51, 37-9-14(2) (b), and 37-7-301(ff)} (SB Policies 7701 and 7702) (Refer to the current edition of the *Textbook Administration Handbook Rules and Regulations*.)
    - 26.1 Each school district provides each student in each school with current or otherwise appropriate textbooks that are in good condition. (See glossary for definition of textbook.) {MS Code 37-43-1, 37-9-14(2)(b), and 37-7-301(ff)}

26.2 Each school district shall keep an active and surplus inventory for each school in the district to be completed by June 15 of each year. The district shall report the inventory in the Textbook Inventory Management System. {MS Code 37-43-51} (Refer to the current edition of the *Textbook Administration Handbook Rules and Regulations*.

27. The school district implements an instructional management system that has been adopted by the school board and includes, at a minimum, the competencies and objectives required in the curriculum frameworks approved by the State Board of Education. **(Districts Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance are exempted.)** {MS Code 37-3-49(2)(a-b) and 37-3-49(5) and SB Policy 4300}
    27.1 DELETED.
    27.2 Suggested teaching strategies, resources, and assessment strategies are available to teachers in each school for selection and use in teaching the required competencies. **(Districts Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance are exempted.)** {MS Code 37-3-49(2)(c) and 37-3-49(5)}

28. The district follows an established board policy that defines criteria for the academic promotion/progression/retention of students. Such criteria prohibit the retention of students for extracurricular purposes.
    28.1 The school district implements a uniform grading policy. (SB Policy 403) {MS Code 37-11-64 and MS Code 37-11-66}.
    28.2 A student who is enrolled in any grade higher than Grade 6 in a school district must be suspended from participation in any extracurricular or athletic activity sponsored or sanctioned by the school district after a semester in which the student's cumulative grade point average is below 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. {MS Code 37-11-65}

Note: This portion of the standard will be jointly monitored and enforced by the State Board of Education and the Mississippi High School Activities Association.

29. The school district provides alternative education programs for the categories of students identified in MS Code 37-13-92. (SB Policies 901 and 902)
    29.1 The school district provides access to an alternative education program that meets the program guidelines outlined in MS Code 37-13-92 and the guidelines established by the State Board of Education. (SB Policy 901) (See guidelines for Alternative/GED School Programs.)
    29.2 The school district, in its discretion, may provide access to a GED Option program that meets the program guidelines outlined in MS Code 37-13-92(4) and the guidelines established by the State Board of Education. (SB Policy 902) (See guidelines for Alternative/GED Programs.)

30. Each classroom teacher, excluding vocational teachers whose class periods exceed 50 minutes, has an unencumbered period of time during the teaching day to be used for individual or departmental planning.
    30.1 If the school utilizes a traditional six-period or seven-period day schedule, the instructional planning time provided for secondary teachers is a minimum of 225 minutes per week, exclusive of lunch period. If the school utilizes any form of a modular/block schedule, the instructional planning time provided is a minimum of either 225 minutes per week or an average of 225 minutes per week per instructional cycle, exclusive of lunch period.
    30.2 Instructional planning time for the elementary school teacher is no less than 150 minutes per week, exclusive of lunch period.

31. Individual teachers (grades 9-12) are limited to three course preparations per scheduling cycle or five in the same subject/content area.

Note: Any request for an exception to the above standard must be submitted in writing to the Commission on School Accreditation for review and action.

32. The curriculum of each high school at a minimum consists of required and approved courses that generate at least 33½ Carnegie units annually. (See Appendices B and C) {MS Code 37-1-3(2)} (SB Policies 2902 and 2903)

Note: Any request for an exemption from teaching the courses listed in Appendix B must be submitted in writing to the Commission on School Accreditation for review and action.

33. The curriculum of each elementary or middle school (any configuration of grades K-8) at a minimum consists of reading/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, health education, and physical education, which may be taught by a regular classroom teacher. {MS Code 37-1-3(2) and 37-13-134}

Note: In any configuration of grades K-8, the curriculum must include 150 minutes of activity-based instruction per week and 45 minutes of instruction in health education per week. Implementation of the activity-based instruction must meet or exceed the standards as approved by the State Board of Education. A regular classroom teacher may provide instruction in the arts, health education, and physical education in a self-contained classroom setting.

34. Student teacher ratios do not exceed the following: {MS Code 37-151-77}
    - 34.1 Student teacher ratios do not exceed 22 to 1 in kindergarten, except in instances in which a full-time assistant teacher is in the classroom. If a full-time assistant teacher is employed, 27 may be enrolled. {MS Code 37-151-77} (See *Mississippi Kindergarten Guidelines.*) (SB Policy 2100)
    - 34.2 Student teacher ratios do not exceed 27 to 1 in classrooms serving grades 1 through 4 unless approved by the State Board of Education. **(Schools Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance are exempted.)** {MS Code 37-151-77} (SB Policy 2100)
    - 34.3 Student teacher ratios do not exceed 30 to 1 in self-contained classes serving grades 5-8. {MS Code 37-151-77}
    - 34.4 Student teacher ratios do not exceed 33 to 1 in departmentalized academic core classes serving grades 5-12. {MS Code 37-151-77}
    - 34.5 The total number of students taught by an individual teacher in academic core subjects at any time during the school year shall not exceed 150. **(Schools Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance are exempted.)**

Note: A teacher who provides instruction through intra-district or inter-district distance learning or supervises students taking virtual courses will be exempt from the 150-student limitation. A lab facilitator or principal designee will be responsible for the assignment of grades and related activities at the receiving school.

SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS

35. The school district complies with the applicable rules and regulations of the State Board of Education in the operation of its transportation program. {MS Code 37-41-53} (SB Policies 7903, 7904, 7906, 7907 and 7909)
    - 35.1 All buses are inspected on a quarterly basis and are well-maintained and clean. (SB Policy 7909)
    - 35.2 Each bus driver has a valid bus driver certificate and a commercial driver's license and operates the bus according to all specified safety procedures. The school district has on file a yearly motor vehicle report on each driver and evidence that each driver has received two hours of in-service training per semester. (SB Policies 7903 and 7906)
    - 35.3 Bus schedules ensure arrival of all buses at their designated school sites prior to the start of the instructional day.
    - 35.4 Emergency bus evacuation drills are conducted at least two times each year. (SB Policy 7904)

36. The school district provides facilities that meet the following criteria: {MS Code 37-7-301(c)(d)(j); 37-11-5, 49; and 45-11-101}

36.1 The school district provides facilities that are clean and sanitary.
36.2 The school district provides facilities that are safe.
36.3 The school district provides operational facilities that are equipped to meet the instructional needs of students and staff.
36.4 The school district provides air conditioning in all classrooms in each school. {MS Code 37-17-6(2)}

37. The school district complies with State Board Policies and State and Federal laws to provide Safe and Healthy Schools:

37.1 Each school has a comprehensive School Safety Plan on file that has been approved annually by the local school board. {MS Codes 37-3-81; 37-3-83(2); 37-11-67 and 37-11-69} (See the School Safety Manual and the MDE School Occupational Safety and Crisis Response Plan.)

37.2 Each school has on file a school wellness policy developed by a local school health council that addresses the eight components of a coordinated approach to school health and that has been approved annually by the local school board. (*Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 2004)* (See the Guide for Development of Local School Wellness Policy, www.healthyschoolsms.org) {MS Code 37-13-134 and MS Code 41-79-31 } (SB Policy 4012)

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

INTRODUCTION

The accountability system is designed to improve student achievement and increase the level of accountability for both school districts and individual schools. The accountability model focuses on student achievement at each school and at the district level. Performance standards have been established, and student assessment data from the statewide assessment program will be used to determine individual school performance classifications and district level performance classifications.

SCHOOL LEVEL PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATION

Information concerning school performance is reported to the Commission on an annual basis, and annual performance classifications will be assigned in the fall of each school year. Each public school that has both achievement and growth data will be assigned an annual performance classification. Available assessment data will be reported for those schools that do not have both achievement and growth data, but a school performance classification will not be assigned. An alternative school will not be assigned a school performance classification. (See State Board Policy 901 and 902 and the Glossary page 77 for definition of alternative school.)

The results from the Achievement Model and the Growth Model (QDI) are combined to assign each school a school performance classification. A graduation rate or a High School Completion Index (HSCI) is also used for any school configuration of 9-12.

DISTRICT LEVEL PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATION

Information concerning district performance is reported to the Commission on an annual basis, and annual performance classifications will be assigned in the fall of each school year. Each public school district will be assigned an annual performance classification based on achievement, growth and graduation/dropout rate. The district rating should be based on the performance of all students in the district (i.e., the district will be treated as one K-12 school).

ANALYSIS OF STATE LAW {MS Code 37-18-1 et. seq.}

The following specifications for establishing school and district performance standards and accountability requirements are addressed in Sections 37-18-1 through 7 of the *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated.*

The State Board of Education (SBE) shall establish, design, and implement a program for identifying and rewarding public schools that improve. Upon full implementation of the statewide testing program, Star School, High Performing, or School At-Risk designation shall be made by the SBE as follows:

1. **Growth Expectation.** A growth expectation will be established by testing students annually and, using a psychometrically approved formula, by tracking their progress. This growth expectation will result in a composite score each year for each school.

2. **Percentage of Students Minimal, Basic, Proficient and Advanced in each school and school district.** A determination will be made as to the percentage of students minimal**,** basic, proficient and advanced in each school. The definition of minimal, basic, proficient and advanced shall be developed for each grade, based on a demonstrated range of performance in relation to content as reflected in the *Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks*. This range of performance must be established through a formal procedure including educators, parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders.

   A school shall be identified as a School At-Risk and in need of assistance if the school:
   - (a) Does not meet its growth expectation and it has a percentage of students functioning below grade level, as designated by the State Board of Education;
   - (b) Is designated as a Failing School; or
   - (c) Is designated as Low Performing or At-Risk of Failing for two (2) consecutive years.

Goal 3: All third graders will be reading on grade level by 2020. Performance on state tests

Goal 1: Reduce the dropout rate to 13% by 2013.

STATE ACCOUNTABILITY RATING SYSTEM

Quality of Distribution Index(QDI)	Inadequate Academic Gain	Appropriate Academic Gain	High School Completion Index or Graduation Rate (5-year)
200 - 300 (200)	**B** (High Performing)	**A** (Star School)	230 HSCI OR Graduation Rate of ≥80%
166 - 199 (166)	**C** (Successful) / **C** (Successful)	**B** (High Performing) / **C** (Successful)	200 HSCI OR Graduation Rate of ≥75%
133 - 165 (133)	**D** (Academic Watch)	**C** (Successful)	
100 - 132	**F** (Low Performing)	**D** (Academic Watch)	
0 - 99	**F** (Failing)	**F** (At-Risk of Failing)	

Growth

Goal 2: To increase Mississippi's scores on national assessments to the national average by 2013.

Note: The label in the top row cell would apply to any school without graduates.

PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATIONS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH

The School and District Performance classification is based on the Quality of Distribution Index (QDI) achieved by the school or district. The QDI measures the distribution of student performance on state assessments around the cut points for Basic, Proficient, and Advanced performance.

The state assessments included in the state accountability system are the Mississippi Curriculum Test, Second Edition (MCT2) Grades 3-8 Language Arts and Math; Subject Area Testing Program, Second Edition (SATP2) which includes Algebra I, Biology I, English II-Multiple Choice, and U.S. History; Mississippi Science Test (MST) Grades 5 and 8; and Alternate Assessment (MAAECF) Language Arts, Math, and Science Grades 5, 8, and 12.

In accordance with State Board of Education Policy 404, the first operational year of any state mandated assessment that is a part of the accountability model will not be included in the Statewide Accountability System. Note: The Mississippi Science Test (MST) Grades 5 and 8 and the Alternate Assessment (MAAECF) for Science Grades 5, 8, and 12 will be included in the state accountability system beginning school year 2012-2013.

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL		
	B (High Performing)	**A** (Star School)
	C (Successful)	**B** (High Performing)
	D (Academic Watch)	**C** (Successful)
	F (Low Performing)	**D** (Academic Watch)
	F (Failing)	**F** (At-Risk of Failing)
	Inadequate Academic Gains	**Appropriate Academic Gains/Growth Status**

THE PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATION MODEL FOR 2009-2011

Cut points on QDI	Inadequate Academic Gains	Appropriate Academic Gains
200-300	High Performing	Star School
166-199	Successful	High Performing
133-165	Academic Watch	Successful
100-132	Low Performing	Academic Watch
0-99	Failing	At-Risk of Failing

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Cut points on QDI	Inadequate Academic Gains	Appropriate Academic Gains
200-300	**B** (High Performing)	**A** (Star School)
166-199	**C** (Successful)	**B** (High Performing)
133-165	**D** (Academic Watch)	**C** (Successful)
100-132	**F** (Low Performing)	**D** (Academic Watch)
0-99	**F** (Failing)	**F** (At-Risk of Failing)

QUALITY OF DISTRIBUTION INDEX (QDI)

1. The Quality of Distribution Index (QDI) should be used to measure achievement. The QDI measures the distribution of student performance on state assessments around the cut points for Basic, Proficient, and Advanced performance. The formula for the QDI is

$$QDI = \% \text{ Basic} + (2 \times \% \text{ Proficient}) + (3 \times \% \text{ Advanced})$$

2. The performance levels of the QDI should be phased in over five years.
   a. The highest performance level should have an eventual QDI cut score of approximately 240, which should reflect performance comparable to high performing schools nationally.
   b. Performance at a national average level should be linked to a QDI in the second highest performance level initially. The model should become increasingly challenging such that national average level performance is linked to a QDI at the third or middle performance level.
   c. The Quality of Distribution Index (QDI) value defining the <u>lowest</u> school/district performance level should be 100.

Cut Score Range	**Year**				
	2009	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
Top Range	200-300	200-300	200-300	200-300	TBD
	166-199	166-199	166-199	166-199	TBD
	133-165	133-165	133-165	133-165	TBD
	100-132	100-132	100-132	100-132	TBD
Bottom Range	Below 100	Below 100	Below 100	Below 100	TBD

ALGEBRA I AND BIOLOGY I

Algebra I and Biology I scores will be combined across middle/junior high school, 9th grade school, and the corresponding high school. That is, the Algebra I and Biology I results for calculating the QDI will be based on the performance of all students in middle/junior high school, 9th grade school, and the corresponding high school in a given year, and both the middle/junior high school, 9th grade school, and corresponding high school will receive the same QDI for Algebra I and Biology I. Including the performance at both levels will encourage middle schools, 9th grade schools, and high schools to work together to support students taking

Algebra I and Biology I when they are ready for the course. A student will contribute equally to the accountability based on their performance level (Minimal, Basic, Proficient, or Advanced) on the assessment regardless of the grade level at which the assessment is first taken.

GRADUATION/DROPOUT COMPONENT

The High School Completion Index (HSCI) should be included in determining the accountability rating of schools with grades 9-12 and districts and a school or district should demonstrate high performance on the HSCI to receive the highest rating in addition to meeting QDI performance and growth. Districts with schools where 9th grade is contained separate from 10-12 grades will be issued a HSCI value based on the students who actually attended the school containing 9th grade and the 10-12 grade school will be issued a HSCI value based on the students who actually attended the school containing grades 10-12. The High School Completion Index (HSCI) should be based on the status of students five years after first entering ninth grade. Eventually the HSCI should be based on the status of students seven years after first entering seventh grade.
The weights for the HSCI student statuses:

Standard Diploma	300
Met Requirements Except Graduation Test	150
Occupational Diploma	175
Certificate of Attendance	150
GED	200
Still Enrolled	50
Dropout	-300

There will initially be two levels for the HSCI corresponding to the two highest levels of performance on the QDI. The Department of Education should monitor the reporting of this information. The Commission will consider revising or adding levels to the graduation/dropout component in the future.

a. The highest level of the HSCI should be a HSCI of 230 <u>or</u> a graduation rate of 80% or higher.

b. The second highest level of the HSCI should be an HSCI of 200 <u>or</u> a graduation rate of 75%.

THE ACHIEVEMENT MODEL

A school's achievement level is based on the current year performance of students who were enrolled in the school for a full academic year (at least 70% of instructional time). The Quality of Distribution Index (QDI) should be used to measure achievement. The QDI measures the distribution of student performance on state assessments around the cut points for Basic, Proficient, and Advanced performance. The formula for the QDI is

$$QDI = \% \text{ Basic} + (2 \text{ X } \% \text{ Proficient}) + (3 \text{ X } \% \text{ Advanced})$$

THE GROWTH MODEL

A multiple regression model is used to predict scale score growth on the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT2) and scale score on certain Subject Area Tests (SATP) for each student based on the student's earlier MCT2 performance. Predictions are made only for students who were enrolled in the school for a full academic year. There are separate prediction equations for each grade level in each content area and each subject area test.

The "met" growth determines the degree to which the school met its basic growth expectation. The regression equations in the pilot growth models predict performance at the student level. Although the predictions are not accurate enough for use at the student level, the positive and negative prediction errors tend to cancel each other, so average residual values for groups of students within a school or district are much more accurate. $\mathbf{R^2}$ indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable accounted for by the prediction equation. Generally, a higher $\mathbf{R^2}$ value indicates better predicting ability. The formula for R^2 is shown below.

$$\mathbf{R^2} = SS_{Model}/SS_{Total} \text{ where, } SS_{Total} = SS_{Model} + SS_{Error}$$

$\mathbf{R^2}$ values for the MCT SS change prediction equations in the growth model used from 2003 through 2007 were similar to the new equations for predicting MCT2 and SATP scale scores.

To ensure the most accurate predictions, students included in the regression analyses must:

- Meet full academic year (FAY) at the district level for the two years used in the regression;
- Have MCT2 scores from the prior school year or grade 8 for students taking Subject Area Tests in grade 9 or later; and
- Have MCT2, Grade 8 Algebra, Grade 9 Algebra, Grade 9 Biology, Grade 10 Algebra, Grade 10 Biology, or Grade 10 English Multiple-Choice test scores from the most recent school year.

STUDENTS INCLUDED IN THE PERFORMANCE MODEL

A student is included in the achievement and growth models for a school if the student was enrolled in the school for a **full academic year**, which is defined as at least 70% (approximately) of the instructional time. The percentage of time enrolled is determined from the monthly student level enrollment records in MSIS as follows:

- End of Month 8 School = Same School on 6 of the 7 Earlier End of Month Reports (Month 1 through Month 7)
- End of Month 7 School = Same School on all 6 of the Earlier End of Month Reports (Month 1 through Month 6)

INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

The Mississippi Statewide Assessment System provides procedures to ensure the inclusion of all students in the assessment programs, including a wide range of testing accommodations, instructional level testing on the MCT2, and alternate assessments. The data for students using testing accommodations are treated no differently from any other test data. For students with disabilities taking instructional level tests or alternate assessments, their scores are included in the achievement model. The weighting procedures in the achievement model ensure that those students count equally within the achievement level assigned to the school.

School districts are allowed to exclude the academic achievement results only for first year English Language Learners (ELL) students (on a case-by-case basis) from determinations of state Achievement Model and Growth Model results. This policy is consistent with the requirements for calculating AYP.

SCHOOLS THAT CANNOT BE INCLUDED IN THE ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH MODELS

A school must be included in both the achievement and growth models in order to be assigned a School Performance Classification. Schools with no assessment data at grades 3-8 and no appropriate SATP data cannot be included in the achievement and growth models. Most of the schools that cannot be assigned a School Performance Classification are schools serving grades kindergarten and first grade and schools serving kindergarten through second grade.

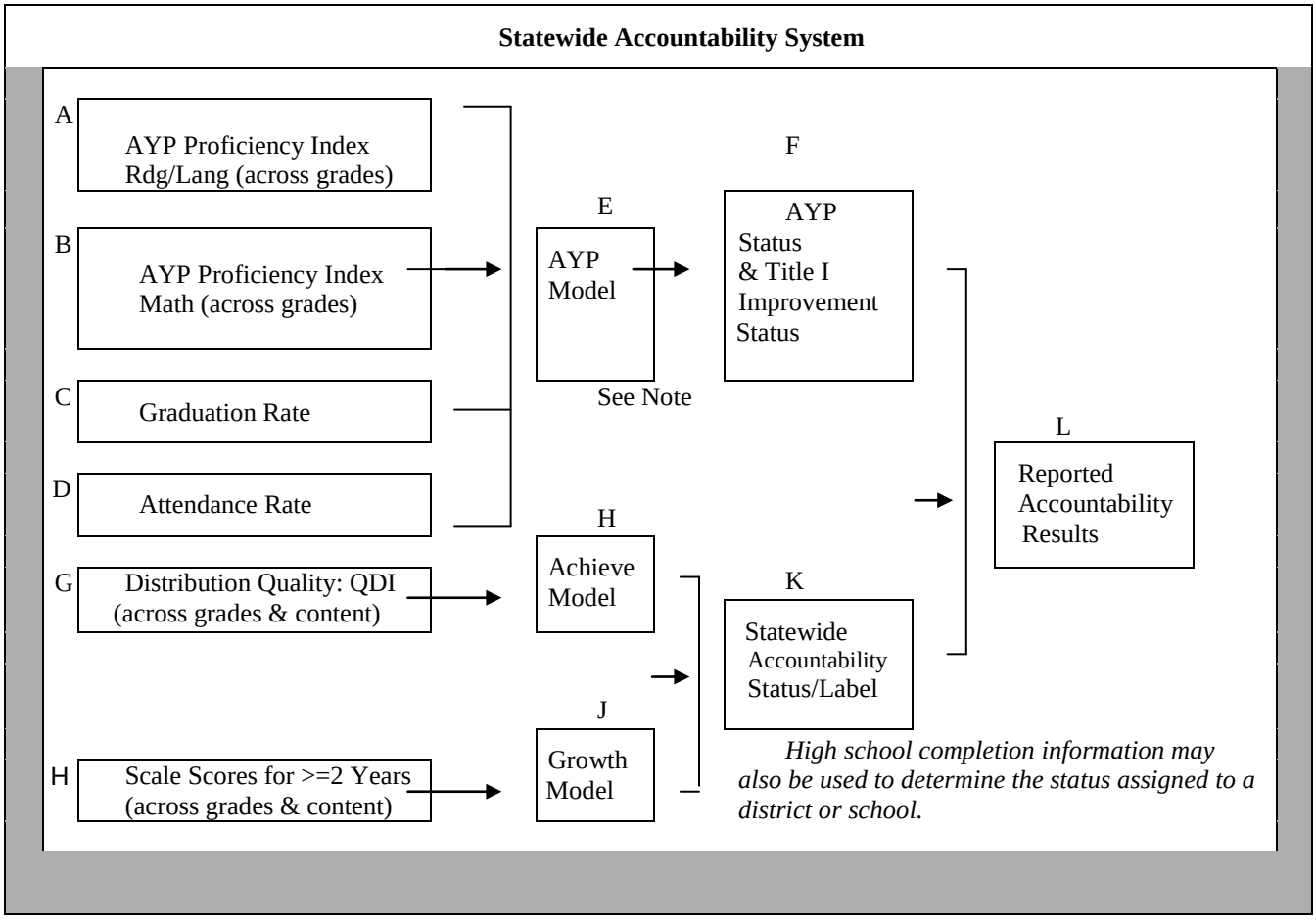
NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB) AND THE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

The development of Mississippi's new statewide accountability system began in 1999. The system was designed to comply fully with the requirements in federal legislation related to Title I (ESEA 1994) and to student with disabilities (IDEA 1997). The new statewide assessment system was also designed for use within the achievement and growth models for school accountability.

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) was signed into law in January 2002. This federal legislation includes additional student assessment requirements and mandates that states develop and implement a single statewide accountability system by the beginning of school year 2003-2004. The legislation includes specific requirements for calculating adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and school districts. Mississippi's new assessment programs already incorporate many of the new federal assessment requirements. For example, students in grades 3-8 must be assessed in both reading/language arts and mathematics.

The conceptual model for Mississippi's Statewide Accountability System that incorporates the federal AYP component is illustrated on the following page. Each school district will be assigned an annual accountability designation based on its accreditation status and the AYP model. Each school will be assigned an annual accountability designation based on the School Performance Classification and AYP model.

Mississippi Statewide Accountability System: A Conceptual Framework



GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
STANDARD 20

SENIORS OF SCHOOL YEAR 2008-2009, 2009-2010 & 2010-2011
(Entering ninth graders in 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008)

Each student graduating from a secondary school in an accredited school district will have earned the required Carnegie units as specified in the following table. Contents of each required and elective course must include the core objectives identified in the *Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks.* Course titles and identification numbers must appear in the current edition of *Approved Courses for Secondary Schools of Mississippi*. (See SB Policies 2902 and 2903.) Enrollment in on-line and correspondence courses listed in this book must have prior approval granted by the principal. No more than one (1) of the minimum required number of units may be earned through completion of an approved correspondence course.

Any student who completes the minimum graduation requirements as specified below and has achieved a passing score on each of the required high school exit examinations is eligible to receive a high school diploma. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under MS Code 37-16-7.

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	**4**[1]	
MATHEMATICS	**4**[2]	**Algebra I**
SCIENCE	**3**[3]	**Biology I**
SOCIAL STUDIES	**3**	**1 World History**[4] **1 U.S. History**[4] **½ U.S. Government** **½ Mississippi Studies**[5]
HEALTH	**½**[6]**&**[7]	**Comprehensive Health *or*** **Family and Individual Health**
BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY	**1**[8]	**1 Computer Discovery or ½ Keyboarding and** **½ Computer Applications**
THE ARTS	**1**	**Any approved 500.000 course or completion of the 2-course sequence for Computer Graphics Technology I and II**
ELECTIVES	**4½** [9]	
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	**21**	

APPENDIX A-1 (Continued)
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
STANDARD 20

SENIORS OF SCHOOL YEAR 2008-2009, 2009-2010 & 2010-2011
(Entering ninth graders in 2005-2006, 2006-2007 & 2007-2008)

[1] Compensatory Reading and Compensatory Writing may not be included in the four English courses required for graduation; however, these courses may be included in the 4½ general electives required for graduation. MYP-English I and MYP English II are accepted in lieu of the English I and English II requirements for students enrolled in the IB program.

[2] Compensatory Mathematics and any developmental mathematics course may not be included in the four mathematics courses required for graduation; however, these courses may be included in the 4½ general electives required for graduation. Beginning school year 2004-2005 for all entering eighth graders, at least one of the four required mathematics courses must be higher than Algebra I. The allowable mathematics courses that can be taken which are higher than Algebra I are: Geometry, Algebra II, Advanced Algebra, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, Discrete Mathematics, Statistics, and AP Statistics. One of the four required mathematics units may be in Drafting if the student completes the 2-course sequence for Drafting I & II. Effective with the eighth graders of 2004-2005, Pre-Algebra, Transition to Algebra, and Algebra I, may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit. MYP Geometry, MYP Algebra II, IB-DP Mathematics I, IB-DP Mathematics II, IB-DP Mathematical Studies I, IB-DP Mathematical Studies II are allowable mathematics courses higher than Algebra I for IB students.

[3] One unit may be in Introduction to Agriscience, Concepts of Agriscience, Science of Agricultural Plants, Science of Agricultural Animals, or Science of Agricultural Environment. Two units may be in the following courses if the student completes the 2-course sequence: Agriscience I & II; Allied Health I & II; Aquaculture I & II; Forestry I & II; Horticulture I & II; Plastics and Polymer Science I & II; and Technology Applications I & II. Two units may be earned by completing the following AEST 3-course sequence: one unit in Concepts of Agriscience; one unit in Science of Agricultural Animals or Science of Agricultural Plants, or Science of Agricultural Environment; and one unit in Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship. IB-DP Physics I, IB-DP Physics II, MYP Chemistry, and IB-DP Chemistry may be accepted as allowable lab-based physical science courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP Biology and IB-DP Biology I may be accepted in lieu of the Biology I requirement for students enrolled in an IB program.

[4] **Based on the 2004 Mississippi Social Studies framework,** AP European History or AP World History can be accepted in lieu of World History. Advanced placement U.S. History is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History from 1877 to present. AP Government and Politics: United States can be accepted in lieu of the required United States Government course. A.P. Macroeconomics or A.P. Microeconomics can be taken in lieu of the required Economics course. A.P. Human Geography can be accepted in lieu of the required Geography course. IB-DP History of the Americas I is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History Course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB-DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP U. S. Government is accepted in lieu of the required Government course for students enrolled in the IB program.

Based on the 2011 Mississippi Social Studies framework, A.P. World History can be accepted in lieu of the required World History from the Age of Enlightenment to Present course. A.P. United States History can be accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History from Post-reconstruction to Present course. A.P. Government and Politics: United Sates can be accepted in lieu of the required United States Government course, A.P. Macroeconomics or A.P. Microeconomics can be taken in lieu of the required Economics course, A.P. Human Geography can be accepted in lieu of the required Geography course. IB-DP History of the Americas I is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB-DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP U.S. Government is accepted in lieu of the required Government course for students enrolled in the IB program.

[5] The credit earned for a State/Local Government course in any other state by an out-of-state transfer student who enters after the sophomore year can stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies or Mississippi State and Local Government. If the transfer student took a State/Local Government course in a grade level that did not award Carnegie unit credit, then any other ½ unit social studies course may be accepted. An out-of-state student who transfers after the junior year may substitute any other ½ unit social studies course.

[6] Credit earned in Allied Health I/Health Science I may be accepted in lieu of Comprehensive Health or Family and Individual Health to meet the graduation requirement for ½ Carnegie unit in Health.

[7] **S**uccessful completion of JROTC I and JROTC II may be accepted in lieu of Comprehensive Health or Family and Individual Health to meet the graduation requirement for ½ Carnegie unit in Health beginning in the 2010-2011 school year and thereafter, when instruction includes all health components in the JROTC curriculum.

[8] Evidence of proficiency in Keyboarding and Computer Applications is accepted in lieu of the required courses if the student earns one unit in any of the courses listed in the *Business and Technology Framework* (academic and vocational). ICT II may be accepted in lieu of Computer Discovery. MYP Computer Discovery may be accepted in lieu of Computer Discovery for students enrolled in an IB program.

[9] Elective units in physical education include participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, performance choral, dance and JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
STANDARD 20

SENIORS OF SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012
(Entering ninth graders in 2008-2009, and thereafter)

Each student graduating from a secondary school in an accredited school district will have earned the required Carnegie units as specified in the following table. Contents of each required and elective course must include the core objectives identified in the *Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks.* Course titles and identification numbers must appear in the current edition of *Approved Courses for Secondary Schools of Mississippi*. (See SB Policies 2902 and 2903) Enrollment in on-line and correspondence courses listed in this book must have prior approval granted by the principal. No more than one (1) of the minimum required number of units may be earned through completion of an approved correspondence course.

Any student who completes the minimum graduation requirements as specified below and has achieved a passing score on each of the required high school exit examinations is eligible to receive a high school diploma. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under MS Code 37-16-7.

Beginning school year 2008-2009 and thereafter, all entering ninth graders (seniors of school year 2011-2012 and later) will be required to have a minimum of 24 Carnegie units as specified below, unless their parent/guardian requests to opt the student out of Appendix A-2 requirements in accordance with local school board policy. Any student who is taken out of these requirements of Appendix A-2 will be required to complete the graduation requirements as specified in Appendix A-1. The local school district may establish additional local requirements approved by the local school board as authorized under MS Code 37-16-7.

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4[1]	English I English II
MATHEMATICS	4[2]	Algebra I
SCIENCE	4[3]	Biology I
SOCIAL STUDIES	4	1 World History[4] 1 U.S. History[4] ½ Geography[4] ½ U.S. Government ½ Economics[5] ½ Mississippi Studies[6]
HEALTH and PHYSICAL EDUCATION	1[7&8]	½ Comprehensive Health *or* ½ Family & Individual Health and ½ Physical Education[9&11]
BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY	1[10]	1 Computer Discovery or ½ Keyboarding and ½ Computer Applications
THE ARTS	1	Any approved 500.000 course or completion of the 2-course sequence for Computer Graphics Technology I and II
ELECTIVES	5[11]	
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	24	

APPENDIX A-2 (Continued)
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
STANDARD 20
SENIORS OF SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012
(Entering ninth graders in 2008-2009, and thereafter)

[1]Compensatory Reading and Compensatory Writing may not be included in the four English courses required for graduation; however, these courses may be included in the 5 general electives required for graduation. Accelerated English 9 can be accepted in lieu of English I. Accelerated English 10 and AP English Language Composition can be accepted in lieu of English II. Beginning school year 2010-2011 for all entering ninth graders, English I is a required prerequisite course for English II. English I may not be taken after a student completes English II.

[2] Compensatory Mathematics, Introduction to Engineering, and any developmental mathematics course may not be included in the four mathematics courses required for graduation; however, these courses may be included in the 5 general electives required for graduation. Effective with the eighth graders of 2008-2009, Pre-Algebra and Transition to Algebra may not be taken after a student completes Algebra I. Beginning school year 2007-2008 for all entering eighth graders, at least two of the four required mathematics courses must be higher than Algebra I. Effective with ninth graders of 2010-2011, Survey of Mathematical Topics may not be included in the two math courses higher than Algebra I. The allowable mathematics courses that can be taken which are higher than Algebra I are: Geometry, Algebra II, Advanced Algebra, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, Discrete Mathematics, Statistics, and AP Statistics. MYP Geometry, MYP Algebra II, IB-DP Mathematics I, IB-DP Mathematics II, IB-DP Mathematical Studies I, IB-DP Mathematical Studies II are allowable mathematics courses higher than Algebra I for IB students. One of the four required mathematics units may be in Drafting if the student completes the 2-course sequence for Drafting I & II. One of the four required mathematics units may be in Survey of Mathematical Topics; however this course does not meet the mathematics requirement for admission to institutions of higher learning. Effective with the eighth graders of 2004-2005, Pre-Algebra, Transition to Algebra, and Algebra I, may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit. Effective with the eighth graders of 2008-2009, Geometry may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit. Effective with the seventh graders of 2012-13, Pre Algebra, Algebra I, Biology I, ICT II (Information & Communication Technology), and First Year Foreign Language may be taken in the seventh grade for Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is the same as the high school course. Effective with the eighth graders of 2012-13, second year Foreign Language and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is the same as the high school course

[3] One unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience, and a second unit may be in completing 2 of the following 3 courses: Science of Agriculture Plants, Science of Agriculture Animals, and Science of Agricultural Environment. Two units may be in the following courses if the student completes the required course sequence ending with Agriscience II, Allied Health II, Aquaculture II, Forestry II, Plastics and Polymer Science II, Technology Applications II, Polymer Science II or Careers in Polymer Science, Horticulture II or Horticulture Landscape and Turfgrass, Engineering II or Applied Engineering Concepts, Health Sciences II or Workplace and Employment Skills in Health Sciences.

Effective with 7th graders of 2012-13, Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, Biology I, ICT II (Information & Communication Technology) and first year Foreign Language may be taken in the 7th grade for Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is the same as the high school course. Effective with 8th graders of 2012-2013, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) and second year Foreign Language may be taken in the 8th grade for Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is the same as the high school course.

Beginning school year 2008-2009 for all entering eight graders, one unit must be a lab-based physical science. The allowable lab-based physical science courses are Physical Science, Chemistry, AP Chemistry, Physics, AP Physics B, AP Physics C – Electricity and Magnetism, and AP Physics C – Mechanics. IB-DP Physics I, IB-DP Physics II, MYP Chemistry, and IB-DP Chemistry may be accepted as allowable lab-based physical science courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP Biology and IB-DP Biology I may be accepted in lieu of the Biology I requirement for students enrolled in an IB program.

[4] Based on the 2004 Mississippi Social Studies framework, Advanced Placement Human Geography is accepted in lieu of the required Geography course. A.P. United States History can be accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History from 1877 to Present course. A.P. World History can be accepted in lieu of the required World History from 1795 to Present course. A.P. Government and Politics: United States can be accepted in lieu of the required United States Government course. A.P. Macroeconomics or A.P. Microeconomics can be taken in lieu of the required Economics course. MYP World Geography is accepted in lieu of the required Geography course for students enrolled in the IB program. Advanced placement U.S. History is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History from 1877 to Present. IB-DP History of the Americas I is accepted in lieu of the

required U.S. History Course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB-DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP U. S. Government is accepted in lieu of the required Government course for students enrolled in the IB program. AP European History or AP World History can be accepted in lieu of World History.

Based on the 2011 Mississippi Social Studies framework**,** A.P. World History can be accepted in lieu of the required World History from the Age of Enlightenment to Present course. A.P. United States History can be accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History from Post-reconstruction to Present course. A.P Government and Politics: United States can be accepted in lieu of the required United States Government course. A.P. Macroeconomics or A.P. Microeconomics can be taken in lieu of the required Economics course. A.P. Human Geography can be accepted in lieu of the required Geography course. MYP World Geography is accepted in lieu of the required Geography course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB-DP History of the Americas I is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History course for students enrolled in the IB program. IB-DP History of the Americas II is accepted in lieu of the required Mississippi Studies, Economics, and/or U.S. Government courses for students enrolled in the IB program. MYP U.S. Government is accepted in lieu of the required Government course for students enrolled in the IB program.

[5] Credit earned for Business Fundamentals or Business Fundamentals II may be accepted in lieu of ½ unit in Economics.

[6] The credit earned for a State/Local Government course in any other state by an out-of-state transfer student who enters after the sophomore year can stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies or Mississippi State and Local Government. If the transfer student took a State/Local Government course in a grade level that did not award Carnegie unit credit, then any other ½ unit social studies course may be accepted. An out-of-state student who transfers after the junior year may substitute any other ½ unit social studies course.

[7] Credit earned in Allied Health I, Health Sciences I, or Theory and Application of Health Sciences I, may be accepted in lieu of Comprehensive Health or Family and Individual Health to meet the graduation requirement for ½ Carnegie unit in Health.

[8] **S**uccessful completion of JROTC I and JROTC II may be accepted in lieu of Comprehensive Health or Family and Individual Health to meet the graduation requirement for ½ Carnegie unit in Health beginning in the 2010-2011 school year and thereafter.

[9] The graduation requirement for **½** unit in physical education may include participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, dance and JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association.

[10] Evidence of proficiency in technology is accepted in lieu of the required courses if the student earns one unit in a technology-rich academic or career technical course related to their program of study. Effective with school year 2012-2013, a Carnegie unit credit for ICT II (Information & Communication Technology) may be awarded to 7th grade students. Effective with school year 2012-2013, a Carnegie unit credit for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) may be awarded to 8th grade students. ICT II may be accepted in lieu of Computer Discovery. A Carnegie unit earned for STEM in the 8th or 9th grade meets this graduation requirement. Technology Foundations replaces Computer Discovery, Keyboarding and Computer Applications and meets this graduation requirement when taken in grades 8-12. MYP Computer Discovery may be accepted in lieu of Computer Discovery for students enrolled in an IB program.

[11] Only one elective unit in physical education including participation in interscholastic athletic activities, band, performance choral, dance or JROTC that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association may be applied each year to the minimum 24 required state units. If a local district has graduation requirements above the state requirements they may award additional credits as outlined in the local Board policy.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
STANDARD 20

CAREER PATHWAY OPTION
SENIORS OF SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012
(Entering eleventh graders in 2010-2011)

In 2010, Mississippi state policymakers passed legislation to create multiple pathways to a standard diploma. The 2010 legislative actions created a career pathway to a standard diploma, with the goal of improving Mississippi graduation rates and providing students with career and technical training that prepare students for postsecondary credential or certification programs and employable workplace skills. This legislative change created Section 37-16-17 of the *Mississippi Code of 1972* to provide for high school career option programs and career track curricula for students not wishing to pursue a baccalaureate degree.

CURICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4[1]	English I English II
MATHEMATICS	3[2]	Algebra I
SCIENCE	3[3]	Biology I
SOCIAL STUDIES	3[4, 5]	1 U.S. History ½ U.S. Government ½ Mississippi Studies
HEALTH and PHYSICAL EDUCATION	½[6]	½ Comprehensive Health, or ½ Family and Individual Health, or ½ Physical Education
CAREER and TECHNICAL	4[7]	(Selected from Student's Program of Study)
INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY	1[8]	Computer Discovery, ICT II, 9th STEM, or Computer Applications and Keyboarding
ADDITIONAL ELECTIVES	2 ½[9]	Courses selected from the student's approved program of study
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	21	

NOTE: Mississippi's Institution of Higher Learning requirements differ from minimum graduation requirements for this diploma pathway.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
Standard 20
Career Pathway Option

SENIORS OF SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012
(Entering eleventh graders 2010-2011)

[1] Compensatory Reading and Compensatory Writing shall not be included in the four English courses required for graduation. The two additional English credits must be from the student's program of study which includes Technical Writing, Creative Writing, English III, English IV, or any college-level dual credit courses.

[2] Compensatory Mathematics may not be included in the three mathematics courses required for graduation. Effective with eighth graders of 2008-2009, Pre-Algebra and Transition to Algebra may not be taken after a student completes Algebra I. For students pursuing the Career Pathway Graduation Option, at least one of the required mathematics courses must be above Algebra I and selected from the student's program of study. The allowable mathematics courses that can be taken which are higher than Algebra I are: Geometry, Algebra II, Survey of Mathematical Topics, Advanced Algebra, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, Discrete Mathematics, Statistics, and AP Statistics, or any college-level dual credit courses. Effective with the eighth graders of 2004-2005, Pre-Algebra, Transition to Algebra, and Algebra I, may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit. Effective with the eighth graders of 2008-2009, Geometry may be taken in the eighth grade for Carnegie unit credit.

[3] For students pursuing the Career Pathway Graduation Option, at least one of the required science courses must be above Biology I and selected from the student's program of study. If a student's program of study allows, one unit may be in Concepts of Agriscience (AEST). A second science unit may be earned by completing a two course sequence selected from the following three options: Science of Agricultural Animals, Science of Agricultural Plants, or Science of Agricultural Environment. Two units may be in the following courses if the student completes the 2-course sequence: Agriscience I & II; Allied Health I & II; Health Science I & II, Aquaculture I & II; Forestry I & II; Horticulture I & II; Polymer Science I & II; Technology Applications I & II and Engineering I & II.

[4] Advanced placement U.S. History is accepted in lieu of the required U.S. History 1877 to Present. The third social studies credit should be selected based on the student's program of study.

[5] The credit earned for a State/Local Government course in any other state by an out-of-state transfer student who enters after the sophomore year can stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies or Mississippi State and Local Government. If the transfer student took a State/Local Government course in a grade level that did not award Carnegie unit credit, then any other ½ unit social studies course may be accepted. An out-of-state student who transfers after the junior year may substitute any other ½ unit social studies course. Credit earned for the first year of Marketing and Economics (Vocational) may be accepted in lieu of ½ unit in Economics.

[6] Credit earned in Allied Health I/Health Science I may be accepted in lieu of Comprehensive Health or Family and Individual Health to meet the graduation requirement for ½ Carnegie unit in Health. Interscholastic athletic activities, band, and ROTC if they meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* may also be accepted.

[7] Career and Technical (CTE) courses must be based on the student's program of study and should include dual credit/dual enrollment options as found in Section 37-15-38 of the Mississippi Code of 1972.

[8] Evidence of proficiency in technology is accepted in lieu of the required courses if the student earns one unit in a technology-rich academic or career technical course related to their program of study.

[9] Electives must be selected from courses related to the student's program of study. Credits earned not approved for that student's program of study will not be counted toward graduation requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES IN THE CURRICULUM OF EACH SECONDARY SCHOOL STANDARD 32

Effective Beginning School Year 2007-2008

CURRICULUM AREA	COURSES	UNITS	TOTAL UNITS
ENGLISH	English I English II English III English IV	1 1 1 1	4
MATHEMATICS	Algebra I Algebra II Geometry Pre-Algebra Transition to Algebra Elective Mathematics Courses	1 1 1 1 1 1	6
SCIENCE	Biology I Chemistry Physics[1] Elective Science Courses[2]	1 1 1 3[2]	6
SOCIAL STUDIES	U.S. History U.S. Government Mississippi Studies World History Economics Intro to Geography	1 ½ ½ 1 ½ ½	4
BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY	Computer Discovery or ½ Keyboarding and ½ Computer Applications Personal Finance[3]	1 ½[3]	1½
HEALTH	Comprehensive Health or Family and Individual Health Physical Education	½ ½	1
THE ARTS	Any approved 500.00 course	1	1
FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE	Family Dynamics	½	½
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	Any combination of courses[4]	4[4]	4
ADVANCED PLACEMENT [5, 6]	At least one (1) advanced placement course in each of the four (4) core areas. AP course in Mathematics AP course in Science AP course in Language Arts AP course in Social Studies	1[5, 6] 1[5, 6] 1[5, 6] 1[5, 6]	4
ELECTIVES	Foreign Language (IHL) *or* Advanced World Geography (IHL) Any other Elective	1 ½	1½
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED			33 ½

APPENDIX B (Continued)

REQUIRED COURSES IN THE CURRICULUM OF EACH SECONDARY SCHOOL STANDARD 32

Effective Beginning School Year 2007-2008

[1] Includes Physics, AP Physics B, AP Physics C—Electricity and Magnetism, and AP Physics C—Mechanics.

[2] Two of the three elective science units may be offered through the following courses: Introduction to Agriscience, Concepts of Agriscience, Science of Agricultural Plants, Science of Agricultural Animals, or Science of Agricultural Environment, Agriscience I & II, Allied Health I & II, Aquaculture I & II, Forestry I & II, Horticulture I & II, Plastics and Polymer Science I & II, and Technology Applications I & II.

[3] One unit in Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship Technology or ½ unit in Financial Technology, ½ unit in Resource Management, or ½ unit in National Endowment for Personal Finance may be offered in lieu of ½ unit in Personal Finance.

[4] Includes Agriculture; Business Technology; Cooperative and Marketing Education; Family and Consumer Sciences; Health Education; Home Economics, Lodging and Hospitality; Technology Education; and Trade and Industrial.

[5] A school offering the International Baccalaureate program is exempted.

[6] Distance learning or approved MS Virtual Public School courses may be used as an appropriate alternative for the delivery of these required Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION TO
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING (IHL) PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN MISSISSIPPI
STANDARD 32

APPENDIX C-1

CURRICULUM AREA	COURSES	UNITS
ENGLISH		4[1]
MATHEMATICS[2]	Algebra I[3] Geometry Algebra II	3
SCIENCE	SELECT 3 UNITS FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST: Physical Science[4] Biology Advanced Biology Chemistry Advanced Chemistry Physics Advanced Physics Or any other science course with comparable content and rigor	3 (2 lab-based)
SOCIAL STUDIES	U.S. History World History U.S. Government (½) Economics (½) *or* Geography (½)	3
COMPUTER EDUCATION	Computer Applications[5]	½
ADVANCED ELECTIVES	SELECT 2 UNITS[6] FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST: Foreign Language[3] World Geography 4th year lab-based Science 4th year Mathematics	2
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED		15½[7]

[1] Courses must require substantial communication skills.
[2] A fourth class in higher-level mathematics is highly recommended.
[3] Pre-high school units: Algebra I or first-year Foreign Language taken prior to high school will be accepted for admission, provided course content is the same as the high school course.
[4] One Carnegie unit from a Physical Science course with content at a level that may serve as an introduction to Physics and Chemistry may be used.
[5] This course should include use of application packages such as word processing and spread sheets. The course should also include basic computer terminology and hardware operation.
[6] One of the two units must be in Foreign Language or World Geography.
[7] Limited exceptions to high school unit requirements may be available. For more information contact the Office of Admissions. Admission requirements are subject to change without notice at the direction of the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning.

COLLEGE PREPARATORY RECOMMENDED CURRICULUM FOR ADMISSION TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING (IHL) PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN MISSISSIPPI

STANDARD 32

CURRICULUM AREA	COURSES	UNITS
ENGLISH		4[1]
MATHEMATICS	Algebra I[2], Geometry, Algebra II, and any one Carnegie Unit of comparable rigor and content (e.g., Advanced Algebra, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, Discrete Mathematics, Probability and Statistics, or AP Statistics)	4
SCIENCE	Biology I, Chemistry I, and any two Carnegie Units of comparable rigor and content (e.g., Physics, Physical Science, Biology II, Chemistry II, AP Chemistry, Physics II, AP Physics B, AP Physics C – Electricity and Magnetism, AP Physics C – Mechanics, Botany, Microbiology, or Human Anatomy and Physiology)	4
SOCIAL STUDIES	World History, U.S. History, Introduction to World Geography, U.S. Government, Economics, and/or Mississippi Studies[2] (Credit earned for a state/local government course in any other state may stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies.)	4
ARTS	Any visual and/or performing arts course(s), meeting the requirements for high school graduation.	1
ADVANCED ELECTIVES	Foreign Language I[2] and II, Advanced World Geography and a Foreign Language I or any combination of English, mathematics, or lab-based science courses of comparable rigor and content to those required above.	2
COMPUTER APPLICATIONS	Computer Applications[3]	½
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED		19½[4]

[1] Courses must require substantial communication skills. Compensatory Reading and Compensatory Writing may not be included.

[2] Algebra I, first year Foreign Language or Mississippi Studies taken prior to high school will be accepted for admission provided the course content is the same as the high school course.

[3] Course should emphasize the computer as a productivity tool. Instruction should include the use of application packages, such as word processing and spreadsheets. The course should also include basic computer terminology and hardware operation.

[4] Limited exceptions to high school unit requirements may be available. For more information contact the Office of Admissions. Admission requirements are subject to change without notice at the direction of the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning.

STUDENT RECORDS
STANDARD 14

1. Student records are collected, maintained, and disseminated as required by Sections 37-15-1 through 37-15-3, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, 20 USC Section 1231, and the Confidentiality Section of the *Individuals with Disabilities Act, 1997 Amendments.*

2. Permanent records are kept in perpetuity for every person who has enrolled or is enrolled in a school.

3. The permanent record contains (a) legal name and address of the student, (b) date of birth as verified by birth certificate, (c) courses taken and grades or proficiency level earned, (d) immunization record, (e) date of withdrawal or graduation, (f) social security number {optional}, (g) record of performance on the required graduation tests, and (h) any other information determined by the State Board of Education.

4. Active permanent records are maintained in a secure and fire-resistant location in each school until the student withdraws or graduates, at which time the record may be transferred and/or placed on photographic film or microfilm in a central, fire-resistant depository.

5. Cumulative records are maintained for each student currently enrolled in a school.

6. The cumulative record (folder) contains the same information as the permanent record, as well as results of standardized tests and other information required by school board policies or prescribed by the State Board of Education.

7. Active cumulative records are maintained in a secure, fire-resistant location in each school.

8. Cumulative records of students who transfer or who are promoted to another school within or outside the district are to be sent to the head of the school to which the student transfers.

9. Cumulative records may be destroyed by order of the school board of the school district in not less than five years after the permanent record of the student has become inactive and has been transferred to the central depository of the district.

10. Permanent and active cumulative records of any school (public or nonpublic) that closes are transferred to the central depository of the school district wherein the closed school is located.

For further clarification or information see the current edition of *Mississippi Cumulative Folders and Permanent Records Manual of Directions.*

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM STANDARD 22

I. PURPOSE

It is the policy of the State Board of Education that all test procedures and results that are used in the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System and/or used in the Performance-Based Accreditation System be valid and accurate for making related decisions. In order to protect the security and integrity of all tests administered through the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System, as well as to ensure reporting of accurate assessment results, the State Board of Education establishes the following requirements and the consequences applied when a school district or school is found in violation of any requirement. These requirements are established under the authority granted in Sections 37-16-1, 37-16-3, and 37-16-4, *Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended.*

II. DEFINITIONS

Secure test materials include certain test administrator manuals, test booklets, answer documents, and other materials as specified by the Office of Student Assessment.

A *possible testing irregularity* is any incident in the test handling or administration that leads to a question regarding the security of the test or the accuracy of the test data.

A *verified testing irregularity* is a violation of a testing requirement.

III. REPORTING AND USE OF TEST DATA

The school district will release test score information to parents, legal representatives, teachers, students, other educators, the media, and the public in a timely manner and provide interpretive material as necessary. The school district will use test scores appropriately in making decisions regarding students. A decision or characterization that will have a major impact on an individual student is not made on the basis of a single test score. Additional retesting opportunities will be made available for any "high stakes" test.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

The following is not an exhaustive list of requirements.

1. The District Test Coordinator or a designated representative of the school district must attend applicable training sessions sponsored by the Office of Student Assessment.

2. A District Test Security Plan is prepared each new school year no later than September 30.
    a. The District Test Security Plan contains all components as required by the Office of Student Assessment.
    b. The District Test Security Plan is signed by the district superintendent, the district test coordinator and the chairman of the school board. The School Test Security Plan, which is a part of the District Test Security Plan, is signed by the school principal, school test coordinator, and the district test coordinator.
    c. The District Test Security Plan identifies **all** individuals who have access to the secure storage area at district and school sites.

3. Except during actual test administration, secure test materials are kept under lock and key, and access to secure test materials is limited to individuals identified in the test security plan as responsible for their security. While secure test materials are in the district, anyone listed as having access to the secure storage area must be accompanied by a second person when entering the secure storage area. To ensure that security is maintained from year to year, it is the responsibility of the district each year to review the list of individuals who have access to the secure storage area and to ensure that only those individuals listed have access to the secure area by way of keys or vault combination.
    a. Secure test materials are kept in locked storage before testing at both the district and school levels.
    b. Access to secure test materials is limited to those individuals identified in the test security plan. Test administrators and proctors will have access as described in the district test security plan. Access to test materials means handling the materials, not reviewing and analyzing test items, unless reading accommodations are required. The superintendent or a specified designee shall designate the personnel who are authorized to have access to test materials.
    c. Test materials are not to be removed from security packaging prior to the time indicated on instructions from the Office of Student Assessment.
    d. Secure test materials are kept in locked storage after testing at both the district and school levels unless otherwise directed by the Office of Student Assessment.

4. All secure test materials are accounted for before, during, and after testing as specified in the District Test Security Plan. Test administrators and proctors will have access as described in the district test security plan. Access to test materials means handling the materials, not reviewing and analyzing test items, unless reading accommodations are required. The superintendent or a specified designee shall designate the personnel who are authorized to have access to test materials.
    a. All secure test materials are accounted for before testing at the district level.
    b. All secure test materials are accounted for before testing at the school level.
    c. Test administrators account for all secure test materials before students are allowed to leave the testing room.
    d. All secure test materials are accounted for after testing at the school level.
    e. All secure test materials are accounted for after testing at the district level.
    f. All secure materials are returned according to the schedule published by the Office of Student Assessment. In the event that a secure testing document has been contaminated by bodily fluids or other health-related hazards, the district test coordinator will follow procedures for disposal as outlined during District Test Coordinator training, and include these procedures in the District Test Security Plan.
    g. If supplementary materials, such as scratch paper, maps, and manipulatives are provided, procedures for disposal are outlined in the District Test Security Plan and followed.

5. Any person involved in any phase of the testing program has been trained in appropriate assessment administration and test security procedures.
    a. Test administrators shall be licensed school personnel.
        i. Due to the need for the one-on-one administration of the English language proficiency test for English Language Learners, which includes component subtests such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, the test administrator may be a non-licensed employee as long as the proctor for the administration is a licensed staff member.
        ii. For only the English language proficiency test for English Language Learners, if a licensed employee is the test administrator, the district is not obligated to provide a second person as proctor.

b. The district conducts professional development training on proper assessment administration procedures and test security for all individuals involved in the handling and administration of each test.
c. The district maintains complete records of all professional development related to assessment.
d. The district has documentation that training related to assessment included information on test security violations and the consequences of violations.

6. Both a test administrator and a proctor are present and actively monitoring students during the entire test administration.
   a. At least two people are present from the time that testing materials are distributed to the test administrator until all test materials have been returned to the secure area.
   b. A seating chart is required for each room/site used for any statewide assessment; the seating chart must be signed and dated by the test administrator, proctor, and school test coordinator.

7. Students are not allowed access to test questions prior to testing and are not allowed access to answers at any time.

8. Reproducing (by any means) or disclosing secure test material (including pilot material) and student responses before, during or after test administration are prohibited. Reproduction or disclosure of secure test materials includes but is not limited to the following: reviewing, reading, or looking at secure test material in a manner that is inconsistent with test security regulations and/or procedures as outlined in the test administrator's manual. Use of unreleased test items in any form (including rewording of such test items) is strictly prohibited.

9. Coaching students, altering responses, or interfering with responses in any way during or after the scheduled test administration is prohibited. Coaching students is defined as providing answers by staff or other students to students in any manner during the test, including cues, clues, hints, and/or actual answers in any form-written, printed, verbal or non-verbal (including but not limited to chalkboards, charts, bulletin boards, posters, computers, hand signals) or allowing students to alter responses after the scheduled test administration.

10. All eligible students are tested. (See also Testing Students with Disabilities Regulations *and Guidelines for English Language Learner*s*: Policies, Procedures, and Assessments*.) (SB Policies 3600, 3800, 7220, and 7601) {MS Code 37-16-3(2)}
    a. Accurate exclusions, absences, and other required data are compiled for each test for each school.
    b. Exclusions and absences data for each test for each school are maintained on file in the district.
    c. Students who drop a course for which an end-of-course Subject Area Test is required after the dates noted below shall still take the appropriate end-of-course Subject Area Test.
       <u>Traditional Schedule</u>
       - Students enrolled in a course at the end of January (5th month) must be tested.
       <u>Fall Block</u>
       - Students enrolled in a course at the end of October (2nd month) must be tested.
       <u>Spring Block</u>
       - Students enrolled in a course at the end of March (7th month) must be tested.
    d. Students enrolled in and taking courses for the first time for which end-of-course Subject Area Tests are required shall take the appropriate Subject Area Tests. These students shall take the appropriate end-of-course Subject Area Test, even if the course title in Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi includes the words Accelerated, Enrichment, or Advanced Placement.

e. Each student enrolled in and re-taking courses for which end-of-course Subject Area Tests are required shall take the appropriate Subject Area Test only if the student has not previously passed the Subject Area Test.
f. Each student shall take the appropriate end-of-course Subject Area Test at the end of the course regardless of the grade level in which the course is offered.
g. Students enrolled in a Mississippi public school will be required to pass end-of-course Subject Area Test in a course for which the school accepts Carnegie units earned by the student through enrollment in summer school, virtual school, or any other non-standard school as defined by the Office of Accreditation.

11. Only appropriate allowable testing accommodations are provided for students as specified in the current edition of *Testing Students with Disabilities* Regulations *and* the current edition of *Guidelines for English Language Learners*: *Policies, Procedures, and Assessments*. (SB Policies 3600, 3800, 7220, 7601, and 7610) The use of any accommodation not listed in these documents or in the current edition of the Testing Accommodations Manual published by the Office of Student Assessment must first be approved by the Office of Student Assessment.

12. Makeup testing is provided for students who are absent during the regularly scheduled test administration.

13. Tests are administered according to the standard procedures defined in the test administrator's manuals and related documents and according to the schedule published by the Office of Student Assessment.

14. Anyone with knowledge of or information regarding a possible testing irregularity or alleged security violations reports the alleged irregularity/violation to an appropriate authority. {MS Code 37-16-4(1)(f)}

15. Test administrators and proctors keep written records of any testing irregularities occurring during testing and report these to the school test coordinator who then reports to the District Test Coordinator. The District Test Coordinator reports all irregularities for a test administration to the district superintendent for investigation. Documentation regarding testing irregularities is maintained on file in the district.

16. The superintendent of the district investigates all reports of alleged violations of test security and/or potential testing irregularities and submits a report of findings to the Office of Student Assessment within fifteen working days after the alleged violation and/or potential irregularity has been reported to him or her.

17. No statistically significant similar or identical patterns of responses and/or erasures are noted in students' answer documents.

18. No statistically significant group or individual scores that are inconsistent with established patterns of achievement are noted.

19. The school prohibits the possession and/or use of any electronic communication device, including but not limited to Ipod's, MP3 players, Bluetooth devices, cell phones, and/or other personal digital assistance devices during the administration of scheduled statewide tests.

20. Tests are to be administered in an environment that provides an adequate test setting for students. Such an environment should provide adequate lighting, reduced noise level, and spacing to ensure that students cannot see the answers being bubbled (or answers being selected during computer-based online testing) by other students.

V. INVESTIGATION

The Office of Student Assessment follows a systematic procedure to ensure that all evidence indicating possible testing irregularities is investigated. Corrective action will be taken when warranted.

A. PROCEDURE FOR INVESTIGATION

Identifying and investigating possible testing irregularities involves a variety of data sources. These include formal testing audits, self-reports of testing irregularities, allegations/complaints related to possible testing irregularities, and results of analyses and reports designed to identify possible irregularities, including the percent of students tested, changes in enrollment, score exceptionalities, erasure report results, and missing documents reports.

The procedure for handling testing irregularities is repeated for each test administration. The Office of Student Assessment will notify the school district in writing when a possible testing irregularity has been identified. Within fifteen working days following a reported potential irregularity/violation and/or receipt of the written notification from the Office of Student Assessment, the district will submit a written report to the Office of Student Assessment. The Office of Student Assessment reserves the right to conduct an independent investigation.

The Office of Student Assessment will evaluate the district report to determine whether the possible testing irregularity has been resolved or the testing irregularity has been verified. If the possible testing irregularity has been resolved, the Office of Student Assessment will notify the district that no further action is required. If a testing irregularity has been verified, the Office of Student Assessment will notify the district superintendent.

In the case of any verified testing irregularity that jeopardized or may have jeopardized the security and integrity of the test(s) or the accuracy of the test results, the Office of Student Assessment will report the irregularity to the Office of Accreditation for appropriate action and follow-up. (See *CONSEQUENCES*.) In the case of improper student behavior supported by a data forensics company and not disproved in the district report, the Office of Student Assessment will respond to the district superintendent with a request on behalf of the State Superintendent of Education that the district superintendent ask for the invalidation of the suspect test scores and prepare for the students with the suspect test scores to participate in the next test administration. If the district refuses to invalidate the suspect scores, the State Superintendent will have the authority to invalidate the scores.

In case of an allegation of an irregularity that prompts a need for an investigation by the Mississippi Department of Education and the investigation provides substantial evidence that an irregularity has occurred; the State Superintendent will have the authority to invalidate suspect scores. The district superintendent will be notified of the invalidated suspect scores and of the need to prepare students with the suspect scores to participate in the next test administration.

B. PROCEDURES FOR PERSONAL MISCONDUCT INVESTIGATION

If an irregularity that represents misconduct or other breaches of test security on the part of district personnel within a school district is identified, the superintendent of the district will be notified of the irregularity. It is the responsibility of the district to conduct an investigation into the allegation and report findings to the Office of Student Assessment. If the Office of Student Assessment concludes that the irregularity was resolved, the district is notified that no further action is necessary.

If the Office of Student Assessment concludes that the irregularity was verified, the district superintendent is notified that the Office of Accreditation is being apprised of the finding.

In case of an allegation of an irregularity or in the case of statistical analyses that prompt a need for an investigation by the Mississippi Department of Education and the investigation provides substantial evidence that an irregularity has occurred, the State Superintendent will have the authority to invalidate suspect test scores. The district superintendent will be notified of the invalidated suspect scores and of the need to prepare students with the suspect scores to participate in the next test administration. The district superintendent will be notified that the Office of Accreditation is being apprised of the findings.

The district attorney may investigate allegations of violations of test security on his own initiative following receipt of allegations, at the request of a school district, or at the request of the Mississippi Department of Education.

After a conviction, the personnel in question will be notified in writing that the evidence of conviction will be presented to the Commission on Educator Licensure and that the Commission is required to take action pursuant to the authority granted in Section 37-16-4, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended. In the case of improper student behavior supported by the data forensics company and not disproved in the district report, the district superintendent will be asked to request the invalidation of the suspect test scores and prepare for the students with the suspect test scores to participate in the next test administration.

VI. CONSEQUENCES

A. LETTER OF WARNING

If a violation has been verified that did not result in a substantial probability that the security, accuracy, or validity of the test results has been jeopardized, then the Office of Student Assessment may issue a letter of warning to the school district superintendent to be placed in the district and/or school file.

Multiple and/or repeated minor violations that indicate the district and/or school has not corrected issues addressed in previous letters of warning or that the district and/or school has continued to be in noncompliance with the numbered issues listed in Requirements (Section IV) may result in a recommendation for a citation to be placed on the accreditation record. (See B below.) In the case of improper student behavior supported by the data forensics company and not disproved in the district reports, the district will be asked to request the invalidation of the suspect scores. If the improper student behavior is determined to be isolated to an individual student's or to individual students' behavior and not supported or condoned by the district, the district will not receive a letter of warning. The district will be asked in an official letter by the Office of Student Assessment to put measures in place to address and prevent the possibility of such improper behavior being repeated. However, multiple administrations resulting in suspect scores may result in further investigation by the Office of Student Assessment that may lead to further consequences. (See CONSEQUENCES.)

B. CITATION PLACED ON THE ACCREDITATION RECORD WITH NO IMMEDIATE ACTION TO DOWNGRADE THE ACCREDITATION STATUS

1. Multiple Letters of Warning

Multiple and/or repeated violations as outlined in A above may result in a recommendation for a citation to be placed on the district's Accreditation Record Summary. The Office of Accreditation will note the citation of noncompliance on the district's accreditation record and notify the superintendent of this action. No immediate action to downgrade the district

accreditation status will be recommended. This citation will remain on record until the district has **successfully** completed the next scheduled administration of the same test for which the irregularity was originally verified.

The Office of Student Assessment may recommend to the Commission on School Accreditation that the school's annual performance classification include the label School in Violation of Test Security.

2. Substantial Probability That the Security, Accuracy, or Validity of the Test Results Has Been Jeopardized

If a verified violation has resulted in a substantial probability that the security, accuracy, or validity of the test results has been jeopardized, the Office of Student Assessment will issue written notification to the district superintendent. The Office of Student Assessment will note the violation on the School and/or District Assessment Record and notify the Office of Accreditation.

The Office of Accreditation will note the citation of noncompliance on the district's accreditation record and notify the superintendent of this action. No immediate action to downgrade the district accreditation status will be recommended. This citation will remain on record until the district has **successfully** completed the next scheduled administration of the **same test** for which the irregularity was originally verified. For example, if the citation is issued for the December paper/pencil Subject Area Administration of the U. S. History Test, the next scheduled administration for the same test will be the December paper/pencil Subject Area administration the following year.

The Office of Student Assessment may submit a recommendation to the Commission on School Accreditation that the school's annual performance classification include the label School in Violation of Test Security.

C. CITATION PLACED ON THE ACCREDITATION RECORD THAT MAY RESULT IN IMMEDIATE ACTION TO DOWNGRADE OF ACCREDITATION STATUS

If it is determined that a violation of a testing requirement jeopardizes the security and integrity of the test(s) or the accuracy of test results, the Office of Student Assessment will issue written notification of the violation to the superintendent of the school district and to the Office of Accreditation.

The Office of Accreditation will note the citation of noncompliance on the district's Accreditation Record Summary and notify the superintendent of this action. The citation of noncompliance will be presented to the Commission on School Accreditation for appropriate action. This citation will remain on record until the district has **successfully** completed the next scheduled administration of the **same test** for which the irregularity was originally verified. For example, if the citation is issued for the December paper/pencil Subject Area Administration of the U. S. History Test, the next scheduled administration for the same test will be the December paper/pencil Subject Area administration the following year.

The Office of Student Assessment may recommend to the Commission on School Accreditation that the school's annual performance classification include the label School in Violation of Test Security.

D. INVALIDATION OF SCORES

1. Student Retest and Score Invalidation Procedure

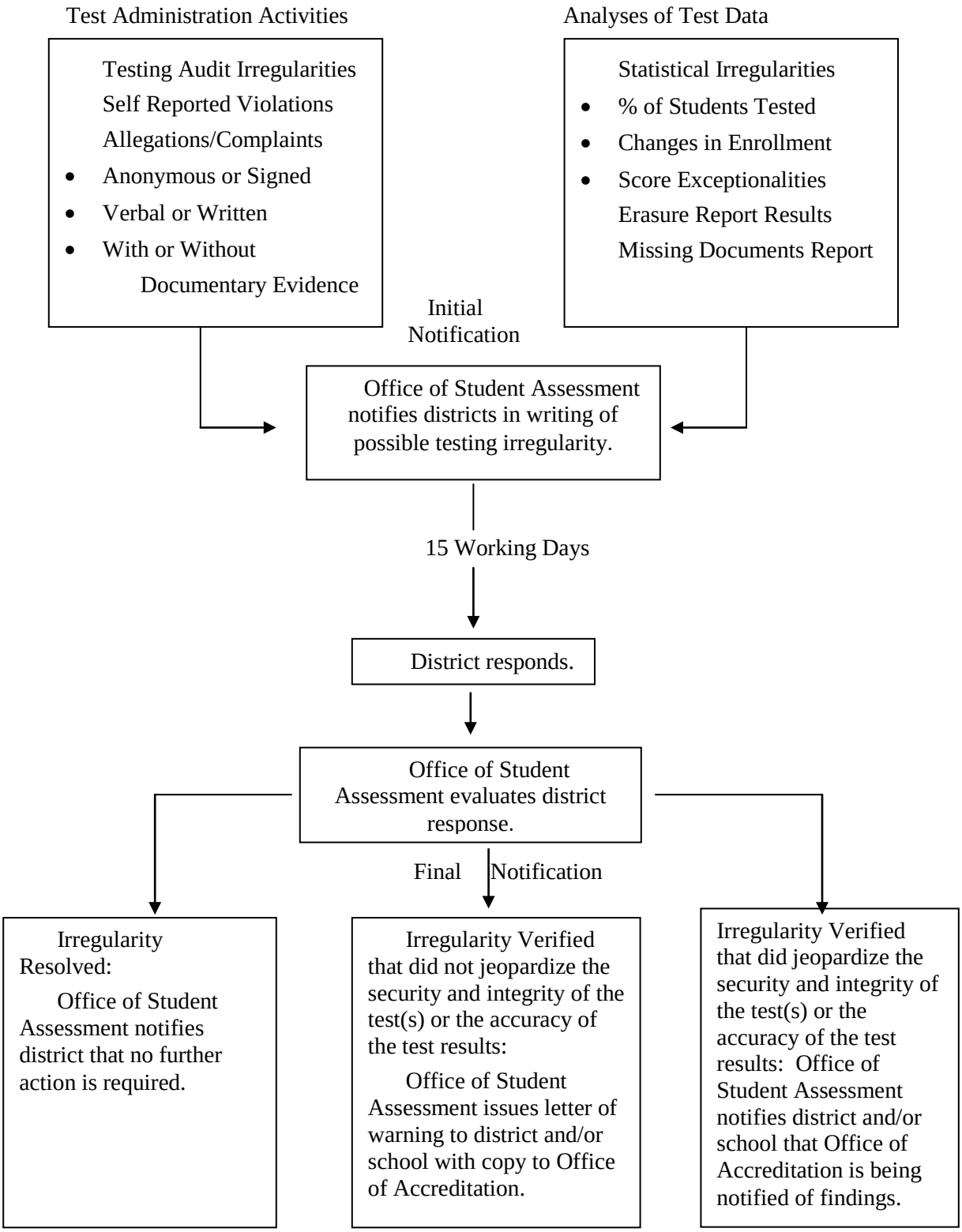
In the case of findings that reveal misconduct at the district or school level, the State Superintendent of Education may order the local school district to have students retake the examination(s) at the district's expense for all areas in question. Should the local district choose not to have students re-examined to establish validity, the State Superintendent of Education will have the authority to have affected scores invalidated. At such time, the local district will be notified.

A school will not receive a school performance classification if the test data have been invalidated, and the school performance classification will be noted as Test Data Invalidated. (See Accreditation Policy 3.3.) In the case that the Office of Student Assessment has requested the district superintendent ask for the invalidation of a student's (or students') suspect scores based upon the analyses by the data forensics company and the refusal to do so by the district superintendent, the State Superintendent will have the authority to have suspect score(s) invalidated. At such time, the local district will be notified.

2. Individual Irregularity Procedure

If there is evidence of a nature that confirms one or more individual testing irregularities on the Subject Area Tests or other tests that have high stakes consequences for individual student(s) resulting in the student or students not being able to graduate in the current school year, the individual(s) in question shall be notified in writing of the irregularity by the district superintendent and given an opportunity to provide an explanation and evidence that the questioned score(s) is/are consistent with other test scores or other academic performance. If retesting of individuals on the test is required and the retesting yields scores that would deny students a diploma or affect promotion/retention decisions after all retesting opportunities have been exhausted, affected individuals will be given an opportunity to appeal to the State Board of Education the decision to invalidate their original scores on the test. No hearing will be granted to any student who has not completed all other requirements for graduation or promotion and exhausted all retake opportunities.

Procedure for Handling Possible Testing Irregularities



The procedure for handling testing irregularities is repeated for each test administration.

MISSISSIPPI OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA
STANDARD 20.5

SENIORS OF SCHOOL YEAR 2008-2009 AND LATER
(Entering ninth graders in 2005-2006 and thereafter)

In accordance with MS Code 37-16-11(2), the State Board of Education has approved criteria for an occupational diploma for students with disabilities. The Mississippi Occupational Diploma provides an option for students with disabilities that emphasizes high expectations in both academics and work experiences that will assist students in acquiring and maintaining the necessary competencies and skills needed to secure and retain competitive employment. The primary postgraduate goal for these students is competitive employment.

- The decision regarding participation in the Mississippi Occupational Diploma program will be made by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) committee, which must include a school counselor. Instructional program and diploma options are to be reviewed annually by the IEP committee and revisions made as necessary.

- The Mississippi Occupational Diploma program may be implemented in any Least Restrictive Environment deemed appropriate by the IEP committee. Students in the occupational diploma program may earn credits by successfully completing course work selected from the general education curriculum and/or special education courses as agreed upon by the student's IEP committee.

- Students with disabilities choosing to participate in the Mississippi Occupational Diploma program must earn a minimum of 21 course credits and complete an occupational diploma portfolio containing a collection of evidence of the student's knowledge, skills and abilities.

- Students with disabilities choosing to participate in the Mississippi Occupational Diploma program must successfully complete a two year Career/Technical (Vocational) Program. In lieu of completing a two year Career/Technical (Vocational) Program, students with disabilities may document a minimum of five hundred forty (540) hours of successful, paid employment.

- Prior to graduation, an exit IEP committee meeting must be held to evaluate accomplishment of the goals and objectives on the IEP and the completion of all requirements for the Mississippi Occupational Diploma. At this meeting, the student will present the completed Mississippi Occupational Diploma Portfolio for review by the IEP committee.

- The final Mississippi Occupational Diploma Portfolio will be reviewed and approved prior to graduation by the principal or a designee.

For additional details, see the State Board of Education approved guidelines for the Mississippi Occupational Diploma at http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/special_education/pdfs/occupat_diploma.pdf.

CONSEQUENCES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE WITH FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS STANDARDS 10 and 11

The Office of Internal Accountability will evaluate each violation of financial accountability requirements and accreditation standards to determine if the violation is considered to be (1) a minor accounting or audit violation, (2) a substantial accounting or audit violation, or (3) a serious financial accountability violation. Due to the variety of possible violations of financial accountability requirements ranging from minor accounting or audit violations to serious financial accountability violations, the following consequences will be implemented for verified deficiencies with financial accountability requirements and accreditation standards.

A. LETTER OF WARNING: MINOR ACCOUNTING OR AUDIT VIOLATION

If a **minor accounting or audit violation** of financial accountability requirements has been verified, then the Office of Internal Accountability will notify the Office of Accreditation. The Office of Accreditation will issue a letter of warning to the school district and place the letter of warning in the district file. Four consecutive minor violations of the same process standard reported to the Office of Accreditation will result in a citation placed on the district's Accreditation Record Summary. (See B below.)

B. CITATION OF NONCOMPLIANCE ON RECORD WITH NO IMMEDIATE ACTION TO DOWNGRADE THE ACCREDITATION STATUS

When **four consecutive minor** accounting or audit violations of the same process standard have been verified or when a **substantial** accounting or audit violation has been verified, then the Office of Internal Accountability will notify the Office of Accreditation. A citation of noncompliance will be placed on the district's Accreditation Record Summary, and the Office of Accreditation will notify the district superintendent and school board chairperson of this action. No immediate action to downgrade the district's accreditation status will be recommended. The deficiencies will remain on record until the district has successfully demonstrated compliance with all financial accountability requirements and accreditation standards.

If the deficiencies remain on record at the time annual accreditation statuses are assigned, the district's accreditation status will be downgraded, and the district will be required to develop a corrective action plan to address the deficiencies.

C. CITATION OF NONCOMPLIANCE ON RECORD WITH A RECOMMENDATION TO IMMEDIATELY DOWNGRADE THE ACCREDITATION STATUS

Any verified violations of financial accountability requirements that are considered to be of a **serious nature** will result in a recommendation to immediately downgrade the district's accreditation status. When the Office of Internal Accountability has determined that a verified violation of financial accountability requirements is of such serious nature that immediate action is warranted, the Office of Accreditation will be notified. The Office of Accreditation will note the citation of noncompliance on the district's Accreditation Record Summary and notify the district superintendent and school board chairperson of this action. The citation of noncompliance will be presented to the Commission on School Accreditation with a recommendation to immediately downgrade the district's accreditation status.

Commission Takes Action to Immediately Downgrade the Status. If the Commission takes action to immediately downgrade the accreditation status, the district will be required to develop a corrective action plan to address the deficiencies. The deficiencies will remain on record until the district has successfully demonstrated compliance with all financial accountability requirements and accreditation standards.

Commission Does Not Take Action to Downgrade the Status. If the Commission does not take immediate action to downgrade the accreditation status, the deficiencies will remain on the district's Accreditation Record Summary until the district has successfully demonstrated compliance with all financial accountability requirements and accreditation standards. If the deficiencies remain on record at the time annual accreditation statuses are assigned, the district's accreditation status will be downgraded, and the district will be required to develop a corrective action plan to address the deficiencies.

GLOSSARY

The following definitions are established for the purpose of implementing the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards* established by the State Board of Education and authorized under Sections 37-17-1 through 13 and 37-18-1 through 7 of the *Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended.*

ACADEMIC CORE
Required course offerings in which specific skills contained in the *Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks* must be taught. Subjects in the academic core are English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign languages, and arts.

ACADEMIC YEAR
The amount of time that must be scheduled in the educational calendar and that consists of a minimum of 180 teaching days. (See *teaching day*.) Two of the 180 days may be 60% days provided that there are 198 minutes of actual instruction, and the remainder of each day is used for professional development and/or testing.

ACCELERATED COURSES
Courses designed for those students who can master the general curriculum and engage in more in-depth study of additional skills.

ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM
The entire process that holds all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, and school boards) accountable for student achievement (growth and achievement). The accountability system includes the statewide assessment system, individual student accountability standards (grade level benchmarks and graduation requirements), an accreditation model that includes a system of rewards and sanctions for both school districts and individual schools, and procedures for interventions in Schools At-Risk and schools that fail to improve over time.

ACCREDITATION RECORD SUMMARY
A continuous record maintained on each school district in the state reflecting the extent to which accreditation requirements are met and used as the basis for assigning annual accreditation statuses. The Accreditation Record Summary is updated as citations of noncompliance with requirements are added or deleted, and school district officials are notified in writing of such.

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS
The performance-based accreditation system for public schools that holds school districts accountable for process standards and individual schools accountable for performance standards (growth and achievement).

ACCREDITATION STATUS
The annual status for a school district assigned by the Commission on School Accreditation and approved by the State Board of Education based on compliance with process standards using verified accreditation data from the previous school year. The accreditation statuses are Accredited, Advised, Probation, and Withdrawn. (See Policy 2.3.)

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP)
The model or formula specified in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for determining whether schools and school districts have met annual achievement criteria.

ADMINISTRATOR
Any staff member employed by a school board who is assigned the responsibility for coordinating, directing, supervising, or otherwise administering programs, services, and/or personnel under the auspices of the program, school, or district.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP)
A program of college level courses and examinations for secondary school students administered by the College Board, 2970 Clairmont Road, Suite 250, Atlanta, Georgia 30329, Telephone (404) 636-9465. High schools providing advanced placement courses must follow guidelines published by the College Board.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL
A public elementary/secondary school that addresses needs of students that typically cannot be met in a regular school, provides nontraditional education, serves as an adjunct to a regular school, and falls outside of the categories of regular education, special education, or vocational education. Students who are placed in an alternative school will remain enrolled in the school they would normally attend if not placed in an alternative school program. Test results for students placed in an alternative school program will be reported at the school the student would normally attend. (See State Board Policy 3700.)

ALLOCATED TIME
A scheduled period of time that provides for the achievement of prescribed objectives. The schedule of allocated instructional time should be in written form showing time designated for activities during the school day, week, month, or year.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATION
See School Performance Classification.

APPEAL
An appeal made to the State Board of Education following a hearing before the Commission on School Accreditation or the Commission's representative. The appeal is on the record made before the Commission's representative or the Commission. Upon written application, the State Board of Education may consider new factual evidence.

ASSISTANT TEACHER
A school district employee assigned to assist a licensed teacher and who works under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher.

ATTENDANCE CENTER
A school in a school district that is located on one school site and has one principal administering the educational program for all the grades in the school.

BASIC SKILLS
Specific learning objectives that represent the most fundamental knowledge in the areas of reading, language arts, and mathematics.

CARNEGIE UNIT
A standard measure of high school work indicating the minimum amount of time that instruction in a subject has been provided. Awarding of one Carnegie unit indicates that a minimum of 140 hours of instruction has been provided in regular and laboratory classes over a school year; awarding of ½ Carnegie unit indicates that a minimum of 70 hours has been provided. See Accreditation Standard 19.3 for exceptions.

CLASSROOM
A school room in which student instruction takes place.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE CHILD
"Compulsory-school-age child" is a child who has attained or will attain the age of six (6) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year and who has not attained the age of seventeen (17) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year; and shall include any child who has attained or will attain the age of five (5) years on or before September 1 and has enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program. Provided, however, that the parent or guardian of any child enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program shall be allowed to disenroll the child from the program on a one-time basis, and such child shall not be deemed a compulsory-school-age child until the child attains the age of six (6) years. {MS Code 37-13-91}

CONSERVATORSHIP
A state of emergency in a district declared by the governor which gives the State Board of Education several options for action as described in MS Code 37-17-6.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN
A plan to correct deficiencies on record that shall be developed by the Mississippi Department of Education, in conjunction with the school district, when a school district is assigned an *ADVISED* or *PROBATION* accreditation status.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE
Independent study carried on through lessons and exercises that are provided to non-resident students by approved university extensions. (See *Approved Courses for Secondary Schools in Mississippi*.)

CREDIT RECOVERY
Credit recovery is defined as a course-specific, skill-based learning opportunity for students who have previously been unsuccessful in mastering content/skills required to receive course credit or earn promotion. Any LEA who provides a Credit Recovery Program shall develop and implement a Credit Recovery Program that has been adopted by the school board and that includes rules, regulations, and processes.

CRITERION-REFERENCED TEST
A test designed to reveal what a student knows, understands, or can do in relation to specific performance objectives. CRTs are used to identify student strengths and weaknesses in terms of specific knowledge or skills that are goals of the instructional program.

CURRICULUM
The course content listed in the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks.

DAYS
The number of days refers to calendar days unless otherwise specified.

DEPARTMENTALIZED CLASS
A class in which an educator teaches one or more core academic subjects to more than one group of students.

DEVELOPMENTAL COURSE
A course designed to be taught in any grade 7-12 (or any combination of grades 7-12 served within a school) which does not appear as an approved course in the current edition of *Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi* but has received approval to be taught in a school district during the developmental process. (See Appendix D.)

DEFICIENCY
The failure of a school district to comply with an accreditation requirement.

DIPLOMA
See Standard Diploma.

DIRECT INSTRUCTION
Act or process in which a teacher is actually guiding (instructing) students toward achieving specific learning objectives.

DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES
Courses utilizing telecommunications technologies including satellites, telephones, and cable-television systems to broadcast instruction from a central site to other classrooms.

DISTRICT LEVEL ACCREDITATION
The accreditation status of all public school districts based on compliance with process standards as determined annually by the Commission on School Accreditation. Annual accreditation statuses are assigned in the fall of each school year and are based on verified accreditation data from the previous school year.

DROPOUT
A student who leaves a school at any time and for any reason, except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another school.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM
Kindergarten and assistant teacher programs that comply with *Mississippi Kindergarten Guidelines*, *Mississippi Elementary School Assistant Teacher Program Regulations*, and *Mississippi Reading Improvement Program Regulations* approved by the State Board of Education and published by the Mississippi Department of Education. (See also *kindergarten* and *pre-kindergarten*.)

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION
Practices and behaviors designed to establish and implement conditions that promote student learning.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Primary, elementary, and intermediate division of the educational system within the school district comprising grades/levels K through 6 or K through 8 or any combination of such grades.

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS
Students who are required to be tested in the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System. A student may be eligible for testing based on the student's grade level enrollment in a specific course. All eligible students must be tested. (See Process Standard 22.)

ENRICHMENT PROGRAM
An academic course with defined objectives, evaluation criteria, and mastery requirements that exposes students to material or instruction that would not otherwise be part of a student's curriculum during the normal sequence of his/her educational experiences.

EVALUATION
Formal appraisal (assessment) of educational experiences, including the performance of schools, educational programs, personnel, and students. Evaluations are conducted to determine strengths and areas which need improvement and may involve the use of various measurements designed to appraise the effects of educational experiences.

EVALUATION TEAM
A trained evaluation team assigned to a School At-Risk within fifteen days after notification that the school has been designated as a School At-Risk. The evaluation team shall be independent of the school being evaluated and may include employees of the State Department of Education. The team may include retired educators who have met certain standards and have completed all necessary training.

EXIT EXAMINATIONS
Assessments required for students to graduate from high school.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
School district sponsored student activities that require administrative supervision and student involvement outside the allocated time for instruction. Student participation in extracurricular activities may be noted on the student's transcript, but academic credit may not be awarded.

EXTENDED YEAR PROGRAM
A program of instruction offered by the district after the close of the regular academic year that is designed for students who need extra time to complete course objectives/requirements.

FAILING SCHOOL
A school performance classification based on the Quality of Distribution Index (QDI) achieved by the school.

FAILING SCHOOL DISTRICT
A district that fails to meet both the absolute student achievement standards and the rate of annual growth expectation standards as set by the State Board of Education for two (2) consecutive years. A school district that has been designated as failing as defined by the State Board of Education shall also establish a community-based prekindergarten through higher education council comprised of a broad spectrum of the community and is required to publicly report progress to the community as a whole. {MS Code 37-18-5}

FRAMEWORKS
Competencies (required learning standards for all students) and objectives (learning outcomes indicating how the competencies can be fulfilled) approved by the State Board of Education.

FULL ACADEMIC YEAR
This term refers to (approximately) 70% of the instructional time from the beginning of the school year to the time students are assessed. Only students who have been enrolled in the school for full academic year (approximately 70%) are included in the accountability model.

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY SKILLS
Specific learning objectives that represent the application of basic skills to everyday life situations and that are tested through the Functional Literacy Examination.

GENERAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT (GED) OPTION

GED Option is an integral component of a high school curriculum that provides another option to obtain a high school level credential. The GED Option is targeted for a subgroup of students who have the capabilities to complete high school requirements, but for a variety of adjustment and life circumstance obstacles are behind in the credits needed to graduate with their class and are at risk of leaving school without a high school credential. The GED Option provides these students a viable second opportunity to stay in school and acquire the necessary high school level knowledge and skills to pass the GED Tests and earn a high school diploma/credential within the same time frame as their peers. {American Council on Education (ACE) Guidelines}

GRADE LEVEL PROFICIENCY STANDARD

A performance standard that establishes the percentage of students proficient in each school based on a demonstrated range of performance in relation to content as reflected in the *Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks.*

GROWTH EXPECTATION

A reasonable expectation for improved student academic achievement based on annual assessment data and using a psychometrically approved formula to track progress. The formula used to calculate the growth expectation will result in a composite score each year for each school.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

See School Guidance Counselor.

HALF-TIME

Any staff person who devotes 50% of the instructional schedule to the assigned duties.

HEARING

The process by which all controversies involving the accreditation levels of school districts are initially heard by a duly authorized representative of the Commission before whom a complete record is made. (See policy 6.0.)

HIGHLY QUALIFIED

See the *Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure*.

HIGH SCHOOL

The secondary division within the educational system of the school district comprising grades 9-12 or any combination of such grades.

HIGHEST LEVELS OF ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

A school or district with a QDI in the top two ranges of the accountability rating system will be identified as meeting the highest levels of accreditation standards.

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Employees of a school district who are professionally trained and licensed to provide instruction and services to students enrolled in the schools of the district.

INVESTIGATIVE EVALUATION (COMPLAINT AGAINST DISTRICT)

An evaluation that is conducted in a school district in response to a formal written complaint. All formal complaints made against schools or districts must be submitted to the Commission in writing and bear the signature of the individual(s) filing the complaint. The written complaint shall contain specific details concerning alleged violations. When the complaint is received, the superintendent is notified in writing of the nature of the complaint and informed that the district is subject to an unannounced audit to investigate

the allegations. If the complaint addresses an area over which the Commission has no authority, the individual filing the complaint is notified.

KINDERGARTEN
That portion of the elementary school serving children who have reached the age of five years on or before September 1.

KINDERGARTEN INSTRUCTIONAL DAY
At this level, the school day. (For specific requirements, see the current edition of *Mississippi Kindergarten Guidelines*.)

LAB-BASED SCIENCE COURSE
A science course in which at least 20% of the instructional time is required to include laboratory experiences.

LABORATORY
Room or rooms basically/appropriately equipped and used by students for the supervised study of some branch of science or the application of scientific principles.

LEARNING CENTER
An area in the kindergarten classroom that contains a collection of materials and activities to introduce, teach, reinforce, and/or enrich a skill or concept.

LEARNING CENTER ACTIVITIES
Activities housed in the kindergarten learning centers that promote student participation through developmentally appropriate instructional techniques.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Statements of what a student will know, feel, or do when a course is completed.

LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTER
A specially designed space in each school equipped for centrally housing an organized collection of materials and equipment representing a broad range of current learning media, including instructional technology. The facility contains areas for individualized study and for large and small group instruction. The facility is organized and administered to function as a learning laboratory where the use of all media is purposeful, planned, and integrated with the educational program and instructional processes of the school. Reference the current *Mississippi School Library Media Guide.*

LIBRARY RESOURCES
Includes all print materials ,non-print materials, and other current multimedia resources and technologies that meet the curriculum goals, needs, and interests of the school community.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA)
A local education agency is any one of the 152 public school districts in Mississippi.

LOWEST PERFORMANCE LEVEL OF ACCREDITATION STANDARDS
A school or district that is identified as failing after one year or identified as at-risk of failing or low performing for two consecutive years will be identified as accredited at the lowest performance levels.

MIDDLE SCHOOL
A school with any configuration of intermediate grades 4-8 whose principal may be licensed as an elementary school administrator or a secondary school administrator.

MISSION STATEMENT
A school district's statement of purpose that is used in strategic planning as the basis for educational decisions.

MISSISSIPPI STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM
A program of statewide assessment designed to improve the operation and management of public schools by providing educators, parents, students, legislators, and the general public with meaningful achievement data from the school, district, and state levels. The program consists of two components: (1) a norm-referenced achievement testing program to be administered in selected grades and (2) a criterion-referenced testing program which assesses basic skills and knowledge and application of selected high school subjects.

MISSISSIPPI OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA
The State Board of Education shall develop and issue criteria for a Mississippi Occupational Diploma for students having a disability as defined by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. See MS Code 37-16-11(2) and Appendix G.

NORM-REFERENCED TEST (NRT)
A test that provides information about the performance of examinees relative to other examinees. A norm-referenced test yields a measure of relative performance of the individual or group by comparison with the performance of other individuals or groups taking the same test.

ON-LINE COURSE
Instruction delivered via the Internet. (See *Approved Courses for Secondary Schools in Mississippi*.)

ON-SITE
Any geographical location selected by the local professional development committee for professional development activity as planned by the school district and provided during contractual time at the school district expense.

ON-SITE EVALUATIONS
On-site evaluations or investigations of a school district that the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, or the Commission on School Accreditation has the authority to call at any time. If deficiencies are found in meeting accreditation standards, the superintendent is notified in writing and given thirty (30) days from the receipt of notification to provide a written response. The report of findings is filed in the current accreditation records in the Office of Accreditation.

PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATIONS
See School Performance Classification.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS
Standards for individual schools and districts based on student achievement data using established proficiency levels and a reasonable expectation for annual growth in student achievement. Output or product standards that address selected components of the statewide testing program and other outcome measures related to the performance of a school or district.

PERSONNEL ACCREDITATION DATA REPORTING SYSTEM
School district employee information required by the Mississippi Department of Education on an annual basis. This information is transmitted electronically, reflects the daily schedule of each employee, and is used to determine district compliance with a number of accreditation standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The instructional requirements for physical education are specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework*. Elective units for graduation include participation in interscholastic athletic activities that meet the instructional requirements specified in the *Fitness through Physical Education Framework* and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association. Beginning with school year 2008-2009 (seniors of 2011-2012), ½ Carnegie unit in physical education is required for graduation.

PLANNING PERIOD

An unencumbered period of time during the teaching day or week required for each classroom teacher except vocational teachers who teach in time blocks of 50 minutes or more. (See process standard 30.)

POLICY

A statement of official intent adopted by the school board and recorded as official action in school board minutes. The school district must comply with all school board policies.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Instructional program serving children who have reached the age of four years on or before September 1.

PRINCIPAL

The individual who is responsible for the total program of a school and who holds valid and appropriate administrator certification.

PROBATION STATUS

An accreditation status assigned to a district that was assigned an Advised status the previous school year, and the district has not taken corrective actions or has not removed the process standard deficiencies that resulted in the Advised status. The district will be required to develop a corrective action plan to address the deficiencies.

PROCEDURE

A statement of processes by which policies, regulations, and standards are carried out.

PROCESS STANDARDS

Input standards that address accepted educational principles and practices believed to promote educational quality. (See Policy 2.2.)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The growth-promoting learning process that empowers stakeholders (teachers, administrators, staff, and other school personnel) to improve the educational organization.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR EDUCATORS

As part of the school improvement plan for a School At-Risk, the professional development plan that is prepared and implemented in accordance with Section 37-18-7 for those school administrators, teachers, or other employees who are identified by the evaluation team as needing improvement**.**

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Any employee of the school district whose assigned duties require state licensure.

PROFICIENCY

An established criterion level based on the demonstrated range of performance in relation to content as reflected in the *Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks*.

PUBLIC NOTICE

After a state of emergency has been declared for a school district, the public notice that the Commission on School Accreditation files at least once a week for at least three consecutive weeks in a newspaper published within the immediate or general vicinity of the affected school district in accordance with Section 37-17-6(12), *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

QUALITY OF DISTRIBUTION INDEX (QDI)

The QDI measures the distribution of student performance on state assessments around the cut points for Basic, Proficient, and Advanced performance. The formula for the QDI is QDI = %Basic + (2x% Proficient) + (3x% Advanced).

REMEDIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Programs designed to provide interventions and supports for students who have been unsuccessful in mastering content/skills.

SCALED SCORE

A transformation of the raw score to have a desired mean and standard deviation for ease of interpretation. Scaled scores provide meaningful year-to-year comparisons, but they cannot be used across subject areas or subtests. Scaled scores represent approximately equal units on a continuous scale. Therefore, a difference of 5 points between two student's scores represents the same amount of difference in performance wherever it occurs on the scale. Scaled scores can be designed to have any range and midpoint (e.g., 200 through 500, with a midpoint of 350).

SCHOOL

An institution that exists for the purpose of teaching school-aged children, that consists of one physical plant located on one school site, that includes instructional staff members and students, and that is in session each school year.

SCHOOL AT-RISK

A school level performance classification. Previously defined as priority schools. A school shall be identified as a School At-Risk and in need of assistance if the school: (a) does not meet its growth expectation and has a percentage of students functioning below grade level as designated by the State Board of Education (b) is designated as a Failing School; or (c) is designated as At-Risk of Failing or Low Performing for two (2) consecutive years.

SCHOOL BOARD

As used in this document, the policy-making body of a public school district.

SCHOOL DAY

That portion of the calendar day that includes the teaching day, intermissions, and any additional time included in the employee contract. School day defines the normal working day for employees.

SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

School guidance counselors shall provide comprehensive counseling services, including the following: academic and personal/social counseling; student assessment and assessment counseling; career and educational counseling; individual and group counseling; crisis intervention and preventive counseling; referrals to community agencies; educational consultations and collaboration with teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders; educational and career placement services; follow-up counseling services; conflict resolution; and other counseling duties or other duties as assigned by the school principal. No individual shall be employed as a school guidance counselor without a minimum of a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling, or in an emergency situation an appropriate certification as determined by the

Commission on Educator Licensure. School guidance counselors shall abide by the American School Counselor Association Code of Ethics. {MS Code 37-9-79}

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A plan that a School At-Risk is required to develop based on the findings of the evaluation team report and the results of a public meeting. The Mississippi Department of Education and evaluation team leader shall assist the school principal and other local school officials in the development of a school improvement plan. A local parents/citizens advisory council shall be established by the evaluation team at the school to provide input and guidance into the development of the school improvement plan and its evaluation. The school improvement plan shall be developed and approved by the principal of the School At-Risk, the superintendent of the local school district, the local school board, and a majority of the teachers of the school.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATION

A classification assigned to a school based on student achievement and growth. (See Policy 3.3.)

SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

The foundation document a school uses to maintain a safe and secure educational environment.

SCHOOL TERM

See Academic Year.

SCHOOL YEAR

See Academic Year.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

A school that contains any or all of grades 9 through 12 and may include grades 7 and 8.

SELF-CONTAINED CLASS

A classroom in which an educator teaches all core subjects to a group of students.

SHOW CAUSE HEARING

The hearing that the Commission on School Accreditation conducts to allow the officials of the affected district to present evidence or other reasons as to why the accredited status should not be withdrawn. This occurs before the Commission recommends to the State Board of Education that the accredited status of a district be withdrawn in accordance with Section 37-17-6(11)(a), Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended.

SPECIAL DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE

Upon meeting all applicable requirements prescribed by the district school board, students with disabilities shall be awarded a special diploma in a form prescribed by the state board. Any such student who meets all special requirements of the district school board for his exceptionality, but is unable to meet the appropriate special state minimum requirements, shall be awarded a special certificate of completion in a form prescribed by the state board. See MS Code 37-16-11.

SPECIAL SCHOOL

A school that serves students with disabilities in accordance with IDEA and applicable state statutes and regulations.

SPECIAL TEST AUDITS
Audits that include reports regarding potential testing irregularities or test security violations and audits that are regularly conducted on-site before, during, and following scheduled assessments to promote the integrity and security of the Mississippi Assessment System.

STANDARD DIPLOMA
A standard high school diploma is awarded to a student who has met all the requirements established by the local board of education and by the State Board of Education. See MS Code 37-16-7.

STANDARDS
Criteria by which school districts and schools are assessed. The two types of standards used in the performance-based accreditation system are performance and process.

STATEWIDE TESTING PROGRAM
See Mississippi Statewide Assessment System.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES
School district sponsored activities which require administrative supervision and student involvement during the teaching day. (See *teaching day*.) Student participation in extracurricular activities may be noted on the student's transcript, but academic credit may not be awarded.

STUDENT SUPPORT PERSONNEL
A professional qualified to offer student support services (e.g., psychologist, guidance counselor, social worker, psychometrist, etc.).

STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM
A program of activities designed to assist and/or complement instructional activities for all students through the following types of activities: planned counseling; consultation; student appraisal, diagnosis, and remediation; and follow-up.

SUBJECT AREA
A division or field of organized knowledge for which state curriculum guidelines have been prepared.

SUBJECT AREA TESTS
Assessments which measure content knowledge in the subject areas of Algebra I, English II, Biology I, and U. S. History from 1877.

SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM
A program of instruction offered by the district during the summer months after the close of the regular academic year. The program of instruction is designed for students who need extra time to complete course requirements and/or for students who wish to enroll in new courses/subjects.

SUPERINTENDENT
The school board employee who is responsible for administering the operations and activities of schools within the district and for implementing the decisions of the school board. The superintendent holds a valid Class AA license in school administration.

SUPERVISOR
An individual who provides direct assistance to instructional and support staff and who holds a valid Class AA license in supervision or administration.

SUPPORT STAFF

Persons employed by an educational organization to provide services to students and staff.

TEACHER

Any person employed by the school district who is required by law to obtain a teacher's license from the State Board of Education and who is assigned an instructional area of work as defined by the Mississippi Department of Education (e.g., employment in an official capacity for the purpose of imparting knowledge, skills, information, and ideas to students in an instructional setting). {MS Code 37-19-1}

TEACHING DAY

A day in which a minimum of 330 minutes of instruction and/or evaluation and/or district approved group testing is provided. Exceptions are days with fewer than 330 instructional minutes that are part of an instructional week of at least 27.5 hours.

TEST AUDITS

See Special Test Audits.

TEXTBOOK

Any medium or manual of instruction which contains a systematic presentation of the principles of a subject and which constitutes a major instructional vehicle for that subject. Whenever any book under contract is displaced by a new adoption, the board may continue to require the schools to use the recently purchased books from any previous adoption; however, such period of use shall not exceed four (4) years. {MS Code 37-43-31(2)} (Refer to the current edition of the *Textbook Administration Handbook Rules and Regulations*.)

WITHDRAWN STATUS

The status of a school district when the accreditation of the school district is withdrawn due to noncompliance with its corrective action plan or as a result of action taken by the Commission on School Accreditation. The status is listed as Withdrawn Not Accredited and the record of that district will continue to be maintained.