

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION (SB2191)  
Administrative Rules and Procedures for Implementation**

In accordance with Senate Bill 2191 passed in the 2015 legislative session and signed by the Governor, the Mississippi Board of Education adopts the following rules and procedures for implementation of Schools of Innovation under SB2191.

**I. Definitions (SB2191 lines 22-40)**

Definitions used in this policy are those as defined by SB2191.

**II. Purpose of a District or School of Innovation (SB2191 Section 2, lines 84-103, line 78)**

In accordance with SB2191 passed in the 2015 legislative session the purpose of a District or School of Innovation shall be to better prepare students for success in life and work and may include at a minimum goals and performance targets for the following:

- Reducing achievement gaps among groups of public school students by expanding learning experiences for students who are identified as academically low-achieving
- Increasing pupil learning through the implementation of high, rigorous standards for pupil performance
- Increasing participation of all students or subgroups of students in various curriculum and instructional components and instructional components to enhance student achievement
- Increasing the number of students who are college- and career-ready and reduce the number of students that exit high school in need of remediation
- Motivating students by expanding curriculum choices and learning opportunities for students

**III. Waivers and Exemptions (line 57-60 and 122-155 and 168-199)**

Innovative schools may request exemptions from regulatory areas. Section 2, of SB 2191 includes areas of innovation, which the SBE could consider for exemptions. Districts may request additional waivers if the waiver is needed to support innovative practices **and does not** violate any state or federal regulations. Districts are not allowed to request a waiver from state assessment requirements. Districts must meet the requirements of the current Mississippi Accountability Standards unless specifically described in the innovative plan and approved by the SBE. Section 2 waivers include but not limit to the following:

- Use of capital outlay for operation costs

- Allow certain exemptions in the hiring process
- Develop alternate salary schedules for extra or extended duty
- Create flexible school schedules and school year calendars
- Promote joint educational ventures between districts and educational entities
- Create nontraditional learning environments
- Use of blended instructional practices such as online learning to meet graduation requirements
- Employ creative funding strategies

The innovative school district plan must include statements assuring that the following regulatory areas shall be met.

- Ensure the same health, safety, civil rights, and disability rights requirements as are applied to all public schools
- Ensure students meet compulsory attendance requirements under Sections 37-13-91 and 37-13-92
- Ensure that high school course offerings meet or exceed the minimum required under Sections 37-16-7 and 37-3-49, for high school graduation or meet early graduation requirements that may be enacted by the Mississippi Legislature
- Ensure the student performance standards meet or exceed those adopted by the State Board of Education as required by Sections 37-3-49, 37-16-3 and 37-17-6, including compliance with the statewide assessment system specified in Chapter 16, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972
- Adhere to the same financial audits, audit procedures, and audit requirements as are applied under Section 7-7-211(e)
- Require state and criminal background checks for staff and volunteers as required of all public school employees and volunteers within the public schools and specified in Section 37-9-17
- Comply with open records and open meeting requirements under Sections 25-41-1 et seq. and 25-61-1 et seq.
- Comply with purchasing requirements and limitations under Chapter 39, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972
- Provide overall instructional time that is equivalent to or greater than that required under Sections 37-1-11 and 37-13-67, but which may include on-site instruction, distance learning, online courses, and work-based learning on nontraditional school days or hours
- Provide data to the department as deemed necessary to generate school and district reports

#### **IV. Application Plan, Approval and Amendment Process**

The approval is a collaborative process between the district and the MDE during the planning stages and prior to application. Schools seeking approval under SB2191 should do so when they require a significant number of waivers from accreditation policies or state laws that hinder the

desired innovation. By collaboration with the MDE during the planning stages, a determination can be made as to whether application for an innovative school under SB2191 is required. There are many programs that are innovative that do not require significant waivers and can be approved by the MDE in other ways.

**A. Plan Details (lines 46-50)**

- Plans are approved for 5 years. All schools approved will be monitored by MDE for progress and continued support during the 5-year term (line 46).
- Because in truly innovative models it is difficult to predict all potential scenarios where a waiver might be required and there are times that new policies are adopted by the MDE that may require a waiver for an operating innovative school, the school may request adjustments to the plan during the 5-year term as needs arise.
- Requests for renewals must be submitted no later than November 30<sup>th</sup> in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the term and renewals will be for no more than five years (line 48).
- Recommendations will be based on the ability of the innovative school to meet the goals and objectives of SB2191 and those performance measures within the approved plan for a sustained period of time.

**B. Sample Process Timeline (lines 63-65)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>MDE</b>
Year prior to opening school	Notify the Office of Chief Academic Officer of interest or intent to apply for Innovative School or District status by August 31 <sup>st</sup> .	Assign any interested district an MDE contact to work with them through the planning process.
July – Nov	Work with MDE contact and stakeholders to develop plan for the innovative school.	Provide support along the way through the Office of Secondary Education
November 30	Submit plans for schools planning to open the following year.	Review of plans by the Office of Secondary Education
Dec – Jan	Prepare district leadership and key stakeholders participate in MDE interview.	Review of plans by the Office of Secondary Education.
February		Present recommendations to the State Board of Education.

### **C. Amendments to the Plan (line 62)**

An innovative school seeking an amendment to an approved 5-year plan shall submit in writing the justification for the amendment to the Office of Secondary Education. Requests may be submitted as needed. Requests will be reviewed and approved by the MDE and a recommendation submitted to the State Board of Education for approval.

### **D. Revocation of Plan (lines 72-73)**

While the collaborative approach to implementing innovative schools under SB2191 and the monitoring support provided by the MDE during operation should minimize the need to revoke the waivers granted to an innovative school, there may come a time when an innovative model is simply not sustainable, not successful, or not meeting the purpose of SB2191. In these situations, the following procedure will apply.

- The school and district will be notified by the MDE of deficiencies and concerns related to the success and sustainability of the school. The MDE may require certain actions to take place in this notification.
- The district will have 30 days to respond and develop a plan to alleviate the issues.
- Key district leaders will appear before a MDE committee to explain how they will address the concerns. The committee may take the following actions:
- Recommend to the State Board of Education that the innovative plan be revoked and determine a process for returning the school to “regular” status with a minimum amount of academic disruption.
- Allow the district to continue in innovative status by taking all actions required by the committee. MDE shall monitor the actions as necessary.

## **V. Innovative School Plan Components**

The plan shall be organized with the following sections. For each section, address at a minimum the items listed below.

### **1. Innovative Program/Design**

- Describe the proposed program, how it differs from what the student would normally do in the current school and what makes it innovative. (lines 104-106)
- Describe the specific research based model being followed.
- Describe the vision and broad goals for the school.
- Explain how the innovative program prepares students for success in life and work, i.e., college and career ready.
- Describe where the school(s) will be and what facilities will be used.
- Identify any extracurricular, exploratory, or experiential activities planned.

2. Accountability, Effectiveness and Performance Targets

- Identify the annual student performance targets and other measures of school performance.
- Describe how the district will monitor and report interim achievement and progress during the school year to the district and MDE (line 74-75).

3. Students

- Describe the process by which students will be selected for and admitted to the program including any description of a target population.
- Describe any necessary process needed for dismissal from the innovative school.
- Describe how the program will address student achievement gaps.
- Identify the number of students to be served and the grade levels served.

4. Funding (line 76-77)

- Description of the funds sources to be used
- Address costs and plans for personnel, transportation, meals, instructional materials, technology, facilities, and professional development.
- Include a detailed 3 year budget projection

5. Staffing

- Organization plan that includes the **plan for shared leadership** with teachers in the school and qualifications required for individuals employed in the program. (line 69-71, lines 116-118)
- Evidence of professional development planned for the staff directly related to the proposed innovation that includes ongoing job-embedded support. . (line 79-81)
- Create a 3 year staffing plan

6. Stakeholders

- Evidence of stakeholder support and capacity to create the change desired in the school (line 66-68, lines 107-109)
- Identify plans for ongoing collaboration among education partners, business and industry partners, community partners and their roles in the school.
- Include documentation of any and all partner agreements, memoranda of understanding, or other legal agreements necessary for implementation of the innovative school or district.

7. Governance

- Describe the proposed governance structure planned for the school.
- Describe the district's role in school oversight, support, professional development, reporting and monitoring.
- Waivers and Exemptions (lines 110-115)
- Requests for waivers of any state or local policies, requirements or restrictions including rationale for the waiver that is connected to the proposed innovation.

8. Timeline of Activities

- Describe planning activities that have taken place to date, i.e., at time of plan submission.
- Detail all key planning activities remaining from the time of plan submission to school opening.
- Describe the continuous monitoring practices that occur throughout implementation

9. Assurances

- Include statements of assurances that the district is in compliance with the regulatory items identified in the *Waivers and Exemption* section above.