

Mississippi's Accountability Model: The Next Generation



A Report by the Mississippi Economic Council



In partnership with



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Executive Summary

Mississippi's educational progress has caught the attention of the Nation. While referred to some as the "Mississippi Miracle", in reality the increases in student success metrics are more the result of putting good policy in place over years than an overnight miracle. Policy decisions ranging from the establishment of the Early Learning Collaboratives for prekindergarten to how the teaching of reading would be conducted to requiring students to read on grade level before moving to the fourth grade can be given credit for setting the course for this remarkable growth. Equally as important have been the tens of thousands of educators responsible for the effective implementation of these policies. But there can be no question that the most critical variable in this newfound success has been adults establishing expectations that students have lived up to.

Regardless of how people refer to it, the facts speak for themselves. In the 2022-2023 school year, Mississippi saw record high graduation rates at 88.9% with Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentrators graduating at 99.5%. Mississippi leads the nation in the percentage of high school graduates that enroll in a postsecondary academic degree program. Significant improvements continue to be seen on standardized tests such as the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), with particularly growth in the 4th grade Reading test scores. The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on state tests have increased. Participation in Advance Placement (AP) courses have more than doubled while the number of students earning a qualifying score on those exams tripled. The percentage of students taking dual credit courses rose from 6.6% to 14.4% over the past 10 years. The good news is real and educators, policymakers, and most importantly students should be praised.

Mississippi's accountability model has played a major role in this decade of growth. Established in 2013, the model was originally designed to drive academic achievement and growth of student scores from one year to the next. The model aggregates student scores on tests given on three days in elementary and middle schools and four days at high schools to provide a summative grade for schools and districts on an A-F scale. While the model does not measure teacher effectiveness or individual student success, it does provide an indication of how well schools educate students in those academic subject areas tested, namely math, English, science, and in the case of high schools, U.S. History. The progress is undeniable. Local school district scores for the 2022–2023 school year show that 91% of districts earned a grade of "C" or higher compared to 62% in the 2015-2016 school year. Additionally, only 12 districts were rated either a "D" or an "F" in the 2022-2023 school year compared to 54 in the 2015-2016 school year.

Clearly, the model has fulfilled its promise to improve schools. The Mississippi Economic Council (MEC) believes that given the recent focus on workforce training with the establishment of the Office of Workforce Development, the efforts of the "Ascent to 55%" campaign to increase the number of Mississippians with career credentials, and the second lowest in the nation workforce participation rate, now is the time to begin considering the next generation of accountability model for the state. The MEC also believes that the current A-F grading system can be improved to provide parents and taxpayers with better insight into how schools are performing by using a more nuanced approach that highlights achievement at the subject level. There are no career

exploration indicator variables in the 700 point elementary and middle school model and in the 1,000 point high school model, only 50 points are available for one career indicator (ACT WorkKeys) and schools can instead opt to use the ACT test scores. The MEC believes that the accountability model should better reflect the impact on individual student outcomes by creating a greater emphasis on career exploration indicators.

As the state of Mississippi's voice for business, the MEC has developed these positions after multiple discussions were held across the state and among hundreds of diverse stakeholders throughout 2023. Several issues became evident in those conversations. For example, most attendees were confused by the A-F grading system and not clear on exactly what those grades represented. There was also concern that while Mississippi ranked first in the country for students enrolling to pursue a college diploma, the state fell to 37th for second year retention at our public universities. This academic degree default mindset has in part led to nearly 320,000 Mississippians with some college credit but no credential. There is almost no debate that students graduating from high school need postsecondary advance skill training that leads to a credential. At issue, though, is that college should be valued equally as a place to get training after high school—whether that means an academic degree course of study or a stackable, portable workforce credential. Concern was voiced from business leaders and economic developers that the average number of students graduating from high school is projected to fall from 30,000 to 23,000 in the next five years. The result of this decline must be a system that becomes more efficient by focusing on multiple student postsecondary outcomes after graduation, not just earning an academic diploma. Other topics frequently discussed included the need for soft skills such as time management and communication and the concern of emphasizing student growth over student proficiency in the model.

These public discussions have led to the following two major recommendations found in this report:

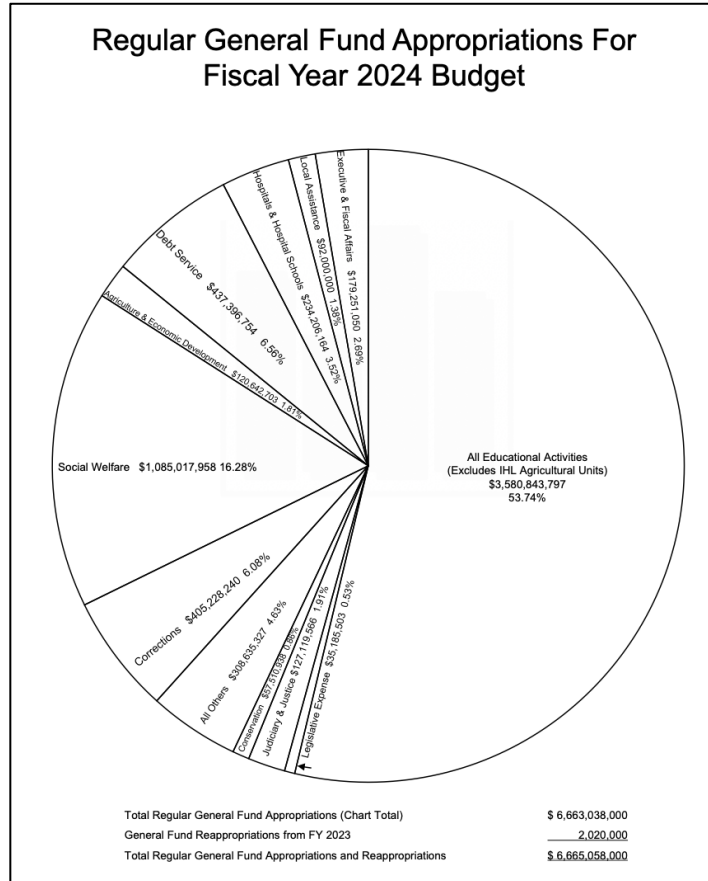
Recommendation One: *The Mississippi Legislature should modify the current A-F grading system to provide the public with greater insight into how well schools and districts are performing.*

Recommendation Two: *The Accountability Task Force should begin considering what the next generation model should look like with an emphasis on expanding career exploration indicators.*

There can be no question that educators must lead on this issue. But just as true is the fact that educators and policy decision makers must hear this call to set the course for the future. It is the desire of MEC that by providing this information to them and working together, the Mississippi education experience will continue to be miraculous.

Education Accountability as Public Policy

Why does Mississippi have an accountability model? The most direct answer is that at the state level, public education is the single largest appropriation by the Legislature each year. In the most recent Fiscal Year, the Mississippi Legislature appropriated almost 54% of the General Fund on “All Educational Activities”, or \$3.581 billion. The next highest category is “Social Welfare” and accounts for 16% of the General Fund budget or \$1.085 billion. Besides money for the state’s community colleges and public universities, the education budget includes \$2.155 billion for K-12 education funding. This portion of the budget is derived by a codified formula, known as the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP). Money from MAEP is allocated to the state’s school districts, charter schools, and special schools based generally on daily average attendance. Local property taxes contribute a little more than one-third (36%) of the total cost of K-12 education while federal funds account for an average of 15% of school districts’ budgets, twice the national average. With such a large outlay of taxpayer dollars to K-12 education, it isn’t surprising that the public is interested in the return on their investment in schools and students.

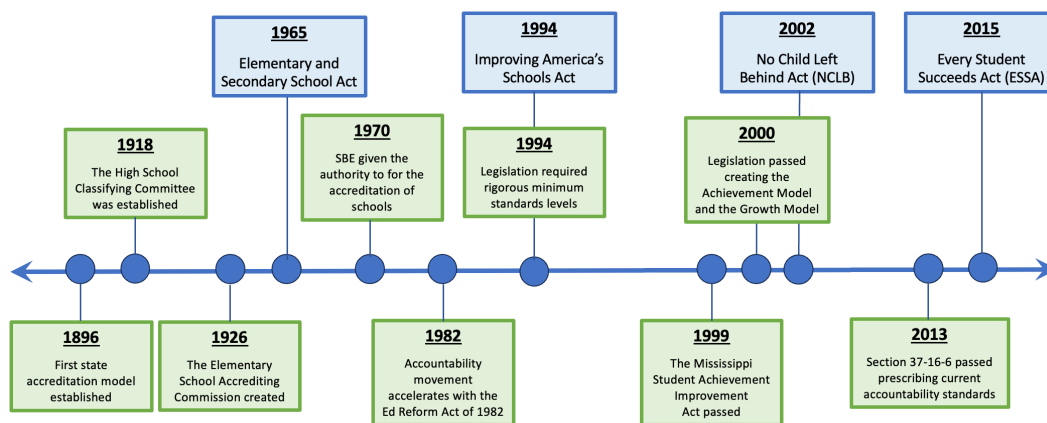


The more complicated answer is that accountability models can in theory use standardized, comparable tests to differentiate academic outcomes based on various subgroup metrics such as race, gender, and socio-economic status. Once these achievement gaps are recognized, additional resources in the form of educational strategies and money can then be directed to low performers to reduce the differences in test scores among subgroups. In order to know where to allocate these dollars, there must be some delineation between what is considered a successful school or district and one that is considered to be in need of intervention. There are many different grading methodologies including star systems, index scores, or the A-F system that is used in Mississippi. Sometimes confusion arises when the public attempts to determine what these scores mean. For example, 700 points in the state’s 1,000 point high school model are awarded based on an aggregation of student standardized scores on tests taken on four days. Another 200 points are based on graduation rates. The implications for school leaders and communities can be profound

with loss of enrollment, loss of property values, loss of economic development opportunities, and in some cases loss of employment based on these scores.

The state has had some form of school oversight models since at least 1896 when the University of Mississippi published the first academic standards for the state’s high schools. Over the past one hundred years, these models have evolved to include an emphasis on the results of academic testing and student growth at the school and district level. The federal government’s engagement in state level accountability has grown dramatically in the last 20 years. This influence resulted when the desire to highlight demographic differences converged with the increased access to data. The federal government became much more involved in accountability models with the passage of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) in 2001. Significant increases in funding were provided to states in return for increased accountability focused on subgroup academic achievement and growth while ensuring metrics like “Adequate Yearly Progress” was made each year. The NCLB act was amended in December 2015 to become the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). This federal law provided more flexibility for states including how they grade schools while remaining focused on factors like student proficiency and growth.

History of Accountability Models in Mississippi



Blue = Federal Law	Green = State Regulations or Law
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Mississippi’s Accountability Model

Every state has some form of accountability model. The components to these models are defined in state board policy, state law, and compliance with federal law through an approved state plan. As required by the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, Mississippi’s state plan is called “Mississippi Succeeds” and is based on the Mississippi State Board of Education’s six point Strategic Plan. This point is critical to understanding that certain components of accountability models are due to the fact that the federal law requires it. Examples include requiring every student to be tested in Grades 3 through 8 in the subjects of math and English Language Arts (ELA) or that all schools are to be given a grade based on their academic proficiency and student growth. Equally important

to understanding accountability model policy is the fact that states were explicitly given more flexibility to determine components in their individual state model in the ESSA law's provisions. For example, Mississippi can provide whatever manner of categorizing schools that shows "meaningful differentiation", resulting in a multitude of grading categories across the country. Mississippi by state law has used the A-F method to measure schools and districts for the past ten years but can use whatever model that meets the federal criteria.

The current version of Mississippi's accountability model has its origins in legislation passed during the 2000s. The *Children's First Act of 2009* expanded the state's growing focus on graduation and drop-out rates, on grade level reading scores, and growth and proficiency all pegged to the national average. Legislation in the 2013 session established many of the components of the state plan in the accountability model today. Specifically, Section 37-17-6 established the requirements of proficiency, growth, how to calculate graduation rates, and the A-F grading system. Later legislative sessions added additional state laws including adding ACT WorkKeys with funding into the model. Shifting priorities away from certain curriculum standards such as Common Core and the passage of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* in 2015 required additional changes to the current state model. For example, in 2018 the U.S. Department of Education required the inclusion of English Language Learners in the model which led to a change in the point distribution for schools and districts.

Just as policy questions seemed to finally be settled between the required federal mandates and state law changes, the spread of the COVID-19 virus became a global pandemic in the first quarter of 2020. The impact on education from students and parents to teachers and administrators was profound. State testing generally occurs in the last weeks of an academic year. However, the declared state of emergency required students to finish the year the best as they could from home and all accountability related tests were cancelled resulting in no accountability scores assigned to schools or districts for the 2019-2020 academic year. Local districts were given option in how to deal with the issue of attendance in the 2020-2021 academic year. Some districts chose to come back fully in person attendance while requiring masks and other social distancing measures. Others made the most of the state's recent investment in providing computers and tablets to all students and made the decision to provide education remotely. Still others used the hybrid approach giving parents the choice to keep their students at home or send them to school. For the 2020-2021 academic year, districts were required to take the state tests, but schools were not given a grade on their results. This provided a baseline indicator for future test years.

Over the next two years, the test scores for schools and districts reflected the determination of educators to increase student academic achievement by capturing growth points in the model and increasing their total scores. In the 2015-2016 school year, there were 58 districts that scored either an A or a B. By the 2022-2023 academic year, that number rose to 104 districts with those scores. There can be no doubt that these increases were due to the dedication and hard work from teachers, parents, and most importantly students. The realities of the model, though, prevent schools and districts that achieved these scores through growth being able to statistically sustain that level of growth resulting in an expected decline in scores even though students may still be making progress towards proficiency. These wide variances will ultimately work their way

out of the model, but the fact that they occurred provides a real case study of how the model can unintentionally give a greater emphasis on measuring systems than in measuring student outcomes including what they do after graduation.

Educators should be given praise for executing the model’s design to encourage high school graduates to go to college. Mississippi has for several years ranked #1 in the United States for the percentage of its high school seniors that graduate and enroll in an academic postsecondary institution that following fall (See Table 1). Unfortunately, Mississippi falls to 37th place in the country for second year retention of students at four-year public universities.

Table 1: High School Graduates College Going Rates

State	%	State	%
1. Mississippi	80%	26. Kansas	62%
2. Connecticut	78%	27. Pennsylvania	62%
3. Massachusetts	74%	28. Illinois	62%
4. New Jersey	74%	29. Hawaii	61%
5. New York	72%	30. Indiana	61%
6. Delaware	71%	31. New Hampshire	61%
7. Rhode Island	70%	32. North Dakota	61%
8. South Dakota	69%	33. New Mexico	61%
9. Virginia	69%	34. Missouri	59%
10. South Carolina	69%	35. Maine	59%
11. Louisiana	69%	36. Wisconsin	58%
12. Tennessee	69%	37. Nevada	58%
13. Minnesota	68%	38. Colorado	58%
14. California	66%	39. Texas	58%
15. Iowa	66%	40. Oklahoma	57%
16. Alabama	66%	41. Wyoming	56%
17. Maryland	65%	42. Oregon	56%
18. Georgia	65%	43. Vermont	55%
19. Michigan	65%	44. West Virginia	55%
20. Florida	65%	45. Montana	54%
21. Kentucky	64%	46. Washington	53%
<i>Nation</i>	<i>64%</i>	47. Arizona	50%
22. North Carolina	63%	48. Utah	47%
23. Ohio	63%	49. Idaho	44%
24. Arkansas	63%	50. Alaska	41%
25. Nebraska	63%		

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2018)

Mississippi has an open enrollment policy for its public postsecondary education institutions and while much more can be done regarding access to financial aid, a student could get a grant or a loan, making accessibility fairly easy. A major factor in students not returning to college to finish their academic degree is that many choose to enter the workforce. This has resulted in nearly 320,000 Mississippians having some college credit but no degree or other credential. That is equivalent to over 10 years of high school graduates in the state.

The current Mississippi accountability model was initially established by law in 2013. It is designed to measure schools and districts through several indicators with points awarded based on each school’s student body performance. Generally speaking, elementary schools and middle schools use a 700 point system while high schools and districts are scored using a 1,000 point system. Federal law also requires that schools receive some form of a grade under the “Meaningful Differentiation” statute but leaves the grading classification system up to states. The rationale for this policy is to be able to determine if schools need additional support and to what degree. State law defines how schools will be graded in Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6 (5)(c), which requires schools and districts to “be measured using an A-F grading scale”. Additionally, Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6 (5)(x), requires that the cut scores between letter grades are to be recalculated once 65% of the schools and/or districts have earned a letter grade of “B” or higher, a major achievement that occurred in the 2022-2023 school year.

Determining what is the difference between an A, B, C, D, or F is based in part on distributive statistics and partly on balancing high expectations of schools and districts while recognizing what achievement levels looked like at the time the cut scores were set. The current cut scores between letter grades were set by the State Board of Education in 2017 using percentiles found in the “Public Schools Accountability Standards” manual. Table 2 below shows the current cut scores with percentiles for districts, the 700 point model used for elementary and middle schools, and the 1,000 point model used for high schools.

Table 2: Letter Grades, Percentiles, and Cut Scores

Grade Percentiles	Districts 1,000 Points	Elementary and Middle 700 Points	High Schools 1,000 Points
A ≥ 90th	668	442	754
63rd ≤ B < 90th	599	377	648
38th ≤ C < 63rd	536	328	584
14th ≤ D < 38th	489	269	510
F < 14th	< 489	< 269	< 510

Source: Mississippi Statewide Accountability System: Business Rules (p. 30)

Students earn points for their schools by how well they do on certain tests that measure their aptitude on the state’s Mississippi College and Career Readiness curriculum. In elementary and middle school, all students in Grades 3-8 are tested in math and English Language Arts (ELA) and tested in science beginning in 5th grade. Mississippi high schoolers are tested at least once in the

subjects of Algebra I, English II, Biology I, and U.S. History. These tests are part of the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) and provide both scale scores and a performance level using Minimal, Basic, Pass, Proficient, and Advanced ratings. Points are awarded on all state tests in a category called “Proficiency”, which represents the percentage of students that score Proficient or Advanced on a MAAP test. Students can also earn points in a category called “Growth” on some of the required state tests. Included in this category are two sub-indicators. The first one is for the percentage of students making adequate progress on state tests from one year to the next. The second one is for the percentage of growth from year to year of the lowest 25% of student performance. Schools with English language learners, defined generally as students whose primary language is not English, must also be included in that school’s accountability model based as required by the *Every Student Succeeds Act*.

700 Point Elementary and Middle School Model

Elementary and middle schools earn an A, B, C, D, or F based on the 700 point model. Up to 300 points can be earned based on the number of students scoring at “Proficiency” or “Advanced” on the English Language Arts (ELA), math, or science tests as part of the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP). The other 400 points available to schools are based on two Growth components on the English Language Arts and math tests (i.e., not in science). Schools with a certain number of English Language Learners (ELL) have accountability models that include a variable worth 35 points that is meant to measure their progress towards proficiency in English. This grading framework is represented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: 700 Point Model Totals

Category	Point Totals	ELL Point Totals ¹
English Language Arts (ELA)		
Proficiency	100 points	95 points
Growth All Students	100 points	95 points
Growth Lowest 25%	100 points	95 points
Math		
Proficiency	100 points	95 points
Growth All Students	100 points	95 points
Growth Lowest 25%	100 points	95 points
Science		
Proficiency	100 points	95 points
English Language Learners		
Progress Towards Proficiency	NA	35 points
TOTAL	700 points	700 points

¹ Schools with at least 10 students whose first language is not English must use this version of the model.

For a 700 point school to receive an “A” rating, it must have scored between 442 and 700 and to receive a “B”, their score would need to have been between 377 and 441. In the 2016-2017 school

year, there were 238 schools out of 639, or 37% of all 700 point schools that had either an A or B rating. Whereas in the 2022-2023 school year, that number almost doubled with 440 elementary or middle schools out of 633, or 70% of all 700 point schools had either an A or B rating.

1,000 Point High School Model

The 1,000 point system is used to grade high schools in Mississippi. Similar to the 700 point model, Proficiency and Growth are measured for math and ELA, specifically Algebra I and English II. High school students also take Biology I and U.S. History as part of the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP), but only Proficiency or Advanced is calculated in the model. A total of 700 out of 1,000 points for a school can be earned through these four MAAP assessments taken on four days towards the end of the school year. It should also be noted that the U.S. History test is not required by federal policy or state law. This grading framework is represented in Table 4.

Table 4: 1,000 Point Model Totals

Category	Point Totals	ELL Point Totals ¹
ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS		
<i>English II</i>		
Proficiency	100 points	95 points
Growth All Students	100 points	95 points
Growth Lowest 25%	100 Points	95 points
<i>Algebra I</i>		
Proficiency	100 points	95 points
Growth All Students	100 points	95 points
Growth Lowest 25%	100 Points	95 points
<i>Other Subjects</i>		
Biology I Proficiency	50 points	47.5 points
U.S. History Proficiency	50 points	47.5 points
GRADUATION RATE		
4 Year Cohort Rate	200 points	190 points
ACCELERATION		
Performance	25 points	23.75 points
Participation	25 points	23.75 points
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS		
ACT Performance or ACT WorkKeys	50 points	47.5 points
<i>English Language Learners</i>		
Progress Towards Proficiency	NA	50 points
TOTAL	1,000 points	1,000 points

¹ Schools with at least 10 students whose first language is not English must use this version of the model.

The high school model also provides the opportunity for students to earn points in addition to the MAAP tests that are not available to elementary or middle school students. These include the high school’s four year graduation rate worth 200 of 1,000 points. A category called “Acceleration” which provides a maximum of 50 out of 1,000 points and measures both participation and performance for students taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses, Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment, International Baccalaureate, or Industry Recognized Certifications. Lastly, high school students can earn up to 50 out of 1,000 points by achieving certain benchmark scores on either the ACT or the ACT WorkKeys test in a category called “College and Career Readiness”. Similar to the 700 point model, high schools with a certain amount of English Language Learners have accountability models that include a variable worth 50 points that is meant to measure their progress towards proficiency in English.

For a 1,000 point school to receive an “A” rating, it must have scored between 754 and 1,000. To receive a “B”, their score would need to have been between 648 and 753. In the 2016-2017 school year, there were 137 high schools out of 241, or 57% of all 1,000 point schools that had either an A or B rating. Whereas in the 2022-2023 school year, that number almost doubled with 200 high schools out of 234, or 86% of all 1,000 point schools had either an A or B rating.

1,000 Point District Model

To arrive at a district’s grade, Proficiency and Growth scores on the MAAP tests from both the 700 and 1,000 point models and the Acceleration and College and Career Readiness indicators from high schools are compiled to provide a district their total score and assigned letter grade on the 1,000 point spectrum. A district must score between 668 and 1,000 for an “A” and between 599 and 667 to earn a “B”. A district would earn a “D” rating for a score between 489 and 535 and an “F” would mean the district score was 488 or less. In the 2015-2016 school year there were 58 out of 143 districts with an “A” or a “B” (41%) and 45 districts out of 143 (32%) that were a “D” or an F”. In the 2022-2023 school year there were 104 out of 146 districts with an “A” or a “B” (71%) and 12 districts out of 146 (4%) that were a “D” or an F”. Table 5 shows district grade distribution since the 2015-2016 school year.

Table 5: Mississippi District Grade Distribution: SY 2015-16 through SY 2022-23

Grade	SY 2015-16	SY 2016-17	SY 2017-18	SY 2018-19	SY 2021-22¹	SY 2022-23
A	14	15	18	31	45	57
B	39	43	42	35	36	47
C	36	43	38	35	46	29
D	35	36	28	23	12	6
F	19	9	23	19	5	6

¹ The MAAP tests were not given in SY 2019-2020. The tests were given in 2020-2021 but grades were not assigned.

Why MEC is Engaging on this Issue Now

The Mississippi Economic Council (MEC) is the State Chamber of Commerce and has been the voice of Mississippi business since 1949. Historically, the MEC has led on broad issues that impact businesses through its Advocacy, Research, Resources and Leadership mission. Its vision statement is to serve as the essential organization for Mississippi businesses to cultivate job creation and economic growth. Through its 75 year history, the voice of Mississippi's business community has frequently been heard on a wide variety of issues ranging from transportation infrastructure to early childhood education. One frequently heard issue is the need to provide a pipeline of workers with postsecondary advanced skill attainment with either career credentials, an associate degree, a bachelor's degree, and above. Existing businesses require a dependable workforce pipeline to grow and it is essential for local, regional, and state economic developers to attract new companies to Mississippi.

Mississippi has enjoyed recent economic success. Not only does Mississippi have record low unemployment, but it has also had huge economic development project wins recently. In October 2023, Steel Dynamics, what was then state's largest economic development project in history representing a \$2.5 billion investment, began hiring approximately 1,000 workers. In January of 2024, Amazon Web Services announced a \$10 billion project coming to the state. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Mississippians per capita income rose by \$8,700 since 2019. While there is much economic progress to be celebrated, Mississippi still has unrealized potential. For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the state's civilian labor participation rate, defined as the number of people that are either working or actively looking for work, is 53% compared to a national average of 63%. Additionally, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, there are 320,000 Mississippians, or about 11% of the state's total population, that have some college credit but no credential. This data point tracks with the college participation and retention data. The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) report that Mississippi leads the country in the percentage of high school seniors that graduate and attend a postsecondary academic institution that fall. However, that ranking falls to 37th for four year public university retention in the second year. This economic drag is exacerbated by higher than average student loan default rates. It should be noted that students going to one of the state's 15 community colleges have much higher retention rates dropping only to 7th place for retention rates.

MEC is engaging in discussions to position the accountability model for the future because as the voice for Mississippi's business community, it has a responsibility to ensure education systems and workforce systems are coordinated to support a health economic environment in the state. There are also many converging factors, both positive and negative, that policymakers across the board should be engaged in. Specifically, the recent executive and legislative emphasis on workforce training provides an enormous opportunity in which Mississippi's public education system can systemically connect. Secondly, the Ascent to 55% program, which is focused on providing a strategic plan to increase the number of citizens with postsecondary credentials from 48.5% to 55% by 2030, will only be successful with the help of educators. The less positive metrics that are becoming increasingly in focus include the state's low labor participation rate and the

declining public school enrollment and concurrent decrease in high school graduates. More insights into these issues are provided in this report.

Accelerate MS and Ascent to 55%

During its regional and state level gatherings, such as MEC’s Capitol Day, HobNob MS, and Annual Meetings, it has become clear from various stakeholder groups that for Mississippi to realize its full economic potential, the education and workforce systems must work together. There is no doubt that the state’s education system is already well connected to the postsecondary academic programs in the state. This is clearly evidenced in the fact that Mississippi leads the country in the percentage of high school seniors that graduate and enroll in a postsecondary academic course of study that following fall. Unfortunately, that ranking drops to 37th for four year public university retention. This promotion of only the academic option, while admirable in its success, has led to nearly 320,000 citizens with some college credit but no credential. By equally promoting career exploration, including the military, education outcomes will be more aligned with what is required for jobs in the state. This should not be construed as necessarily starting in the workforce immediately after graduation but rather as encouraging students to attend college to not only pursue academic degrees but also equally promote career credentials as an option for students.



The emphasis on workforce development has been a major driving force of recent state government policy. In 2020, the Legislature created the Office of Workforce Development, branded as Accelerate MS in 2021. This office was established to coordinate workforce strategies across multiple agencies and public policy issues. Its focus is on increasing the number of workers with advance skill training leading to better and higher paying jobs. Success leads to a better economic future not only for the state but for the citizens it serves. To achieve this, Accelerate MS focuses resources to support the growth of jobs in targeted sectors including but not limited to energy, healthcare, and IT. This work in turns supports the Mississippi’s local, regional, and state level economic development activities. Site selectors and corporate teams want to know that there will be a qualified workforce when choosing where to establish or expand their business.

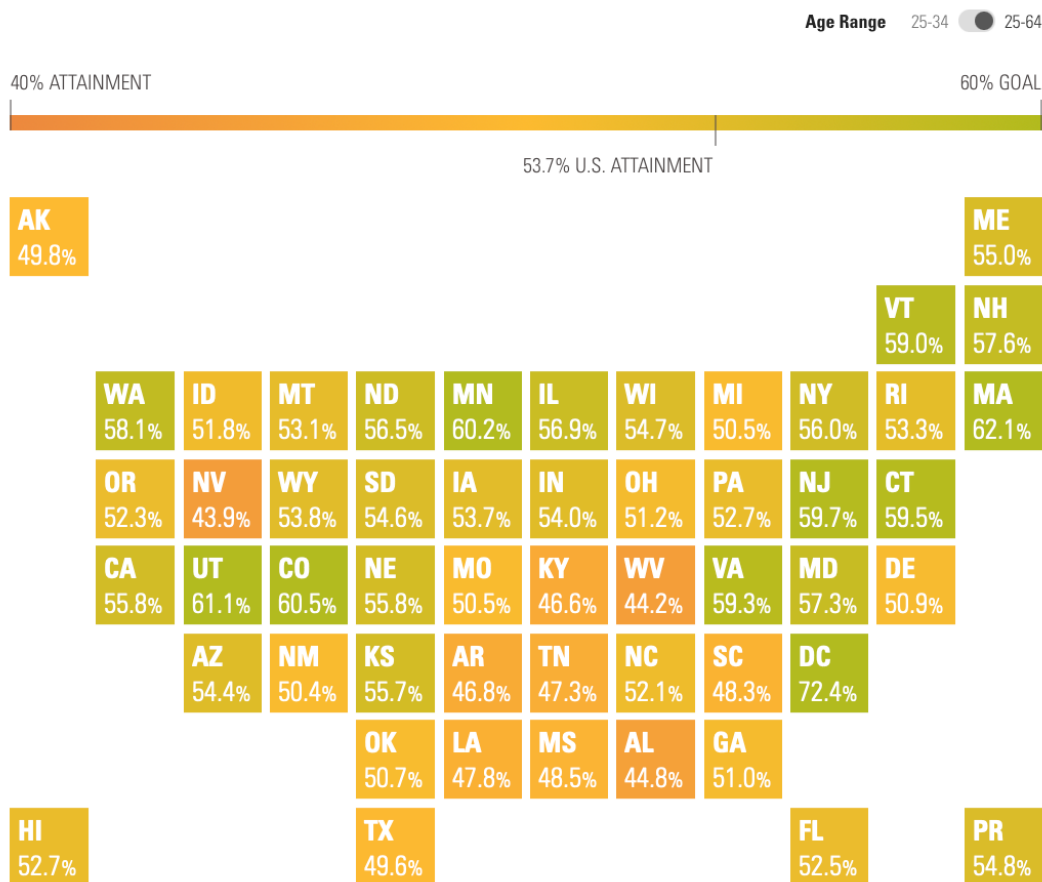
In addition to Accelerate MS, other components of Mississippi’s education and workforce systems have focused their policies to support the growth of a high skilled, high wage job environment in the state. The clearest example of this is the recent establishment of a postsecondary attainment goal by the Education Achievement Council (EAC). This organization was established by the Mississippi Legislature in 2010 to sustain attention to the state's goal of increasing the educational attainment and skill levels of the state's working-age population benchmark to the national average. The legislation provided that the Council be comprised of



of

members representing Members of the Legislature, heads of various state agencies, and K12 to postsecondary educational leadership. In October 2020 the EAC adopted a resolution to increase the number of Mississippians with advanced skill training beyond high school from the current rate of 48.5% to 55% by 2030 and 60% by 2035.

Table 6: Postsecondary Credential Rates by State



Source: Lumina Foundation’s “A Stronger Nation”

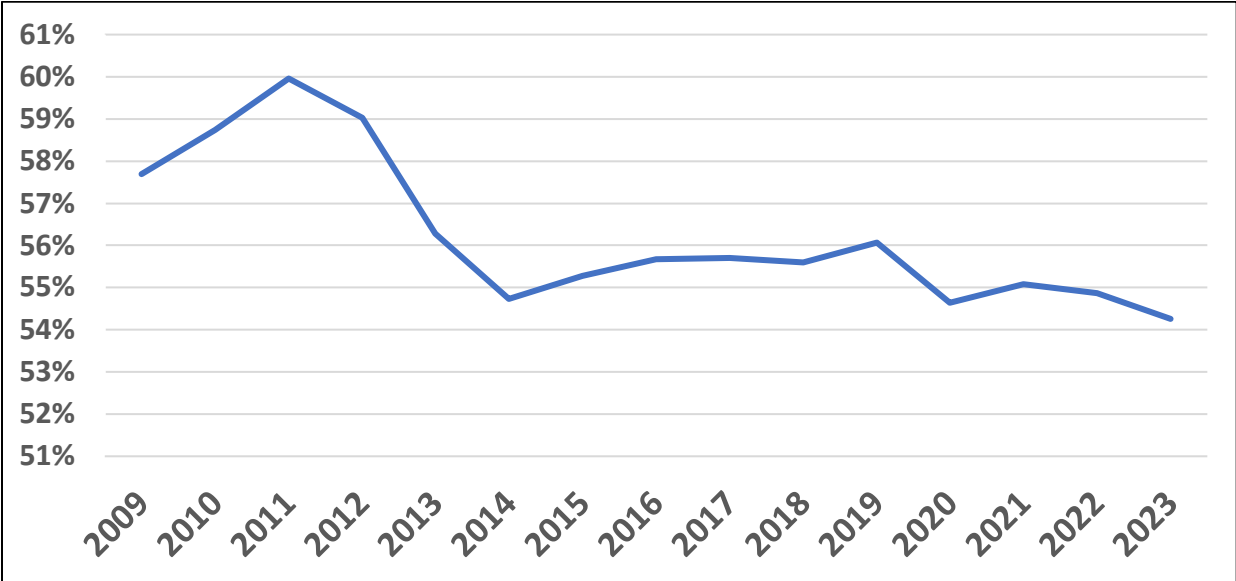
A 9% increase in attainment rate to meet the national average would mean a nearly additional \$200 million in increased tax revenue. A focused effort to increase in the number of workers with some advance skills training after high school would also help address the college retention rate for the state. While Mississippi leads the nation in college going rates, that ranking drops to 37th after the first year for four year college students and to a less precipitous decline in rankings to 7th for two year college students. Having a better plan to promote career credentials and connect students with training and education that lead to occupations that make more sense for them will also address the state’s high loan default rate as well as reengage the nearly 12% of the state’s population that have some college credit but no credential.

The work of the EAC led to the establishment of the Ascent to 55% plan which contains specific strategies to move Mississippi from 48.5% postsecondary degree attainment rate to 55% by 2030 and 60% by 2035. The Mississippi Economic Council’s Propel Education Forum (PEF, formerly the Public Education Forum) received a grant from the Jackson-based Woodward Hines Foundation to develop and execute recommendations to achieve this goal. The PEF accomplished this by hosting ongoing statewide listening sessions throughout 2022 and 2023 to gather diverse stakeholder input. The focus of the plan’s recommendations is on five themes, called the 5 As. They are Alignment, Accessibility, Affordability, Awareness, and Accountability. This work will not be successful without the support and leadership of educators and education policy makers.

Labor Participation Rate

A major topic of public concern being discussed at the highest levels of state government is Mississippi’s current Labor Participation Rate. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, this metric measures the percentage of the civilian population 16 years and older that is working or is actively looking for work and are not institutionalized in a facility such as a prison or nursing home. This is a different economic statistic that the unemployment rate which measures the percentage of people who are actively looking for work but not employed. While the state’s unemployment rate has been at historic lows around 3%, the national average Labor Participation Rate is 62% and the Mississippi’s average is 53.8%. Factors such as a high percentage of retirees and those citizens with disability contribute to this number. Another major contributing factor is the number of citizens with postsecondary attainment. It is vital that the state’s public education system connect with the state’s workforce system to support a solution to this issue. Lower workforce participation means less tax revenue to pay for government services like education. Table 7 shows the state’s Labor Participation Rate over time.

Table 7: Labor Participation Rates in Mississippi (2009-2021)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Decreasing Enrollment

Another major concern of the business community is the significant decrease in the number of students enrolled in Mississippi's public schools. Since the 2012-2013 school year, total enrollment has fallen from 493,650 to 440,285 students, a decline of 53,365 or 11%. The most precipitous decline occurred in the COVID-19 years between 2019 and 2022 when nearly 30,000 students left the public school system. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, homeschoolers increase from 4% of the school age population to 15%. Table 8 shows this enrollment trend over the past 10 years.

Table 8: Total K12 Student Enrollment (2013 to 2023)

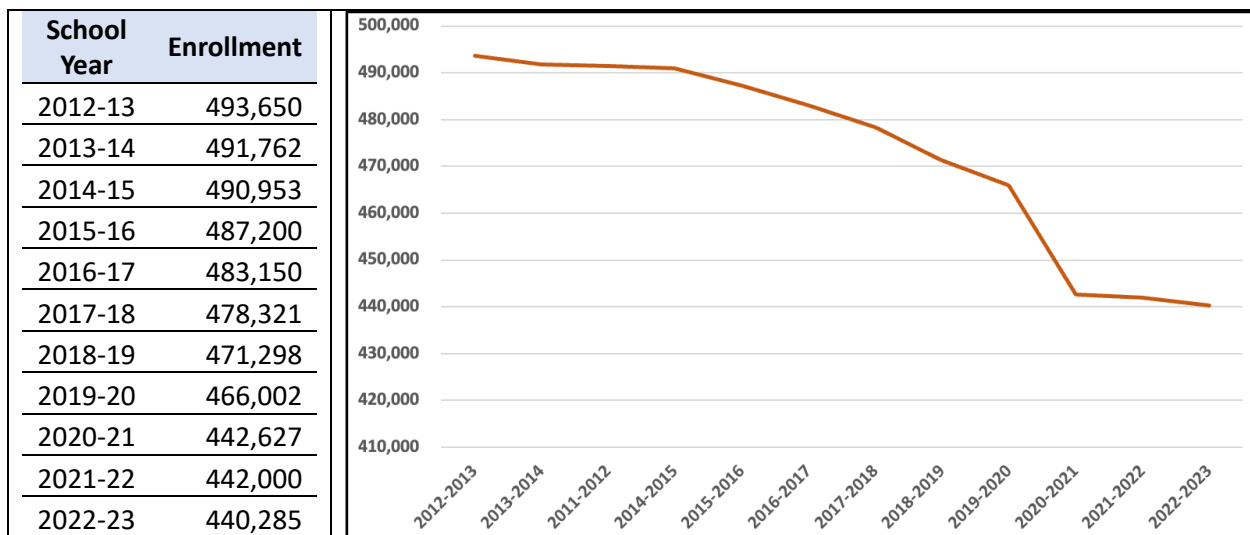


Table 9: Differences in Grade K-12 (2013 to 2022)

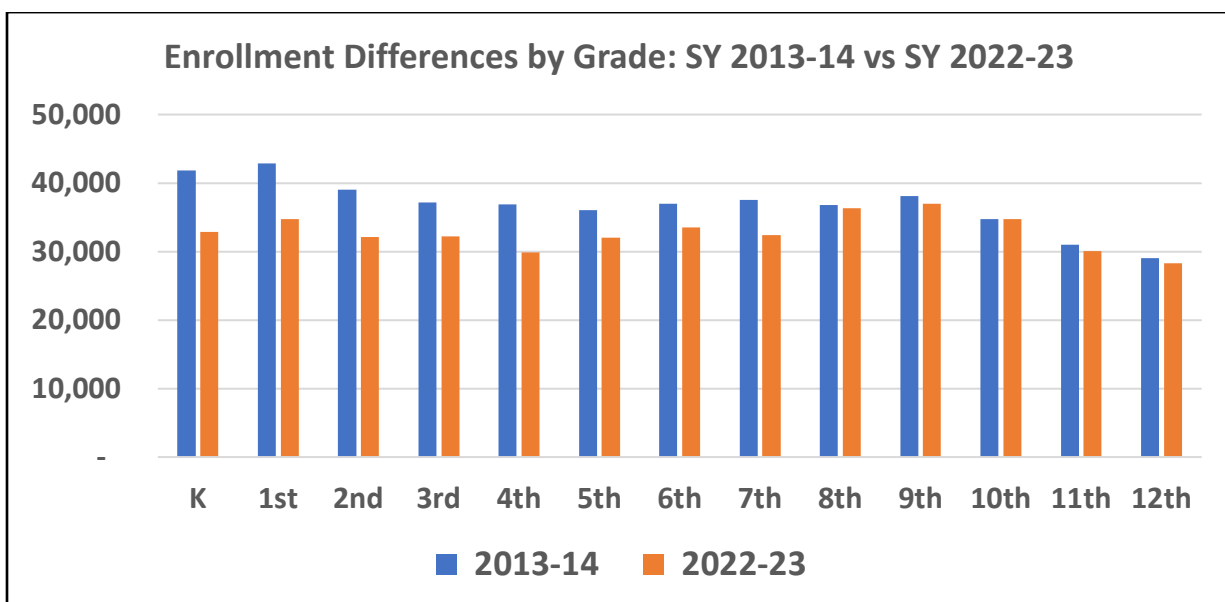


Table 9 above shows the differences between grades in 2013 and 2023. When comparisons are made over time by grade, this decline becomes more pronounced in earlier grades. For example, there were 8,907 fewer Kindergarteners and 5,133 fewer 7th graders in 2022 compared to 2013. This is compared to 1,023 fewer 11th graders and 713 fewer 12th graders during the same years. This means that by enrollment decline will start to be felt in earnest starting by the Class of 2028. Mississippi typically graduates a little less than 30,000 seniors each year. That number will be closer to 24,000 in 2028 and will go down from there. While this will create multiple challenges for schools, it is a serious threat to the state’s workforce outlook. Simply put, Mississippi will need to do more with less. Tables 8 and 9 shows the year to year decline and the decline by grade.

MEC Working Group Statewide Tour Findings

After hearing from business leaders, economic developers, community advocates, and other policymakers, MEC conducted several listening tours across the state throughout 2023. Multiple working group sessions to collect feedback on the development of a statewide K12 school accountability model. A qualitative analysis of MEC’s notes from those sessions was conducted. This summary begins with a brief overview of the current system and then expands on five themes from the working group sessions as reflected in the notes. Partnering with Accelerate MS’s Career Coaches and Ecosystem Coordinators, MEC visited seven locations between September and October. In December, additional working groups were held through the metro Jackson area.

LOCATION	DATE
Tupelo	September 12
Senatobia	September 13
Cleveland	October 3
Hattiesburg	October 4
Meridian	October 5
Jackson	October 10
Biloxi	October 12

Summary of Working Group Sessions

The following is a summary of MEC’s 2023 working group sessions on a new K12 school accountability model for the state of Mississippi. Thirty separate session documents were analyzed using ATLAS.ti Web (version 23.3.4). The working groups addressed the following six questions:

1. *Thinking as a taxpayer, what should Mississippi’s accountability model measure?*
2. *Since 2013, Mississippi has used the A-F system to rate schools and districts. The USDE requires “meaningful differentiation” but leaves how to define this up to states. What are your thoughts about the state’s use of the A-F system to grade districts and schools?*
3. *What could be changed in the current accountability model to incentivize schools to prepare students to be both college and career-ready after high school?*
4. *What does the term “College and Career Ready Student” imply to you?*
5. *What components of the elementary and middle school model (700 points) would you change (if any) and why?*

6. *What should be improved in the school report cards to enable users to understand the strengths and successes in addition to flagging areas for growth?*

In the first question, working group participants were asked to identify measures for the accountability model from the viewpoint of a taxpayer. A significant number of the resulting suggestions are already incorporated into the existing accountability system. College and career readiness was mentioned most often. Of these suggestions, nearly a third focused on general career and workforce readiness, while approximately 20 percent named CTE course taking/certification, and relatively fewer specified ACT and/or ACT WorkKeys.

One suggestion involved using current career readiness measures more similarly to other indicators in the system. For example, one participant suggested considering career readiness in a way that mirrors the system's approach to bottom growth of math and reading:

"If you want incentives, look at your bottom 25% in career readiness and possibly that could be an incentive."

Participants mentioned using the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery as a measure of students' post-K12 readiness. However, the next most frequently suggested elements to measure were holistic wellness indicators such as mastery of "soft skills," school climate, safety, student engagement, and student mental health. One participant shared:

"... measure if we are producing good citizens and equipping them with the soft skills needed for the workforce."

Other suggested indicators to measure included student growth, educator effectiveness and retention, and participation in physical education, arts, and extracurricular activities.

Another topic each working group focused on was the current accountability system's use of the A–F grading system to differentiate schools and districts by performance. While some commented on the familiarity with the A-F model as used on common report cards, many responses described the system as confusing and unclear. These negative responses focused on the lack of transparency in how a specific rating is achieved. Others called out a lack of public understanding of what a particular level "means" for a school.

"It doesn't matter what we call or label descriptors if people don't understand what each level means."

"The community at large doesn't really understand the model or what those letters are ... They don't realize how close a district can be between an A and B. It can be a 10th of a point but the letter is all they see. The current model does not indicate an actual difference between them—it is too broad."

Participants also indicated that negative perceptions resulting from a low grade can impact the community economically as it may prevent businesses and/or individuals from moving to the area. Two unintended consequences of the A–F grading system emerged. The first was that the system creates a negative stigma for schools with low ratings.

"The A–F system puts a negative light and gives a bad perception of the school/district."

"When you hear D or F, the assumption is that there is nothing going good in the school."

A second unintended consequence of the A–F grading system is an unnecessary sense of competition among schools.

"... A–F way of rankings makes us very divisive. Across the state instead of working together to benefit Mississippi as a whole, it puts us in a competitive mindset where it is divisive."

Participants also indicated that this sense of competition incentivizes focusing on variables that yield the most points rather than on the needs of individual students. This in turn can create a perception among parents that their children are being “manipulated for points.” The most mentioned issue in responses about the A–F grading system was related to the lack of specificity in a stand-alone letter score. In addition to the perceived negative connotation of an “F,” respondents said that the grading system alone does not communicate areas of strength or potential improvement for schools. Participants shared:

"All you see is a score, but you have no idea what it means."

"There is a mixed feeling about the A–F model, it does not always account for other growth outside of academics."

"There are great things happening within the district that the A–F model does not capture. "

"There always has to be motivation to improve and there always has to be something to designate ... It is more about educating your community as to what goes in there ... They need to see what makes up those 'grades' because right now they see that and just assume a state test."

Respondents were then asked two questions related to college and career readiness. The first was what the term “college and career readiness” meant. Respondents defined college and career readiness as a state in which a student is fully prepared for their preferred next step after high school. This sentiment is captured succinctly in the following response:

"[College and career ready is] when a student graduates K12, the student is prepared academically and socially to meet the requirements for their future [colleges, the work force, etc.] Students are also prepared each year to advance to the next grade."

Another question related to college and career readiness asked what could be changed in the current accountability model to incentivize schools to prepare students to be ready for both college and careers after high school. Three clear ideas about this topic emerged.

First, and the most prominent aspect of responses to this question, related to the reallocation of accountability system points to weigh measures related to career readiness, such as ACT WorkKeys and certifications, more highly. Respondents overwhelmingly pointed to the imbalance in points between career- and college-readiness measures.

"At the high school level, there are only 50 points out of 1,000 that are set aside for college or career readiness: ACT or ACT WorkKeys."

Participants also expressed support for expanding the model's indicators to include internships, apprenticeships, and the GED.

A second aspect of suggested changes to the accountability model involved the measurement of non-academic skills. Respondents noted that such skills are often hard to measure, but that being ready for college and career involves more than just academics. This overlaps to some extent with the suggested definitions of college and career readiness discussed above—as in the factors listed below:

"... student is present with solid attendance, active in the school and community, able to manage their time effectively and efficiently, and succeeding in life, whatever that looks like. One can measure a 'College and Career Ready Student' by their responsibility."

Finally, responses coalesced around supporting schools in better aligning processes and activities related to learning content standards to the needs of local industry and careers. Respondents mentioned that such alignment would facilitate student engagement and help students to be better prepared for potential careers once they leave high school.

Participants were then asked a question about potential changes to the elementary and middle school accountability model. Responses focused on three key aspects—integrating career readiness indicators, expanding accountability indicators outside of reading and math, and shifting the model's focus from growth to proficiency.

Discussion of the integration of career readiness measures centered on the middle school level. In the current model, this change would require the separation of report card categories for middle and high school. Participants indicated a desire to support middle schools in assessing

skills such as money management, budgeting, computer science, and completion of keystone projects.

“All middle schools have four areas to focus on—no room for college and career points.”

“Measure other areas in addition to academics. Parental involvement, student behavior, performance-based subjects, attendance, include science just as much as math and English Language Arts; all state testing should be included in the model—KRA and 3rd grade reading assessment.”

Several responses focused on expanding the number of indicators outside of reading and math. Various participants recommended adding physical education, music, kindergarten readiness, writing, and reading growth in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 as opposed to waiting until third grade. One respondent suggested considering adding kindergarten readiness to the model:

“Should we add kindergarten readiness to the model? Would this influence districts to add more pre-k education?”

The third area explored by responses to this question related to measuring growth versus proficiency. Most of these responses encouraged reducing the focus on growth:

“Decrease emphasis on growth moving and add emphasis to proficiency.”

“Give credit for the 3rd graders who are passing.”

“When you hit proficiency wall, growth will kill the score.”

“Growth doesn’t necessarily indicate literacy success—it can celebrate mediocrity.”

However, a few responses addressed the importance of keeping growth in the model:

“Incentivize schools to be measured in growth K-2.”

“If we only focus on measuring proficiency, we will really hurt some schools.”

Working group participants were asked how the report cards issued to each school by the state should be improved. Currently, the report cards include the accountability elements as well as other indicators such as educator data, postsecondary enrollment at an institution in Mississippi, and the percentage of students participating in a given assessment.

The most mentioned elements to include on the report card centered around college and career readiness, including tracking students after they have left the K12 school system. Most comments centered on reporting student success after graduation:

"Regarding the report card, it is important for parents to see how the school is performing, and how the graduates are doing beyond high school graduation."

"Incorporating a section that highlights the student's employability after high school would be beneficial. This could include information on career readiness skills, vocational training, or college preparation."

The second most frequently mentioned category of elements to include on the report card were those related to school climate and student well-being.

"[The report card should] value how much do our students enjoy being at school—is it a good experience?"

Other suggestions included allowing schools to post their own indicators, reporting the number of students that have earned their GED, and attendance. Finally, some working group participants suggested that the report card could be easier to understand.

"[The report card could be improved by adding] better explanation or narrative that is user-friendly."

"More readable and with better explanations for the general public to ensure clear transparency."

MEC Next Generation Accountability Model Recommendations

The results of this public outreach have led the MEC and its leadership to conclude the following two major recommendations should be taken into consideration by the Mississippi Legislature and the State Board of Education.

MEC Recommendation One: The Mississippi Legislature should consider modifying the current A-F grading system to provide the public with greater insight into how well schools and districts are performing.

The *Every Student Succeeds Act* requires states to provide meaningful differentiation to show the public how well schools and districts perform on their accountability model. The six major rating systems are summarized below.

A-F Rating: An A-F letter grade is assigned to schools based on the summation of accountability indicators such as student achievement test scores, growth in academic test scores, graduation rates, ACT/SAT participation and scores, and attendance rates. Cut scores are set by states.

1-5 Stars: Similar to the A-F rating system, a single composite rating is assigned to schools, with 1 star being the lowest and 5 stars the highest rating.

Index Rating System: A single composite rating is assigned, but the rating scale varies. It may be a numerical rating such as on a 1-10 scale, 1-100 scale, or a percentile rating.

Federal Tiers of Support: Only schools that fall into the “lowest performing schools” category are identified as meeting the federal requirements for intervening in low-performing schools. Other schools are not ranked or rated.

Descriptive: Text-based labels are assigned based on performance indicators. For example, a state may translate a summative index score into an overall text-based identification (exceeds, meets, or meets few expectations). Some states use the following four descriptive summative ratings: Lowest Performing, Underperforming, Commendable, and Exemplary.

Dashboard: Performance results on multiple indicators within the accountability model are assigned. States may assign a summative rating to each indicator. For example, California, the only state to use a dashboard, includes summative ratings on individual 14 indicators, including absenteeism, suspension rate, ELA, mathematics, and local climate survey among other variables. This model does not provide an aggregate rating for schools or districts.

States can and do change their grading models over time. Table 10 shows which rating systems were used by states in 2018 and which ones had changed by 2021.

Table 10: Comparison of Type of Rating System Adopted by States in 2018 and 2021

Type of Rating System	2018 States	2021 States	2018 No.	2021 No.
A-F Rating System	AZ FL IN LA MS NM NC OH OK TN TX UT	IN LA MI MS NC OH OK TN TX UT	12	10
Descriptive Rating System	DE IL KS ME MA MN NE NJ SC VT WV	DE IL KS ME MA MN NE NJ SC VT WV WY	11	12
Index Rating System	AK AR CT GA HI IA MI MO SD WA WI WY	AK AR CT FL GA HI IA MO NM ND SD WA WI	12	13
1-5 Star Rating System	DC KY MD NV RI	DC KY MD NV RI	5	5
Dashboard		CA	0	1
Federal Tiers of Support	AL CO NH NY VA	AL AZ CO ID MT NH NY OR PA VA	5	10
No Summative Rating System	CA ID ND OR PA		5	0
Other Rating System	MT		1	0

Source: Education Commission of the States. 50-state comparison: States’ school accountability systems.

Currently, Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6 (5)(c), schools and districts will be measured using an A-F grading scale. Additionally, Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6 (5)(x), requires that the cut scores between letter grades are to be recalculated once 65% of the schools and/or districts have earned a letter grade of “B” or higher which happened in the 2022-2023 school year. The only way Mississippi can change their model is by amending this section of the Mississippi code. The options the Legislature can consider are posted below with suggested bill language found in Appendix A.

Rating System Change Options

- 1. No Change.** The Legislature can choose to keep the current A-F model and require the State Board of Education to change the cut scores as required by law. The rationale for this would be to raise expectations on what an A, B, C, and D represent. Federal intervention resources would not be impacted.
- 2. Remove the Cut Score Recalculation Provision Only.** In the 2022-2023 school year, more than 65% of districts were rated either an “A” or a “B” therefore triggering the provision in Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6 (5)(x) that requires the State Board of Education to recalculate the cut scores. The Legislature could choose to remove this provision.
- 3. Delay Cut Score Recalculation Provision for One Year.** Some educational policy observers believe that there is still potentially some inflated growth in the model, particularly in high schools, based on the impact of not testing in 2019-2020 school year and not assigning a letter grade score in the 2020-2021 school year. Recognizing that the effects of COVID-19 on the accountability model are still being worked out of the system, the Legislature could choose to delay the provision to recalculate the cut score for the 2023-2024 school year.
- 4. Empower the State Board of Education to Define the Rating System.** The Legislature could choose to turn over the decision of which rating system best serves the public to the State Board of Education.
- 5. Legislatively Redefine the Rating System.** The Legislature would choose which rating system would provide the public with greater insight into school and district performance and meets the federal requirement of meaningful differentiation. Based on the input received from the statewide conversations, the MEC suggests using a combination of the index system and the dashboard. In this methodology, schools and presumably districts would be given a grade on a scale of 0-100 for each of the indicators on the accountability model as opposed to just one overall summative score based on the aggregation of indicator scores.

MEC Recommendation Two: The Accountability Task Force should begin considering what the next generation model should look like with an emphasis on expanding career exploration indicators.

The second major recommendation based on the MEC listening sessions and business leadership feedback deals directly with the accountability model. If there was one clear theme that emerged from the listening sessions, it was that there needed to be an increased emphasis on career exploration indicators. To better understand why the model looks the way it does now, it is important to know what is required by the federal government and what flexibility is given to states.

The *Every Student Succeeds Act* which provides states with federal accountability guidance, requires that “substantial weight” and “in the aggregate, much greater weight” be given to academic indicators over non-academic indicator. The academic indicators for all school include measures of Proficiency, Growth, and progress towards Proficiency among English Language Learners. Graduation rates are included in high school models. In the 700 point model that is used in Mississippi, 100% of the indicators are academic in nature (i.e., no non-academic indicators). For the 1,000 point model, 90% of the indicators are academic with the remaining 10% divided equally into non-academic indicators, namely the Acceleration and College and Career Readiness components. These non-academic indicators, which must be weighted less than the academic indicators, are known as School Quality/Student Success (SQSS) indicators and are further described in the next section.

School Quality/Student Success Indicators

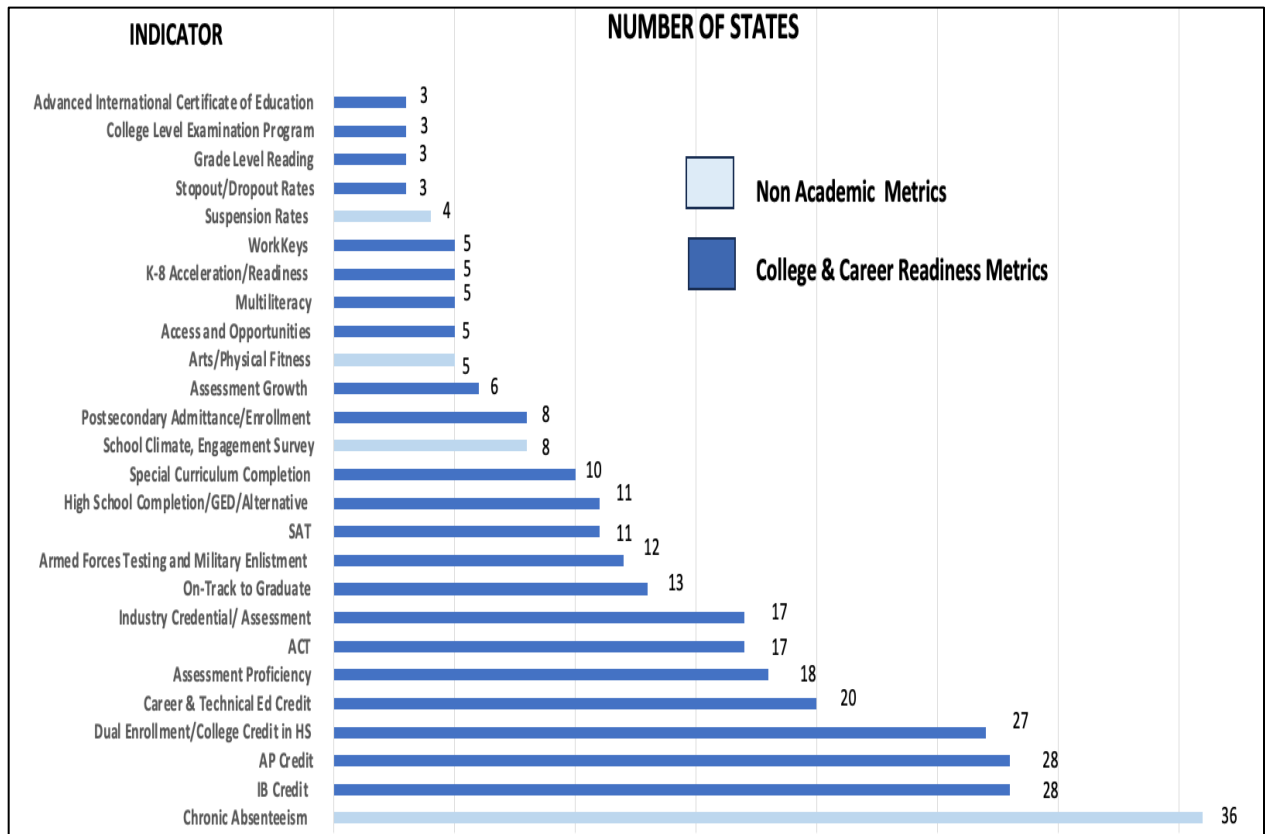
School Quality/Student Success (SQSS) indicators are provisions included in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) and are designed to empower states to have more input and control in their accountability models than in the previous federal law. Mississippi has SQSS indicators in its high school model already, but not in the elementary or middle school model. The category of Acceleration provides up to 50 points (5%) for districts and includes Advanced Placement courses, Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge, and Industry Recognized Certifications. To receive points students are measured on Participation and Performance. Similarly, the category of College and Career Readiness provides for up to 50 (5%) based on Participation and Performance on the ACT, as measured by the student meeting certain benchmarks, or on ACT WorkKeys and which level they obtain on that test.

As part of the flexibility given to states, accountability models can add whatever indicators they choose in their statewide accountability model. If states want to deploy federal support and resources to support districts, then the indicators must be approved by the U.S. Department of Education. If a state includes SQSS indicators in its state plan, it has to meet certain federal criteria including the following:

1. Be the same across districts
2. Begin and end in one grade span
3. Be valid and reliable
4. Disaggregated by subgroup such as race and socioeconomic status
5. Allow for meaningful differentiation

There are many examples of U.S. Department of Education approved SQSS indicators not in Mississippi’s model but used by other states and across multiple types of schools. For example, five states include Physical Fitness in their model and 12 offer the military interest inventory test known as the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Table 9 list these along with the number of states that have them in their model.

Table 11: U.S. Department of Education Approved SQSS Indicators



Mississippi has not taken full advantage of the flexibility given to states. The MEC urges our education leaders to modify its “Mississippi Succeeds” state plan and request career exploration and other SQSS indicators to better balance the accountability model. The next section connects the dots between what was heard in the statewide working sessions, what is on business leaders’ minds, and what can be achieved through allowable flexibility by the U.S. Department of Education.

Mississippi's Next Generation Accountability Model Options

After consulting with other states and education focused policy groups, such as ExcelinEd, state leaders and educators worked together in 2013 to create an accountability model focused on academic improvements in Mississippi. While not perfect or complete, most would look at the data and conclude that the goal of the model has been mostly fulfilled. This is most evidenced in Table 4 which shows that in the 2022-23 school year, there were 104 out of 146 districts with an "A" or a "B" (71%) and 12 districts out of 146 (4%) that were a "D" or an "F".

As this success is celebrated, now is the time to begin considering how to begin building Mississippi's next generation accountability model and to take advantage of the opportunity to ensure a well prepared workforce is available in the near. To do this, the State Board of Education has within its regulatory authority the capability to consider several models that expand upon the current version. The Board could also think strategically about where the concept of accountability will be in the next three to five years and start to position for that paradigm shift today.

Accountability models of the future should be student centered and measure the impact on individual students rather than aggregating student scores to rate institutions. Since 2018, Oxford School District is one example of a local school district that has been focused on students in addition to systems and institutions. Its "Portrait of a Graduate" ensures students at all levels of education are guided towards becoming Effective Communicators, Culturally Aware, Ethical, Critical and Creative Thinkers, Resilient, Personally Responsible, and Active Citizens. These measures coupled with academic and college and career readiness meet the public at every step of their expectations, hopes, and desires for students. This is teaching soft skills at its core, is equitable in the sense that every district has the capabilities to do it and is a model that can and should be exported across the state.

Mississippi looks to our local districts for leadership but we also know that change will take time. However, there are ways to bring the current model in line with public expectations around career exploration in this year. The following recommendations are based on feedback and national accountability policy expert input into what can be termed "the art of the possible". The suggested model modifications include, but certainly are not limited to:

- 1. Accountability Model 1: Slight Change.** In this model, the State Board of Education could decide to add a small number of SQSS indicators and points to the 700 and 1,000 point totals. No legislation would be required but the State Board would have to amend its accountability regulations found in the "Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards". A request to amend the "Mississippi Succeeds" plan would likely need to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. See Appendix B.
- 2. Accountability Model 2: Additive Model.** This model is similar to Model 2 but would provide for a higher number of SQSS indicators and more potential points. No legislation would be required but the State Board would have to amend its accountability regulations.

A request to amend the “Mississippi Succeeds” plan would likely need to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. See Appendix C.

- 3. Accountability Model 3: Point Reassignment.** Points given for all current academic and SQSS indicators would be revalued to place a greater emphasis on College and Career Readiness indicators while keeping the 700 and 1,000 point totals the same. Additional SQSS indicators not in the model would be included. No legislation would be required but the State Board would have to amend its accountability regulations. A request to amend the “Mississippi Succeeds” plan would likely need to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. See Appendix D.
- 4. Accountability Model 4: Local Options Model.** This model would empower local districts to choose from a list of multiple indicators while continuing to require adherence to all federal and state requirements. These could be SQSS indicators, and therefore require federal approval, or not. Legislation would be required and the State Board would have to amend its accountability regulations. A request to amend the “Mississippi Succeeds” plan would likely need to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for SQSS indicators that are included. See Appendix E.
- 5. Accountability Model 5: Two Models.** This approach to accountability would create two models: one federal and one state. The federal model would reflect only what is required by the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (e.g., all students in Grades 3-8 take ELA and math tests). The state would create a separate model that would provide ten options in which the local school district could choose five that are most important to their communities. For example, one district may choose to select growth and reduced chronic absenteeism for its points while another may choose early college and CTE diploma endorsements. See Appendix F.
- 6. Accountability Model 5: Future State Model.** This approach by the State Board of Education would be different than the previous five examples. The Future State Model would be focused on student outcomes including soft skill development and greater attention given to career exploration indicators while continuing to follow federal accountability requirements. Legislation would be required and the State Board would have to amend its accountability regulations. A request to amend the “Mississippi Succeeds” plan would likely need to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. See Appendix G.

No Change. Doing nothing for now is as much a potential outcome of the State Board of Education decision as any other possibility. The current 700 and 1,000 point totals would stay the same. No legislation, State Board regulatory change, or amending of Mississippi’s federally required accountability state plan (“Mississippi Succeeds”) would be necessary. This is included to be clear that there exists a choice to do nothing.

Next Steps

There are three primary entities that have direct oversight and varying responsibilities to facilitate the successful completion of the two MEC Recommendations found in this report. They include the State Board of Education, the Mississippi Legislature, and the U.S. Department of Education. Recommendation One regarding the rating system used by the state is the most direct and will require a change in the current law. This can be done with input from the State Board of Education and leadership of the Mississippi Department of Education and will ultimately require amending the “Mississippi Succeeds” state plan. The State of Georgia switched from an A-F model to an indexing model in 2023 and can be used as an example of how to accomplish this goal.

The second MEC Recommendation is much more complex and will require careful deliberation when considering what the public wants in a future accountability model. Fortunately, a deliberative body already exists at the Mississippi Department of Education to provide exactly this kind of guidance and advice for the State Board of Education to consider acting upon. The Accountability Task Force (ATF) is a standing body that is tasked with providing feedback from an educator’s perspective on amending the model. The ATF members are appointed for one year terms by the State Superintendent and is made up of teachers and administrators from across Mississippi. The ATF can take these recommendations and begin their deliberative process right away.

MEC has provided examples of models in this report as examples of what a new model could look like. MEC is not proposing that any of these models be adopted as the new accountability model but using these as a starting point for reform. MEC acknowledges the ATF and the State Board of Education are the guiding forces for reform to the model; however, MEC believes the MDE should consider adding business and postsecondary representation to the ATF board.

Appendix A: Rating System Changes and Suggested Legislative

Mississippi law defines provisions of the state accountability model in Section 37-17-6 (5). That part of the code is shown below:

(5) (a) Effective with the 2013-2014 school year, the State Department of Education, acting through the Mississippi Commission on School Accreditation, shall revise and implement a single “A” through “F” school and school district accountability system complying with applicable federal and state requirements in order to reach the following educational goals:

- (i)** To mobilize resources and supplies to ensure that all students exit third grade reading on grade level by 2015;
- (ii)** To reduce the student dropout rate to thirteen percent (13%) by 2015; and
- (iii)** To have sixty percent (60%) of students scoring proficient and advanced on the assessments of the Common Core State Standards by 2016 with incremental increases of three percent (3%) each year thereafter.

(b) The State Department of Education shall combine the state school and school district accountability system with the federal system in order to have a single system.

(c) The State Department of Education shall establish five (5) performance categories (“A,” “B,” “C,” “D” and “F”) for the accountability system based on the following criteria:

- (i)** Student Achievement: the percent of students proficient and advanced on the current state assessments;
- (ii)** Individual student growth: the percent of students making one (1) year’s progress in one (1) year’s time on the state assessment, with an emphasis on the progress of the lowest twenty-five percent (25%) of students in the school or district;
- (iii)** Four-year graduation rate: the percent of students graduating with a standard high school diploma in four (4) years, as defined by federal regulations;
- (iv)** Categories shall identify schools as Reward (“A” schools), Focus (“D” schools) and Priority (“F” schools). If at least five percent (5%) of schools in the state are not graded as “F” schools, the lowest five percent (5%) of school grade point designees will be identified as Priority schools. If at least ten percent (10%) of schools in the state are not graded as “D” schools, the lowest ten percent (10%) of school grade point designees will be identified as Focus schools;
- (v)** The State Department of Education shall discontinue the use of Star School, High-Performing, Successful, Academic Watch, Low-Performing, At-Risk of Failing and Failing school accountability designations;
- (vi)** The system shall include the federally compliant four-year graduation rate in school and school district accountability system calculations. Graduation rate will apply to high school and school district accountability ratings as a compensatory component. The system shall discontinue the use of the High School Completer Index (HSCI);

- (vii) The school and school district accountability system shall incorporate a standards-based growth model, in order to support improvement of individual student learning;
 - (viii) The State Department of Education shall discontinue the use of the Quality Distribution Index (QDI);
 - (ix) The State Department of Education shall determine feeder patterns of schools that do not earn a school grade because the grades and subjects taught at the school do not have statewide standardized assessments needed to calculate a school grade. Upon determination of the feeder pattern, the department shall notify schools and school districts prior to the release of the school grades beginning in 2013. Feeder schools will be assigned the accountability designation of the school to which they provide students;
 - (x) Standards for student, school and school district performance will be increased when student proficiency is at a seventy-five percent (75%) and/or when sixty-five percent (65%) of the schools and/or school districts are earning a grade of "B" or higher, in order to raise the standard on performance after targets are met;
 - (xi) The system shall include student performance on the administration of a career-readiness assessment, such as, but not limited to, the ACT WorkKeys Assessment, deemed appropriate by the Mississippi Department of Education working in coordination with the Office of Workforce Development.
-

1. **No Change.** The Legislature can choose to keep the current A-F model and require the State Board of Education to change the cut scores a required by law. The rationale for this would be to raise expectations on what an A, B, C, and D represent. Federal intervention resources would not be impacted.
2. **Remove the Cut Score Recalculation Provision Only.** In the 2022-2023 school year, more than 65% of districts were rated either an "A" or a "B" therefore triggering the provision in Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6 (5)(x) that requires the State Board of Education to recalculate the cut scores. The Legislature could choose to remove this provision.

(ix) *The State Department of Education shall determine feeder patterns of schools that do not earn a school grade because the grades and subjects taught at the school do not have statewide standardized assessments needed to calculate a school grade. Upon determination of the feeder pattern, the department shall notify schools and school districts prior to the release of the school grades beginning in 2013. Feeder schools will be assigned the accountability designation of the school to which they provide students;*

(x) ***

(xi) *The system shall include student performance on the administration of a career-readiness assessment, such as, but not limited to, the ACT WorkKeys Assessment, deemed appropriate by the Mississippi Department of Education working in coordination with the Office of Workforce Development.*

3. Delay Cut Score Recalculation Provision for One Year. Some educational policy observers believe that there is still potentially some inflated growth in the model, particularly in high schools, based on the impact of not testing in 2019-2020 school year and not assigning a letter grade score in the 2020-2021 school year. Recognizing that the effects of COVID-19 on the accountability model are still being worked out of the system, the Legislature could choose to delay the provision to recalculate the cut score for the 2023-2024 school year.

(ix) *The State Department of Education shall determine feeder patterns of schools that do not earn a school grade because the grades and subjects taught at the school do not have statewide standardized assessments needed to calculate a school grade. Upon determination of the feeder pattern, the department shall notify schools and school districts prior to the release of the school grades beginning in 2013. Feeder schools will be assigned the accountability designation of the school to which they provide students;*

(x) ***Effective beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, standards*** for student, school and school district performance will be increased when student proficiency is at a seventy-five percent (75%) and/or when sixty-five percent (65%) of the schools and/or school districts are earning a grade of “B” or higher, in order to raise the standard on performance after targets are met;

(xi) *The system shall include student performance on the administration of a career-readiness assessment, such as, but not limited to, the ACT WorkKeys Assessment, deemed appropriate by the Mississippi Department of Education working in coordination with the Office of Workforce Development.*

4. Empower the State Board of Education to Define the Rating System. The Legislature could choose to turn over the decision of which rating system best serves the public to the State Board of Education.

(5) (a) *Effective with the *** 2023-2024 school year, the State Department of Education, acting through the Mississippi Commission on School Accreditation, shall revise and implement a *** school and school district accountability system complying with applicable federal and state requirements ****

- (i) ***
- (ii) ***
- (iii) ***

(b) *The State Department of Education shall combine the state school and school district accountability system with the federal system in order to have a single system.*

(c) *The State Department of Education shall establish a school and school district rating system *** based on the following criteria:*

- (i)** *Student Achievement: the percent of students proficient and advanced on the current state assessments;*
- (ii)** *Individual student growth: the percent of students making one (1) year's progress in one (1) year's time on the state assessment, with an emphasis on the progress of the lowest twenty-five percent (25%) of students in the school or district;*
- (iii)** *Four-year graduation rate: the percent of students graduating with a standard high school diploma in four (4) years, as defined by federal regulations;*
- (iv)** *****
- (v)** *The State Department of Education shall discontinue the use of Star School, High-Performing, Successful, Academic Watch, Low-Performing, At-Risk of Failing and Failing school accountability designations;*
- (vi)** *The system shall include the federally compliant four-year graduation rate in school and school district accountability system calculations. Graduation rate will apply to high school and school district accountability ratings as a compensatory component. The system shall discontinue the use of the High School Completer Index (HSCI);*
- (vii)** *The school and school district accountability system shall incorporate a standards-based growth model, in order to support improvement of individual student learning;*
- (viii)** *The State Department of Education shall discontinue the use of the Quality Distribution Index (QDI);*
- (ix)** *The State Department of Education shall determine feeder patterns of schools that do not earn a school grade because the grades and subjects taught at the school do not have statewide standardized assessments needed to calculate a school grade. Upon determination of the feeder pattern, the department shall notify schools and school districts prior to the release of the school grades beginning in 2013. Feeder schools will be assigned the accountability designation of the school to which they provide students;*
- (x)** *****
- (xi)** *The system shall include student performance on the administration of a career-readiness assessment, such as, but not limited to, the ACT WorkKeys Assessment, deemed appropriate by the Mississippi Department of Education working in coordination with the Office of Workforce Development.*

5. Legislatively Redefine the Rating System. The Legislature would choose which rating system would provide the public with greater insight into school and district performance and meets the federal requirement of meaningful differentiation. Based the input received from the statewide conversations, the MEC suggests using a combination of the index system and the dashboard. In this methodology, schools and presumably districts would be given a grade on a scale of 0-100 for each of the indicators on the accountability model as opposed to just one overall summative score based on the aggregation of indicator scores.

(5) (a) Effective with the *** 2023-2024 school year, the State Department of Education, acting through the Mississippi Commission on School Accreditation, shall revise and implement a single *** school and school district accountability system complying with applicable federal and state requirements *** using a 0-100 scoring index for each indicator in the school and school district accountability model;

- (i)** ***
- (ii)** ***
- (iii)** ***

(b) The State Department of Education shall combine the state school and school district accountability system with the federal system in order to have a single system; and

(c) The State Department of Education shall establish *** an index based scoring methodology *** for the accountability system based on the following criteria:

- (i)** Student Achievement: the percent of students proficient and advanced on the current state assessments;
- (ii)** Individual student growth: the percent of students making one (1) year's progress in one (1) year's time on the state assessment, with an emphasis on the progress of the lowest twenty-five percent (25%) of students in the school or district;
- (iii)** Four-year graduation rate: the percent of students graduating with a standard high school diploma in four (4) years, as defined by federal regulations;
- (iv)** ***
- (v)** The State Department of Education shall discontinue the use of Star School, High-Performing, Successful, Academic Watch, Low-Performing, At-Risk of Failing and Failing school accountability designations;
- (vi)** The system shall include the federally compliant four-year graduation rate in school and school district accountability system calculations. Graduation rate will apply to high school and school district accountability ratings as a compensatory component. The system shall discontinue the use of the High School Completer Index (HSCI);
- (vii)** The school and school district accountability system shall incorporate a standards-based growth model, in order to support improvement of individual student learning;
- (viii)** The State Department of Education shall discontinue the use of the Quality Distribution Index (QDI);
- (ix)** The State Department of Education shall determine feeder patterns of schools that do not earn a school grade because the grades and subjects taught at the school do not have statewide standardized assessments needed to calculate a school grade. Upon determination of the feeder pattern, the department shall notify schools and school districts prior to the release of the school grades beginning in 2013. Feeder schools will be assigned the accountability designation of the school to which they provide students;
- (x)** ***

- (xi)** *The system shall include student performance on the administration of a career-readiness assessment, such as, but not limited to, the ACT WorkKeys Assessment, deemed appropriate by the Mississippi Department of Education working in coordination with the Office of Workforce Development.*

Appendix B: Accountability Model 1—Slight Change

In this model, the State Board of Education could decide to add a small number of SQSS indicators and points to the 700 and 1,000 point totals. No legislation would be required but the State Board would have to amend its accountability regulations found in the “Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards”. A request to amend the “Mississippi Succeeds” plan would likely need to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

Decision Maker	Change Required
Mississippi Legislature	No
State Board of Education	Yes
“Mississippi Succeeds” (Request made to U.S. Dept of Education)	Yes

700 Point Accountability Model

Category	Current Point Totals	Potential Point Totals
English		
Proficiency	95 points	95 points
Growth All Students	95 points	95 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	95 points
Math		
Proficiency	95 points	95 points
Growth All Students	95 points	95 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	95 points
Science		
Proficiency	95 points	95 points
English Language Learners		
Progress Towards Proficiency	35 points	35 points
New SQSS Indicator(s)	NA	25 points
TOTAL	700 points	725 points

Examples of new SQSS Indicators could include Physical Fitness, Third Grade Reading Gate, and Kindergarten Readiness Test among other options.

The example above is not to be viewed as a recommendation of MEC but rather to show options for the Mississippi Department of Education’s consideration.

1,000 Point Accountability Model

Category	Current Point Totals	Potential Point Totals
ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS		
<i>English II</i>		
Proficiency	95 points	95 points
Growth All Students	95 points	95 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	95 points
<i>Algebra I</i>		
Proficiency	95 points	95 points
Growth All Students	95 points	95 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	95 points
<i>Other Subjects</i>		
Biology I Proficiency	47.5 points	47.5 points
U.S. History Proficiency	47.5 points	47.5 points
GRADUATION RATE		
4 Year Cohort Rate	190 points	190 points
ACCELERATION		
Performance	23.75 points	23.75 points
Participation	23.75 points	23.75 points
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS		
ACT Performance or ACT WorkKeys	47.5 points	47.5 points
<i>English Language Learners</i>		
Progress Towards Proficiency	50 points	50 points
<i>New SQSS Indicator(s)</i>	NA	50 points
TOTAL	1,000 points	1,050 points

Examples of new SQSS Indicators could include ASVAB, Business Round Tables, Apprenticeships, Internships, or Work Based Learning among others.

The example above is not to be viewed as a recommendation of MEC but rather to show options for the Mississippi Department of Education's consideration.

Appendix C: Accountability Model 2—Additive Model

This model is similar to Model 2 but would provide for a higher number of SQSS indicators and more potential points. No legislation would be required but the State Board would have to amend its accountability regulations. A request to amend the “Mississippi Succeeds” plan would likely need to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

Decision Maker	Change Required
Mississippi Legislature	No
State Board of Education	Yes
“Mississippi Succeeds” (Request made to U.S. Dept of Education)	Yes

700 Point Accountability Model

Category	Current Point Totals	Potential Point Totals
English		
Proficiency	95 points	95 points
Growth All Students	95 points	95 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	95 points
Math		
Proficiency	95 points	95 points
Growth All Students	95 points	95 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	95 points
Science		
Proficiency	95 points	95 points
English Language Learners		
Progress Towards Proficiency	35 points	35 points
New SQSS Indicator(s)	NA	100 points
TOTAL	700 points	800 points

Examples of new SQSS Indicators could include Physical Fitness, Third Grade Reading Gate, and Kindergarten Readiness Test among other options.

The example above is not to be viewed as a recommendation of MEC but rather to show options for the Mississippi Department of Education’s consideration.

1,000 Point Accountability Model

Category	Current Point Totals	Potential Point Totals
ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS		
<i>English II</i>		
Proficiency	95 points	95 points
Growth All Students	95 points	95 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	95 points
<i>Algebra I</i>		
Proficiency	95 points	95 points
Growth All Students	95 points	95 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	95 points
<i>Other Subjects</i>		
Biology I Proficiency	47.5 points	47.5 points
U.S. History Proficiency	47.5 points	47.5 points
GRADUATION RATE		
4 Year Cohort Rate	190 points	190 points
ACCELERATION		
Performance	23.75 points	23.75 points
Participation	23.75 points	23.75 points
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS		
ACT Performance or ACT WorkKeys	47.5 points	47.5 points
<i>English Language Learners</i>		
Progress Towards Proficiency	50 points	50 points
<i>New SQSS Indicator(s)</i>	NA	200 points
TOTAL	1,000 points	1,200 points

Examples of new SQSS Indicators could include ASVAB, Business Round Tables, Apprenticeships, Internships, or Work Based Learning among others.

The example above is not to be viewed as a recommendation of MEC but rather to show options for the Mississippi Department of Education's consideration.

Appendix D: Accountability Model 3—Point Reassignment

Points given for all current academic and SQSS indicators would be revalued to place a greater emphasis on College and Career Readiness indicators while keeping the 700 and 1,000 point totals the same. Additional SQSS indicators not in the model would be included. No legislation would be required but the State Board would have to amend its accountability regulations. A request to amend the “Mississippi Succeeds” plan would likely need to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

Decision Maker	Change Required
Mississippi Legislature	No
State Board of Education	Yes
“Mississippi Succeeds” (Request made to U.S. Dept of Education)	Yes

700 Point Accountability Model

Category	Current Point Totals	Potential Point Totals
English		
Proficiency	95 points	90 points
Growth All Students	95 points	75 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	75 points
Math		
Proficiency	95 points	90 points
Growth All Students	95 points	75 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	75 points
Science		
Proficiency	95 points	90 points
English Language Learners		
Progress Towards Proficiency	35 points	35 points
New SQSS Indicator(s)	NA	100 points
TOTAL	700 points	700 points

Examples of new SQSS Indicators could include Physical Fitness, Third Grade Reading Gate, and Kindergarten Readiness Test among other options.

The example above is not to be viewed as a recommendation of MEC but rather to show options for the Mississippi Department of Education’s consideration.

1,000 Point Accountability Model

Category	Current Point Totals	Potential Point Totals
ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS		
<i>English II</i>		
Proficiency	95 points	90 points
Growth All Students	95 points	75 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	75 points
<i>Algebra I</i>		
Proficiency	95 points	90 points
Growth All Students	95 points	75 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	75 points
<i>Other Subjects</i>		
Biology I Proficiency	47.5 points	40 points
U.S. History Proficiency	47.5 points	40 points
GRADUATION RATE		
4 Year Cohort Rate	190 points	NA
Diploma + CTE Endorsement	NA	80
Diploma + Academic Endorsement	NA	80
ACCELERATION		
Performance	23.75 points	20 points
Participation	23.75 points	20 points
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS		
ACT Performance or ACT WorkKeys	47.5 points	40 points
<i>English Language Learners</i>		
Progress Towards Proficiency	50 points	40 points
<i>New SQSS Indicator(s)</i>	NA	200 points
TOTAL	1,000 points	1,000 points

Examples of new SQSS Indicators could include ASVAB, Business Round Tables, Apprenticeships, Internships, or Work Based Learning among others.

The example above is not to be viewed as a recommendation of MEC but rather to show options for the Mississippi Department of Education's consideration.

Appendix E: Accountability Model 4—Local Options Model

This model would empower local districts to choose from a list of multiple indicators while continuing to require adherence to all federal and state requirements. These could be SQSS indicators, and therefore require federal approval, or not. Legislation would be required and the State Board would have to amend its accountability regulations. A request to amend the “Mississippi Succeeds” plan would likely need to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for SQSS indicators that are included.

Decision Maker	Change Required
Mississippi Legislature	Yes
State Board of Education	Yes
“Mississippi Succeeds” (Request made to U.S. Dept of Education)	Yes

700 Point Accountability Model

Category	Current Point Totals	Potential Point Totals
English		
Proficiency	95 points	90 points
Growth All Students	95 points	75 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	75 points
Math		
Proficiency	95 points	90 points
Growth All Students	95 points	75 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	75 points
Science		
Proficiency	95 points	90 points
English Language Learners		
Progress Towards Proficiency	35 points	35 points
New SQSS Indicator(s)	NA	100 points
TOTAL	700 points	700 points

Examples of new SQSS Indicators could include Physical Fitness, Third Grade Reading Gate, and Kindergarten Readiness Test among other options.

The example above is not to be viewed as a recommendation of MEC but rather to show options for the Mississippi Department of Education’s consideration.

1,000 Point Accountability Model

Category	Current Point Totals	Potential Point Totals
ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS		
<i>English II</i>		
Proficiency	95 points	90 points
Growth All Students	95 points	75 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	75 points
<i>Algebra I</i>		
Proficiency	95 points	90 points
Growth All Students	95 points	75 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	75 points
<i>Other Subjects</i>		
Biology I Proficiency	47.5 points	40 points
U.S. History Proficiency	47.5 points	40 points
GRADUATION RATE		
4 Year Cohort Rate	190 points	NA
Diploma + CTE Endorsement	NA	80
Diploma + Academic Endorsement	NA	80
ACCELERATION		
Performance	23.75 points	20 points
Participation	23.75 points	20 points
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS		
ACT Performance or ACT WorkKeys	47.5 points	40 points
<i>English Language Learners</i>		
Progress Towards Proficiency	50 points	40 points
New SQSS Indicator(s)	NA	200 points
TOTAL	1,000 points	1,000 points

Examples of new SQSS Indicators could include ASVAB, Business Round Tables, Apprenticeships, Internships, or Work Based Learning among others.

The example above is not to be viewed as a recommendation of MEC but rather to show options for the Mississippi Department of Education's consideration.

Appendix F: Accountability Model 5—Two Models

This approach to accountability would create two models: one federal and one state. The federal model would reflect only what is required by the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (e.g., all students in Grades 3-8 take ELA and math tests). The state would create a separate model that would provide ten options in which the local school district could choose five that are most important to their communities. One district may choose to select growth and reduced chronic absenteeism for its points while another may choose early college and CTE diploma endorsements.

Decision Maker	Change Required
Mississippi Legislature	Yes
State Board of Education	Yes
“Mississippi Succeeds” (Request made to U.S. Dept of Education)	Yes

700 Point Accountability Model (Federal + State)

Category	Current Point Totals	Federal + State Point Totals
English		
Proficiency	95 points	100 points
Growth All Students	95 points	50 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	35 points
Math		
Proficiency	95 points	100 points
Growth All Students	95 points	50 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	35 points
Science		
Proficiency	95 points	100 points
English Language Learners		
Progress Towards Proficiency	35 points	30 points
SUB-TOTAL	700 points	500 points
State Model: Schools will pick 5 of 10 indicators such as Bonus Growth Points, Physical Education, Computer Science, Chronic Absentee Reduction, and Third Grade Reading Gate.	0 points	200 points
TOTAL	700 points	700 points

The example above is not to be viewed as a recommendation of MEC but rather to show options for the Mississippi Department of Education’s consideration.

1,000 Point Accountability Model (Federal + State)

Category	Current Point Totals	Federal + State Point Totals
ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS		
<i>English II</i>		
Proficiency	95 points	100 points
Growth All Students	95 points	75 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	NA
<i>Algebra I</i>		
Proficiency	95 points	100 points
Growth All Students	95 points	75 points
Growth Lowest 25%	95 points	NA
<i>Other Subjects</i>		
Biology I Proficiency	47.5 points	100 points
U.S. History Proficiency	47.5 points	NA
GRADUATION RATE		
4 Year Cohort Rate	190 points	NA
Diploma + CTE Endorsement	NA	100
Diploma + Academic Endorsement	NA	100
ACCELERATION		
Performance	23.75 points	30 points
Participation	23.75 points	30 points
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS		
ACT Performance or ACT WorkKeys	47.5 points	50 points
<i>English Language Learners</i>		
Progress Towards Proficiency	50 points	40 points
SUB-TOTAL	1,000 points	800 points
State Model: Schools will pick 5 of 10 indicators such as Bonus Growth Points, taking the ASVAB, participating in a business round table, early college, or reducing chronic absenteeism.	0 points	200 points
TOTAL	1,000 points	1,000 points

The example above is not to be viewed as a recommendation of MEC but rather to show options for the Mississippi Department of Education’s consideration.

Appendix G: Accountability Model 6—Future State Model

This approach by the State Board of Education would be different than the previous five examples. The Future State Model would be focused on student outcomes including soft skill development and greater attention given to career exploration indicators while continuing to follow federal accountability requirements. Legislation would be required and the State Board would have to amend its accountability regulations. A request to amend the “Mississippi Succeeds” plan would likely need to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

Decision Maker	Change Required
Mississippi Legislature	Yes
State Board of Education	Yes
“Mississippi Succeeds” (Request made to U.S. Dept of Education)	Yes





Effective Communicators

Convey information in a meaningful and effective way to achieve common goals with others.



Culturally Aware

Possess a set of skills, values and principles that acknowledge and adapt to differences in various cultures and ethnicities, in order to work cross-culturally.



Ethical

Act with key moral principles that include honesty, fairness, equity, dignity and individual rights.



Critical Thinkers

Conceptualize, apply, analyze, and evaluate information gathered from observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, as a guide to belief, understanding and action.



Creative Thinkers

Approach problems with curiosity and imagination to generate innovative ideas and solutions without fear of failure.



Resilient

Withstand and recover from challenges with independence, courage and emotional competency.



Personally Responsible

Accept and maintain ownership of one's own actions by meeting obligations, expectations and being accountable within one's power, control, or management.



Active Citizens

Take an active role in society, conducting oneself in accordance with the rights, duties, and privileges of their community, country and world.

Source: Oxford School District

The example above is not to be viewed as a recommendation of MEC but rather to show options for the Mississippi Department of Education's consideration.