



MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright future for every child



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# MISSISSIPPI SUCCEEDS

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*Executive Summary  
and State Plan*

FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVERY  
STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

SEPTEMBER 2017

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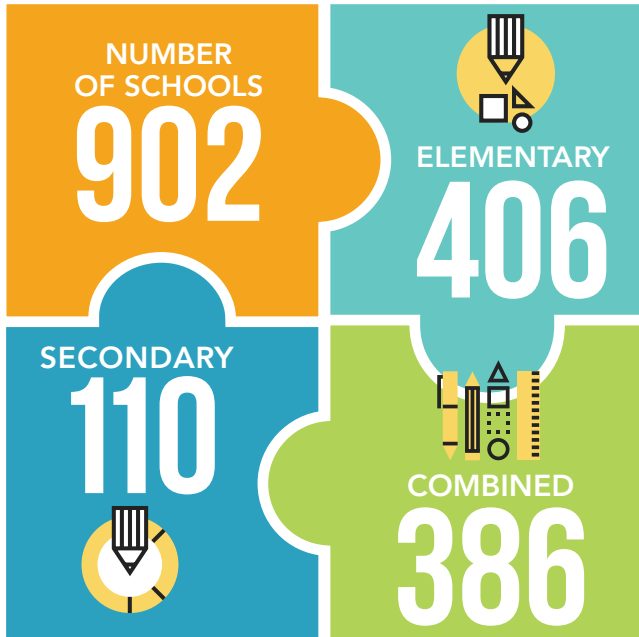
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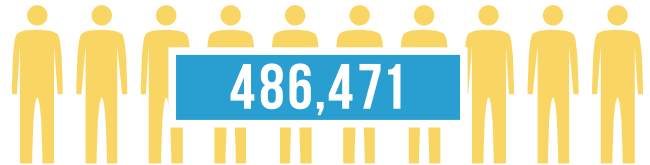
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# MISSISSIPPI

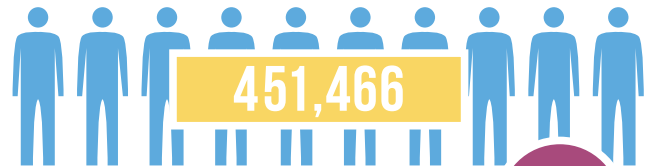
## AT A GLANCE



STUDENT AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP:

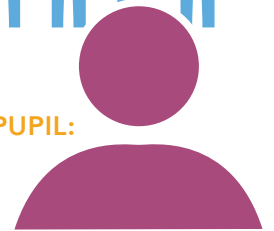


STUDENT AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE:



AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER PUPIL:

\$9,704



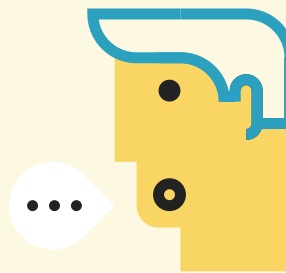
144  
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

NUMBER OF TEACHERS:

32,101

AVERAGE TEACHER SALARY:

\$44,416



GRADUATION RATE  
RISES FROM 73.7% IN 2012  
TO

82.3%  
IN 2017



NATIONAL RANKING FOR  
PERCENT OF TEACHERS WHO  
ARE NATIONAL BOARD  
CERTIFIED TEACHERS



4TH AND 8TH GRADE GAINS  
IN 2015 READING, MATH AND  
SCIENCE NAEP SCORES





## PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to connect Mississippi's strategic goals to the strategies and activities of the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and local school districts to prepare students for college and career. Sections include information and data about current performance, the numbers and context regarding achievement targets, details about the initiatives designed to help Mississippi's students achieve those ambitious targets, and finally information about the federal programs that support Mississippi's vision for student success.

The MDE is charged with supporting local school districts to help them to attain the Mississippi State Board of Education's vision and goals. The Board's bold vision for a world-class education system and the agency's philosophy of operating in the best interest of students drive the MDE's work.

### MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global economy

### VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

Mississippi's leaders use this mission and vision not only for aspiration, but also for inspiration. Talking with leaders, teachers, and parents throughout the state yields a common desire for students to achieve in school, but also to be inspired in learning the history, art, culture, and music of their home state. They want Mississippi's children to be prepared and confident to pursue careers and choices that enable them to be their best in Mississippi, have families they can provide for, enrich their communities with skills and contributions, advocate for the laws and policies that represent their values, and be able to enjoy the quality of life they know in Mississippi.

Connecting this aspiration to the plan itself is the work of the Mississippi State Board of Education. With the Strategic Plan 2016-2020, the State Board of Education sets the roadmap for improving public education in Mississippi. The plan describes the objectives and strategies the MDE employs to help local school districts achieve the Board's vision and goals. The Board's goals were created in 2014 and affirmed in 2016.

# STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION GOALS

---

1

## ALL STUDENTS PROFICIENT AND SHOWING GROWTH IN ALL ASSESSED AREAS

- Implement the Literacy-Based Promotion Act with fidelity
- Continue implementing the Mississippi College-and Career-Readiness Standards

2

## EVERY STUDENT GRADUATES FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND IS READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER

- All students enter Mississippi colleges prepared for credit-bearing courses
- All students graduate prepared for careers, meeting academic and employability standards
- Increase the number and percentage of students participating in and successfully completing advanced coursework, including AP, dual enrollment, articulated credit, STEM pathways and national certifications

3

## EVERY CHILD HAS ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

- Define a high-quality early childhood model and share the model with all stakeholders
- Increase access to high-quality early childhood programs

4

## EVERY SCHOOL HAS EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND LEADERS

- Increase the percentage of educators rated Effective or above on the state evaluation systems
- Raise the academic standards in Mississippi teacher-preparation programs

5

## EVERY COMMUNITY IS EFFECTIVELY USING A WORLD-CLASS DATA SYSTEM TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Modernize current student information system to become a state-of-the-art data system
- Revise the Office of Technology and Strategic Services plan

6

## EVERY SCHOOL AND DISTRICT IS RATED "C" OR HIGHER

- Improve academic outcomes in Targeted Support and Improvement Schools and Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools
- Improve academic outcomes in Districts of Transformation
- Establish an Achievement School District (ASD)



# CURRENT PERFORMANCE IN MISSISSIPPI

## Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Student Achievement

Mississippi's students are as capable as any other group of students across the country. Yet, despite the dedication and hard work of teachers and school leaders across the state, student achievement results place the state near the bottom of many education rankings.

Student achievement in Mississippi is low, with about 30% of students scoring proficient and advanced on state tests. Mississippi has been through two assessment changes in the last three years. On recent assessments, Mississippi's students scored fairly low as a result of more rigorous standards and assessments; this assessment performance is much more in line with Mississippi's performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) than prior state assessments. The new assessments address the "honesty gap" of student knowledge and abilities in comparison with student scores through better alignment of high expectations with meaningful cut-off scores for proficiency.

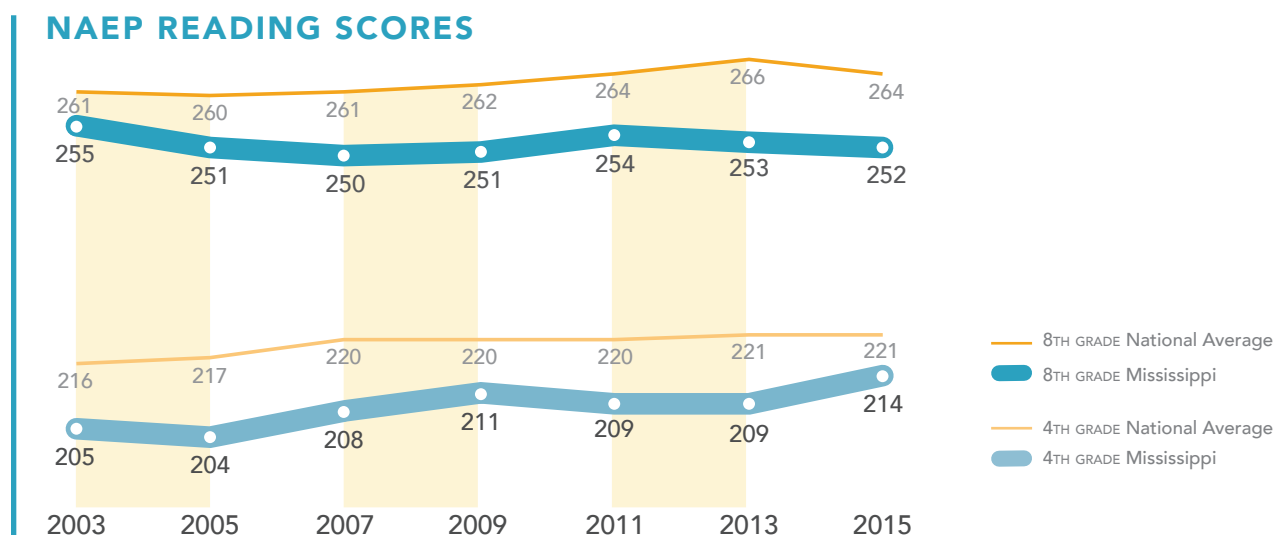
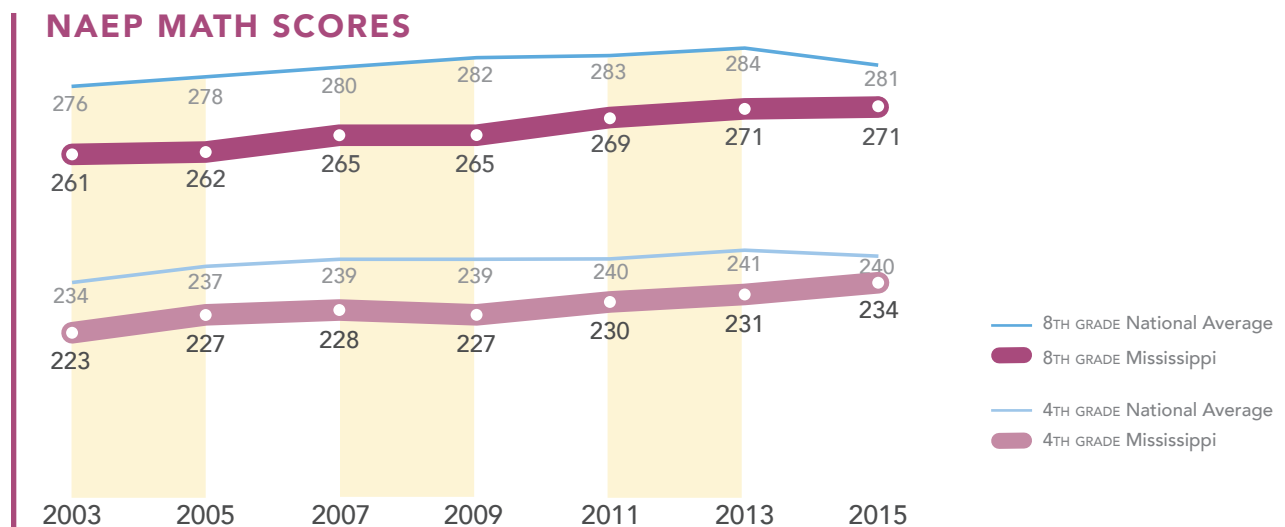
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS			
GRADE	2014-15 PROFICIENT & ADVANCED	2015-16 PROFICIENT & ADVANCED	CHANGE
Grade 3	28.7%	32.1%	+3.4%
Grade 4	29.8%	32.6%	+2.8%
Grade 5	28.1%	34.1%	+6.0%
Grade 6	29.3%	29.2%	-0.1%
Grade 7	31.2%	29.1%	-2.1%
Grade 8	31.1%	33.3%	+2.2%
English II	49.3%	37.1%	-12.2%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>32.2%</b>	<b>32.6%</b>	<b>+0.4%</b>

MATH			
GRADE	2014-15 PROFICIENT & ADVANCED	2015-16 PROFICIENT & ADVANCED	CHANGE
Grade 3	33.1%	32.7%	-0.4%
Grade 4	27.2%	32.2%	+5.0%
Grade 5	25.1%	30.0%	+4.9%
Grade 6	24.5%	32.5%	+8.0%
Grade 7	20.2%	34.2%	+14.0%
Grade 8	28.1%	30.9%	+2.8%
Algebra I	27.4%	26.1%	-1.3%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>26.6%</b>	<b>31.1%</b>	<b>+4.5%</b>

## Student Achievement Comparison with NAEP

Mississippi students also participate in the NAEP assessment. Known as "The Nation's Report Card," the NAEP assessment results provide a meaningful comparison among states for student achievement.

Mississippi showed a significant increase in 4th grade math and reading in the 2015 administration, countering the national trend of flat or declining performance. Compared to 2013 scores, Mississippi was the only state that had a significant increase in 4th grade math, and was one of thirteen states that showed an increase in 4th grade reading. Since implementing Mississippi College- and Career-Readiness Standards starting in the 2011-12 school year, Mississippi's students have demonstrated steady growth on national measures.

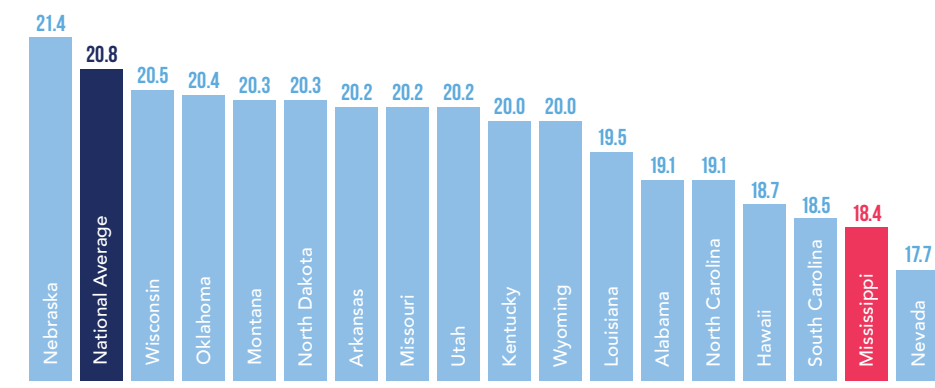




## College and Career Readiness with the ACT Assessment

Mississippi's 2015 11th grade class was the first class in which all students were required to take the ACT. The decision to administer the ACT to all 11th graders was rooted in Mississippi's commitment to equity. The ACT measures college readiness and student achievement in high school. Of the 17 states that require all students to participate in the ACT, Mississippi's scores were higher than only Nevada's. Only 11% of Mississippi 11th graders tested in 2016 met benchmark scores in all four tested areas, as opposed to 26% nationwide. While the MDE has set specific benchmarks for students to meet college- and career-readiness expectations as a part of the state accountability model, individual colleges and universities determine placement requirements for credit-bearing courses in reading, English, and mathematics. Specific details can be found on respective college and university websites.

### 2016 GRADUATING CLASS ACT COMPOSITE SCORE AVERAGES<sup>1</sup>



Scores from the first statewide administration of the ACT in 2015 increased during the second administration. The first class to take the assessment scored 17.6 in 2015, and the second class, the Class of 2017, rated an 18.3 composite score on the 11th grade administration. This is still below the national composite average of 20.8, measured on a scale from one to 36.

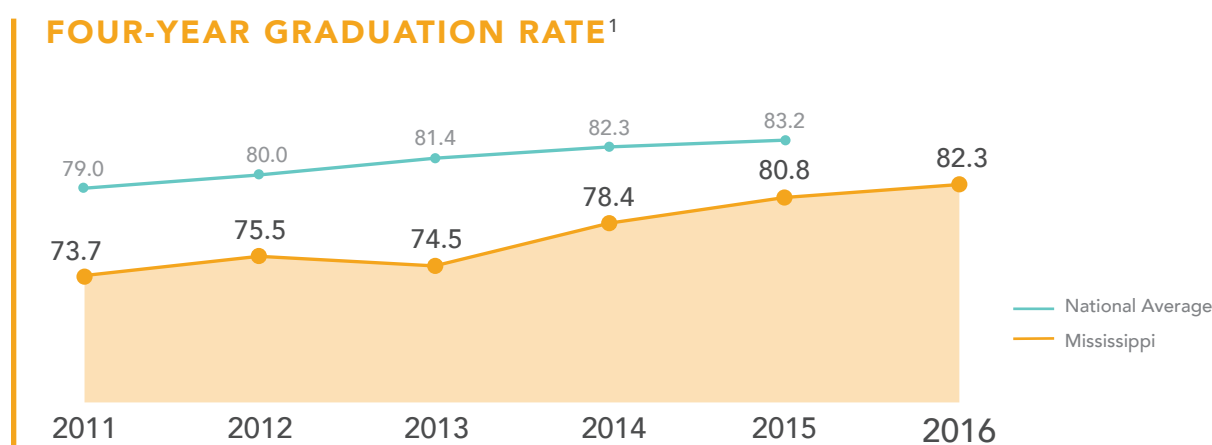
MISSISSIPPI 11TH GRADE ACT SCORE COMPARISON					
Year	Average English Score	Average Math Score	Average Reading Score	Average Science Score	Average Composite Score
2015	16.9	17.6	17.8	17.8	17.6
2016	17.6	18.0	18.3	18.6	18.3

District-wide ACT averages have improved, as 19 districts had an average ACT composite score of 20 or higher in 2016, compared to only nine districts in 2015.

<sup>1</sup> The graph represents a comparison of composite scores averages from states that require ACT testing statewide to eligible public school students. The composite score averages represent public and private school graduating class data.

## Mississippi's High School Graduation Rate is Climbing

The 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) is one of Mississippi's most significant areas of growth over the last few years. The graduation rate has grown from 73.7% in 2012 to 82.3% in 2017. The graduation rate for students with disabilities increased significantly from 22.5% to 34.7% from during the same timeframe. The dropout rate decreased from 16.7% in 2012 to 10.8% in 2017, another significant move in the right direction. Mississippi is seeing positive results, in large part due to focused professional development related to higher standards of learning and multiple pathways by which students can receive a diploma.



## English Learner Population Growing as Mississippi Grows More Diverse

As a state, Mississippi is educating a growing number of English learners (EL). The state's EL population is still quite small, with 8,100 EL students in 2012, trending up to 12,000 in 2017, making the EL population roughly 2.5% of all students. The LAS Links assessment has been used to measure English language acquisition since 2016, and the state is currently working to establish and implement Mississippi's first-ever State Board adopted EL standards.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/State%20by%20State%20Graduation%20Rates.pdf>, referenced May 12, 2017, and 2015-16 Superintendent's Annual Report.

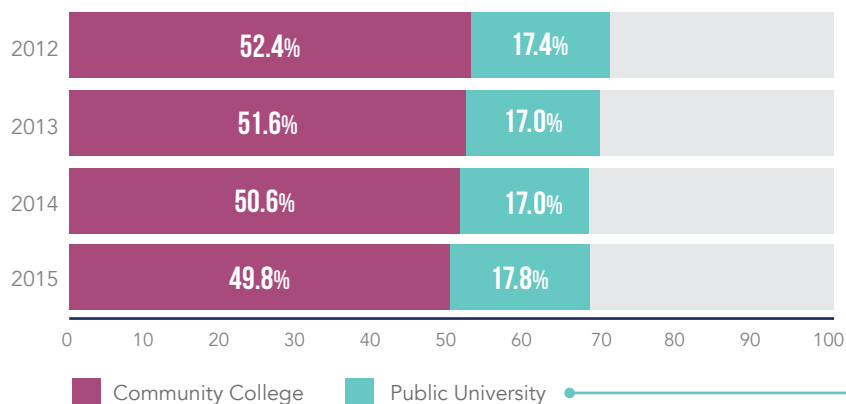
## College Enrollment and Remediation

College enrollment among Mississippi high school graduates is steady. As reported by Mississippi’s LifeTracks system, enrollment in public universities has increased slightly from 17.4% of students enrolling in 2012 to 17.8% of students enrolling in 2015. Enrollment in Mississippi community colleges has declined slightly, with just under half of high school graduates enrolling in community college programs. This student enrollment rate does not include enrollment in private colleges or out-of-state universities. Mississippi’s 67.6% is very close to the national average of 68.4% of students enrolling in community college, private colleges or universities, or public universities, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Mississippi’s students have had consistent need for remediation when they enroll in 2- and 4-year institutions. Since 2012, the percentage of first-year students at Mississippi 4-year colleges and universities who have enrolled in remedial classes has decreased slightly from 22% in 2012 to 20.9% in 2016. This compares to a 2012 national average of 29% in remedial classes for first- and second-year bachelor’s degree students, according to the National

Center for Education Statistics (NCES)<sup>3</sup>. In Mississippi community colleges, 34.5% of all students were enrolled in remedial classes in 2016, compared to 41% of community college students nationwide, based on NCES data. While Mississippi students need help with the basics at rates lower than national averages, increasing college preparedness and decreasing these percentages are top goals for schools, districts, and the MDE.

**COLLEGE ENROLLMENT FOR MISSISSIPPI HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://lifetracks.ms.gov/PK12/ViewReport.aspx?reportName=PK12CollegeEnrolledHSProgress>

<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016405.pdf>

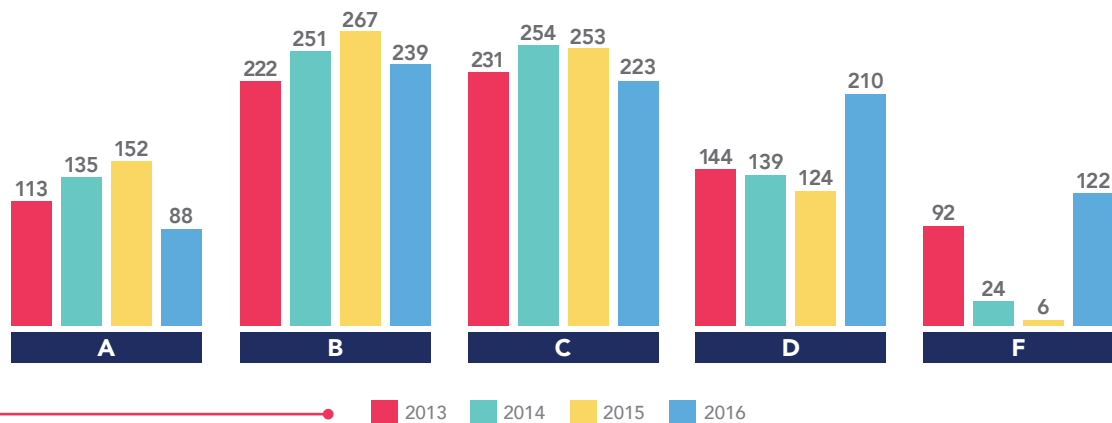
## School and District Accountability Scores Shift Due to Higher Standards

Accountability and transparency are important values for the MDE and local school districts, and the MDE demonstrates this commitment through publishing scores for each school and district in the state. These ratings are issued annually and are based on a combination of academic achievement and academic growth in math, reading, science, and history, and include a measure of growth for the lowest-performing 25% of students. At the high school level, accountability measures also include graduation rate, advanced coursework participation and outcomes, and college and career readiness as measured by the ACT.

Mississippi's school-level accountability standards increased substantially for the 2015-16 school year, based on the implementation of the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program and more rigorous cut points. As a result, school and district results were lower for 2016 than in previous years. In addition, the MDE instituted a process for sharing improvement strategies among the "F" rated schools, designed to build awareness of school-wide issues and strengthen connections among board members, district leadership, school leaders, teachers, parents, and community members.

### SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY RATINGS

Number of Schools Rated "A" Through "F"





# LONG-TERM GOALS AND INTERIM BENCHMARKS

Leaders in Mississippi's districts and schools know that setting specific targets will enable their students to be prepared for college and career. Setting targets for student achievement provides the opportunity to engage students, parents, community members, teachers, school leaders, and state leaders in conversation and work to help all Mississippi's students achieve these goals.

## MISSISSIPPI ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Long-Term Goals and Interim Benchmarks

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS			
CURRENT Proficiency	INTERIM Proficiency Targets		LONG-TERM Proficiency Goal
2015-2016	2018-2019	2021-2022	2024-2025
32.6%	45.1%	57.5%	70.0%

MATH			
CURRENT Proficiency	INTERIM Proficiency Targets		LONG-TERM Proficiency Goal
2015-2016	2018-2019	2021-2022	2024-2025
31.1%	44.1%	57.0%	70.0%

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Long-Term Goals and Interim Benchmarks

CURRENT Graduation Rate	INTERIM Graduation Rate Targets		LONG-TERM Graduation Rate Goal
2015-2016	2018-2019	2021-2022	2024-2025
82.3%	84.8%	87.4%	90.0%



# CURRENT INITIATIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ATTAIN GOALS OF MISSISSIPPI SUCCEEDS PLAN

1

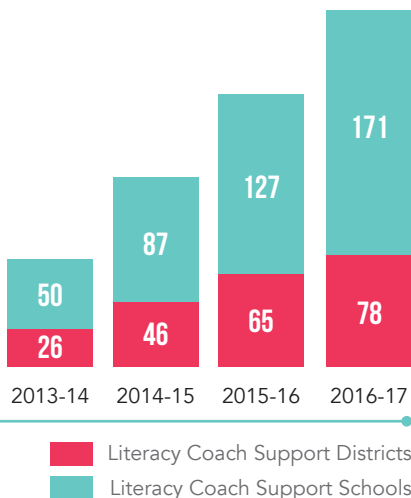
## ALL STUDENTS PROFICIENT AND SHOWING GROWTH IN ALL ASSESSED AREAS

- Implement the Literacy-Based Promotion Act with fidelity
- Continue implementing the Mississippi College-and Career-Readiness Standards

### FOCUSING ON GRADE-LEVEL READING

Learning to read is the focus for grades K-3, as reading to learn is the goal thereafter. The MDE has invested in encouraging early elementary teachers, literacy specialists, special education teachers, and other interventionists to collaborate in understanding and addressing student needs.

In the spring of 2016, 63% of Kindergarteners met or exceeded the end-of-year target score on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment that categorizes them as transitional readers. This is an increase from 54% in 2015, and a significant increase from the fall readiness rate that has hovered around 35% for several years. In other words, statewide, 1 in 3 students enter kindergarten with the requisite skills to learn kindergarten content, but almost 2 in 3 students exit with the skills needed for 1st grade. For 3rd graders in 2016, 87% of students passed the 3rd grade Reading Assessment on their first try, which was an increase from 85% in 2015. In 2017, 92% of students passed. This rate does not equate to proficiency, but the expectations for promotion under the law will increase during the 2018-19 school year.



Literacy coaches have been critical to achieving this growth over the last few years. With the goal of helping teachers better teach the building blocks to reading, this focused intervention in the highest need schools is valued by school leaders and teachers, and has positive results with early readers.

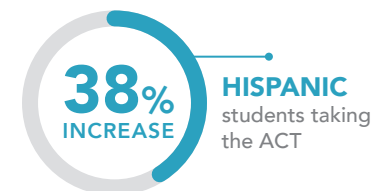
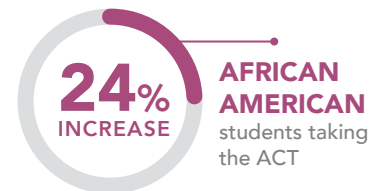
## 2

### EVERY STUDENT GRADUATES FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND IS READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER

- All students enter Mississippi colleges prepared for credit-bearing courses
- All students graduate prepared for careers, meeting academic and employability standards
- Increase the number and percentage of students participating in and successfully completing advanced coursework, including AP, dual enrollment, articulated credit, STEM pathways and national certifications

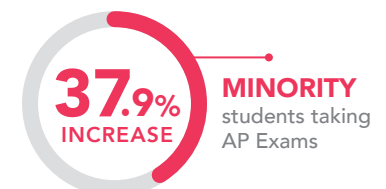
### EXPANDING ACCESS TO ACT FOR ALL 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS

The decision to administer the ACT assessment to all 11th graders was rooted in a commitment to equity. The ACT is a gateway assessment to higher education opportunities. Because all students now have an ACT score, this reduces barriers to application, enrollment, and matriculation in a variety of programs. Data for the graduating class of 2016 indicates that the number of tested students went from 25,797 to 31,969 in the first year of statewide 11th grade administration. More importantly, the demographics of students assessed shifted significantly. Notably, Mississippi saw a 24% increase in the percentage of African American students and a 38% increase in the number of Hispanic students taking the ACT in the first year of implementation. The average composite score for 11th graders increased from 17.6 in 2015 to 18.3 in 2016, and the percentage of students meeting ACT benchmarks scores in all four subject areas also increased from 9% to 11%. While state-wide assessment outcomes are lower than desired, the higher expectations of a college entry exam paired with transparency and clarity about student achievement will enable schools and districts to map paths to improvement in instruction.



### EXPANDING ACCESS TO AP COURSES

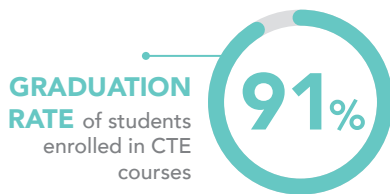
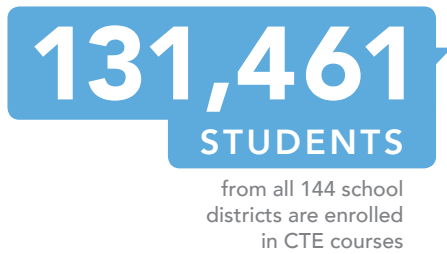
Enabling access to college-level content is another way that Mississippi schools are eliminating barriers to high achievement in postsecondary education. Through raising awareness of Advanced Placement (AP) benefits, increasing access to classes, and providing focused professional development for teachers, principals, and counselors, Mississippi saw growth in all three major categories of AP participation and performance. There was a 23.1% increase in the number of students enrolled in AP courses, a 22.8% increase in the number of exams taken, and 11.1% increase in the number of students achieving qualifying AP scores. More specifically, there has been a 37.9% increase in the number of minority students taking AP exams.



## INVESTING IN CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Economic development professionals and school leaders across the country are known to say that today's career and technical education (CTE) is "high tech, not vo-tech." Vocational education, initiated by the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, was focused on skilled trades, home economics, and agriculture. Mississippi's leaders, driven by a desire to prepare the workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow, have shifted that focus to transportation and logistics, hospitality and tourism, health sciences, engineering and advanced manufacturing, education, and Mississippi's mainstay, agriculture.

CTE provides middle and high school students access to companies in Mississippi's leading industries and offers training to prepare them for livable wage careers. The sweet spot of "middle skill" roles, those that require more skills than a high school diploma but not a 4-year degree, provide stable opportunities for young people to engage in the economy and build a career in Mississippi.



Research from Mississippi State University cites 131,461 students from all 144 school districts across the state are enrolled in CTE courses. CTE students' performance is frequently measured by performance-based assessments, and 77% of teachers reported that these assessments accurately measured students' skills and achievements. More importantly, students enrolled in CTE courses achieve a graduation rate of 91%, higher than both the Mississippi and national averages. Eighty-three percent of CTE students have scored on grade level in math, and 84% achieve a credential, certificate, or degree.



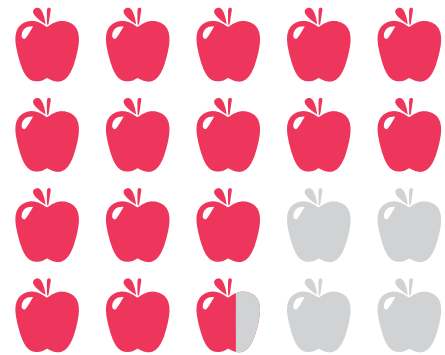
### 3

## EVERY CHILD HAS ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

- Define a high-quality early childhood model and share the model with all stakeholders
- Increase access to high-quality early childhood programs

## EXPANDING ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mississippi's students start on the track to college and career readiness in early childhood. The MDE has prioritized investment in providing access to high-quality early childhood programs. In 2015, 59% of preschool children in an Early Learning Collaborative public/private partnership demonstrated readiness for kindergarten; in 2016, 71% of preschool students met this readiness indicator; and in 2017, the readiness rate for students in an Early Learning Collaborative was 78%. This is in contrast to the statewide readiness rate that hovers at 1 in 3 students. Providing high-quality early childhood options is central to the MDE strategy, and as a result, every program is rated annually via an Effectiveness Evaluation Plan that examines classroom interaction as well as student outcomes. The MDE is partnering with other agencies and organizations to build a continuum of support from birth to 3rd grade.



**78%** preschool children in an Early Learning Collaborative demonstrated **READINESS FOR KINDERGARTEN**

## 4

### EVERY SCHOOL HAS EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND LEADERS

- Increase the percentage of educators rated Effective or above on the state evaluation systems
- Raise the academic standards in Mississippi teacher-preparation programs

## EXPANDING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Mississippi has used approximately \$1M annually for professional development related to effective implementation of the Mississippi College-and Career-Readiness Standards. According to an independent report from the Southern Regional Education Board, the MDE sets strong expectations for high-quality professional learning for all educators and provides essential support for school districts. Professional development initiatives include free, on-demand training for schools and districts, an expanded professional development calendar and menu of services, courses for curriculum directors, and interagency convenings to support academic initiatives among school attendance officers, literacy coaches, school improvement coaches, professional development coordinators, and other personnel. The MDE is looking closely at professional development offerings for school leaders in an effort to ensure that current principals have appropriate professional growth opportunities, and that future principals are prepared to serve as instructional leaders going forward.



## 5

### EVERY COMMUNITY IS EFFECTIVELY USING A WORLD-CLASS DATA SYSTEM TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Modernize current student information system to become a state-of-the-art data system
- Revise the Office of Technology and Strategic Services plan

## DATA PORTAL

The MDE is developing a user-friendly way for parents and the public to use the MDE website to view key data points about schools and districts. ESSA emphasizes transparency and accountability, which are critical to improving schools and districts. The data visualization portal will initially launch as an internal tool for MDE staff, with a public-facing portal scheduled to launch near the end of 2017. This website will allow for users to sort, filter, and review data at the state, district, or school level across multiple years for areas such as student attendance, graduation rate, student discipline, and academic performance, in order to make better decisions that will positively impact student achievement.

## REPORTING

Mississippi will retain its accountability model under ESSA, and schools and districts will continue to be graded on an A through F scale. These grades will still be based on reading and math proficiency rates, student growth, graduation rates, ACT scores, and the percentage of students participating and achieving in advanced coursework. As the MDE continues with implementation of its current accountability system, student performance will be reported differently. Student subgroup performance will be published by school and district. This transparent approach to reporting will unmask any underperforming groups that have previously been reported in the aggregate only.

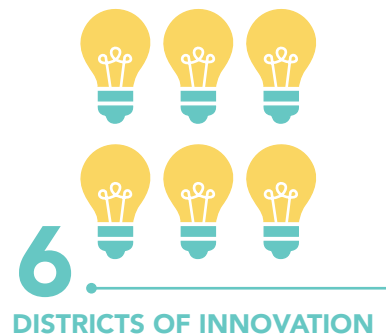
6

### EVERY SCHOOL AND DISTRICT IS RATED "C" OR HIGHER

- Improve academic outcomes in Targeted Support and Improvement Schools and Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools
- Improve academic outcomes in schools under conservatorship
- Establish an Achievement School District (ASD)

## ENCOURAGING FLEXIBILITY WITH DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION COMPETITIVE PROCESS

Through the districts of innovation model, districts have flexibility in areas such as seat time and teacher certification to allow for innovative scheduling and instructional delivery methods. Six Mississippi school districts are currently participating as Districts of Innovation.



## ENSURING TRANSPARENCY WITH SCHOOL AND DISTRICT GRADES

A key MDE function is to assess and communicate the quality of every public school and district. By measuring student achievement and growth for all grades, graduation rate and college and career readiness for high schools, and isolating the growth of the lowest-performing student groups in the school, the MDE compares performance to objective measures and provides an A-F rating for each school and district each year. Schools use these ratings to understand their relative performance and identify opportunities to improve. Districts and the MDE use these ratings to reward and replicate high-performing schools and identify schools in need of intervention. These annual ratings are published on an MDE website, and districts have the opportunity to publish additional information about their schools' performance as well. Parents and community members can look up the rating of any school or district in the state and identify the drivers for the rating, and use this information to commend performance or recommend changes. The goal is for every school to be rated "C" or higher on this criterion-based system.

## SUPPORTS TO STRUGGLING SCHOOLS

The MDE has made a concerted effort to work alongside low-performing schools to change academic outcomes for students in recent years. Through the assignment of improvement coaches within struggling schools, the provision of professional development for teachers in struggling schools, and a newly implemented schools-at-risk interview process, the MDE is placing responsibility for the turnaround process at the local level. The Achievement School District, scheduled to launch in the 2018-19 school year, creates an additional governance option for districts, through which the MDE may absorb districts into a statewide district to directly drive improvement efforts.



### SUPPORTING STRUGGLING SCHOOLS

through improvement coaches, professional development, and schools-at-risk interview process



## HOW YOU CAN HELP IMPROVE MISSISSIPPI'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

It will take support from every reader of this plan and every citizen to help Mississippi achieve.

- **PROVIDE FEEDBACK** on this plan. In June and July of 2017, the MDE and Board will welcome public comments to highlight strengths and opportunities to improve this plan for Mississippi's 902 public schools. Read, consider, and suggest ways to help make schools even greater places for our students to learn.
- **HOLD A MEETING** in your community or through your civic organization to host an MDE staff member and learn more about the strategic plan, this ESSA plan, and to provide feedback on the direction of the state's schools.
- **FOLLOW THE MDE AND YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT.** Get updates on this plan and on the issues of student achievement, school culture, governance, and others. MDE's blog, Twitter feed, Facebook page, and webpage each provide updates on the Board's vision, as well as the accomplishments of Mississippi students, teachers, and school leaders.
- **GET INVOLVED LOCALLY.** Voting, volunteering for your local school board or district committees, attending school activities, and listening to young readers practice their skills are all great ways to learn how Mississippi's schools are serving our young people and our communities. Parents are encouraged to participate in schoolwide planning sessions and parent engagement activities. Interested individuals can contact their local school or district to learn about available resources and supports.