

MISSISSIPPI GROW-YOUR-OWN TEACHER

# Task Force Report



MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright *future* for every child

# Table of Contents

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<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>03</b>
<b>Timeline</b> .....	<b>07</b>
<b>Review of Literature</b> .....	<b>08</b>
<b>Grow-Your-Own Task Force</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>State Board of Education</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Strategies</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Leveraging State and Federal Funding</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Recommendations</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>21</b>

# Executive Summary

As noted in Mississippi’s Consolidated State Plan for *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* and Mississippi’s State Plan to *Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators*, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) recognized the importance and urgency of addressing teacher workforce disparities in the state, especially those in high-needs areas where large percentages of minority students are taught by less effective teachers. In both state plans, teacher pipeline concerns are addressed and viewed through the lens of equity.

As a result, to ensure equitable access of effective teachers for all students, especially minority students and those from low-income households, the MDE convened a taskforce to explore Grow-Your-Own (GYO) initiatives. In Mississippi, as in many states in the country, minority students are disproportionately impacted by teacher shortages. According to the research literature, minority teachers are more likely to teach in schools with large minority student populations and are more likely to leave the profession. Teacher turnover creates a revolving door effect in schools, especially those with the most vulnerable student populations.

As a result of the work of the task force, the MDE will share recommendations to assist districts in supporting the development and implementation of GYO initiatives at the local level. As districts purposefully implement strategies to grow their own teacher workforce, we anticipate sustainable pipelines of educators who are members of the community in which they teach, particularly in urban and isolated rural districts.

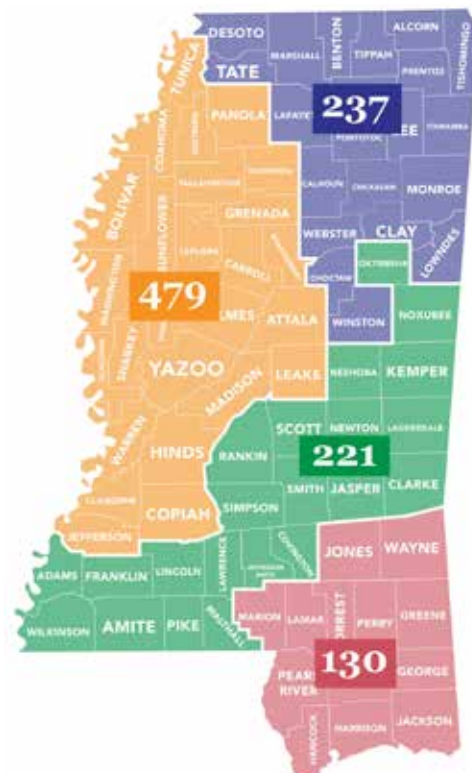
In accordance with the Mississippi State Board of Education Goal 4: Every Student has Effective Teachers and Leaders, the MDE is committed to reducing, and ultimately eliminating, the disproportionalities of less effective teachers in critical shortage districts. The disproportionalities often exist because of teacher recruitment and retention challenges. To ensure equitable access of effective and experienced teachers for these students, the MDE will implement GYO strategies designed to attract, prepare, support, and retain teachers in these districts.

**“More than 60% of America’s teachers work within 20 miles of where they went to high school. In every community, most of the future teaching workforce is sitting on the student side of the desks right now—with or without any kind of proactive recruitment efforts. Because we know where each community’s future teachers are largely coming from, communities have a clear, inherent self-interest in providing opportunities to help guide young people on a well-supported path to teaching. Homegrown teachers are vital assets who must be nurtured and developed—and that means starting early.”**

***The Grow-Your-Own Imperative, Brown (2016)***

## Mississippi Teacher Vacancies by Congressional District

AS OF 07/27/2018



To strategically attract teachers to schools with large low-income and minority student populations, the MDE will support districts in the implementation of GYO strategies. Moreover, these efforts will not be limited to districts identified as critical-shortage districts; all districts will be encouraged to develop a GYO program. The goal is for these innovations to serve as the impetus for more GYO programs and to provide a structure for GYO programs across multiple communities in Mississippi.

GYO represents innovative partnerships between Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs), and community colleges centered around assisting

paraprofessionals, classified staff, emergency substitutes, and local K-12 students to enter teacher education and become certified teachers, especially in critical shortage school districts. As cited above, teachers have a strong preference to teach close to home; GYO seeks to change the systemic nature of teacher shortages by guiding people back to their communities to become teachers. GYO programs address the dual goals of alleviating the teacher shortage, while improving workforce diversity to better reflect the K-12 student population by creating a sustainable pipeline of educators who are members of the community in which they teach, particularly in urban and isolated rural districts. (Albert Shankar Institute, 2005)

## Teacher Academy/ Educators Rising: High-Impact Recommendations

### High-Impact Recommendations

1. Amend current licensure guidelines for Teacher Academy teachers.
2. Establish a Board for Teacher Academies that compares to health-related careers board to guide the work of Teacher Academies.
3. Develop a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) for Teacher Academy teachers for on-going professional support of Teacher Academy teachers.
4. Restructure Teacher Academy with two tracks.
  - CTE, which would lead to certification to work in day-care and/or possibly as a paraprofessional.
  - Candidates who meet admittance requirements, ACT score of twenty-one (21) or above or CORE and want to earn college credit through dual enrollment in a Teacher Academy will participate in the high school campus, not CTE center. Candidates have potential to earn 6-9 hours of college credit in high school. Ensure program embeds clinical experiences. Experiences should be provided at middle school level, as well as elementary.
5. Collaborate with Workforce Development to encourage support for the profession.

## Paraprofessionals and Classified Staff: High-Impact Recommendations

### High-Impact Recommendations

1. Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) should allow candidates to work and be enrolled in a Teacher Education Program. EPPs and LEAs must leverage the unique position of paraprofessionals and classified staff in the design of course-work and practicum experiences.
2. LEAs should require and encourage paraprofessionals and classified staff to attend professional development. Mississippi should engage in developing a continuing education system for assistant teachers and paraprofessionals—potentially through micro-credentialing.
3. The MDE should develop a portrait of a learner-ready teacher in Mississippi for EPPs.
4. EPPs and LEAs who partner to prepare paraprofessionals and classified staff should require candidates to commit to teaching in the local district for no less than three (3) years.
5. LEAs should begin hiring more paraprofessionals and classified staff at the secondary level with a goal of building a pipeline of secondary education teachers.

## Community Colleges and Postsecondary: High-Impact Recommendations

### High-Impact Recommendations

1. The MDE in conjunction with the State Board of Education should remove the sole National Board-Certified Teacher (NBCT) requirement that currently exists for districts desiring to develop a Teacher Academy program. It is recommended that districts are provided with other viable options for staffing and developing the program.
2. The MDE Office of Teaching and Leading should track Teacher Academy students by assigning a license number while in the program using the Educator Licensure Management System (ELMS). Students will not have an actual license, but rather a Teacher Academy student certificate that contains future license numbers.
3. The MDE, in conjunction with the Institutions of High Learning (IHL), universities and colleges across the state, should be encouraged to develop scholarship opportunities and/or dual credit transitions from Teacher Academies to higher learning institutions in Mississippi.
4. The MDE should create a statewide marketing campaign that will advertise and market the prestige of the Mississippi teaching profession. Marketing will be tailored to both high school and college students.
5. The legislature should amend the current Mississippi legislation with the state-level technical amendment to delete the words "Foundations of Reading" exam – replace the actual name with the terms "rigorous reading assessment."
6. The legislature should amend the current Mississippi legislation to develop optional flexibility (e.g. course credit, other exams, major coursework, etc.) in lieu of the "Foundations of Reading" exam.

# 2016–2020 Strategic Plan

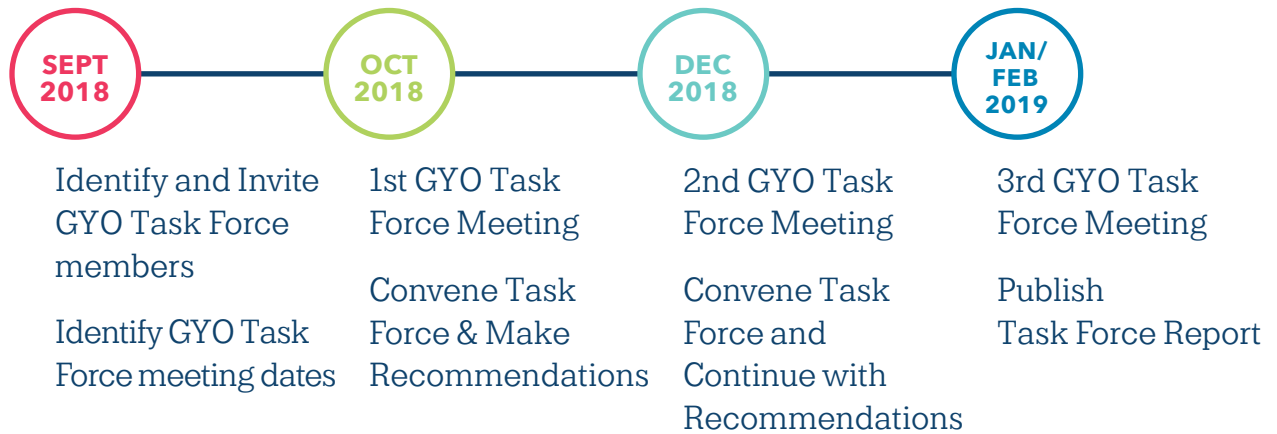
The Mississippi Department of Education is charged with supporting local school districts to help them attain the Mississippi State Board of Education’s vision and goals. The Board’s bold vision for a worldclass education system and the agency’s philosophy of operating in the best interest of students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

The Mississippi State Board of Education Strategic Plan sets the roadmap for continually 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.

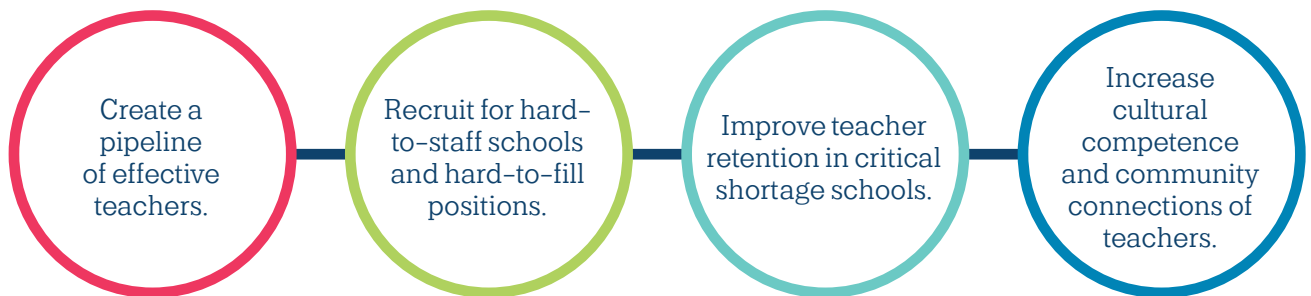
## 2016–2020 Strategic Plan Goals:

<p><b>1</b></p> <p>All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas</p> 	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career</p> 	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program</p> 
<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders</p> 	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Every Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes</p> 	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>Every School and District is Rated “C” or Higher</p> 

## Grow-Your-Own Task Force Timeline:



## Goals of the GYO initiative are as follows:



### To support these goals, the MDE:

Convened a Task Force to:

- Develop Grow-Your-Own (GYO) prototypes to be implemented with the following subgroups: Teacher Academics & Educators Rising (HS Students), Paraprofessionals and Classified Staff, and Community Colleges and Postsecondary Partnerships
- Propose ways to facilitate co-constructed partnerships between Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs)
- Identify potential districts to pilot a Mississippi Grow-Your-Own (GYO) Program
- Develop systems to maintain ongoing communication with GYO participants and track their progress from teacher preparation programs to the classroom
- Develop recruitment strategies to help districts to recruit non-licensed staff and community members

The MDE’s goal is to provide guidance, strategies, and support for school districts to establish and maintain a local GYO program. In December 2018, the MDE convened the Grow-Your-Own Task Force to develop structures for the program. The task force was charged with creating a blueprint for co-constructing partnerships between districts, EPPs, and community colleges to address teacher workforce challenges and to implement GYO strategies.



# Review of Grow-Your-Own Literature

Given the severity of the current (and projected) teacher shortage in Mississippi, the need to implement strategies to recruit and retain effective teachers has never been more urgent.

The teacher shortage typically adversely affects schools and districts with traditionally underserved populations, such as those with high poverty rates and high minority populations, to a greater degree than other schools and districts (Schwartzbeck, Prince, Redfield, Morris, & Hammer, 2003; Espinoza, Saunders, Kini, & Darling-Hammond, 2018; Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Recruitment and retention strategies,

then, should largely focus on approaches likely to result in a sustainable, high-quality teacher workforce for schools and districts currently without equitable access to effective teachers.

Addressing the critical teacher shortage typically involves two types of strategies - incentives (often financial) to accept or remain in hard-to-staff positions and strategies to “strengthen the pipeline of qualified teachers” (Hanover Research, 2016). Strategies to “strengthen the pipeline of qualified teachers” include Grow-Your-Own (GYO) models which purport to recruit and prepare teachers already invested in their communities, thus creating opportunities for more diversity in the workforce and a better chance of teacher retention as people serve their children and their neighbors in their own communities (Espinoza et al., 2018; Valenzuela, 2017).

## EPP Graduates

AS OF 07/27/2018

Educator Preparation Provider	Total Completers 2016-17	% Employed
Alcorn State University	14	79%
Belhaven University	71	72%
Blue Mountain College	32	75%
Delta State University	63	78%
Jackson State University	47	74%
Millsaps College	4	25%
Mississippi College	89	64%
Mississippi State University	279	81%
Mississippi University for Women	29	79%
Mississippi Valley State University	11	73%
Rust College	0	0%
Tougaloo College	3	100%
University of Mississippi	301	54%
University of Southern Mississippi	218	68%
William Carey	122	80%
MS Alternative Pathways to Quality Teachers*	90	87%
Teach For America*	67	76%
Teach MS Institute @ MSU*	5	80%
Teach MS Institute @ UM*	151	75%
Teach MS Institute @ USM*	5	80%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>COMPLETED: 1,601</b>	<b>AVERAGE 74%</b>

## Impact on Teacher Shortage

Grow-Your-Own strategies have the potential to significantly impact the teacher shortage over time when implemented as part of a comprehensive plan to attract and retain teachers. In a study of the empirical literature regarding the supply and demand of the teaching force, Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley (2006) examined the characteristics of people who enter the teaching labor force as well as the perceptions of those who do not and found people with higher “opportunity costs” (those rewards and compensation that would be available with other jobs for which they could qualify) were less likely to enter the teaching force, and white women were the most likely when there were not many other available options (i.e., lower “opportunity costs”).

Other studies have shown a number of reasons why people, especially people of color, did not enter the teaching force, including the cost of educator preparation, low salary, lack of

\* Alternate Route Programs



“prestige” or a dismissive view of the profession, difficulty with required assessments and/or college coursework, and attraction to other career fields (Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Guarino et al., 2006; Hunter-Boykin, 1992; Hunt, Kalmes, Haller, Hood, & Hesbol, 2012; Skinner, 2010). Recruitment strategies, including GYO programs, should include intentional actions to mitigate the barriers that deter people from entering the teaching profession.

Although recruiting teachers is important, retaining teachers must also be thoughtfully considered, especially in hard-to-staff schools. Therefore, it is critical to examine teacher preferences to understand what makes them stay (Reininger, 2012) in addition to understanding causes of teacher attrition (Sutcher et al., 2016). When examining why teachers leave the profession or transfer to other jobs, many reasons have been identified, including challenging working conditions, poor preparation, lack of classroom support, lack of administrative support, few opportunities for career advancement, lack of housing options in rural communities, and low salaries (Partee, 2014; Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Schwartzbeck et al., 2003; Sutcher et al., 2016).

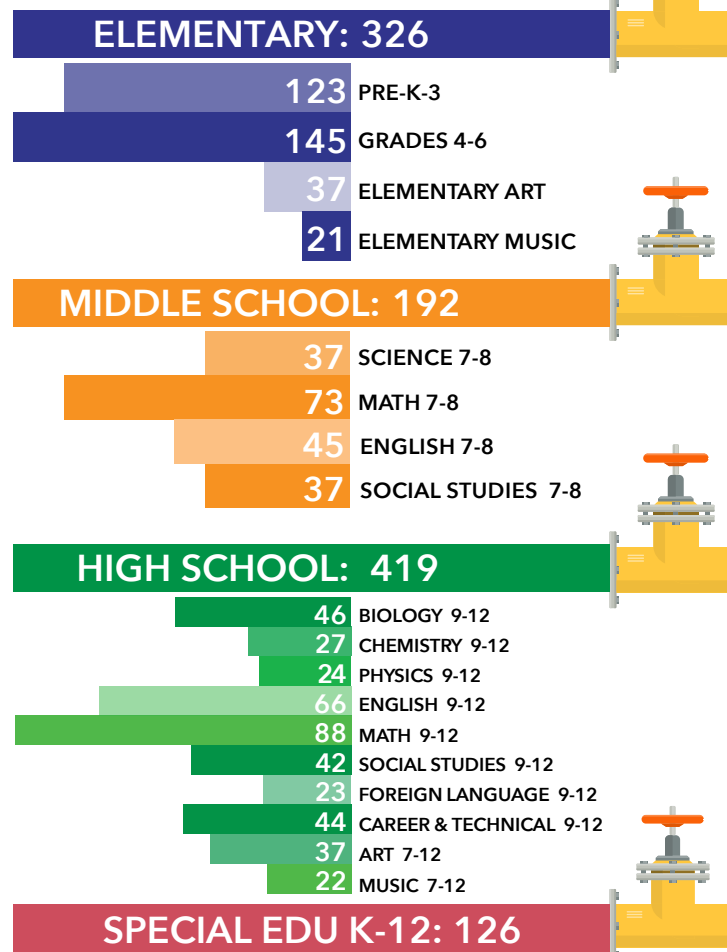
Additionally, teachers certified through an alternate route (instead of completing a traditional education preparation program) leave the profession at significantly higher rates than teachers prepared through a traditional educator preparation program (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Espinosa et al., 2018; Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Sutcher et al., 2016). Therefore, strategies to reduce teacher attrition should address these issues wherever possible.

**Considered a “high-retention pathway” (Espinosa et al., 2018), GYO programs are showing promise in addressing some of the root causes of the teacher shortage in hard-to-staff schools and districts. From recruitment programs in middle and high schools, colleges and universities, and for non-certified staff already employed in schools, to student loan forgiveness options and scholarships to teacher academies and residencies, to other models, GYO programs are designed to address barriers that deter entry into the teacher labor force while capitalizing on the reasons teachers stay in hard-to-staff schools.**

Studies have repeatedly shown teachers tend to work in schools close to home or schools with similar characteristics to the schools they attended (e.g., Engel, Jacob, & Curran, 2014; Miller, 2012; Reininger, 2012). Additionally, teachers of color were more likely to teach in hard-to-staff schools within their communities with high minority populations and had higher retention rates than their white colleagues in these schools (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Sexton, 2010; Hunt et al., 2012; Partee, 2014). Therefore, GYO strategies--recruiting people from within the communities they serve--can provide a supply of teachers who already have the cultural capital, social networks, and community investment without experiencing issues such as needing time for acculturation, social and geographical isolation, and inadequate housing opportunities that may impede other recruitment and retention efforts.

## Mississippi Teaching Vacancies by Content Area and Grade

1,063 AS OF 7/27/2018



## Impact on Student Achievement

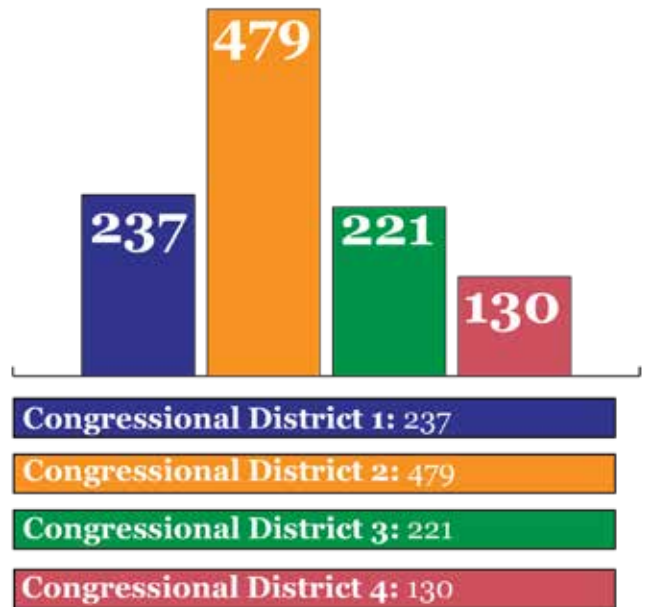
Grow-Your-Own strategies also have the potential to significantly impact student achievement in Mississippi. As several studies have reported positive correlations between teacher experience and student achievement (Kini & Podolsky, 2016; Podolsky et al., 2016), it is no surprise that hard-to-staff schools--many with underserved populations of low-income families and high percentages of minority students--often have high turnover rates and underachieving students (Hanover Research, 2016; Hanushek, Rivkin, & Schiman, 2016; Hunt et al., 2012). These schools tend to have much higher numbers of long-term substitutes, inexperienced teachers, and teachers not fully endorsed to teach the classes to which they are assigned, accompanied by high rates of teacher attrition (Espinosa et al., 2018; Hunt et al., 2012; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013; Sutchter et al., 2016).

This lack of equity in consistent access to fully endorsed, effective teachers over time has resulted in chronically underserved populations of students in specific geographical areas, districts, and schools and has created a cycle of poverty and poor educational opportunity that have been difficult to overcome (Espinosa et al., 2018; Hunt et al., 2012; Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

To improve student achievement in underserved geographical areas, districts, and schools, strategies must be implemented that successfully recruit qualified, effective teachers, but also **KEEP** them so that the benefits of experience are realized (Hunt et al., 2012; Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

## Mississippi Teacher Vacancies by Congressional District

AS OF 7/27/18



Additionally, these strategies should include intentional recruitment and retention specifically of teachers of color, as recent studies have shown positive student achievement gains as well as higher graduation rates, better student attendance, advanced-level course participation, and higher rates of participation in college entrance exams when students of color were paired with a same-race teacher (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Dee, 2004; Hanover Research, 2016; Hunt et al., 2012; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Because GYO models, by definition, strive to recruit people from the communities where they live, these strategies could conceivably not only work to recruit more teachers in number, but they also hold the possibility of significantly diversifying the teacher labor force in communities with high minority populations. Such diversification could result in significant improvements in student outcomes for traditionally underserved students (Valenzuela, 2017).

## Lessons Learned

**Examining reports of the results from various types of Grow-Your-Own programs and models has provided insight into factors contributing to their success as well as challenges faced.**

A common theme in programs considered effective was a strong partnership between colleges and universities and the other organizations involved throughout the teacher pipeline continuum, including community-based organizations, state agencies, and local school districts (Adams & Manuel, 2016; Gist, Bianco, & Lynn, 2018; Hanover Research, 2016; Skinner, 2010; Valenzuela, 2017).

Other characteristics of successful GYO models included advising plans that eliminated unnecessary coursework; early advising and increased course loads to accelerate teacher placement; assistance applying for certifications; increased financial support during the program, such as tuition scholarships; and after-placement aid, such as teacher workshop funding (Hunt, Gardner, Hood, & Haller, 2011; Valenzuela, 2017).

Though the literature on effective Grow-Your-Own models is limited, some evaluations of existing programs showing success have been completed (Hanover Research, 2016; Valenzuela, 2017), providing the basis for recommendations for future programs as well as some lessons learned. Valenzuela (2017) examined four (4) effective GYO programs, including The South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) Teacher Cadet program and the Pathways2Teaching program at the University of Colorado Denver (UCD), and found common themes included offering dual credit to high school participants and providing them with field experiences.

Hanover Research (2016) examined several successful GYO programs, including district-sponsored GYO programs in Florida, Minnesota, and Texas that had been identified as effective by third party. The research revealed the GYO models in Florida and Texas included recruiting and exposure to the teaching profession in middle schools and high schools as well as courses in high schools to provide experience in the field as students were making decisions regarding their career pursuits. In Minnesota, Minneapolis Public Schools recruited from within the district for their fifteen (15) month residency program leading to a license in elementary education, which included a salary plus benefits for participants as well as a “year-long co-teaching experience” (Hanover Research, 2016). The models in both Florida and Minnesota noted working closely with partner universities.



Challenges for several GYO programs were identified as well. Program completion and retention, not recruitment, proved to be significant challenges for the Grow-Your-Own Illinois Initiative, with over half of the candidates dropping out (Hunt et al., 2012). The majority of candidates had difficulty passing the required basic skills test; most candidates worked either full-time or part-time while in the program; and over 75% of candidates had dependents, contributing to program attrition and ultimately leading to reduced program funding (Hunt et al., 2012).

Similarly, Adams and Manuel (2016) noted barriers experienced by multi-lingual candidates in Washington and suggested supports such as academic tutoring, flexible scheduling, assistance in test preparation, and networking opportunities enabling candidates to collaborate as well as recommending that at the state-level, testing requirements and their impact on “underrepresented populations” in the teaching profession be examined.

Skinner (2010) noted comparable challenges in Chicago for candidates in Project Nueva Generación for whom English is a second language, and Irizarry (2007) observed these challenges as the director of Project TEACH and suggested the same types of supports, noting financial, academic, and social support, including mentoring, were provided before candidates were admitted to Project TEACH through what he terms “the induction years”. Irizarry credited these supports and the strong partnerships between a community-based organization, a local university, and a school district for the success of the program.

# Grow-Your-Own Task Force

The task force included persons from critical shortage school districts, educators, students, educator preparation providers (EPPs), community colleges, educator associations, classified employees, community members and/or business partners.

## Task Force

### BUSINESS COMMUNITY

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Mississippi Economic Council

### PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY

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Kellogg Foundation

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Mississippi Professional Educators

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Mississippi First

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### INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

#### Dr. Susan Lee

### MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION

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### PRIVATE-HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY

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William Carey University

### PUBLIC-HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY

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#### Dr. Kalanya Moore

Mississippi Valley State

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Oxford Public School District

### DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

#### Dr. Tony McGee

Scott County Public  
School District

### DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

#### Dr. Lisa Langford

Calhoun County School District

### HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR

#### Catherine Melchi

Ocean Springs School District

### HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR

#### William Murphy

Sunflower County School District

### FEDERAL PROGRAMS OFFICER

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### SCHOOL LEADER

#### Stephanie Crowell

Quitman County School District

### SCHOOL LEADER

#### Amanda Johnson

Clarksdale Collegiate  
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Quitman School District

### MS TEACHER OF THE YEAR

#### Whitney Drewrey

Lafayette County School District

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# State Board of Education

The Mississippi State Board of Education's vision is 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. The Board sets policies and standards that advance public education in Mississippi. The Governor appoints five Board members, and the Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives each appoint two Board members.



**CHAIR**  
**Jason S. Dean, Ph.D.**  
Term expires July 2024  
At-Large Representative



**VICE-CHAIR**  
**Buddy Bailey**  
Term expires July 2023  
Administrator Representative



**Rosemary G. Aultman**  
Term expires July 2022  
At-Large Representative



**Karen Elam, Ph.D.**  
Term expires July 2021  
3rd Supreme Court District Representative



**Johnny Franklin**  
Term expires July 2025  
1st Supreme Court District Representative



**John R. Kelly, Ph.D.**  
Term expires July 2020  
2nd Supreme Court District Representative



**Charles McClelland**  
Term expires July 2019  
At-Large Representative



**Brittany Rye**  
Term expires July 2027  
Teacher Representative



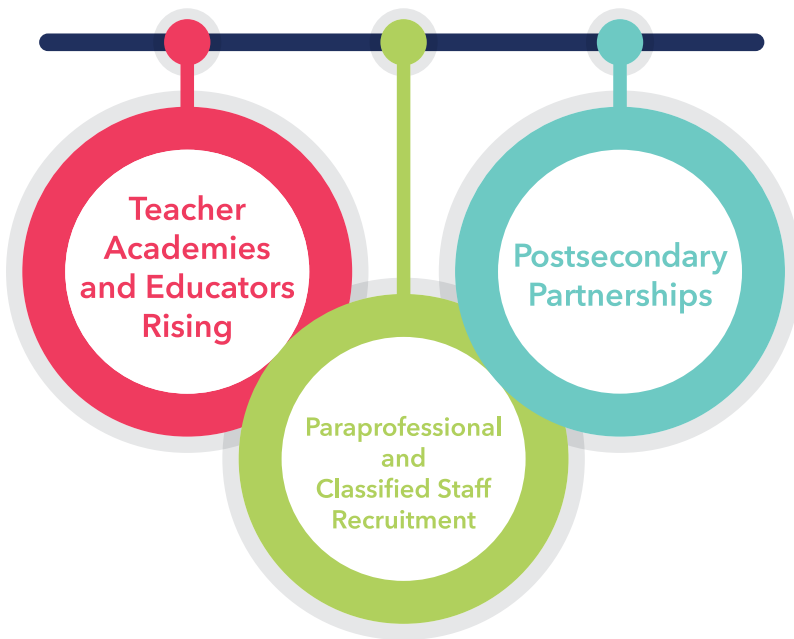
**Sean Suggs**  
Term expires July 2026  
At-Large Representative



**Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.**  
State Superintendent of Education



# Grow-Your-Own Strategies



The Grow-Your-Own (GYO) initiative includes three strategies aimed at developing a sustainable teacher workforce in communities with the greatest critical shortage challenges. These strategies include developing and/or strengthening Teacher Academies and Educators Rising chapters in critical shortage school districts, developing structured partnerships between critical shortage school districts and EPPs; and developing community college partnerships with critical shortage school districts and EPPs. The task force will create structures for implementation of these strategies.



## Teacher Academies and Educators Rising— Middle and High School Students

Current high school students are a significant pool of future teachers. A strategy for attracting and recruiting future minority teachers, particularly those in communities with large minority student populations, is to encourage, foster and support students who have expressed interest in teaching.

Teacher Academies and Educators Rising Chapters are designed to do just that. The MDE currently coordinates Teacher Academy programs and Educators Rising chapters to identify students interested in education.

Teacher Academy is a high school program with courses designed to attract students to the field of education, provide information and field experiences relevant to pursuing a degree in education, as well as prepare students for the rigors of a career in education and remain long-term educators. The Teacher Academy pathway includes classroom and hands-on experiences that will prepare students for an educator preparation program and a career in education.

Educators Rising is a national organization that provides prospective teachers the experience and skills that are needed to be ready for the classroom. Starting with high school students, Educators Rising provides passionate young people with hands-on teaching experience, sustains interest in the profession, and helps cultivate the skills that are needed to be successful educators. The result is a pipeline of well-prepared teachers who are positioned to make a lasting difference—not only in the lives of students, but also in the field of teaching more broadly.



# Grow-Your-Own Strategies

## Paraprofessional and Classified Staff Recruitment

During the 2016-2017 school year, over 8,500 paraprofessionals worked in schools throughout the state. GYO strategies will provide support mechanisms to enable paraprofessionals and classified staff members to earn teacher licensure through a traditional or alternate route preparation program. To ensure participants' success and retention, the partnership will provide a full array of supports including advising, coaching, tuition assistance, and mentoring.



## Postsecondary Partnerships

Community college students represent a relatively untapped pool of potential teachers. By some estimates, nearly half of community college students represent minority groups. In addition, a series of studies conducted from 1999 through 2001 revealed that nearly one-fifth of all candidates entering the teaching force began their postsecondary school education at the community college level and that more than half of the community colleges have dedicated teacher preparation programs.

# Leveraging State and Federal Funding

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## State Funding

Each year, funding for state-level programs in Mississippi is primarily allocated through appropriations approved by the Mississippi State Legislature. In leveraging state funds for Mississippi's Grow-Your-Own (GYO) programs, a statewide needs assessment will be conducted to ensure that interested school districts will have the resources needed to effectively develop activities associated with the program.

The central aim of GYO programs is to improve teaching and learning, especially in high needs schools, by recruiting and preparing community level paraprofessionals (Madda, 2009) and professionals who did not receive training from a traditional educator preparation provider.

The pioneering Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Legislation of 1998 set the stage for GYO strategies.

These initiatives include the following:

- Critical Needs Teacher Scholarship Program;
- William F. Winter Teacher Scholar Loan Program;
- Beginning Teacher/Mentoring Program;
- Mississippi Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant Program and the
- Mississippi Employer-Assisted Housing Teacher Program

Several of the initiatives have not been funded in recent years; however, school districts across the state have addressed the need for initiatives that assist them in attracting, recruiting, and retaining teachers. Each of the state-funded initiatives will open a pipeline for not only attracting and recruiting teachers but retaining them as well. If these programs are funded, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), in collaboration with the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), will be able to collect longitudinal data showing the effects of these programs.

In addition, an annual statewide Grow-Your-Own Educators Summit is proposed and will provide professional development to school district leaders from across the state who are interested in developing a local program for recruiting and retaining teachers. The summit will also provide school district leaders with strategies, resources, and recommendations to sustain their GYO programs and associated activities.

## Federal Funding

One of the purposes of Title II, Part A of *The Every Student Succeeds Act* is to increase the number of teachers, principals, and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools. In carrying out this purpose, the statute outlines how funds should be utilized to develop and implement initiatives to assist with recruiting, hiring, and retaining effective teachers, particularly in low-income schools with high percentages of students who do not meet the challenging state academic standards. The program requires districts to improve equity in the distribution of teachers and provides the following initiatives as examples of how Title II, Part A funds may be utilized as outlined in *ESEA section 2103(b)(3)(B)* and *ESEA section 2103(b)(3)(C)*.

Title II, Part A funds can be used to provide:

- expert help in screening candidates and enabling early hiring;
- differential and incentive pay for teachers, principals, or other school leaders in high-need academic subject areas and specialty areas, which may include performance-based pay systems;
- teacher, paraprofessional, principal, or other school leader advancement and professional growth, and an emphasis on leadership opportunities, multiple career paths, and pay differentiation;
- new teacher, principal, or other school leader induction and mentoring programs that are designed to increase the retention of effective teachers, principals, or other school leaders;
- recruiting qualified individuals from other fields to become teachers, principals, or other school leaders, including mid-career professionals from other occupations, former military personnel, and recent graduates of institutions of higher education with records of academic distinction who demonstrate potential to become effective teachers, principals, or other school leaders.

Also, a school operating a schoolwide program may use Title I, Part A funds for any activity that supports the needs of students in the school as identified through the comprehensive needs assessment and articulated in the schoolwide plan (*ESEA section 1114(b)*). Thus, Title I-A funds can be used to recruit and retain effective teachers, particularly in high-need subjects (*ESEA section 1114(b)(7)(A)(iii)(IV)*).

Like Title I, Part A and Title II, Part A, Title III funds are available to assist educators in developing and enhancing their capacity to provide effective instructional programs designed to prepare English learners, including immigrant children and youth, to enter all-English instructional settings (*ESSA section 3102(4)*). Title III, Part A funds can be used for the recruitment of, and support for, personnel, including teachers and paraprofessionals who have been specifically trained or are being trained to provide services to immigrant children and youth where districts are experiencing substantial increases in Immigrant Children and Youth (*ESEA section 3115(e)(1)(B)*).

Finally, districts that receive Title V, Part B, Subpart 2 funds may also use their allocation to support any or all the previously mentioned activities (*ESEA section 5222(a)*).

# Teacher Academy/ Educators Rising

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## HIGH-PRIORITY LEGISLATIVE/ MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ACTIONS

1. Seek scholarship funding for GYO programs.
2. Encourage legislative support through communications that speak positively about education and the teaching profession.

## TEACHER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION SEA / LEA STRATEGIES

1. Recruit students, as early as 4th-5th grade and promote the profession. Include teaching as a profession in career fairs and invite elementary students.
2. Identify high school seniors who plan to choose education as a college major. Host state-wide signing day in conjunction with EPPs for future teacher candidates.
3. Provide a cord for students who complete Teacher Academy program. High school graduations recognize students planning to choose education as a college major.
4. Develop clear pathways to licensure: beginning with Teacher Academy, progressing through community college and culminating with a four-year institution.
5. Provide teaching scholarships to high school students.
6. Promote the Educators Rising program and encourage high schools to establish a chapter of the Educators Rising Program.

## Teacher Academy / Educators Rising: High-Impact Recommendations

### High-Impact Recommendations

1. Amend current licensure guidelines for Teacher Academy teachers.
2. Establish a Board for Teacher Academies that compares to health-related careers board to guide the work of Teacher Academies.
3. Develop a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) for Teacher Academy teachers for on-going professional support of Teacher Academy teachers.
4. Restructure Teacher Academy with two tracks.
  - CTE, which would lead to certification to work in day-care and/or possibly as a paraprofessional.
  - Candidates who meet admittance requirements, ACT score of twenty-one (21) or above or CORE and want to earn college credit through dual enrollment in a Teacher Academy will participate in the high school campus, not CTE center. Candidates have potential to earn 6-9 hours of college credit in high school. Ensure program embeds clinical experiences. Experiences should be provided at middle school level, as well as elementary.
5. Collaborate with Workforce Development to encourage support for the profession.

# Paraprofessionals and Classified Staff

## HIGH-PRIORITY LEGISLATIVE/ MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ACTIONS

1. The MDE and Mississippi Legislature should create a pathway for individuals who majored in Teacher Education but changed their major and earned a non-teaching degree. However, individuals did complete a degree program.
2. The Mississippi Legislature should allocate appropriate funding from the Complete 2 Compete program to support Mississippians who hold an interest in teaching.
3. The Mississippi Legislature should appropriate funding to support paraprofessionals and classified staff with tuition assistance.
4. Postsecondary institutions should implement a differentiated tuition scale for teacher education.

## TEACHER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION SEA / LEA STRATEGIES

1. The MDE should revise the Continuing Education Unit (CEU) process to include focused professional learning, **at no cost to educators.**
2. The MDE should develop a state-wide teacher communication website to connect and update teachers on teacher recruitment and retention strategies.

## Paraprofessionals and Classified Staff: High-Impact Recommendations

### High-Impact Recommendations

1. Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) and LEAs should allow candidates to work and be enrolled in a Teacher Education Program. EPPs and LEAs must leverage the unique position of paraprofessionals and classified staff in the design of course-work and practicum experiences.
2. LEAs should require and encourage paraprofessionals and classified staff to attend professional development. Mississippi should engage in developing a continuing education system for assistant teachers and paraprofessionals—potentially through micro-credentialing.
3. The MDE should develop a portrait of a learner-ready teacher in Mississippi for EPPs.
4. EPPs and LEAs who partner to prepare paraprofessionals and classified staff should require candidates to commit to teaching in the local district for no less than three (3) years.
5. LEAs should begin hiring more paraprofessionals and classified staff at the secondary level with a goal of building a pipeline of secondary education teachers.



# Community Colleges and Postsecondary Partnerships

## HIGH-PRIORITY LEGISLATIVE/ MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ACTIONS

1. Amend the Mississippi legislation to provide an increase in resources for programs and activities outlined in the 1998 Critical Teacher Shortage legislation. An addition should be incorporated into this legislation referencing a requirement for school districts to mandate teacher exit surveys, that will be given to each teacher leaving/resigning from the district.
2. Amend the current Mississippi legislation to provide differential college tuition for those majoring in education, to curb the teacher shortage. As a Return on Investment (ROI), teachers receiving differentiated tuition will sign a five (5) year contract to teach in a public school in Mississippi.
3. Amend the current Mississippi legislation to provide more support programs and professional development to those administrators who graduate from non-Mississippi educational leadership/administration programs.
4. Limit reciprocity certification for administrators seeking employment in Mississippi, unless they have at least three (3) years of experience in school administration from another state(s).
5. Allocate funding and resources to provide support to Mississippi school administrators in the field/area of cultural responsiveness, especially among prospective teachers that receive(d) a leadership degree from an out-of-state institution of higher learning.
6. Develop articulation agreements for students who enroll in a Teacher Academy program and/or have an interest in teaching in Mississippi. The articulation agreement should be developed between Career-Technical Education (CTE), community colleges, and one (or more) of the fifteen (15) educator preparation institutions in the state.

## TEACHER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION SEA/LEA STRATEGIES

1. Encourage educator preparation programs to provide teacher mentoring and induction support to local/nearby school districts.
2. Develop a state-wide teacher communication network in order to better communicate, unite, and update teachers, as needed.
3. Provide various tracks for teacher leadership endorsements and/or activities in collaboration with institutions of higher learning within the state.

## Community Colleges and Postsecondary Partnerships: High-Impact Recommendations

### High-Impact Recommendations

1. The MDE in conjunction with the State Board of Education should remove the sole National Board-Certified Teacher (NBCT) requirement that currently exists for districts desiring to develop a Teacher Academy program. It is recommended that districts are provided with other viable options for staffing and developing the program.
2. The MDE Office of Teaching and Leading should track Teacher Academy students by assigning a license number while in the program using the Educator Licensure Management System (ELMS). Students will not have an actual license, but rather a Teacher Academy student certificate that contains future license numbers.
3. The MDE, in conjunction with the Institutions of High Learning (IHL), universities and colleges across the state, should be encouraged to develop scholarship opportunities and/or dual credit transitions from Teacher Academies to higher learning institutions in Mississippi.
4. The MDE should create a statewide marketing campaign that will advertise and market the prestige of the Mississippi teaching profession. Marketing will be tailored to both high school and college students.
5. The legislature should amend the current Mississippi legislation with a state-level technical amendment to delete the words "Foundations of Reading" exam and replace the actual name with the terms "rigorous reading assessment."
6. The legislature should amend the current Mississippi legislation to develop optional flexibility (e.g. course credit, other exams, major coursework, etc.) in lieu of the "Foundations of Reading" exam.



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# Notes



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# Notes



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# Portrait of a Mississippi Teacher

## ADVOCATE

For positive relationships with ALL students, peers, and families

For students in a manner that respects the diversity of ALL

For the positive perception of the teaching profession

For the mastery of rigorous learning standards for ALL students

## CULTIVATE

A safe learning environment for students

An attitude of a self-starter

Continuous learning and innovative practices

Collaborative professional learning environments

## EMPOWER

Students to be college and career ready

Students to work collaboratively in a student-centered learning environment

Students to be creative and innovative in their learning

Students to persevere



MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright *future* for every child