

Chapter 2: Organization of the State Board

Rule 2.3 Student Representatives of the Mississippi State Board of Education

Purpose: The Mississippi State Board of Education (State Board), in an effort to include student perspectives on state educational policies, laws and regulations, shall incorporate student representation in a non-voting capacity by and through the appointed position of Student Representative of the State Board.

The Student Representative will serve as a link between board level policy and the classroom. The Student Representative will serve as a trustee on behalf of Mississippi students and will be charged with providing perspectives on issues of interest to students and ensure student's voices are represented. The Student Representative will be responsible for attending State Board meetings as well as standing committee(s) or subcommittee(s) to which he or she may be assigned. Unless invited to attend by an affirmative vote of a majority of the State Board, the Student Representative may not attend Executive Sessions of the State Board. Student Representatives will be excused from school to attend State Board meetings as official school business.

Term of Service: Through a competitive application process, the State Board will appoint one rising junior and one rising senior to serve as Student Representatives consecutively in the initial year of program implementation. The senior representative's term will end on April 30th due to graduation. The junior representative will promote to a senior representative and will continue to serve for a second year and a new junior will be appointed annually. The term of service for rising juniors will begin on July 1st of Year 1 and will end on April 30th of Year 2.

Eligibility: Students who meet the following criteria are eligible to apply for the Student Representative program:

1. Any student who is a Mississippi resident, enrolled in a Mississippi public high school or charter school, and who will be enrolled in good standing in the eleventh grade (or twelfth grade in the 2019-2020 school year) may apply. Confirmation of eligibility will be received from the high school counselor as part of the application process.
2. A student must have an overall grade point average of 2.5 or above. Confirmation of eligibility will be received from the high school counselor as part of the application process.

Upon appointment, Student Representatives must maintain eligibility throughout the term of service.

Application: The Office of Educational Accountability will prepare and disseminate an application packet to all public high schools and charter schools in Mississippi. The application packet will also be posted on the Mississippi Department of Education web site. Students must complete all application requirements and submit the application to the Mississippi Department of Education by the deadline to be considered for the program.

Application requirements will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Student must submit at least 3 recommendation letters (from a teacher who has instructed the student, an administrator, and other adult who knows the student but is not a family member).
2. Student must agree to provide his/her own transportation to board meetings, activities, and events. Student Representatives will be reimbursed for approved travel expenses such as mileage, lodging and meals incurred while traveling on official board business upon submission of a claim to the State Superintendent based upon the guidelines established by the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) in accordance with § 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated.
3. Student must have written consent of a parent or guardian, as well as the approval of the principal and district superintendent to apply for the Student Representative position.
4. Student must have written confirmation from his/her counselor that the eligibility requirements have been met.
5. Student must provide responses to the essay questions.
6. Student will have the opportunity to highlight his/her extracurricular activities, community and volunteer service, work experience and academic achievements and honors.

Screening: Immediately following the application deadline, the Office of Educational Accountability will review the applications received to ensure all application requirements have been met for candidates to be considered for an interview. Applicants who do not meet all eligibility criteria and application requirements will be automatically disqualified. Applications received after the deadline for submission will be disqualified. All qualified applications will be screened as follows:

1. The School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee Chair will work with the State Superintendent to appoint an internal Ad-Hoc Screening Committee of five members composed of one School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee member and four Mississippi Department of Education staff.
2. The Screening Committee will review all qualified applications and rate each application holistically, selecting at least the top 10 semifinalists who reflect the best cross-section of the many outstanding students who apply.

Interview and Appointment: The interview and appointment process will be conducted as follows:

1. The semifinalists will be interviewed by the School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee of the State Board.
2. The School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee will recommend no more than four finalists to the State Board for an interview. One junior representative and one senior representative will be appointed by the State Board in the program implementation year. Subsequently, only one junior representative will be appointed by the State Board annually.

3. The School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee will document the next highest scoring candidates in rank order should an alternate(s) be needed to fulfill the duties of a Student Representative(s) during his/her term.

Duties and Responsibilities: Upon appointment by the State Board, the Student Representative shall, at minimum, fulfill the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Attending monthly State Board meetings is required in addition to attendance of special called meetings or other meetings or events as requested by the Board Chair. When a school activity prevents a Student Representative from attending a State Board meeting, he/she should provide notice to the State Board Chair. Additional absences should be limited to no more than two absences per fiscal year.
2. Preparing for State Board meetings by reviewing the packet of board meeting materials provided prior to the meetings.
3. Attending a one-day orientation session.
4. Participating actively in the discussions of the State Board by listening, observing and providing meaningful input.
5. Working harmoniously with other State Board members and Mississippi Department of Education staff.
6. Accepting the will of the majority vote of the State Board in all cases and giving support to the resulting policy.
7. Developing a thorough understanding of current educational issues, State laws, policies, and regulations that directly impact Mississippi students and sharing this info with high school students statewide.
8. Serving as a spokesman for student viewpoints in policy decisions directly influencing students and communicating with students frequently. It is important that the Student Representative elicit information from students statewide and attempt to formulate objective opinions.
9. Participating in the selection process of the incoming Student Representative.
10. Serving as a mentor for the incoming Student Representative.
11. Preparing and presenting a report to the State Board at the end of the term of service that documents lessons learned and ways to strengthen the Student Representative program in the future.
12. During their senior year, Student Representatives may be given the opportunity to complete a capstone project that will be presented to the State Board and other organizations in their community and to receive academic credit for the project.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-1-3*