

# OFP Highlights

...is an update on the Office of Federal Programs' federal grants & RFPs, workshops, trainings, and opportunities relevant to MS school districts, parents, community and other stakeholders.

January 8, 2015

## New Releases & Web Postings

### ***EL and Immigrant Instructional Supports***

The Office of Federal Programs (OFP) is processing Title III, LEP and Immigrant Children and Youth applications. Award notifications are forthcoming.

OFP and SEDL are collaborating on a 3-year professional development plan. The focus of this plan is to provide Administrators, Federal Programs Coordinators, ELL Coordinators, ESL teachers, and General Education teachers with best practices and strategies for those who provide services for our English learners. High academic achievement and graduation are goals we have set for each student, and OFP will continue to provide schools and districts with the support needed to develop, implement, and sustain programs to best serve our English learners.

The FY15 LEP Financial Management Package has been placed on the OFP website. Click [here](#). This package consist of the amendment request procedures, the budget modification form, the amendment cover sheet, and the expenditure report dates and forms.

For more information, please contact:  
Office of Federal Programs  
Tarro Funches, State Title III Coordinator  
Email: [tfuncness@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:tfuncness@mde.k12.ms.us)  
Phone: 601-359-3499

### ***MS SOARS***

**MS SOARS** (Mississippi Schools Obtaining Academic Results for Success) is a web-based system for district and school leadership teams to inform, coach, sustain, track, and report improvement activities. It is also a tool to facilitate planning, implementation, and monitoring of the action steps for continuous improvement. MS SOARS is an online tool that guides research-based planning and instructional interventions based on the assessment and implementation of rapid improvement indicators.

All schools with a differentiated accountability label of **Not Meeting AMOs** are required to work in MS SOARS. Schools needing login and password information should contact the Office of Federal Programs for MS SOARS access. Detailed instructions on how to access MS SOARS and the assessment of indicators are now posted on the OFP webpage. Click [here](#).

Comprehensive plan reports and Quality of Work checklists are due **March 20, 2015**. Further information regarding training opportunities for schools and districts is forthcoming via separate correspondence.

For more information, please contact:  
Office of Federal Programs  
Betina White, MS SOARS Coordinator  
Email: [bswhite@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:bswhite@mde.k12.ms.us)  
Phone: 601-359-3499

### ***School Effectiveness Review Process (SERP) Follow-up Component January – March, 2015***

The Office of Federal Programs (OFP) continues to implement the School Effectiveness Review Process (SERP). The process is designed to offer greater support to low-performing schools and districts in the usage of *No Child Left Behind* funding. The ultimate goal of SERP is to assist districts in ensuring all federal resources are used efficiently and effectively to positively impact student achievement.

As we move toward attaining this goal the MDE is currently reviewing, processing, and approving FY15 Final CFPAs (Consolidated Federal Program Applications). Beginning in January through March 2015 we will provide follow-up support to schools and districts participating SERP. Follow-up support will focus on strengthen connection between instruction activities and the usage of federal funds in relation to improving student achievement. The general intent is to offer support for existing practices while preparing for an evening stronger FY16 planning. Affected school districts will receive official notification under a separate cover.

For more information, please contact:  
Office of Federal Programs  
Farrah Nicholson, School Support Services  
Email: [fnicholson@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:fnicholson@mde.k12.ms.us)  
Phone: 601-359-3499

### ***MCAPS – Mississippi Comprehensive Automated Performance-based System***

The new OFP online application system known as “**MCAPS**” (M-caps) **Mississippi Comprehensive Automated Performance-based System** is currently being implemented. We have conducted several formal and informal training sessions with the 26 pilot districts. All school districts will begin using MCAPS for the 2015-2016 school year. OFP will start conducting trainings for all school districts in April 2015.

The next training session for pilot districts will be held on January 20, 2015 at 10 a.m. at the Rankin County School District Board Room.

For more information, please contact:  
Office of Federal Programs  
Mariea B. Jackson, Title II & Title VI Director  
Email: [mbanks@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:mbanks@mde.k12.ms.us)  
Phone: 601-359-3499

### ***FY 2015 CFPA Training Material***

The presentations and video recordings of all major sessions from the FY 2015 CFPA training are posted to [Share Point](#) and [OFP CFPA](#) website. If you were not able to attend this year's training or need to be reminded of key elements to developing your CFPA, please visit one or both of the above-mentioned sites.

### ***FY15 Final CFPA Allocations released***

For **informational and planning purposes only**, the FY15 allocations for Title I, Part A – Low Income; Title I, Part A Neglected; Title I, Part D Subpart 2 – Delinquent; Title II, Part A – Improving Teacher Quality and the *optional* SES per-pupil expenditure rates are now posted to the OFP webpage. Click [here](#).

In keeping with the continued focus on effective schools and improved student outcomes, offices in the Mississippi Department of Education are carefully assessing program plans with attention to resulting academic achievement. The intent is a thoroughly planned instructional program which guides budget considerations and directs supplementary federal program funding.

Here follows a checklist to focus on refinements or revisions to the preliminary FY15 CFPA as final plans and budgets for Title I and Title II are developed.

1. Consider specific changes to be implemented in the final FY15 CFPA as a result of the review and analysis of most recent student achievement data.
2. Consider revisions needed following the analysis of state test scores for the district as a whole and for individual schools and subgroups participating in Title I and Title II funding. Include in the review of school data the results of the 2013-14 measures of academic progress.
3. Identify components of the preliminary CFPA plan to be realigned and strengthened through renewed focus and attention.
4. Ensure schoolwide and targeted assistance plans address strategies for improvement of instruction and achievement as revealed by data analysis.
5. Address cost factors of revisions needed to ensure increases in student achievement and revise budgets accordingly.
6. Review preliminary federal program budgets to identify and strengthen the direct parallel between budget expenditures and the focus on improved outcomes, which can be quantified by test data.
7. Convene planning committees of stakeholders and, specifically, parents of participating children to strengthen overall parent involvement in ongoing educational initiatives.
8. Revise school shares and off-the-top set-asides to ensure balances with final FY15 federal program allocations.

9. Adjust budget narratives supporting the overall Title I and Title II programs and, for Title I, parent involvement, priority, and focus schools, to ensure narratives are aligned with budgets and revised plans resulting from review and analysis of achievement data.
10. Determine if all accreditation standards were met prior to the assignment of federally funded positions including administrative personnel, teachers and paraprofessionals, support services personnel, including guidance counselors, social workers, nurses, attendance, and all other personnel paid with federal funds.
11. Adjust assignments of teachers paid with federal funds based on first month enrollments to ensure non-supplanting of federal funds in teacher assignments.
12. Review district policies to determine adherence to comparability requirements in the equivalent assignment of personnel, equivalent distribution of materials and supplies, and adherence to district salary scales.
13. Review procedures to document time and effort of personnel paid from multiple funding sources.
14. Ascertain if time and effort records of personnel paid from multiple cost objects are substantiated by concurrent verifiable documentation commensurate with payroll calendars and are adjusted on a quarterly basis to actual time expended on each cost objective, if the variation in projections is exceeded by more than 10%.
15. Review the FY14 cumulative payroll for personnel paid from multiple funding sources and adjust to actual payroll amounts without variation from actual document time and effort records.

For more information, please contact:  
Office of Federal Programs  
Melanie Diggs, Director of Finance  
Email: [mdiggs@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:mdiggs@mde.k12.ms.us)  
Phone: 601-359-3499

### ***NEW – MSIS User Manual for Federal Programs***

The NEW – [MSIS User Manual](#) for Federal Programs is available for the 2014-2015 school year. The manual is located on the website of [Office of Federal Programs](#). Student. It provides step by step procedures with screen shots to guide the process for reporting accurate federal data on a monthly basis. **The manual is very important for Month 1 due Sept 30.** Also, share the manual with each schools designated MSIS personnel for accuracy in selecting the student indicators. Please print or save for daily use.

For more information, please contact:  
Office of Federal Programs  
Rhushell Moore, Data Content Specialist  
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Phone: 601-359-3499 or 601-359-3487

### ***Text to E-mail Questions***

Responding to your questions is critical to the success of your program. In an effort to enhance the efficiency and timely responses you are welcome to send questions, comments, or ideas to enhance our services by texting or emailing questions to [federalprograms2@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:federalprograms2@mde.k12.ms.us). This

tool was used during the FY 2015 CFPA training to capture questions, which have been posted to the OFP website under [FAQ](#).

## Guidance Notifications

### ***Federal Programs' Organization Affiliates***

The Office of Federal Programs has added a new link [Organization Affiliates](#) on its webpage. The Organization Affiliates page is intended to provide educators and all stakeholders' access to professional organizations specifically dedicated to improving and implementing the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The OFP encourages membership and participation in these professional organizations that provide professional development, resources, and training support for those interested in supporting the academic success of children and youth.

### ***MDE Guidance Letters to LEAs***

Policy letters have been added for the Title III, ELL & Immigrant Education and Title X, McKinney-Vento/Fostering Connections Act programs. For more information, please visit the OFP website at: [OFP Guidance Letters](#).

## News You Can Use & Friendly Reminders

### ***Early Childhood Communications***

The Mississippi Department of Education is excited to announce the provision of regional professional development trainings specifically for Title I Pre-K teachers. Based on the feedback given in the Spring 2014 Title I Survey, we have developed the trainings to meet the most-requested areas of need. Four one-day sessions, each hosted by a local school district, will provide similar professional development opportunities to attendees. In addition to presentations by MDE early childhood staff, early learning collaborative and Title I Pre-K teachers will also present at these trainings. Each training day will begin at 8:30 AM and end at 4:15 PM and will be limited to 50 participants. (Participants should only attend one training.) Participants will have the opportunity to receive CEU or SEMI credits. Questions regarding these trainings should be sent to Brittany Herrington at [bherrington@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:bherrington@mde.k12.ms.us).

### **Training Dates**

February 2nd – Meridian  
March 6th – Jackson  
March 26th – Tupelo  
March 27th – Greenville

### **Registration**

Registration will be on a first come, first serve basis. Keep in mind that these trainings are for Title I Pre-K teachers. In order to register, participants should send his/her name, position, and email address to [bherrington@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:bherrington@mde.k12.ms.us). Participants may register individually or may send a list of names, positions, and email addresses of all the participants at one school or school district. Each participant will receive a confirmation email that will contain specific information including the site address. We encourage participants to register and attend at the site nearest their school.

district. In the event that more than 50 participants seek registration at one site, participants may be asked to attend a training at a different site near their school district.

For more information, please contact:

Office of Early Childhood

Brittany Herrington, Professional Development Coordinator

Email: [bherrington@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:bherrington@mde.k12.ms.us)

Phone: 601-359-2586

### ***New Authority for Uses of Title I, Part A for Homeless Students***

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) has been asked whether Title I funds may be used to meet two requirements of McKinney-Vento: (1) to provide a local homeless liaison and (2) to pay the cost to transport homeless children and youth to and from their school of origin. New authority in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 expands the allowable use of Title I funds to support these activities. The appropriations language applies to FY2015 (SY2014-2015) Title I funds and, under the authority in section 425(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), to FYs 2013 and 2014 Title I carryover funds as well. Accordingly, an LEA may spend funds from its FY 2015 Title I allocation and unobligated Title I carryover funds to pay for the homeless liaison or to transport homeless children and youth to their school of origin. For your reference, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 guidance is available just [Click here](#).

#### ***May an LEA use funds it reserves under ESEA section 1113(c)(3)(A) to pay for a homeless liaison or to provide transportation to the school of origin?***

No. Under ESEA section 1113(c)(3)(A), an LEA must reserve Title I funds, as necessary, to provide instructional and related services to homeless children and youth who attend non-Title I schools that are comparable to those services the LEA provides to children in Title I schools. The amount an LEA must reserve is dependent on the number and needs of homeless children and youth attending non-Title I schools in the LEA; if there are no such homeless children or youth, for example, the LEA would not need to reserve any funds. Reserving funds to pay the homeless liaison or to transport homeless children and youth does not satisfy an LEA's responsibilities under section 1113(c)(3)(A). Over and above those responsibilities, however, an LEA may now reserve Title I funds to pay for the homeless liaison or to transport homeless children and youth to and from their school of origin.

The intent of this question and answer simply was to make clear that, while the new authority under the appropriations act now permits an LEA to use Title I funds to support a homeless liaison and to transport homeless children and youth to their school of origin, it does not otherwise change an LEA's existing obligation under ESEA section 1113(c)(3)(A) to provide comparable Title I services to homeless children and youth who attend non-Title I schools. However, as a result of the questions that have been received, ED wishes to clarify that the existing obligation under section 1113(c)(3)(A) in no way inhibits an LEA's new authority to use Title I funds to support a homeless liaison and school-of-origin transportation. As a result, ED has revised the answer to the question to read as follows:

***May an LEA use funds it reserves under ESEA section 1113(c)(3)(A) to pay for a homeless liaison or to provide transportation to the school of origin?***

Yes. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 expanded the allowable uses of Title I, ESEA funds to include supporting a homeless liaison and transporting homeless children and youth to their school of origin. The requirement under ESEA section 1113(c)(3)(A) that an LEA set aside sufficient Title I funds to provide comparable Title I services to homeless children and youth who attend non-Title I schools does not restrict the amount of Title I funds that an LEA may decide to use under the new authority to support a homeless liaison and to transport homeless children and youth to their school of origin. As before, LEAs must continue to provide homeless children and youth with the comparable services required by ESEA section 1113(c)(3)(A), and using Title I funds to support a homeless liaison and to transport homeless children and youth to their school of origin does not satisfy an LEAs "comparable services" obligation. Note that the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires LEAs in States that receive funding under McKinney-Vento, which currently all States do, to provide a homeless liaison and to provide transportation for homeless children and youth to their school of origin, regardless of the amount of Title I funds, if any, that the LEA decides to use to support such activities.

For more information, please contact:  
Office of Federal Programs  
Barbara Greene, State Title X Coordinator  
Email: [bgreene@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:bgreene@mde.k12.ms.us)  
Phone: 601-359-3499

***Community Eligibility Provision***

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is being phased in over several years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and will be available in all States starting in the 2014-2015 school year. CEP permits eligible schools to provide meal service to all students at no charge, regardless of economic status, while reducing burden at the household and local levels by eliminating the need to obtain eligibility data from families through a separate collection.

In addition to promoting nutrition for at-risk students, these changes to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are important to the implementation of Title I, Part A because SEAs and LEAs often use NSLP data to carry out certain Title I requirements. The Office of Child Nutrition and Office of Federal Programs are working collaboratively to support LEAs and schools desiring to exercise this CEP options. [Click here](#) to access specific guidance and support material.

For more information, please contact:  
Stephanie Robinson, Office of Child Nutrition  
Email: [SNRobinson@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:SNRobinson@mde.k12.ms.us)  
Phone: 601-359-1737

Marcus Cheeks, State Director  
Office of Federal Programs  
Email: [MCheeks@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:MCheeks@mde.k12.ms.us)  
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***Champions of Change***

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Offices of Federal Programs and Special Education will honor 57 schools for academic achievement or progress during a ceremony at the MDE Central High School Building on **March 17, 2015** starting at **1:00 p.m.** MDE staff will recognize schools that have earned the title of High Progress, High Performing, Exemplary Inclusion and/or Distinguished under Federal Title I guidelines as "**Champions of Change.**"

The Federal Title I program provides funding to schools across the country for students at risk of failure and living at or near poverty. The goal of funding is to provide students with a fair and equal opportunity to meet challenging academic standards and to help school districts close the achievement gap.

The **High Progress** status is awarded to 33 schools across the state for demonstrating the greatest gains in closing achievement gaps among students. This award status goes to schools that represent the highest 10% of schools that have improved in overall point value from 2012-2013 quality of distribution index (QDI) to the 2013-2014 total points earned in the accountability system.)

The **High Performing** status is awarded to two schools for demonstrating the greatest gains in closing achievement gaps among students. High Performing schools represent the highest 20% of all schools in performance for points earned for 2012-2013 QDI, 2013-2014 total points in the accountability system, growth of the lowest 25% subgroup, and graduation rates (where applicable.)

The **Exemplary Inclusion** award is being presented to two schools for demonstrating and encouraging full inclusion of children with disabilities in all aspects of academic and extra-curricular activities.

The **Distinguished School** status is awarded to the top 20 Title I schools for exceptional student performance, in Reading, Language Arts, and Math for two or more consecutive years while effectively closing the achievement gap between the black and white subgroups. Two schools will receive National Recognition as Title I Distinguished Schools and will be named during the ceremony.

Invitations and notifications to awardees will be sent via e-mail soon.

For more information, please contact:

Office of Federal Programs

Mr. Kelsey Blumenberg, State Title I & Distinguished Schools Coordinator

Email: [keblumenberg@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:keblumenberg@mde.k12.ms.us)

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