

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	TOPIC: EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS
EMPLOYEE PROCEDURES MANUAL	SECTION: 21.0 PAGE 1 OF 3 EFFECTIVE DATE: MAY 1, 2000 REVISION #1: OCT. 1, 2023

LETTERS

All outgoing correspondence shall be placed on official MDE letterhead. Correspondence to elected officials and State Board members should be signed by the State Superintendent. All other correspondence may be signed by staff members within the agency. Each division or office may set policies for handling correspondence from their organizational unit.

LETTER FORMAT

Letters that will be signed by the State Superintendent should be prepared in final form on his/her official letterhead. The structure for all departmental correspondence should be as follows, and preferably should be no more than one page:

Date

The date should reflect the day the letter is to be mailed and not the day it is prepared.

Address

Proper or honorary title should be utilized on letter and envelope (i.e., The Honorable should be used for elected official, etc.).

Salutation

Proper title should be used (Mr., Mrs., Dr., The Honorable, etc.).

Body

All letters should be written in a clear and concise manner free of punctuation and spelling errors.

Second Page (if necessary)

Second and succeeding pages of all letters should be on plain bond paper which matches the letterhead, and the name, date, and page number should be indicated on the top of each page.

Close and Signature Lines

A complimentary close, such as Sincerely, should be followed by the full name of the signer and his/her title.

Enclosures

If the letter contains enclosures this should be noted two lines below the signature title.

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LETTER FORMAT (continued)

Copies

If the letter will be sent to other individuals, this should be noted utilizing the c: abbreviation. If copies will be sent without the addressee’s knowledge, a separate sheet should be typed with all the “blind” copies noted. This should be indicated with a bc: and then the persons’ name. The sheet noting all blind copies must be attached to the original letter. When the letter has been signed this sheet should be filed with the Department’s copy of the correspondence.

SIGNATURE AND MAILING PROCESS

All correspondence requiring the State Superintendent’s signature should be prepared in final form and submitted to the State Superintendent’s office. The final letter should be accompanied by an email from the Chief over the program office from which the letter originated. A brief explanation, if necessary, should also be given. If the letter is in response to an incoming piece of correspondence, that letter should also be attached to the brief explanation. The explanation and the final letter must be submitted at least three days before the letter is to be mailed.

The State Superintendent will sign all letters and return them to the originating program office for mailing. The preparer will be responsible for making all necessary copies of the correspondence prior to mailing the final letter. No correspondence should be mailed without first making a copy for the Department’s file.

EMAIL

All employees are required to use the official MDE email signature for all email correspondence. When employees are out on personal leave, they should schedule an out-of-office reply that includes the dates of their leave and the name and contact information for the staff member(s) who can assist while they are out of the office.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Department Chiefs must approve all graphic design requests to ensure projects reflect MDE's priorities. All requests should be to the Office of Communication and Government Relations through the online form, [Request for Document Formatting or Graphics Creation](#). This form should be used to request assistance with formatting documents, forms, and other materials for publishing by the MDE. If a request cannot be fulfilled in-house, offices may procure services from an outside design firm following Office of Procurement guidelines. All materials must

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adhere to instructions in the [MDE Brand Guidelines](#) document. The Office of Communication and Government Relations must approve any materials produced by an outside firm.

LOGOS/BRANDING

Preserving the integrity of MDE's brand is vital to maintaining a strong reputation and identity. The *MDE Brand Guidelines* document and best practices ensure the agency is represented consistently. No other logo may be used to represent the work of MDE. Download the official logo from the MDE [logos page](#). Consult the [MDE Brand Guidelines](#) before creating any documents or creative material.