

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Item
March 14-15, 2013

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION

11. Action on the requests of Hattiesburg Public School District, Lamar County School District and Wayne County School District to operate the schools in the district for less than one hundred eighty (180) days as a result of the February 10, 2013 south Mississippi tornados

Back-up material attached



Mississippi Department of Education

Lynn House, Ph.D., Interim State Superintendent of Education

Office of Educational Accountability

Michael D. Kent • Interim Director

Office of Accreditation

Paula A. Vanderford, Ph.D. • Education Bureau Manager • 601-359-3764 • FAX: 601-359-1979

MEMORANDUM

To: District Superintendents

From: Paula A. Vanderford, Ph.D.
Education Bureau Manager, Office of Accreditation

Date: February 26, 2013

Subject: South Mississippi Tornadoes Data Collection

Many school districts in our state experienced unexpected closings due to inclement weather associated with tornadoes in South Mississippi. As a result of these closings, the current calendar for some districts will not reflect the minimum instructional time per day and 180 teaching days as required by state statute, State Board Policy, and Accreditation Standards. Accreditation Standard 19, as approved by the State Board of Education and published in *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2012*, requires each school district to provide a minimum of 180 teaching days in which both teachers and pupils are in regular attendance for scheduled classroom instruction for not less than sixty percent (60%) of the normal school day. Standard 19 also requires 330 minutes of instructional time per day or 27.5 hours of instructional time per week.

Current legislation gives the State Board of Education (SBE) the authority to grant exceptions when **catastrophic conditions** exist, the Governor or President has declared a disaster emergency, and it would not be **economically feasible or practical** for the district to make up the days missed prior to the end of the school year. Since a state of emergency was declared as a result of these tornadoes, the Office of Accreditation is collecting data for consideration by the SBE when making its decision.

Please complete the attached *South Mississippi Tornadoes Data Collection Form* and return to the Office of Accreditation no later than 12:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 6, 2013. We apologize for the quick turn around, but we would like to present this information to the SBE at its March meeting. Please submit all information by emailing pvanderford@mde.k12.ms.us or faxing it to 601.359.1979. All districts must submit a response to the Office of Accreditation even if the district is not requesting forgiveness of days missed. The collection of this data does not suggest that the SBE will be granting waivers for making up all days missed.

"Quality Education for Every Child"

Central High School Building • 359 North West Street • P.O. Box 771 • Jackson, MS 39205-0771

District Superintendents
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Dr. House will present this information to the State Board of Education on March 14-15, 2013. Following the decision made by the SBE, we will provide direction and support in all efforts to comply with state statute, State Board Policy and accreditation standards. Submissions received after the deadline on March 6, 2013, will be considered at the April SBE meeting.

If you have any questions concerning this request, please contact the Office of Accreditation at (601) 359-3764.

c: Lynn J. House, Ph.D.
Michael D. Kent
Leadership Team

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION**

***SOUTH MISSISSIPPI TORNADOS DATA COLLECTION FORM
February 2013***

Date:

District:

District Code:

Superintendent (or Designee):

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Number of Days Missed:

Number of Days to be Made-up:

If the District is not requesting forgiveness of days missed, has the Board approved a schedule (Revised Calendar) for Make-up Days?

If not, what is the anticipated date of Board approval?

Number of Days Requesting Forgiveness:

If the district is requesting forgiveness of days missed and believes it is not economically feasible or practical to make up the days missed due to tornado in the Hattiesburg area, briefly state the rational for your position.

**Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Accreditation**

**Data Collection
South Mississippi Tornadoes February 10, 2013**

Four Districts reported days missed as a result of the tornadoes in South Mississippi on February, 10, 2013: Hattiesburg Public School District, Lamar County School District, Petal School District, and Wayne County School District.

District	Number of Days Missed	Days to be Made-up	Days Forgiveness is Requested
Hattiesburg Public School District	3	1	2
Lamar County School District Oak Grove High School (OGHS)	District 2 OGHS 3	District 1 OGHS 1	District 1 OGHS 2
Petal School District	1	1	0
Wayne County School District	1	0	1

Rationale for Requesting Forgiveness of Days Missed

District	Rationale for Requesting Forgiveness: Not Economically Feasible or Practical to Make-Up Days
Hattiesburg Public School District	<p>Making up days missed on a scheduled holiday will highly influence and impact our student attendance; therefore, we are respectfully requesting forgiveness for the two remaining days our students and faculty missed due to the tornado. Our district has found that requiring students to attend on days that are designated as holidays is not in the best interest of the students nor the district. Monday, February 18, 2013, a scheduled holiday, was used as a make-up day. 343 students were absent which is approximately 100 students above the normal average of absentees. Even when students returned to school following the tornado, there were 20 less students in attendance than on the holiday make-up day (President's Day).</p> <p>Both President Obama and Governor Bryant have declared Forrest County (Hattiesburg) a Federal Disaster area. Our transportation department was severely damaged and had to be relocated to another facility. Over 1400 homes in our community were affected by the tornado. Of the 1400 homes damaged, 75 belonged to our students and nine (9) to our employees. Forgiveness of the two remaining days will give our employees and students some time to recover from their circumstances whether it is housing related or other issues as well as time to heal and devote to family.</p>
Lamar County School District Oak Grove High School (OGHS)	<p>As a district, we made the decision to make-up one of the 2/3 days missed on Feb. 18, President's Day, which was a district holiday. Oak Grove High School (OGHS) already has 5 minutes built into their 2012-13 class schedule, and our other schools are willing to add 2-3 minutes into their class schedule for the remainder of the school year to make up the 1 day missed. Also, in the fall of this school year, Hurricane Isaac caused our district to be closed for 2 days, and we made up those days by our built-in weather day and also taking a school holiday away. Making these changes would not affect our ADA on a make-up day, nor effect families plans again</p>
Wayne County School District	<p>We were included in the disaster area declared by FEMA/MEMA. Our district is very rural and widespread. Flooding was a major issue and prevented us from being able to safely run school bus routes after the storm.</p>