

OFFICE OF QUALITY PROFESSIONALS AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
May 16-17, 2013

OFFICE OF EDUCATOR LICENSURE

- C. Approval of school districts with need for administrators to participate in the Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program

Background Information:

In 1998, the Mississippi Legislature amended the Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program. The legislation enables Mississippi school districts to grant sabbatical leave to licensed teachers employed in Mississippi schools for not less than three years. The purpose is to allow such teachers to participate full-time in an educational leadership program and become local school district administrators. The conditions of eligibility, compensation, reimbursement, obligation, breach of contract, and availability are set forth in law and the State Board of Education policy.

Participating teachers receive the benefits of focused study on a university campus and practical administrative internships in local school districts. Participating school districts benefit from an increased supply of potential candidates for future administrative openings.

School-based accountability for student growth and performance demands knowledgeable and skilled leadership. Through the sabbatical program, local school districts, colleges and universities, the Mississippi Department of Education, and the Mississippi Legislature are working in partnership to ensure that Mississippi has an ample supply of well-informed and well-prepared leaders for tomorrow's schools.

School District Justification of Need for Administrators
May 2013

The Office of Educator Licensure recommends approval of the following school districts as eligible to participate in the 2013-2014 Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program on the basis of their identified need for school administrators:

Hollandale School District

- Small school district that needs effective leadership for academic growth and student achievement
- Three (3) administrators with 25 or more years of experience.

North Bolivar School District

- One (1) administrator relocating within the upcoming year
- Two (2) administrators with 25 or more years of experience
- High turnover rate for principals
- No assistant superintendent in the district
- No assistant principals in the district.

Quitman County

- Need highly qualified administrators to propel rural school district to new heights
- Nine (9) administrators in the district, four (4) with 25 or more years of experience
- Need to hire at least four administrators at the end of 2012-2013 school year.

Rankin County

- Six (6) percent turnover rate in administration
- Forty (40) administrators with 25 or more years of experience
- Currently one (1) vacancy and anticipate the need for six new administrators over the next two years
- Serves approximately 19,000 students in 27 schools
- Need to increase leadership pool with highly qualified educators.

Backup Material: Attached

Recommendation: Approval

Guidelines
Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program
(For licensed teachers in Mississippi school districts)

Mississippi Code Annotated 37-9-77

In 1998, the Mississippi Legislature amended the Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program. The legislation enables Mississippi school districts to grant sabbatical leave to licensed teachers employed in Mississippi schools for not less than three years. The purpose is to allow such teachers to participate full-time in an educational leadership program and become local school district administrators. The conditions of eligibility, compensation, reimbursement, obligation, breach of contract, and availability are set forth in law.

Eligible Candidates

Statutory Requirements:

In order to be eligible to participate in this program, the candidate must be a licensed teacher employed in a Mississippi school district for not less than three (3) years.

The candidate must be recommended by the local school board.

The candidate must be admitted to an educational leadership program that was approved by the Mississippi Department of Education by January 1 preceding the date of admission to the program.

State Board Regulations:

Each local school board may set its own criteria for approving recommendations.

The educational leadership program must be full-time.

Compensation of Candidates

Statutory Requirements:

The salary prescribed in Section 37-19-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, including annual experience increments, is paid to the participant by the employing school district from non-minimum education program funds.

Candidates participating in this program shall receive credit for teaching experience (one-year) during the sabbatical leave period.

Candidates participating in this full-time program shall continue participation in Public Employees Retirement System and the Public School Employees Health Insurance Plan.

Maximum compensation during the sabbatical is equal to the one-year salary and paid fringe benefits prescribed in the Mississippi Code.

Reimbursement by Mississippi Department of Education

Statutory Requirements:

Subject to the availability of funds and the determination of the district's need for administrators, the Mississippi Department of Education shall reimburse the sponsoring district for the cost of the participant's salary and paid fringe benefits for one (1) contract year.

The amount of reimbursement shall be based on the then current minimum education program salary schedule prescribed in the Mississippi Code, not to exceed the minimum education program salary for a teacher holding a Class A license and having five (5) years' experience.

The sponsoring school district shall be responsible for the local salary supplement and any portion of the participant's salary that exceeds the maximum amount allowed from state funds. The participant's local salary supplement may not be reduced.

State Board Regulations:

Local school districts shall submit sabbatical program applications as directed by the Mississippi Department of Education. The Department of Education will approve applications in accordance with the statute and the methodology for approval of subgrants established by the Mississippi Board of Education.

Obligation of Candidates

Statutory Requirements:

As a condition for participation in the school Administrator Sabbatical Program, the candidate shall agree to employment as an administrator in the sponsoring school district for not less than five (5) years following completion of administrator licensure requirements.

State Board Regulations:

There shall be a contractual agreement between the candidate and the school district which includes the standard terms and conditions specified by the Mississippi Department of Education.

Breach of Contract

Statutory Requirements:

A participant who fails to assume employment as an administrator in the sponsoring school district for five (5) years following completion of administrator licensure requirements, unless the commitment is deferred, shall be in breach of contract and liable for the amount of the salary and fringe benefits received while on sabbatical. That liability shall be to the Mississippi Department of Education for the amount of salary and fringe benefits paid by the State, less 20% for each year the individual was employed as an administrator. In addition, the liability shall be to the local school district for any portion of the salary and fringe benefits paid by the local school district, less 20% of the amount paid for each year of employment as an administrator.

Interest on the amount due shall accrue at the current Stafford Loan rate at the time the breach occurs.

A participant is liable for an amount equal to a reasonable attorney's fee if the claim for re-payment is placed in hands of an attorney for collection after default.

If the school district does not have an administrative vacancy, or if the district does not need the administrator position for the full five-year commitment period, the school board shall defer any part of the employment commitment that has not been met until such a time as an administrator position in the district becomes available.

If such a deferral is made, the sponsoring school district shall employ the person as a teacher in the school district during the period of deferral, unless the person desires to be released from employment by the sponsoring school district and the district agrees.

If the sponsoring school district releases a person from employment, that person may be employed as an administrator in another school district in the state that is in need of administrators as determined by the Mississippi Board of Education, and that employment for the other school district shall be applied to any remaining portion of the five-year employment commitment.

Nothing in these guidelines shall prevent a school district from not renewing the person's contract before the end of the five-year employment commitment in accordance with the School Employment Procedures Law (Section 37-9-101 et seq.). However, if the person is not employed as an administrator by another school district after being released or having his contract not renewed by the sponsoring school district, he shall be liable for repayment of the amount of his salary and fringe benefits, plus interest, less 20% for each year of employment as an administrator. Interest on the amount due shall accrue at the current Stafford Loan rate.

State Board Regulations:

Any participant who fails to complete all requirements for obtaining a Mississippi administrator license within eighteen (18) months shall be in breach of contract and liable for the salary and fringe benefits received. Interest shall accrue at the current Stafford Loan rate.

Partial years of employment as an administrator shall be prorated.

Availability of Sabbatical

State Board Regulations:

Candidates approved to participate in the Administrator Sabbatical Program prior to July 1, 2001, shall be subject to all requirements of this legislation and all regulations outlined in these guidelines.

Definitions

Administrator:

An administrator, as defined by the *Accreditation Requirements of the State Board of Education* (1997), is any staff member employed by a school board who is assigned responsibility for coordinating, directing, supervising, or otherwise administering programs, services, and/or personnel under the auspices of the program, school, or district.

Administrator License:

An individual hired to fulfill the above responsibilities is required to hold an administrator license as defined in the *Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure* (1997).

Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program 2013 – 2014 Application Process

Identification of Need

1. The district identifies a need for administrators on the basis of district data. The data should include information such as the number of current and/or anticipated vacancies, the number of current administrators with over 25 years of experience, and/or the rate of administrator turnover.
2. The district submits a letter of need with supporting documentation by **April 9, 2013**, to the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Daphne Buckley, Office of Quality Professionals & Special Schools, P.O. Box 771, Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0771.

Selection of Candidate

3. The district identifies a teacher or teachers within the district who meets the following criteria:
 - At least three (3) years of teaching experience in Mississippi,
 - Demonstrated leadership ability,
 - Interest in becoming a school administrator,
 - Willingness to commit to serving five years as an administrator in the district,
 - Would be considered by the district for employment as an administrator, and
 - Admission to an approved, full-time administrator preparation program in Mississippi.
4. The local school board approves a sabbatical leave of absence for the identified teacher contingent upon State Board of Education (SBE) approval of the district's need.

Approval of Need

5. The MDE staff reviews the district documentation and, if the need for administrators is clearly substantiated, presents the information to the State Board of Education for approval.
6. The MDE staff notifies the district of the decision immediately following the Board meeting. SBE approval means only that the district has substantiated the need for administrators and may recommend candidates for the program.

Submission of Application

7. Once the district has approved the teacher(s) to be recommended and the teacher has been admitted to an approved, full-time administrator preparation program, the school district superintendent submits the completed Mississippi School Administrator Application for the teacher(s).

Approval of Application

8. Applications are considered on a first-come, first-served basis. The deadline for receipt of applications is June 14, 2013.
9. The MDE staff immediately notifies districts of approval or non-approval.

Participation in the sabbatical program is contingent upon the availability of state funds.

Availability of Sabbatical

State Board Regulations:

Candidates approved to participate in the Administrator Sabbatical Program prior to July 1, 2001, shall be subject to all requirements of this legislation and all regulations outlined in these guidelines.

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