

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
January 16-17, 2014

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION

29. Approval to establish State Board Policy 3804 - Additional Assessment Options for Graduation (Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act Process with public comment)

On October 3, 2013, the Commission on School Accreditation approved the proposed assessment options for graduation and the establishment of State Board Policy 3804.

Current State Board Policy 3803, *Assessments Required for Graduation*, outlines the graduation requirements for end-of-course subject area tests in the areas of Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and U.S. History. In an effort to provide flexibility to students, State Board Policy 3804 provides approved options for students to meet these high school end-of-course assessment requirements through alternate measures.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached



Mississippi Department of Education

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

Office of Educational Accountability


Todd Ivey • Director

Office of Accreditation and Accountability

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

MEMORANDUM

To: School District Superintendents
School District Principals
Members, State Board of Education
Members, Commission on School Accreditation
Other Interested Parties

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

Date: October 25, 2013

Subject: **Additional Assessment Options for Meeting End-of-Course Subject Area Test (Graduation Requirements)**

On October 18, 2013, the State Board of Education (SBE) granted approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) process to approve the establishment of proposed State Board of Education Policy 3804: *Additional Assessment Options for Meeting End-of-Course Subject Area Test Graduation Requirements*. The proposed policy was approved by the Commission on School Accreditation on October 3, 2013.

The proposed additional assessment options for meeting the end-of-course subject area test graduation requirements will be effective upon the completion of the APA process for school years 2013-2014 and thereafter. The proposed policy and assessment options are attached for your review.

You may submit comments in writing by mail or e-mail (accountability@mde.k12.ms.us), or they may be faxed to 601-359-1979 and received in the Office of Accreditation and Accountability no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 8, 2014. All written comments will be compiled and submitted to the SBE Thursday, January 16, 2014. Please submit written comments to Paula A. Vanderford, Education Bureau Manager, Office of Accreditation and Accountability, Post Office Box 771, Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0771.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Accreditation and Accountability at 601-359-3764, or e-mail pvanderford@mde.k12.ms.us.

Enclosures

c: Lynn J. House, Ph.D.
Todd Ivey

"Quality Education for Every Child"

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

State Board Policy 3804
Approved by the Commission on School Accreditation October 3, 2013
Approved by the State Board of Education October 18, 2013

3800 Graduation Requirements

3804 Additional Assessment Options for Meeting End-of-Course Subject Area Test Graduation Requirements

State Board Policy 3803, *Assessments Required for Graduation*, outlines the end-of-course subject area test graduation requirements. State Board Policy 3804 provides approved options for students to meet these high school end-of-course subject area test graduation requirements through approved alternate measures.

The intent of State Board Policy 3804 is to outline options that are based upon widely accepted measures that a student has met an objective, rigorous standard and is ready for entry into college or the work force. This policy applies to past, current, and future Mississippi students.

While it is possible that a student will meet one of the options below before taking the subject area test, this policy states that a student is eligible to use any of these options once he or she has failed to pass any required end-of-course subject area test once. Specifically, students may meet the graduation requirement outlined in State Board Policy 3803 by attaining any one of the measures outlined below for each of the subject area tests listed.

1. Algebra I

- a. Obtain a score of **16** or higher on the Math subject subscore of the ACT.
- b. Earn a C or higher in an entry level, credit-bearing dual enrollment/dual credit /college credit course with a MAT prefix.
- c. Score a 2 or higher on the IB (International Baccalaureate) Math I assessment.
- d. Score a 2 or higher on any AP (Advanced Placement) Math assessment.
- e. Score a 43 or higher on the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) AFQT (Armed Forces Qualification Test).
- f. Obtain an ASVAB AFQT score of 36 **plus one** of the following:
 - 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.

State Board Policy 3804
Approved by the Commission on School Accreditation October 3, 2013
Approved by the State Board of Education October 18, 2013

- 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and outlined in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.
- g. Obtain the *Silver Level* on the ACT WorkKeys **plus** one of the following:
- 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.
2. Biology I
- a. Obtain a score of **16** or higher on the Science subject subscore of the ACT.
 - b. Earn a C or higher in an entry level, credit-bearing dual enrollment / dual credit / college credit course with a BIO prefix.
 - c. Score a 2 or higher on the IB-DP (International Baccalaureate) Biology I or MYP (what is/spell out MYP) Biology assessment.
 - d. Score a 2 or higher on any AP (Advanced Placement) Science assessment.
 - e. Obtain an ASVAB AFQT score of 36 **plus one** of the following:
 - 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.
 - f. Obtain the *Silver Level* on the ACT WorkKeys **plus** one of the following:
 - 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.

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- 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.
3. English II
- a. Obtain a score of **16** or higher on the English subject subscore of the ACT.
 - b. Earn a C or higher in an entry level, credit-bearing dual enrollment / dual credit / college credit course with an ENG prefix.
 - c. Score a 2 or higher on any IB (International Baccalaureate) English assessment.
 - d. Score a 2 or higher on any AP (Advanced Placement) English assessment.
 - e. Score a 43 or higher on the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) AFQT (Armed Forces Qualification Test).
 - f. Obtain an ASVAB AFQT score of 36 **plus one** of the following:
 - 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.
 - g. Obtain the *Silver Level* on the ACT WorkKeys **plus** one of the following:
 - 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.

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4. U.S. History
- a. Obtain a score of **16** or higher on the reading subject subscore of the ACT.
 - b. Earn a C or higher in an entry level credit-bearing dual enrollment / dual credit / college credit course with a HIS prefix.
 - c. Score a 2 or higher on the IB-DP (International Baccalaureate) History of the Americas I assessment.
 - d. Score a 2 or higher on the AP (Advanced Placement) U.S. History assessment.
 - e. Obtain an ASVAB AFQT score of 36 **plus one** of the following:
 - 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.
 - f. Obtain the *Silver Level* on the ACT WorkKeys **plus** one of the following:
 - 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.

Proposed Mississippi Graduation Assessment Options

Assessment Options	Math	Science	English	Social Studies
ACT	16 (Math)	16 (Science)	16 (English)	16 (Reading)
Dual Credit / Dual Enrollment	C or higher in MAT credit-bearing course	C or higher in BIO credit-bearing course	C or higher in ENG credit-bearing course	C or higher in HIS credit-bearing course
IB (International Baccalaureate)	2 or higher IB Math I	2 or higher IB-DP Biology I or MYP Biology	2 or higher Any IB English	2 or higher IB-DP History of the Americas
AP (Advanced Placement)	2 or higher Any AP Math	2 or higher Any AP Science	2 or higher Any AP English	2 or higher AP US History
ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery)	43	N/A	43	N/A
ASVAB + MS-CPAS2 OR Industry Certification	ASVAB score of 36 plus one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CPAS score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements <li style="text-align: center;">OR 2. Earn approved Industry Certification specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint 			
ACT WorkKeys + MS-CPAS2 OR Industry certification	WorkKeys Silver Level plus one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CPAS score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements <li style="text-align: center;">OR 2. Earn approved Industry Certification specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint 			

Approved by the Commission on School Accreditation on October 3, 2013
Approved by the State Board of Education October 18, 2013

Administrative Procedures Act (APA)

**State Board of Education
Policy 3804**

October 25, 2013 - January 8, 2014

Office of Accreditation

Administrative Procedures Act (APA)

State Board of Education Policy 3804

Listed below are the findings from the APA process for State Board of Education proposed Policy 3804. The policy would establish additional assessment options for school districts to meet the end-of-course subject area test graduation requirements. The proposed policy was approved by the Commission on School Accreditation on October 3, 2013. The APA process was open for comment from October 25, 2013 to January 8, 2014. A comment found in more than one email will be indicated by (#).

- *Establish an ACT composite score to stand alone or use the higher scores proposed in the accountability model as standalone scores. (5)*
- *Use the lower score of 16 (or lower) in conjunction with the vocational standards already established with the ASVAB component option. (4)*
- *New policy while well intended misses the point by using high-stakes assessment to prevent students from graduating in the first place.*
- *There is no data that shows passing the SATP, a cut score of 16 on the ACT, earning credit in a dual credit class (or its equivalent), a 43 on the ASVAB (or its equivalent), or any of the other myriad of measures listed guarantees a student is either College Ready or Career Ready (incidentally, the two are not the same, despite changing the conjunction from 'or' to 'and'). I believe that by continually adding additional ways a student can receive her or his diploma we are continuing to address the symptom (students not graduating) but failing to address the problem (standardized testing that prevents graduation). Therefore, while I feel this policy will marginally help students, I do not believe it will do anything to improve education in Mississippi.*
- *I do not like these state test and I think they are unfair. Yes, they assure a certain amount of knowledge has been obtained, but shouldn't passing the class after sitting through it's requirements be enough? We all know some students are terrible test takers.*
- *Suggestions from Biloxi.... The proposed title changes, i.e. CCSS PLUS, Integrated Math II, etc. are not indicative of the rigor or the intent of the course. Because the Mississippi Gulf Coast is very transient, we have many students who transfer in and out of our schools and such vague titles will cause many problems when trying to transfer credits to graduate or attend other schools. Also, course titles needs to be university recognized.*
- *If we are going to be waiting on Advanced Placement scores to come back in the summer, will the accountability timeline be moved back?*
- *I feel that the current standards for graduation from high school in Mississippi are low enough. Now you are talking about "dumbing them down". Then only thing the proposed standards will do is further lower Mississippi standards. We are already the laughing stock of the entire United States. Our graduates cannot read or spell due to the "no child left behind" standard that was implemented several years ago, then the "core curriculum" standard and now make it worse and make it easier to pass?*
- *The problem is not the schools or the teachers. The biggest problem is the LACK OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT! Why don't you focus on that.*

- *I do believe something has to change in order to get our students graduated and to the next phase of their lives but my concern is will students who choose an alternate form of high school graduation be eligible for pell grant assistance? If not, this will raise a huge concern over students being able to afford going to college*
- *In my opinion, in order for the SATP program to be effective, all students are must be held to the same standards... passing the tests. IF the SATP program is deemed a necessary and effective tool to drive student achievement, then it should not be weakened by providing ways around it. As for the proposed options to passing SATP assessments, ACT score requirements are TOO LOW. If ACT scores are to be included as an option, they need to be adjusted to agree with 4-yr university minimums to enroll in freshman level courses. (3)*
- *There is one exception to my objection - I do think it is a good idea to consider a vocational-technical option for graduation, but again I cannot speak to the appropriateness of the proposed ASVAB, CPAS requirements.*
- *"failing" US History SATP. Not only is US History the hardest SATP given, but it was revamped last school year to be even tougher and most students don't take it until end of 11th grade. There should be a backup plan for students. My suggestion, ACT score.*
- *Adding new options for students to graduate from high school who have not passed the subject area test, could have the unintended effect of creating problems for all post-secondary institutions in the state.*
- *Adding new options for students to graduate from high school who have not passed subject area test, could have the unintended effect of creating problems for all post-secondary institutions in the state. The options also include alternatives using MS-CPAS2, Industry Certification, and ACT WorkKeys. ACT WorkKeys is a job skills assessment system that helps employers select, hire, train, develop, and retain a high-performance workforce. The purpose of this series of tests measures foundational and soft skills and offers specialized assessments to target institutional needs, not academic attainment levels of students.*
- *I am so excited about the optional pathways for graduation for students in MS. I believe that this process has been well thought out and will benefit thousands of students in MS. I think that using alternative testing options will open the life options up for students. These decisions are student driven and are the simply the right way to go for Mississippi students.*

John Cartwright

From: Noal Cochran <ncochran@richton.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2013 10:42 AM
To: Accountability
Subject: SBE Policy 3804

Dear Sirs:

My only concern is centered on the ACT component. In the proposed accountability models, the ACT scores put forth as acceptable for school wide credit are higher than 16. I would propose that ACT scores be treated the same as ASVAB scores.

1. Establish an ACT composite score to stand alone or use the higher scores proposed in the accountability model as stand alone scores.
2. Use the lower score of 16 (or lower) in conjunction with the vocational standards already established with the ASVAB component option.

For example:

Student A makes a 16 on the math ACT but must also make a:

a. CPAS score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements

OR

b. Earn approved Industry Certification specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint.

Thanks for taking our comments.

Dr. Cochran

--
Dr. Noal B. Cochran
Superintendent
701 Elm Avenue
Richton, MS 39476
601-788-6581

Paula Vanderford

From: Paula Vanderford
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2013 11:48 AM
To: Accountability
Subject: FW: Alternate Assessments to State Testing

From: Dina Holland [<mailto:dholland@icsd.k12.ms.us>]
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2013 11:43 AM
To: Paula Vanderford
Subject: Alternate Assessments to State Testing

I have reviewed the proposals and am definitely in favor of looking at some options for students who are unable to pass one or more state tests. The option that is most doable by most students is the 16 on subtests of the ACT. Generally speaking, IB and AP students do not tend to have difficulty passing state tests nor do dual enrolled/credit students. These programs require students to have a 3.0 GPA and a 15 on the ACT. I feel as though the ASVAB score of 43 is a bit high as well especially when the Army accepts those with a 31, Marines a 32, Navy a 35, and the Coast Guard a 40. Only the Air Force requires higher which is a 50. I do not feel like these options except the ACT will target the group of students who are failing the state tests. Thank you for allowing input.

Dina Holland
St. Martin High School, principal

Paula Vanderford

From: Shannon Eubanks <aeubanks@lincoln.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Tuesday, October 29, 2013 9:17 AM
To: Accountability
Cc: rratcliff@lincoln.k12.ms.us
Subject: State Board Policy 3804

To Whom It May Concern:

I wish to comment on State Board Policy 3804 concerning the Additional Assessment Options for Meeting End-of-Course Subject Area Test Graduation Requirements. I applaud any efforts to allow students who demonstrate mastery of the curriculum to receive the diploma they earned and deserve. However, I feel this new policy, while well-intended, misses the point: WE SHOULDN'T BE USING A HIGH-STAKES ASSESSMENT TO PREVENT STUDENTS FROM GRADUATING IN THE FIRST PLACE! But since we do not have the will or desire to face this truth, I do have a few comments about the new policy.

As this policy indicates, a student who fails a Subject Area Test but meets one of the other measures can meet graduation requirements. Since passage of the SATP is no longer mandatory, by simply doing away with the requirement for passage the rest of these measures become unnecessary. Schools are being held responsible for SATP scores regardless, so this would not affect school accountability any more than the proposed change does.

Also, a point of clarification: in paragraph 2, last sentence, it states: "This policy applies to past, current, and future Mississippi students." Does this mean schools will be responsible for going back and awarding diplomas to students who did not graduate over the years but made any of the other measures outlined? If so, how far back? Or, do former students have to request the review?

In conclusion, there is no data that shows passing the SATP, a cut score of 16 on the ACT, earning credit in a dual credit class (or its equivalent), a 43 on the ASVAB (or its equivalent), or any of the other myriad of measures listed guarantees a student is either College Ready or Career Ready (incidentally, the two are not the same, despite changing the conjunction from 'or' to 'and'). I believe that by continually adding additional ways a student can receive her or his diploma we are continuing to address the symptom (students not graduating) but failing to address the problem (standardized testing that prevents graduation). Therefore, while I feel this policy will marginally help students, I do not believe it will do anything to improve education in Mississippi.

Shannon Eubanks
Principal
Enterprise Attendance Center
1601 Highway 583 SE
Brookhaven, Mississippi 39601
Office: 601-833-7284
Fax: 601-835-1261

Paula Vanderford

From: Paula Vanderford
Sent: Tuesday, October 29, 2013 12:08 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: FW: Alternatives to Exit Exams

From: Amy Blackmon [<mailto:ablackmon1@comcast.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, October 29, 2013 8:58 AM
To: Paula Vanderford
Subject: Fw: Alternatives to Exit Exams

Dear Ms. Vanderford:

Gerald Loden gave me your name and suggested I forward this letter in regard to the article that ran in our newspaper yesterday: MS Looks at Alternatives to Exit Exams. He said it may be too late for public opinion but had I known MDE was asking for opinions on this very important subject to me it would have been the first on your desk.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am so glad MDE is looking at changing this unbalanced and unfair policy towards our high school students.

Amy Blackmon
662-841-4698

----- Original Message -----

From: Amy Blackmon
To: gloden@tupeloschools.com
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2013 11:00 AM
Subject: Alternatives to Exit Exams

Dear Mr. Loden:

I read the article this morning entitled: MS Looks at Alternatives to Exit Exams. Two questions immediately come to mind. Do you really think the solution for not passing one test is to offer more test? and Aren't the state test just one way to make the teachers more accountable at certain student's expense?

I do not like these state test and I think they are unfair. Yes, they assure a certain amount of knowledge has been obtained, but shouldn't passing the class after sitting through it's requirements be enough? We all know some students are terrible test takers. At best, I wish that was my son's problem. There are so many unknown reasons why Joshua can't pass these test I can't began to explain it in a letter or conversation. I don't think the Psychologist on staff at the THS district can explain it either. ADHD is like cancer that has spread. It effects behavior and learning ability. It also, effects interest and motivation. It causes moodiness. It can have social implications. These students have to work twice as hard, maybe more, than the "normal" student to get a concept. Sometimes collateral learning takes over and sometimes it never takes-that's where these test are unfair to the student with learning impairment. Unfortunately, you can't open the brain up and take a look for malfunctions. It's all measured subjectively. These students are often called lazy, trouble makers, dummies, etc. But they are not.

I am more worried about Joshua passing these state test than I am his future. He has a good personality and is very personable and polite. He has salesman qualities and is physically strong. He talks about going to college. He made snare drum on the THS drumline his freshman year which is unusual and has hung in there for the last two years. I count Mr. Matlock and Mr. Fant officers in my village of authorities over Joshua. But guess what? He has failed the science state test twice and will be REQUIRED (no prep and no time to prep) to take it again in December. He passed the class but he can't pass the state test and now that his science class is over his prep for the state test is up to him. He was

recoded last year in algebra to keep him from failing the state test and just last week was recoded for English for the same reason. Instead of more test why not more classes that interest 17 year old boys and test them for writing and reading within those classes?

Consider this: drumming is math. It requires counting, sorting rhythms, memorization, recall skills, team work. Joshua is currently in Earth and Space which he was excited about being able to take (it's an elective). He is pulling a C average. The school is not testing his brain how it learns or in what he is interested in. Why not a state test in drumming and/or Earth and Space. Both contain math, reading, and writing.

I think MED needs to put real faces on this problem. Here is a kid that will (in all probability) not graduate with his class mates, which is important to him. Because he probably won't get a high school degree his life will be a living hell getting an interview or job or just some employer to listen to his case. Joshua will not be the only one.

I want my son to get a high school degree for all practical and social reasons. Burn the state test!

Amy Blackmon
662-871-4698

Paula Vanderford

From: Karen Norwood <karen.norwood@biloxischools.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 29, 2013 3:20 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: Suggestions from Biloxi

In regards to recommendations:

- The proposed title changes, i.e. CCSS PLUS, Integrated Math II, etc. are not indicative of the rigor or the intent of the course. Because the Mississippi Gulf Coast is very transient, we have many students who transfer in and out of our schools and such vague titles will cause many problems when trying to transfer credits to graduate or attend other schools. Also, course titles need to be university recognized.
- The assumption is that students that are 7th grade students currently earning a Pre-Algebra or Transition to Algebra Carnegie unit will be able to take CCSS Math Grade 8 next year and earn a Carnegie unit as well. Is that correct?
- Is Creative Writing being changed to a full year course?
- In the college readiness block, we believe that the ACT composite should be used rather than breaking the scores apart. Tracking the sub scores is going to be extremely cumbersome and is going to lead to errors. Also, IHL uses a composite score, why can't that be used on the accountability model? Also, why are the numbers for the ACT different for the assessment option. If a 16 is determined to be college and career ready, then why can't that number be used for accountability purposes as well.
- Because of the weight of industry certification classes, is MDE and IHL working collaboratively to ensure programs are seamless?
- If we are going to be waiting on Advanced Placement scores to come back in the summer, will the accountability timeline be moved back?

--
Dr. Karen Norwood
Assistant Superintendent
Biloxi Public Schools
(228)374-1810 x134

Paula Vanderford

From: Pete Redmon <s.p.redmon@att.net>
Sent: Thursday, October 31, 2013 12:41 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: GRADUATION STANDARDS

I feel that the current standards for graduation from high school in Mississippi are low enough. Now you are talking about "dumbing them down". Then only thing the proposed standards will do is further lower Mississippi standards.

We are already the laughing stock of the entire United States. Our graduates cannot read or spell due to the "no child left behind" standard that was implemented several years ago, then the "core curriculum" standard and now make it worse and make it easier to pass?

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

The problem is not the schools or the teachers. The biggest problem is the **LACK OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT!** Why don't you focus on that.

Pete Redmon, CFNP
Retired USN CDR

Paula Vanderford

From: Smith, Wendy <wsmith@smcc.edu>
Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 2:03 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: Mississippi Graduation Assessment Options

I was a teacher for 13 years, an Assistant Principal for 2 years, a Workforce Training Specialist for 3 years where I administered the GED test (*several who were high school dropouts because they could not pass the state test) and am currently the Workforce Development Director at Southwest Mississippi Community College. I do believe something has to change in order to get our students graduated and to the next phase of their lives but my concern is will students who choose an alternate form of high school graduation be eligible for pell grant assistance? If not, this will raise a huge concern over students being able to afford going to college.

Wendy S. Smith, SMART Certified, M.Ed.
Workforce Training Director
Southwest Mississippi Community College
1146 Horace Holmes Drive
(601) 276-3889 Office Number
(601) 276-3883 Fax Number
wsmith@smcc.edu



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Paula Vanderford

From: Leah Ann Peavey <LPeavey@npsd.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2013 8:35 AM
To: Accountability
Subject: I have read and considered the proposed options for graduation in lieu of passing SATP tests. In my opinion, in order for the SATP program to be effective, all students are must be held to the same standards... passing the tests. (But don't stop ...

I have read and considered the proposed options for graduation in lieu of passing SATP tests. In my opinion, in order for the SATP program to be effective, all students are must be held to the same standards... passing the tests. (But don't stop reading here. I do have something positive to say in the end.) If you provide options, it will weaken the SATP program. I am speaking as a MS public school teacher of upper level sciences and maths, including AP Chemistry, and as a mother of a child who had to take the formidable 2013 US History SATP three times to pass it! IF the SATP program is deemed a necessary and effective tool to drive student achievement, then it should not be weakened by providing ways around it. As for the proposed options to passing SATP assessments, ACT score requirements are TOO LOW. If ACT scores are to be included as an option, they need to be adjusted to agree with 4-yr university minimums to enroll in freshman level courses. Including dual enrollment or AP options will likely help no one, since struggling SATP testers are not likely to be enrolled in these higher level courses. I fear including these options will encourage enrollment and cause the "watering down" of these courses to help students graduate. This would be a great disservice to our upper level students. I cannot speak to IB because I am not familiar enough with that program.

There is one exception to my objection - I do think it is a good idea to consider a vocational-technical option for graduation; but again I cannot speak to the appropriateness of the proposed ASVAB, CPAS requirements.

Thanks for hearing me out,
Leah Ann Peavey
Teacher, North Pike High School

Paula Vanderford

From: Suzanne Hirsch
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2013 9:00 AM
To: Accountability
Subject: APA for Alternative Assessment Options

I would like to endorse the Alternative Assessment options policy that is currently out for review. The policy is student centered and will assist our state in giving our students/citizens a chance for a future. The items offered as alternatives provide both free and paid options that will alleviate any obstacles for students. The process will encourage students to focus on their futures as we give them direction toward taking the ACT and ASVAB instead of retesting on an irrelevant exam.

With regard to concerns about accountability and the impact on students taking the test seriously, I believe the issue lies with the teachers and administrators. We don't promote the fact that they have other options. We promote the fact to the students that they need this to graduate just as before. They will have to take more tests (just like the retesting now) to graduate if they don't pass this one. The only difference is what the other tests are for the student.

Thank you for moving forward with this. As an administrator of students at the end of their high school career, I am encouraged that we are thinking about the students, not ourselves. The policy is well planned, gives several options, and is aligned with national practices.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Hirsch
Executive Director
Mississippi School of the Arts
PO Box 229
Brookhaven, MS 39602-0229
601-823-1300
601-823-1555 fax
www.msa.k12.ms.us
shirsch@mde.k12.ms.us

Paula Vanderford

From: Mollie Miller <mmiller@chickasaw.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2013 9:28 AM
To: Accountability
Subject: Proposed Gradation Assessment Options

As a high school teacher, I am in favor of optional assessments for gradation particularly the ACT. I am also in favor of the ASVAB rote and the ACT WorkKeys.

Paula Vanderford

From: Deedy Gallagher <deedy.gallagher@biloxischools.net>
Sent: Friday, November 22, 2013 2:31 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: ACT reading score in place of US History SATP

My concern is students not graduating high school because they can't pass SATP's. As a high school teacher, for many years now I've said to many people "requirements to receive a high school diploma should be whatever the public universities in the state require." As educators if we do that then every young adult will have the choice to go to college or not because they met the college acceptance requirements through graduating high school. If, as teachers, our job is to prepare students for the real world, then required competency test should not only count toward being able to graduate, but they should also consist of what colleges require for admissions or what the military requires. Colleges don't care if students pass the SATP's only that the students has a diploma or GED and has taken the ACT/SAT. MS high school graduation requirements should reflect college admissions requirements, then we will know we've prepared students for the real world, and they have a choice to attend college, join the military or find a trade. That's my teacher thought.....

As a parent, I don't care if my child scores basic, proficient, or advanced on any of the SAPT tests. I stress to my children GPA and ACT scores. As far as SATP, I just want my children to pass them so they receive a high school diploma because they will earn a college degree. The only thing the SATP counts for is a high school diploma. Colleges don't ask students to send their SATP scores. I have a daughter who's passed 3 of the 4 required SATPs, but is struggling with US History SATP. She isn't a slacker in ANY WAY SHAPE OR FORM. I have no doubt she will be a productive tax paying citizen as soon as she graduates from college, as she is aspiring to be a teacher. She has achieved honor roll her entire life, she's in National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta, and is captain of her cheer squad at Ocean Springs High School with a 3.97 GPA which includes CPC courses. She's met the admissions requirements of and has been accepted into every college she's interested in attending not only through her GPA, but also her ACT. However, she missed the "passing" score of her US History SATP by 1 point, which means she may not "earn" her high school diploma. She is now taking a compensatory US History class, made arrangements to sit in another US History class, and is going to after school tutoring along with required community service hours for NHS and competition cheer squad. She's getting ready for her cheer squad's State, National and World cheer championship competitions and working 2 nights a week while maintaining A's and B's. Yet, based on the research I've done as to why the Board of Education requires students to pass the 4 SATPs, other than holding teachers accountable, the only explanation I see is the board feels if the SATPs aren't passed along with the classes then the students haven't done enough to be a productive citizen. Also through research, I discovered our case isn't the only one. Students lose scholarships, not because they haven't done enough in high school to be

accepted into public universities or because they haven't passed their required high school classes, but because they don't have a high school diploma (reason: "failing" US History SATP). Not only is US History the hardest SATP given, but it was revamped last school year to be even tougher and most students don't take it until end of 11th grade. There should be a backup plan for students. My suggestion, ACT score. The vision of the MS Department of Education is "to create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens." Any high school student who meets all public university acceptance requirements have proven to the universities they have the knowledge and skills to be successful there; therefore, those students should be allowed to receive a high school diploma regardless of if they pass US History SATP. It is my understanding it is being considered any student who scores at least a 16 on the reading section of the ACT will be allowed to graduate. I request is you as the board of education make it happen. My daughter's US History teacher moved out of state this past May, he isn't being help accountable for the many in his 1 and only US History class not passing because he moved. A great deal of students in his class didn't pass and they are the ones who a paying the price. They need to have another way they can show they have "the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens" let that be through their reading section of the ACT score.

Deedy Gallagher, M.Ed, NBCT
Biloxi High School

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Paula Vanderford

From: Paula Vanderford
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2013 2:01 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: Fwd: APA Comment for MDE Policy 3804

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Eric Clark <eclark@mccb.edu>
Date: November 25, 2013, 1:26:27 PM CST
To: "pvanderford@mde.k12.ms.us" <pvanderford@mde.k12.ms.us>
Cc: "Carey Wright (CWright@mde.k12.ms.us)" <CWright@mde.k12.ms.us>, "hbounds@mississippi.edu" <hbounds@mississippi.edu>
Subject: APA Comment for MDE Policy 3804

Dear Dr. Vanderford,

I am writing per APA, to record the fact that I have serious concerns about the Proposed Mississippi Graduation Assessment Options (Policy 3804). I am also writing to Dr. Wright directly to explain those concerns in more detail. Thank you.

Eric Clark

Eric Clark, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Mississippi Community College Board
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, Mississippi 39211
office: 601-432-6684
fax: 601-432-6480
email: eclark@mccb.edu

The mission of the Mississippi Community College Board is to advance the community college system through coordination, support, leadership, and advocacy.



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COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD

3825 Ridgewood Road • Jackson, MS 39211 • Phone: (601) 432-6518 • Fax: (601) 432-6363

November 25, 2013

Dr. Carey Wright
State Superintendent of Education
Mississippi Department of Education
Post Office Box 771
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0771

Dear Dr. Wright:

I am writing to express my concern to you about the Proposed Mississippi Graduation Assessment Options that were approved at the October 18, 2013, MDE board meeting, to be submitted for initial APA comments.

Adding new options for students to graduate from high school who have not passed the subject area test, could have the unintended effect of creating problems for all post-secondary institutions in the state. For example, at public universities students are granted full admission if they have a composite ACT score of 16 (and not four sub-scores of 16) and at least a 2.50 GPA on the college preparatory curriculum, or rank in the top 50% of the graduating class. On November 19, 2013, the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges approved a statewide common ACT placement score standard beginning in the fall 2014 semester. In order for a student to be placed in English Composition I, a student will need to have scored a minimum of 17 on the English sub-score. In order to be placed in College Algebra, a student will have to have scored a minimum of 19 on the ACT math sub-score. The MDE definition of a 16 ACT score in Math and English labeling a student as "college-ready" contradicts post-secondary admission requirements, and in my opinion it sends a misleading message to the public about what "college-ready" looks like, and it could set many poorly-prepared students up for failure.

The options also include alternatives using MS-CPAS2, Industry Certification, and ACT WorkKeys. ACT WorkKeys is a job skills assessment system that helps employers select, hire, train, develop, and retain a high-performance workforce. The purpose of this series of tests measures foundational and soft skills and offers specialized assessments to target institutional needs, not academic attainment levels of students. MS-CPAS2 only assesses technical skills attainment and there are no general education competencies included in the Statewide Career Pathway Blueprint for MS-CPAS2. In addition, MS-CPAS2 is not recognized at all by Mississippi business and industry and will not assist a high school graduate in employment in Mississippi. There is also no reference to the Industry Certification option being aligned with industry standards and post-secondary curriculum.

The mission of the Mississippi Community College Board is to advance the community college system through coordination, support, leadership, and advocacy.

November 25, 2013

Page 2

All of our colleges and universities devote a great deal of time, money, resources, and effort into remedial education of students once they move from the K-12 system. It is estimated each year that the community colleges spend between \$25 and \$27 million and public universities spend between \$10 and \$11 million on remedial education. Additionally, remedial courses cost students money and do not count towards a degree. Oftentimes, these issues result in a person not earning an Associate's or Bachelor's degree which could lead to a lifetime of financial hardship.

Of course you are just as concerned as I am with improving the educational levels of our citizens. I fear, however, that the potential effect of this proposal is to send students to college or a university more poorly prepared, and not better prepared. I hope that MDE will reconsider the **graduation assessment options that it has proposed, and have conversations with leaders from both community colleges and IHL so that we may all work together to define what a college-ready student is.** Thank you for your consideration. Please call me whenever I can be of help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left of the name.

Eric Clark, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Mississippi Community College Board

Paula Vanderford

From: Jana Perry
Sent: Wednesday, December 04, 2013 1:19 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: Graduation Options

I am so excited about the optional pathways for graduation for students in MS. I believe that this process has been well thought out and will benefit thousands of students in MS. I think that using alternative testing options will open the life options up for students. These decisions are student driven and are the simply the right way to go for Mississippi students.

I would be glad to share my opinion with anyone who will listen.

Thanks,

Jana Perry
Principal
Mississippi School of the Arts
P.O. Box 229
Brookhaven, MS 39602
Office: (601)823-1308
Fax: (601)823-1331

Paula Vanderford

From: David.martin <david.martin@brookhaven.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Thursday, December 05, 2013 3:05 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: Proposed MS Grad Assessment Options

To whom it may concern,

I am glad to see the state working to give our students alternative methods to a diploma concerning SATP2. I like most of the options and would accept them as they have been presented to us by MDE at the updated meeting at Hinds Community College on December 2, 2013.

I do have a couple of additional points I would like to share.

I believe that the ACT cut score should be lowered below the recommended 16. I feel that most of these students who do not pass the SATP2 are not interested in enrolling directly into a four year college or university. I believe the score should reflect what our community colleges and workforce divisions believe is the minimum for these students to enroll in a career –tech or workforce program and be successful.

I would also like to recommend that we look at the ACT testing as a replacement to all SATP2 tests. I believe that the ACT given every year of the student's high school career would give school districts a better indication of growth and also benefit the students in college prep. This method would give them a "free" ACT score to submit and allow schools to measure growth on a national scale using the same measuring stick every year.

I appreciate everyone's hard work to make our student's successful and look forward to helping Mississippi continue to improve and develop our children.

Sincerely, ...

David Martin, Principal
Brookhaven High School
443 East Monticello St
Brookhaven, MS 39601

Phone: 601-833-4498
Fax:601-823-3792

John Cartwright

From: Deedy Gallagher <deedy@dnsms.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 15, 2013 5:08 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: Vote yes to 3804

Please vote YES to MS Dept of Education State Board Policy 3804. Please give high school students additional assessment options that measure their end of course assessment requirements for graduation.

Deedy Gallagher

John Cartwright

From: Penny Hill <phill@louisville.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2013 3:12 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: Assessment Options for Graduation

Dr. Wright said in a meeting today that they were looking at raising the ACT scores that would serve in place of the SATP from a 16 to 17 or 19. PLEASE DO NOT raise the recommended score any higher. If our students could score 17 or higher on the ACT, they would be able to pass the SATP in the first place. Students who are going directly into the workforce need a high school diploma but do NOT need the 19 ACT score to get into college.

--

Penny Hill
Director of Curriculum
Louisville Municipal School District
112 South Columbus Avenue
Louisville, MS 39339
662-773-4071 ext 8120
662-803-7293 cell

John Cartwright

From: apleas@ymail.com
Sent: Saturday, December 21, 2013 8:25 AM
To: Accountability
Subject: Assessment Options

I am ecstatic that the MS Legislature is considering assessment alternatives to SATP scores. As you are well aware, our state has a significant high school dropout rate and a major contributor is the testing mandate as a graduation requirement. As an educator, it has been heartbreaking to see students successfully complete required classes but not receive a diploma because they could not pass one or more of the mandatory SATP tests and often failing short by a few points. Needless to say, the lack of a high school diploma has a major negative impact on the individual student, their families, and the entire state of Mississippi.

I certainly understand the need for accountability to measure our students' success and to measure teacher instruction, but there are a plethora of ways to accomplish this task. I am hopeful that our state legislators will implement the proposed plan to substitute ACT, AP, ASVAB, and other scores in lieu of SATP scores. This will be a significant economic boost to our state not to mention the tremendous sense of pride that students will feel after completing 12 years of education.

This is a step in the right direction if our state officials are really serious about turning the tide of education in this state. After all, every student in this state deserves a quality education and a chance to matriculate into the workforce or college. SATP testing should not be an obstacle to making that happen.

Sincerely,

Arnetra Pleas
Passionate Educator

Sent from my iPhone

Proposed State Board Policy 3804
Approved by the Commission on School Accreditation October 3, 2013
Approved by the State Board of Education October 18, 2013

Title 7: Education K-12

Part 3: Policy

3800 Graduation Requirements

3804 Additional Assessment Options for Meeting End-of-Course Subject Area Test Graduation Requirements

State Board Policy 3803, *Assessments Required for Graduation*, outlines the end-of-course subject area test graduation requirements. State Board Policy 3804 provides approved options for students to meet these high school end-of-course subject area test graduation requirements through approved alternate measures. State Board Policy 3804 applies to past, current, and future Mississippi students.

While it is possible that a student will meet one of the options below before taking the subject area test, this policy states that a student is eligible to use any of these options once he or she has failed to pass any required end-of-course subject area test two times. Specifically, students may meet the graduation requirement outlined in State Board Policy 3803 by attaining any one of the measures outlined below for each of the subject area tests listed.

1. Algebra I

- a. Obtain a score of 17 or higher on the Math subject subscore of the ACT.
- b. Earn a C or higher in an entry level, credit-bearing dual enrollment/dual credit /college credit course with a MAT prefix.
- c. Obtain an ASVAB AFQT score of 36 **plus one** of the following:
 - 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and outlined in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.
- d. Obtain the *Silver Level* on the ACT WorkKeys **plus one** of the following:

Proposed State Board Policy 3804
Approved by the Commission on School Accreditation October 3, 2013
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- 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.
2. Biology I
- a. Obtain a score of **17** or higher on the Science subject subscore of the ACT.
 - b. Earn a C or higher in an entry level, credit-bearing dual enrollment / dual credit / college credit course with a BIO prefix.
 - c. Obtain an ASVAB AFQT score of 36 **plus one** of the following:
 - 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.
 - d. Obtain the *Silver Level* on the ACT WorkKeys **plus one** of the following:
 - 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.
3. English II
- a. Obtain a score of **17** or higher on the English subject subscore of the ACT.
 - b. Earn a C or higher in an entry level, credit-bearing dual enrollment / dual credit / college credit course with an ENG prefix.
 - c. Obtain an ASVAB AFQT score of 36 **plus one** of the following:

Proposed State Board Policy 3804
Approved by the Commission on School Accreditation October 3, 2013
Approved by the State Board of Education October 18, 2013

- 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.
- d. Obtain the *Silver Level* on the ACT WorkKeys **plus one** of the following:
- 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.
4. U.S. History
- a. Obtain a score of **17** or higher on the reading subject subscore of the ACT.
 - b. Earn a C or higher in an entry level credit-bearing dual enrollment / dual credit / college credit course with a HIS prefix.
 - c. Obtain an ASVAB AFQT score of 36 **plus one** of the following:
 - 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.

Proposed State Board Policy 3804
Approved by the Commission on School Accreditation October 3, 2013
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- d. Obtain the *Silver Level* on the ACT WorkKeys **plus one** of the following:
- 1) Earn a CPAS (Career Planning and Assessment System) score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements.
 - 2) Earn an approved Industry Certification as specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint and in **Appendix A-5** in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.

Source: MS Code 37-17-6 and 37-16-7 (Adopted 10/2013)

Proposed Mississippi Graduation Assessment Options

Assessment Options	Math	Science	English	Social Studies
ACT	17 (Math)	17 (Science)	17 (English)	17 (Reading)
Dual Credit / Dual Enrollment	C or higher in MAT credit-bearing course	C or higher in BIO credit-bearing course	C or higher in ENG credit-bearing course	C or higher in HIS credit-bearing course
ASVAB + MS-CPAS2 OR Industry Certification	ASVAB score of 36 plus one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CPAS score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements OR <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Earn approved Industry Certification specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint (Appendix A-5) 			
ACT WorkKeys + MS-CPAS2 OR Industry Certification	WorkKeys Silver Level plus one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CPAS score that meets the attainment level assigned by Federal Perkins requirements OR <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Earn approved Industry Certification specified in the Career Pathway's Assessment Blueprint (Appendix A-5) 			