

OFFICE OF CHIEF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
May 15-16, 2014

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION

14. Approval to revise the weighting of the graduation, Science, and U.S. History components for schools with a grade 12 in the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System and to revise the associated business rules
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act process with public comments)

On April 3, 2014, the Commission on School Accreditation approved the proposed revisions from the Accountability Task Force and Technical Review Team to revise the weighting of the graduation, science, and U. S. History components for high schools and district with grade 12 in the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System effective school year 2013-2014.

On April 18, 2014, the State Board of Education (SBE) granted approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) process to revise the weighting of the graduation, Science, and U.S. History components for schools and districts with a grade 12 in the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System and to revise the associated business rules. The proposed revisions were based on the recommendations from the Accountability Task Force (ATF) and Technical Review Team (TRT) that reconvened on March 25, 2014. The revisions were also based on feedback from the United States Department of Education (ED) regarding the ESEA Flexibility Request and the combined state and federal accountability systems beginning in school year 2013-2014, in accordance with MS Code 37-17-6(5)(a).

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached



Mississippi Department of Education

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D. • State Superintendent of Education

Office of Educational Accountability

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Office of Accreditation and Accountability

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MEMORANDUM

To: School District Superintendents
School District Principals
Other Interested Parties

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

Date: April 18, 2014

Subject: **Statewide Accountability System Effective School Year 2013-2014**

On April 18, 2014, the State Board of Education (SBE) granted approval to amend the business rules of the Statewide Accountability System effective school year 2013-2014. Based on the initial feedback from the United States Department of Education (USDOE) regarding the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility request and the combined state and federal accountability systems, the weighting for the graduation, Science and U.S. History components has been revised for districts and schools with Grade 12 (high schools) in the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System. These proposed revisions will be effective upon completion of the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Process for school years 2013-2014 and thereafter.

The amended business rules for the Statewide Accountability System are attached for your review. The additional rules are highlighted in yellow and revisions are in red font. **Please be reminded that the business rules are subject to additional revisions based on the approval from USDOE regarding the flexibility request for the combined state and federal accountability systems.**

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 Tuesday, May 13, 2014. All written comments will be compiled and submitted to the SBE Thursday, May 15, 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.

Enclosure

c: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.
Todd Ivey

"Quality Education for Every Child"

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Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, accountability labels will be assigned based on the following school grading assignments:

Schools (and Districts) with no 12th grade will have seven (7) components, each worth 100 points, totaling 700 possible points:

1. Reading Proficiency
2. Reading Growth – All Students
3. Reading Growth – Low 25% of Students
4. Math Proficiency
5. Math Growth – All Students
6. Math Growth – Low 25% of Students
7. Science Proficiency

For schools (and districts) with a grade 12 the following schedule will be used:

During the 2013-2014 school year, schools (and districts) with a grade 12 will have 9 components, totaling 900 possible points:

1. Reading Proficiency (100 points)
2. Reading Growth – All Students (100 points)
3. Reading Growth – Low 25% of Students (100 points)
4. Math Proficiency (100 points)
5. Math Growth – All Students (100 points)
6. Math Growth – Low 25% of Students (100 points)
7. Science Proficiency (50 points)
8. U.S. History Proficiency (50 points)
9. Graduation Rate – All Students (200 points)

During the 2014-2015 school year, schools (and districts) with a grade 12 will have 10 components, totaling 950 possible points:

1. Reading Proficiency (100 points)
2. Reading Growth – All Students (100 points)
3. Reading Growth – Low 25% of Students (100 points)
4. Math Proficiency (100 points)
5. Math Growth – All Students (100 points)
6. Math Growth – Low 25% of Students (100 points)
7. Science Proficiency (50 points)
8. U.S. History Proficiency (50 points)
9. Graduation Rate – All Students (200 points)
10. College & Career Readiness (Math 50% and English/Reading 50%) (50 points)

(Note: This component is contingent upon legislative funding. If for any reason this component is not implemented, the components and their corresponding weights used during the 2013-2014 calculations will be applied.)

Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, schools (and districts) with a grade 12 will have 11 components, totaling **1000** possible points:

1. Reading Proficiency (100 points)
2. Reading Growth – All Students (100 points)
3. Reading Growth – Low 25% of Students (100 points)
4. Math Proficiency (100 points)
5. Math Growth – All Students (100 points)
6. Math Growth – Low 25% of Students (100 points)
7. Science Proficiency (**50 points**)
8. U.S. History Proficiency (**50 points**)
9. Graduation Rate – All Students (**200 points**)
10. College & Career Readiness (Math 50% and English/Reading 50%) (**50 points**)
(Note: This component is contingent upon legislative funding.)
11. Acceleration (Participation and Performance Combined) on the following sliding scale:
 - a. Year 1 (2015-2016): Participation - 70%/Performance - 30% (**50 points**)
 - b. Year 2 (2016-2017): Participation - 60%/Performance - 40% (**50 points**)
 - c. Year 3 (2017-2018) and beyond: Participation - 50%/Performance - 50% (**50 points**)

The following business rules will apply:

1. Assignment of Grade Classifications

1.1 Standards for student, school, and school district performance will be increased when student proficiency is at a seventy-five percent (75%) and/or when sixty-five percent (65%) of schools and/or districts are earning a grade of "B" or higher, in order to raise the standard on performance after targets are met. (SECTION 37-17-6, MS CODE OF 1972)

1.2 Grades for schools (and districts) with no 12th grade (elementary/middle schools) will be determined based on the following cut-points:

- A ≥ 518
- 455 ≤ B < 518
- 400 ≤ C < 455
- 325 ≤ D < 400
- F < 325

1.3 Grades for schools (and districts) with a 12th grade will be determined based on the following cut-points for the **2013-2014** school year:

- A ≥ 740
- 680 ≤ B < 740
- 598 ≤ C < 680
- 500 ≤ D < 598
- F < 500

1.4 Cut-points for schools with a 12th grade will be reset with the implementation of the College & Career Readiness component and the Acceleration component.

1.5 Assignment of district grades will be calculated by treating the district as one large school based on the same grading assignments used for schools.

2. Full Academic Year (FAY)

2.1 In order for a student to meet Full Academic Year (FAY) and be included in the proficiency and growth calculations he/she must have been enrolled (regardless of attendance) for at least 75% (≥ 75%) of the days from September 1 (of school year) to the first day of testing. This date will be published yearly by the MDE and will be the same for all schools, students, and assessments. For schools on a traditional school calendar, the date will be in the Spring. Note: 74.5% will not be rounded up to 75%.

2.1.1 Enrollment is defined as enrollment at the school/district level except for students in 4x4 block scheduled courses.

2.2 For students in 4x4 block scheduled courses, FAY for the Fall semester will be calculated from September 1 of the school year to the first day of Fall primary test administration. The specific date will be published yearly by MDE. FAY for the Spring semester will be calculated from February 1 to the first day of Spring testing, the same day as schools using a traditional school calendar. These dates will be published yearly by MDE.

2.3 The beginning and ending dates will be included in the calculations. Calculations will be based on calendar days, not instructional days. Weekends and holidays will be included in the calculations.

2.4 If a student meets FAY at a school other than the school where he/she is enrolled at the time of testing his/her scores will count at the school where he/she met FAY.

2.5 This definition of FAY will not be applied to students for previous years where a previous definition of FAY was applied. In the event that no FAY was calculated for a student in a previous year, this method will be applied.

2.6 FAY will be calculated at the school level as well as at the district level. Therefore, it is possible for a student who transfers within a district to meet FAY for a district and be included in the calculations for the grade assignment for the district but not be included in the calculations for a school. Scores of all students will be included in the state level calculations regardless of FAY status.

2.7 If a student enrolls and withdraws on the same day, the student will be considered as having been enrolled for one (1) day.

2.8 (Deleted) Rule 2.9 supersedes.

2.9 If FAY cannot be calculated or discerned because of incorrect MSIS coding, the student will be forced to FAY at the school/district if the movement of the student appears to be within the same school/district.

3. N-Count Minimums

3.1 School Totals

3.1.1 In order for a school to earn a grade, the school must have a minimum of 10 valid test scores in each of the required components. Schools that do not have the minimum of 10 valid test scores for each of the components but meet the 95% minimum participation requirements, the available data will be reported but the school will not receive a grade. If a school does not meet the minimum of 10 valid test scores requirement because they do not meet the 95% minimum participation requirement, the school will receive a grade based on the available data for each component. See Sections 22 and 24 for exceptions to this rule.

3.2 Low 25% N-Count Minimums

3.2.1 This subgroup must have a minimum of 10 valid test scores. If there are less than 10 (<10) students in the Low 25% subgroup, the subgroup will consist of All students except for the students scoring at the highest achievement level. If this calculation still results in a number less than 10, then ALL students will be included in the calculation of the Low 25% subgroup.

3.2.2 At the grade-level, a minimum of 4 students with valid scale scores are required to identify the Low 25%. If a grade has less than 4 students with valid scale scores for the subject, there will be no students identified as being in the Low 25% for that grade level for that subject.

4. Participation Rates

4.1 If a school/district does not meet the 95% minimum participation rate, the school/district will automatically be dropped a letter grade. Although subgroup participation rates will be reported, this penalty will apply to the overall participation rate only. (A 94.5% participation rate will not be rounded to 95%.)

4.2 Elementary schools with no assessments (K, 1, and 2) will not be assigned a participation rate. Therefore, these schools will not be impacted by the participation rate minimum requirements.

4.3 Students may be removed from the denominator of testing participation calculations if he/she meets the criteria set forth by the Office of Student Assessment as having a Significant Medical Emergency which made participation in the state testing impossible. For details regarding the definition of Significant Medical Emergency and the process of requesting a student be removed from the calculations, please contact the Office of Student Assessment.

4.4 High School participation rates will be calculated based on the Senior Snapshot. Data from all statewide high-school level end-of-course assessments required for graduation will be used in the participation calculations.

4.4.1 For the 2013-2014 school year, the Senior Snapshot process used for calculating participation rates in high school level end-of-course assessments will remain consistent with previous years. Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, U.S. History will be included in the participation rate calculations. (Refer to rule 4.5 for additional clarification.)

Note: This proposed revision to the business rules was approved by the SBE on March 21, 2014, and is currently in the APA process.

4.5 Students with significant cognitive disabilities (SCD) with no U.S. History assessment scores will be removed from the denominator for the participation rate calculation for U.S. History.

4.6 If and when the ACT assessment becomes a state required assessment, it will be included in the participation rate calculations. (See Section 25.)

4.7 If a student is expelled but is still enrolled in MSIS for the school/district during the testing window, he/she will be included in the denominator. If the student does not test, the student will count as “not tested”.

5. Proficiency

5.1 Proficiency will be determined by the percentage of students who achieve a performance/proficiency of Proficient and above. No additional credit will be given for students scoring in a performance/proficiency level above proficient (e.g. “Advanced”). No partial credit will be given for students scoring in any performance level below proficient.

5.1.1 For proficiency components worth 50 points the weighted percentage of students proficient will be multiplied times 0.5 to determine the points applied to the component.

5.1.2 The science proficiency component for schools with a 12th grade will be based on all science assessments administered at that school. Therefore, for schools with a 12th grade that also have a 5th and/or 8th grade, the science component for that school will still be worth 50 points.

5.2 Assessments included in the proficiency calculations will consist of all federally-required statewide assessments in Reading/Language Arts/English, Mathematics and Science, and any additional high-school level end-of-course assessments required for graduation. This includes all Alternate Assessments based on Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAS) for SCD students. (This rule will need to be reviewed with the implementation of any new statewide assessments.)

6. Growth

6.1 Growth is determined by whether or not a student increases in performance/proficiency levels from one (1) year to the next based on the following criteria:

- An increase of ANY performance/proficiency level
- Staying at the same performance/proficiency that is at or above Proficient from one (1) year to the next
- An increase within the lowest two (2) performance/proficiency levels that crosses over the mid-point of the level. (Example: Bottom half of Basic to top half of Basic)

6.2 Additional weight in the numerator is given for the following increases:

- Any increase of two (2) or more performance/proficiency levels will be given a weight = 1.2.
- Any increase to the highest performance/proficiency level will be given a weight = 1.25.
- An increase within the highest performance/proficiency level and any other increase is given a weight = 1.

(Note: Because additional weight is given, it is mathematically possible for a school or district's growth value to be greater than 100 points for any/all of the four (4) growth components.)

6.3 Any decrease in performance/proficiency levels = 0.

6.4 The lowest two (2) performance/proficiency levels will be split into half at the mid-point of the range. In the event that the range is an odd number and cannot be split into two (2) equal halves, the lower half of the performance/proficiency level will be one (1) point larger than the upper half. (Example: If the range of the performance/proficiency level is 13 scale score points, the bottom half of the range will be seven (7) scale score points and the upper half of the range will be six (6) scale score points.)

The splitting of the lowest two (2) performance/proficiency levels into half at the mid-point range is not intended to create two (2) new separate performance/proficiency levels. Therefore, students who move from the bottom half of the lowest performance/proficiency level to the bottom half of the second lowest performance/proficiency level will not be given additional weight for increasing two (2) performance/proficiency levels. That student will be considered to have increased one (1) performance/proficiency level.

(Rules regarding the splitting of the lowest two (2) performance/proficiency levels are subject to review and change with the implementation of any new assessments.)

6.5 Assessments used for calculation of growth will include:

- Grade-level (3-8) assessments in Reading/Language Arts;
- Grade-level (3-8) assessments in Mathematics;
- High School-level assessment in Reading/Language Arts;
- High School-level assessments in Mathematics;
- Alternate Assessment (3-8 and High School) in Reading; and
- Alternate Assessment (3-8 and High School) in Mathematics.

Growth will not be calculated for Science or U.S. History.

6.6 Students taking Algebra I in 7th or 8th grade are required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to also take the grade-level assessment in mathematics. Therefore, these students will have two (2) growth calculations: grade-level to grade-level and grade-level to Algebra I. The grade-level to grade-level growth calculation will be applied to the current school. The grade-level to Algebra I growth calculation will be banked until the student's 10th grade year.

6.7 To calculate growth for the High Schools for Math-All Students, Math-Low 25%, Reading-All Students and Reading-Low 25%, the 8th grade grade-level assessments will be used as the baseline. The exceptions to this are as follows:

- If a student takes Algebra I during his/her 8th grade year, his/her 7th grade grade-level assessments will be used as the baseline and banked until the student is in the 10th grade.
- If a student takes Algebra I in the 7th grade, his/her 6th grade grade-level math assessment will be used as the baseline and banked until the student is in the 10th grade.

6.8 If a student does not have the previous year's grade-level assessment, the student will be excluded from the growth calculation(s) except in the cases of the high school level assessments.

6.9 For students taking high school level assessments in grades lower than 10th grade, growth will be banked until the student's 10th grade year and then applied.

6.10 If a student does not take the required High School level assessments until 11th or 12th grade year, growth will be calculated and applied in the first year he/she has a valid score. The exception to this will be for students taking the alternate assessment. For students taking the alternate assessment, a cap of two (2) years will be applied to the growth calculations. Therefore, if a student takes the alternate assessment in 8th grade and does not take the high school level alternate assessment until 11th or 12th grade, he/she will not be included in the growth calculations.

6.11 Students who are retained in grades 3-8 will have a growth calculation based on the retained grade from the previous year. (Example: A 4th grade student who was retained will have growth calculated based on his/her previous year's 4th grade assessment scores.)

6.12 For K-3 schools, growth of 4th grade students in the district will be used for the growth calculations of the K-3 school in which they met FAY. Growth of the 3rd grade students who are retained will be included with the 4th grade student growth calculations.

6.13 The student must meet FAY for the current year in order to be included in the growth calculations but is not required to meet FAY for the previous year.

6.14 Growth will not be calculated for students who take the Alternate Assessment in the current year but took the grade-level general education assessment the previous year or vice versa.

6.15 The denominator for the growth calculation includes any FAY student with two (2) valid assessment scores (as defined above). The numerator will include any student included in the denominator who has demonstrated growth as defined above, and weighted accordingly.

6.16 After the implementation of the Common Core assessments, if a student comes to Mississippi from another state and has taken the same Common Core assessment as given in Mississippi, his/her score will be used to calculate growth for the student and the student's growth will be included in the calculations (provided that he/she meets FAY). If the student took a Common Core assessment (in another state) that is different from the assessments given in Mississippi, he/she will not have a growth calculation.

7. Lowest 25% of Students

7.1 Calculation methodology for students whose baseline assessment score is 3rd – 7th grade:

7.1.1 The Lowest 25% in reading and the Lowest 25% in mathematics are determined using the same method but applied separately to reading data and to mathematics data. The procedure used to identify the Lowest 25% of the students in a school is applied separately by grade, and the identified students are combined across all grades to comprise the Lowest 25% and to determine learning gains.

The process:

1. Rank the scores of all FAY students in the grade from highest to lowest based on their prior year scale scores. Students without a score from the prior year, or students in high school without an 8th grade test score, are not included. (See Rules 7.1.2 and 7.1.3 for additional clarification). Do not include scale scores from the alternate assessment. (See Rule 7.4)
2. Divide the number of students in the list by four (4). If the result is not a whole number then automatically round up to meet the 25% minimum.
3. Count, from the lowest score up, the number of students identified in step 2. Then identify the scale score that corresponds to that student. This scale score becomes the boundary score.
4. Identify all students with the boundary score determined in step 3. All students with the same boundary score or lower scale score will be included in the Lowest 25% group for that subject/grade.
5. Repeat the process for each grade for the subject then combine students to form the Lowest 25% for the school for the subject.

Note: The number of students in the Lowest 25% group must meet the minimum n-count as defined in Section 3.2. If the minimum n-count is not met, the rules outlined in Section 3.2 will be applied. (See Section 3 for more details on N-Count minimums.)

It is possible for the Lowest 25% to be more than 25% when steps 4 and 5 are applied.

7.1.2 The Lowest 25% for high schools will be identified based on their 8th grade cohort and their 8th grade grade-level assessment score. The exception will be for those students who take a high-school level course before the 10th grade, in which case, those students will be excluded from the Lowest 25% group.

7.1.3 The Lowest 25% for schools whose highest grade is lower than fourth grade will be identified based on the students who attended the school, not based on their fourth grade school's Lowest 25% group. Therefore, a student may be identified in the Lowest 25% in one school, but not the other.

7.2 The Lowest 25% for a district will be identified using the same method described above (i.e., the district will be calculated as if it were one school). Therefore, it is possible that some students may be identified as the Lowest 25% for their school but not for their district, or for their district but not their school.

7.3 The Lowest 25% for the state will be identified using the same method (i.e., the state will be calculated as if it were one school).

7.4 Scores from the alternate assessment for SCD students will not be included in the identification of the Lowest 25%.

8. Graduation Rate

8.1 The federally-approved 4-year graduation rate will be used. (SECTION 37-17-6, MS CODE OF 1972)

Definition: The number of students who graduate in four (4) years from a school and LEA with a **regular high-school diploma** divided by the number of students who entered four years earlier as first-time 9th graders, with adjustments for deaths, emigration, and transfers in and out. Ninth-grade students who repeat 9th grade will stay in their original cohort.

Definition: A "regular high school diploma" is the standard high-school diploma that is fully aligned with the state's academic content standards. No exceptions are made for students with disabilities (SCD students or non-SCD students) or students receiving an occupational diploma, GED, certificate of attendance, etc.

8.2 For schools with a 12th grade that have been in existence for less than four (4) years, the district's graduation rate will be applied to the school's graduation component calculation.

8.3 The schools/district graduation rate will be multiplied by 2.0 to calculate the points applied to the graduation component for schools/districts.

9. Acceleration

9.1 Beginning in school year 2015-2016, high schools will have an Acceleration component in their calculations.

9.2 The Acceleration component refers to the percentage of students taking and passing the assessment associated with the accelerated courses such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), or SBE-approved industry

certification courses. For students taking dual credit and dual enrollment courses, passing refers to students who are passing the course with a "C" or above. For AP courses, the student must score at least 3 on the AP exam. For IB courses, the student must score at least 4 on the IB exam. For AICE courses, the student must obtain a passing score on the exam. (Passing scores of "A", "B", "C", "D", and "E" on the AICE exams are not based on the American "A-F" grading scale.) For industry certification courses, the student must pass the exam.

9.2.1 College courses must be credit-bearing courses with a minimum of 3 semester hours credit and may be in any subject/content area.

9.3 The Acceleration component will consist of a Participation and a Performance component. These two components will be combined for one score worth 50 points and phased in on the following sliding scale:

- a. Year 1 (2015-2016): $(\text{Participation} - 70\% / \text{Performance} - 30\%) \div 2$
- b. Year 2 (2016-2017): $(\text{Participation} - 60\% / \text{Performance} - 40\%) \div 2$
- c. Year 3 (2017-2018) and beyond: $(\text{Participation} - 50\% / \text{Performance} - 50\%) \div 2$

9.4 Calculation of Participation

9.4.1 The numerator for the Participation component calculation will be the number of students taking accelerated courses such as AP, IB, AICE, dual credit, dual enrollment or industry certification courses based on the definition above.

9.4.2 The denominator for the Participation component calculation shall include all students not identified as Significant Cognitive Disabilities (SCD) students whose Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) grade or peer-grade equivalent is 11th or 12th grade plus any 9th or 10th grade students who are taking and passing these assessments/courses plus any 11th or 12th grade SCD students who are taking and passing these assessments/courses. (9th and 10th grade students and SCD students will not be included in the denominator unless they are also included in the numerator.)

9.4.3 Students participating in multiple accelerated courses during the same school year will be given additional weighting in the numerator as follows:

- 2 courses: 1.1
- 3 courses: 1.2
- 4 courses: 1.3
- 5 courses: 1.4

9.5 Calculation of Performance

9.5.1 The numerator for the Performance component calculation will be the number of students taking and passing accelerated assessments/courses such as AP, IB, AICE, dual credit, dual enrollment, or industry certification courses based on the definition above.

9.5.2 The denominator for the Performance component calculation will consist of all students participating in the courses identified in the participation calculations but with no additional weight applied for students taking multiple courses.

9.5.3 Students who are enrolled in accelerated courses but do not take the required assessment will be considered as "not proficient" in the performance calculations.

9.6 For students taking and passing multiple courses, the additional weighting used in the participation calculations will be applied. Example: A student taking and passing two (2) courses would count as one (1) student in the denominator and 1.1 in the numerator. A student taking two (2) courses but only passing one (1) will count as 1 in both the numerator and the denominator.

9.7 Students who take an accelerated course during their 11th grade year but do not take an accelerated course during their 12th grade year will be counted in the denominator both years, but in the numerator during their 11th grade year only.

9.8 FAY requirements will not be applied to the participation or proficiency calculations in the Acceleration component.

10. Banking Scores: High school end-of-course assessments taken before 10th grade

10.1 Scores of students taking Algebra I, Biology I, English II, or US History end-of-course assessments in a grade below 10th grade will be “banked” for proficiency/achievement and growth calculations until the student is in the 10th grade and then applied to a) the student’s school of origin where he/she took the assessment and b) the student’s 10th grade school (if the student met FAY requirements the year he/she was assessed and during his/her 10th grade year). (See Section 6 for additional clarification on Growth).

10.2 If a student transfers out of district before or during their 10th grade year, his/her scores (achievement and growth) will be applied to the school of origin (if FAY was met) but not to the receiving school in the new district.

Refer to Section 4 (Participation) and 6 (Growth) for additional information.

11. Focus Schools (Pending USDE approval)

11.1 Schools identified as “D” or “F” schools for two (2) consecutive years and not identified as “Priority” will be identified as “Focus” schools. (SECTION 37-17-6, MS CODE OF 1972)

11.2 If at least 10% of the schools in the state are not graded as “D” schools, the lowest 10% of schools, which are not already identified as Priority Schools, will be identified as Focus Schools. (SECTION 37-17-6, MS CODE OF 1972)

11.3 Beginning with the 2013-2014 grade assignments, any school designated as “Focus” will implement Focus School interventions for a minimum of two (2) years. If the school’s grade level improves the school will take the higher grade level but continue to be considered as a “Focus School” for federal reporting and will continue to implement the Focus school interventions for the two-year minimum.

12. Priority Schools (Pending USDE approval)

12.1 Schools identified as “F” schools for two consecutive years will also be identified as “Priority” schools. (SECTION 37-17-6, MS CODE OF 1972)

12.2 If at least 5% of the schools in the state are not graded as “F” schools, the lowest 5% of school grade point designees will be identified as Priority Schools. (SECTION 37-17-6, MS CODE OF 1972)

12.3 Beginning with the 2013-2014 grade assignments, any school designated as “Priority” will implement Priority School interventions for a minimum of three (3) years. If the school’s grade level improves the school will take the higher grade level but continue to be considered as a “Priority School” for federal reporting and will continue to implement the Priority school interventions for the three-year minimum.

13. Reward Schools (Pending USDE approval)

13.1 Schools identified as “A” schools will also be identified as “Reward” schools. (SECTION 37-17-6, MS CODE OF 1972)

13.1.1 Any school also meeting the federal criteria for “Reward-High Progress” or “Reward-High Performing” will be recognized.

14. Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) (Pending USDE approval)

14.1 AMOs will be reported for federal requirements but will not be factored into the calculations for the assigning of A-F accountability labels.

14.1.1 All “C,” “D,” and “F” schools not identified as Priority or Focus will develop an action plan regarding subgroups not meeting AMOs.

15. English Learners (EL)

15.1 Scores of English Learners (EL) will be included in the calculations UNLESS the district requests that the scores of an EL student who is first year in the country be excluded from their proficiency (not participation) calculations.

15.1.1 A student whose HLS (Home Language Survey) indicates the presence of a language other than English must be assessed for English-language proficiency within thirty (30) days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year. Students who register after the beginning of the school year must be assessed within two (2) weeks of enrollment. LEAs have the option to exclude the test scores for recently arrived EL students. “Recently Arrived” applies to the amount of time the student has been served in any school within the United States, NOT to the length of time the student has lived in the United States. LEAs must identify first year EL students designated for exclusion on or before February 1, annually. (For more information, contact the Office of Federal Programs.)

15.1.2 “Recently arrived” ELs may also be excluded from the Acceleration component and College and Career Readiness component. These students will automatically be included (if FAY is met) unless the district requests these students be excluded. The process for requesting the exclusion will be communicated by the MDE.

15.1.3 Any EL student whose scores are excluded based on rule 15.1 will have their score invalidated in the accountability calculations. Therefore, the score will NOT be used the following year as a baseline for any growth calculations.

16. Students with Disabilities

16.1 United States Department of Education (ED) regulations limit the number of scores of children taking alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities (SCD) scoring proficient or above to 1% of the students at the state and district level. This rule does not apply at the school level because these regulations recognize that some schools offer specialized services or are near specialized medical facilities that attract higher numbers of students with significant special needs. Therefore, if a district has >1% of their total population scoring proficient or above on an alternate assessment the percent above 1% will be adjusted.

16.2 All eligible SCD students who are enrolled before or during the January MSIS data submission will be expected to participate in statewide assessments. If an SCD student, who would otherwise be eligible to participate in the alternate assessment, is enrolled after the January MSIS data submission, he/she may be removed from the denominator of participation calculations if the IEP committee determines that there is insufficient time for the teacher to gather both baseline and final assessment data that would yield a valid assessment for that student. The district will need to notify the Office of Student Assessment of any such student that may need to be removed from the participation calculations. If the student transfers from another school within the state after this deadline, and it is verified by the Office of Student Assessment that no baseline data from the school of origin is available, the district must notify the Office of Student Assessment and request that this student be removed from the participation calculations. (This rule will need to be updated and revised with the implementation of any new alternate assessment.)

16.3 Non-SCD students are not allowed to participate in alternate assessments. If any such students have alternate assessment data, the test data will be considered not valid.

16.4 Students with disabilities will be those students whose SPED indicator in MSIS is "Y" (Yes) at the end of month 8 (closest approximation to the test administration dates).

16.4.1 In order for a student to be counted as SCD, his/her SCD indicator and SPED indicator must be set to "Y" (Yes) in MSIS.

16.5 Students with disabilities who are coded as "ungraded" (56 or 58) in MSIS will be assigned a peer-grade calculation based on his/her age on September 1 of the current school year.

17. Duplicate Test Scores

17.1 If a student takes the general education (grade-level) assessment AND the alternate assessment, the scores from the general education assessment will be used in the school/district accountability calculations.

17.2 If MSIS records indicate two (2) valid assessment scores for the same assessment in the same year, the score from the first administration date will be used. In the event that MSIS records indicate two

valid assessment scores for the same assessment on the same date, the higher of the two scores will be used in the school/district accountability calculations.

18. Invalid Test Scores

18.1 Students with invalid test scores will be counted as “not tested” for participation calculations. The first VALID test score will be used in the proficiency, growth, and participation calculations.

18.2 If an invalid score is validated after the accountability calculations are performed and final school/district grade classifications have been assigned, the school/district’s grade classifications will not be recalculated and adjusted to reflect the validated score. If during the next year, the student tests again and has a valid test score, that test score, although it was not the student’s first test score, will be used during the next year’s calculations. Please refer to the Office of Student Assessment regarding deadlines for appealing invalid test scores.

18.3 If a student’s MSIS grade level (or peer grade level for ungraded students) does not match his/her assessment grade level, the student’s scores will not be included in the numerator for participation, growth, or proficiency calculations. (The student will count as not proficient, not meeting growth, and not tested.) Likewise, the student’s scores will not be used the following year in growth calculations. (Note: This rule does not apply to high-school end-of-course assessments or high school alternate assessments.)

19. Rounding

19.1 In the calculation of each of the components in the accountability system that are reported to schools, the final value of each component will be rounded to one (1) decimal place (tenths place). After the components are summed, the total value will be rounded to a whole number and reported for the final grade value calculation.

Example:

Reading Proficiency	80.5
Reading Growth – All Students	80.5
Reading Growth – Low 25% of Students	80.5
Math Proficiency	80.5
Math Growth – All Students	80.5
Math Growth – Low 25% of Students	80.5
Science Proficiency	80.5
Total Score	564

Note: Other rounding rules are embedded in the explanations of the specific components.

20. School Reconfigurations or Redrawing of District Lines

20.1 A school’s accountability calculations will be based on the grade configuration of the school (and the students in that school) on the date that corresponds with the Full Academic Year rules at the time of testing (see Section 2 for details on Full Academic Year). The calculations are applied to the school the following year, regardless of any reconfigurations or redistricting that takes place during the summer after testing or during the school year before testing.

21. Alternative, Career, Technical, & Vocational Schools

21.1 No school grades or differentiated accountability labels will be assigned to alternative, career, technical, and/or vocational schools. Scores of students attending these schools will be included in the school grade of the student's official MSIS home school of enrollment.

22. Schools Without Tested Subjects or Grades

22.1 Elementary/Middle Schools

22.1.1 Any elementary/middle school that does not have reading or math scores because the school does not have the required grade level, the scores from the students in the next higher grade in the tested subject within the same district will be applied back to the student's lower elementary school of origin. In order for the scores to be applied, the student must meet FAY at the lower grade school, the current school and if there is a gap in years, anywhere in the district for the years in between.

Example 1, K-2 School:

- Reading and Math Proficiency- The reading and math scores from students in grade 3 who attended the K-2 school and are still in the same district will be used to calculate the math and reading proficiency for that K-2 school.
- Science Proficiency – An equating process will be used to adjust the scores for this component.
- Growth - The reading and math scores from students in grade 4 who attended the K-2 school and are still in the same district will be used to calculate the growth for Reading-All Students, Math-All Students, Reading-Low 25%, and Math-Low 25% for that K-2 school. The students would have to have met FAY
 - in the K-2 school during 2nd grade
 - the 4th grade school in the same district; and
 - any school within the same district during 3rd grade.

Example 2, K-3 School:

- Reading and Math Proficiency- The reading and math scores from students in grade 3 at the school will be used to calculate the math and reading proficiency for that K-3 school.
- Science Proficiency – An equating process will be used to adjust the scores for this component.
- Growth - The reading and math scores from students in grade 4 who attended the K-3 school and are still in the same district will be used to calculate the growth for Reading-All Students, Math-All Students, Reading-Low 25%, and Math-Low 25% for that K-3 school.
- All applicable FAY rules will apply.

Example 3, K-4 School:

- Reading and Math Proficiency- The reading and math scores from students in grades 3 and 4 at the school will be used to calculate the math and reading proficiency for that K-4 school.
- Science Proficiency – An equating process will be used to adjust the scores for this component.
- Growth - The reading and math scores from students in grades 3 and 4 at the school will be used to calculate the growth for Reading-All Students, Math-All Students, Reading-low 25%, and Math-Low 25% for that K-3 school.

- All applicable FAY rules will apply.

Example 4, 6-7 School:

- Reading and Math Proficiency- The reading and math scores from students in grades 6 and 7 at the school will be used to calculate the math and reading proficiency for that 6-7 school.
- Science Proficiency – An equating process will be used to adjust the scores for this component.
- Growth - The reading and math scores from students in grades 6 and 7 at the school will be used to calculate the growth for Reading-All Students, Math-All Students, Reading-Low 25%, and Math-Low 25% for that 6-7 school.
- All applicable FAY rules will apply.

22.1.2 An equating process to adjust the points required will be used for elementary/middle schools that do not have science scores because the school does not have a 5th or 8th grade.

22.2 High Schools

22.2.1 Schools with missing data for components specific to high schools (U.S. History, graduation rates, etc.,) will have proxy data (i.e., district average, historical average, etc.,) applied if available. If no proxy data is available, an equating process will be used to adjust for the missing components.

22.3 Schools with only Pre-Kindergarten and/or Kindergarten will not be assigned a school grade label. (Pending legislative amendment)

23. State and other Special Schools

23.1 Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) and Mississippi School for Math and Science (MSMS)

23.1.1 The Mississippi School of the Arts and Mississippi School for Math and Science will not earn grades. (Pending technical amendment to SB2396)

23.1.2 If a student takes a high-school end-of course assessment for the first time while at MSA or MSMS, his/her scores will be sent back to their school/district of origin and rolled into the state totals.

23.1.3 (Pending the implementation of the College Readiness component) Students enrolled at MSA and/or MSMS during the time of the Senior Snapshot will have their ACT scores sent to their high school of origin.

23.2 Mississippi School for the Blind (MSB) and the Mississippi School for the Deaf (MSD)

23.2.1 The Mississippi School for the Blind and the Mississippi School for the Deaf will not earn grades but will have results reported to meet federal regulations. (Minimum N-counts and FAY rules will apply.) (Pending technical amendment to SB2396)

23.3 Other State/Special Schools

23.3.1 State agencies (i.e. Hudspeth, Ellisville State School, etc.,) will not earn grades.

23.3.2 Students placed in non-public (special private schools) (i.e., Millcreek, CARES, etc.,) but are enrolled in regular Mississippi public school will have his/her scores included in the calculations of the school/district in which he/she is enrolled in MSIS.

23.3.3 Students enrolled in schools 200 and 500 have no enrollment and are not used for any of the usual statistical and reporting purposes. If a student is enrolled in a public school during the testing window, he/she would have to be tested (and counted in the testing participation rates) and his/her score (if FAY) would be used for accountability purposes.

23.4 Students in Correctional Facilities/Juvenile Justice System

23.4.1 According to the USDE, these facilities are considered “programs” not schools and would not be assigned accountability labels.

23.4.2 If a student, who is still enrolled in MSIS, is in such a program and is not tested, the student will count as “not tested” in the participation rate calculations of the school/district. If the student is tested, his/her scores will count at his/her MSIS resident school.

23.5 Virtual Public Schools

23.5.1 Only schools classified under the U.S. Department of Education’s EDEN (Education Data Exchange Network) reporting requirements as a separate school entity will receive a grade.

24. 9th Grade Only Schools

24.1 Scores of a 9th grade only school will be combined with the high school to which that school feeds and calculated as one (1) school but reported as two (2) separate schools. In other words, both schools will earn the same school grade because it will be based on the same data calculations.

25. College & Career Readiness Indicator

The College & Career Readiness component will be dependent on legislative action. The following rules will apply only if the state legislature mandates state-wide ACT testing and appropriates funding for such testing.

25.1 The ACT will be used as the College & Career Readiness Indicator.

25.2 The College and Career Readiness component will be comprised of a Mathematics and an English/Reading component. These two components will be equally weighted and combined for one score worth 50 points:

$$(Math + Reading/English) \div 2$$

25.3 A student will be included in the numerator for Mathematics if he/she is considered College & Career Ready in Mathematics by having a score on the Mathematics component of the ACT at or above the ACT College Readiness Benchmark for the Mathematics component at the time of the student’s assessment.

25.4 A student will be included in the numerator for English/Reading if he/she is considered College & Career Ready in English/Reading by having a score on the English component of the ACT at or above the

ACT College Readiness Benchmark OR if his/her score on the Reading component of the ACT is at or above the ACT College Readiness Benchmark at the time of the student's assessment.

NOTE: As of September 1, 2013 the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are as follows:
English - 18; Reading - 22; Mathematics - 22

25.5 Science ACT sub-scores will not be included in the College & Career Readiness component.

25.6 ACT Composite scores will not be included in the College & Career Readiness component. (Rationale: ACT does not designate a composite score to indicate college readiness.)

25.7 The highest sub-score for each student (at the time of the Senior Snapshot) in Mathematics and Reading/English, as described above, will be used in the College & Career Readiness Indicator accountability calculations.

25.8 Contingent upon legislative funding, the state will pay for one state-wide ACT administration to be held in the Spring for students classified in MSIS as juniors. Ungraded students whose birthdates link them to the cohort of students identified as juniors will also be included. Students may take the ACT as many additional times as they choose, at their own expense.

25.9 Students identified in MSIS as SCD will not be required to participate but may participate if the IEP committee deems it appropriate.

25.10 The ACT scores of all students identified in the Senior Snapshot will be included in the calculation except students identified in MSIS as SCD. However, if a student identified in MSIS as SCD takes the ACT, his/her score will be included in the calculations.

25.11 A student's score will be applied to the school in which the student is enrolled in MSIS at the time of the Senior Snapshot.

25.12 No other assessments will be allowed as a substitution for the ACT in the College & Career Readiness component.

26: Senior Snapshot

The Senior Snapshot (SS) is a method of identifying high school students for the high school assessment participation rate calculation required by the ED. Because students may take the high school level assessment at any time during high school to meet federal regulations, MDE uses this method to capture the status of students before the end of their fourth year in high school. The SS captures ALL students who have been enrolled in a MS public school for three (3) years (grades 10-12). If the student does not meet the 3-year enrollment criteria, he/she will not be included in the denominator for participation rate calculations.

27: Other

27.1 Deceased Students

27.1.1 Students indicated in MSIS as deceased will not be included in any accountability calculations.

27.2 Foreign Exchange Students

27.2.1 For school year 2013-2014, foreign exchange students will automatically be included in accountability calculations just as any other students. However, if a school/district wishes to have a foreign exchange student excluded from the accountability calculations, the request should be made through the Internal Review Process.

27.2.2 Beginning in school year 2014-2015, MSIS will have a "Foreign Exchange Student Exemption" flag that schools/districts may use to identify and request exemption for these students. Schools/districts will be required to provide supporting documentation.

Statewide Accountability System Effective School Year 2013-2014

APA COMMENTS

April 18 – May 13, 2014

APA Comments Summary Chart

Rule	Narrative of Rule	Topic	Comments		
			Supporting	Concerns	Total
1.3 1.4 5.1.1 5.1.2 8.3 25.2	Based on the initial feedback from the United States Department of Education (USDOE) regarding the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility request and the combined state and federal accountability systems, the weighting for the graduation, Science and U.S. History components has been revised for districts and schools with Grade 12 (high schools) in the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System. These proposed revisions will be effective upon completion of the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Process for school years 2013-2014 and thereafter.		1	86	
TOTAL COMMENTS			1	86	87

Statewide Accountability System Effective School Year 2013-2014

APA Comments Summary Chart

Role	Number of Commenters
Superintendents/Conservators	30
Assistant Superintendents	4
District School Board Members	
Teachers	8
Librarians/Media Specialists	
Federal Programs Directors	1
Curriculum Directors	2
Special Education Directors	1
Principals	20
Assistant Principals	
Vocational School Directors	
Other District Personnel	10
Instructional Specialists/Academic Coaches	
Advocacy Groups	1
MDE Offices	
Citizens (Parents)	1
Unknown	12
State Organizations	
TOTAL	84

Thirty-seven (37) school districts were represented through the APA comments received.

**Statewide Accountability
System Effective School
Year 2013-2014**

APA COMMENTS

April 18 – May 13, 2014

From: [Cortez Moss](#)
To: [Accountability; Accountability System](#)
Cc: [Paula Vanderford](#)
Subject: Addendum to the New Accountability Model
Date: Friday, April 18, 2014 7:36:04 PM

Dr. Vandeford:

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Phelton Moss. I served as one of the Teach for America Interns this past summer for Jean Massey. I wanted to reach out to you as regard to the proposed changes to the new accountability model. I have mixed feelings about this change. I favor the increased focused on graduation. However, US History and Biology are now only worth 50 Points along with ACT and AP classes. However, I like that the graduation rate now counts for 200 points. Couldn't we just increase the total and make everything worth 100 points as regard to proficiency in math, ELA, history, and science? At this point, Math and English are worth 300 points each given that we have grow the bottom 25% (100), grow all kids (100), and make sure all kids are proficient (100), while Biology and History are worth only 50 points each focusing only on proficiency. We are de-emphasizing elements of a holistic curriculum. Now we are back at the same point: the math and English teachers are carrying the accountability of the school!

Thanks,
PCM

--

Yours in "Educating the Masses,"

Phelton Cortez Moss

University of Mississippi Alum 2012
B.A. Public Policy Leadership, English
M.A. Curriculum and Instruction, Candidate
Teach for America 2012 Corps Member-MS Delta
10th Grade ELA/ Instructional Coach
Greenwood Public School District

From: [Deadra Cassell](#)
To: [Accountability](#)
Subject: Clarification
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2014 9:31:38 AM

Good Morning,

I am posing a scenario for clarification.

The Business Rules state that for the 2013-2014 school term the weights will be:

Graduation	200 Points	22.22%
LA Prof	100 Points	11.11%
Growth All	"	"
Growth <25%	"	"
Math Prof	"	"
Growth All	"	"
Growth <25%	"	"
Science Prof	50 Points	5.56%
US History	50 Points	5.56%

In the **webinar** - it appears that the calculation does not take into consideration these extended weighted values. The Graduation is multiplied by 2.0, and the Science Prof & US History Prof is multiplied by .5 (creating only 90%) which is a bit below the weighted calculation of 2.22 and .556 (creating 100%). Is this correct or am I understanding this incorrectly??

I calculated our projected School label using the 22.22% (For Graduation = $77.5 \times 2.22 = 172.05$), 11.11% & the 5.56% (Science Prof = $48 \times .556 = 26.688$). Could you clarify this for me.

Thanks for all that you do for our schools and our students!

Have a great day,
Dr. Cassell

Deadra Cassell, Ph.D.
Curriculum/Professional Development
West Jasper School District
610 Highway 18 E
Bay Springs, MS 39422
601-764-2280 EX 106
601-670-6973
601-764-4490 Fax

From: [Noal Cochran](#)
To: [Accountability](#)
Subject: Proposed Business Rules
Date: Friday, April 25, 2014 11:39:15 AM

I would like further explanation for the new cut scores posted with the business rules for schools with a 12th grade. This is a significant change (5-6%) in some cases.

--

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

COPIAH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TELEPHONE (601) 894-1341
FAX (601) 894-2634



RICKEY CLOPTON, SUPERINTENDENT

254 W. GALLATIN - HAZLEHURST, MISS. 39063

Dr. Wright,

April 28, 2014

I am Larry Williams and manage test data for the Copiah County School District.

Our concerns and issues are with raising the scale score cut points in the Statewide Accountability System for 2013-2014 when the total points remain 900.

1) When we received the impact data, calculating 2012-2013 scores, in Dec. for the new accountability model approved in January, our district received a "C" rating. When we recalculated the points weighting Science and US History 50% and the graduation rate 200%, using the same scale score cut points, our district received a "C" rating with a graduation rate of 80%. When you raise the scale score cut points (58 points) our district would receive a "D" rating. At **Wesson Attendance Center** the impact data for 2012-2013 shows them with a "B" rating. They stay a "B" rating with weighting Science, US History, and the graduation rate with the present scale score cut points; this is with a graduation rate of 87%. When you raise the scale score cut points (57 pts) they receive a "C" rating. Wouldn't you think that if you had such good graduation rates, and doubling this rate, their accountability rating would go up or at least stay the same? Raising the scale score cut points appears to nullify or inversely affect our accountability rating. We strongly oppose raising the scale score cut points. More time and information are needed to appropriately evaluate this change. We do not need to sacrifice good decisions and accuracy for the sake of speed.

Recommendation: The scale score cut points should not be changed until next year since the ACT component will be added to go from 900 to 950 points. I would also appeal to the Feds that more time is needed to evaluate any changes.

2) No new impact data has been sent to the districts in changing the scale score cut points and changing the weight on Science, Social Studies, and graduation to make comparisons with the scale score cut points approved in January. We have been left to do this ourselves and this does not lead to consistency and accuracy among the districts. (This was done for the current accountability system in Dec.)

Recommendation: Send new impact data changing the weight on Science, Social Studies, and graduation rates.

3) Making changes to the scale score cut points just before state tests is changing in midstream. We have used the present scale score cut points all year long as a point of reference to hold our schools and staff accountable using the Case 21 common assessments. The results are reported to board members and all staff in the district. **Making any change to the scale at this point skews these results and creates a climate of confusion and disillusionment that affects morale. This will damage credibility with the public trying to explain these changes.**

Recommendation: Same recommendation as for number 1.

4) Anytime scale score cut points are changed, it should be explained to all districts (in a way that can be understood) and done prior to the beginning of a new school year so that appropriate goals may be set and accurate information disseminated.

Supporting data is attached.

Sincerely,



Larry Williams

Test Data Manager, Covich County

4-25-14



Copies

For 2013-14 Test Results

For 2013-14 Test Results

Present Cut Scores

Proposed Change in raising cut scores for schools (and district)

for schools (and district)

with a grade 12 (900 pts.)

(not weighting grad. rate)

Increase

(weighting grad. rate)

$A \geq 695$	+45 pts.	$A \geq 740$	9.1% increase
$623 \leq B < 695$	+57 pts.	$680 \leq B < 740$	9.1% increase
$540 \leq C < 623$	+58 pts.	$598 \leq C < 680$	10.7% increase
$422 \leq D < 540$	+78 pts.	$500 \leq D < 598$	18.5% increase
$F < 422$	+78 pts.	$F < 500$	18.5% increase

Copiah Co. = 554
 "C"
 +24.4
 4.4% increase
 in pts. (not 11%)

Copiah Co. = 578.4
 "D" (weighting grad. rate)
 by 11% to 22%
 4.4% increase

Wesson AC = 635
 "B"
 +20.8
 3.4% increase
 in pts. (not 11%)

Wesson AC = 655.8
 "C" (weighting grad. rate)
 by 11% to 22%
 3.4% increase

Weighting the graduation rate more with a good graduation rate should increase ^(or stay the same) your accountability rating rather than go down =

District

Area	State - Pre-11th - 2012-13	1 st 9wks CASE 21	2 nd 9wks CASE 21	Comp. CASE 21	State 2013-14
LA Proficiency	54.8%	55.46%	58.6%	59.80%	
LA (all) Growth	63.6%	60.31%	61.5%	62.8%	
LA (25%) Growth	56.6%	53.33%	57.4%	59.1%	
Math Proficiency	62.5%	70.41%	65.3%	71.8%	
Math (all) Growth	68.7%	73.46%	69.3%	75.6%	
Math (25%) Growth	54.9%	61.75%	57.1%	65.6%	
Science Proficiency	27.8% 55.6%	18.16% 37.52%	22.1% 44.2%	24.6% 49.2%	
US History Proficiency	29.1% 58.2%	26.1% 52.2%	27.6% 55.2%	28.65% 57.3%	
Graduation Rate	160.4% 80.2%	160% 80%	160% 80%	160% 80%	
Total	518.4 - D 554 - C	519.58 - D 544.44 - C	518.9 - D 548.6 - C	607.95 - C 581.2 - C	- New Scale

District / High School Grades

Points in each category represent the percent of students meeting the established criteria

The cut-points below are the required cut-points based on the model without the College & Career Readiness Indicator.

	A	B	C	D	F
Points <i>New Scale</i>	≥695 <i>7,740</i>	≥623 <i>7,680</i>	≥540 <i>7,538</i>	≥422 <i>7,500</i>	<422 <i>5,500</i>
Percent of Eligible Students Tested*	At least 95%	At least 95%	At least 95%	At least 95%	At least 95%

UPDATE: The SBE previously approved a requirement that schools/districts be dropped one letter grade for not meeting a specified target in either of the components for growth of the bottom 25%. The Accountability Task Force and Technical Review Team are recommending that requirement be removed.

*Although subgroup participation rates will be reported, this penalty will apply to the overall participation rate only. (A 94.5% participation rate will not be rounded to 95%.)

9/12/2013



Wesson Attendance Center

Area	State - Pre-11th	1 st 9wks	2 nd 9wks	Comp.	State
	2012-13	CASE 21	CASE 21	CASE 21	2013-14
LA Proficiency	71.0%	69.3%	69.59%	73.21%	
LA (all) Growth	76.8%	65.1%	67.44%	69.1%	
LA (25%) Growth	65.5%	62.0%	67.0%	62.0%	
Math Proficiency	69.3%	74.6%	66.59%	78.5%	
Math (all) Growth	75.2%	70.3%	60.77%	77.1%	
Math (25%) Growth	55.2%	63%	52.0%	66.7%	
Science Proficiency	36.4% 72.8%	25.3% 50.6%	28.4% 56.8%	31.9% 63.8%	
US History Proficiency	31.8% 63.5%	27.25% 54.5%	32.8% 65.6%	33.85% 67.7%	
Graduation Rate	174.6% 87.3%	174.6% 87.3%	174.6% 87.3%	174.6% 87.3%	
Total	655.8 - C 635 - B	631.45 - C 596.7 - C	619.19 - C 593.09 - C	667.02% - C 645.47 - B	New Scale

High School Grades

Points in each category represent the percent of students meeting the established criteria

The cut-points below are the required cut-points based on the model without the College & Career Readiness Indicator.

	A	B	C	D	F
Points <i>New Scale</i>	≥695 7,740	≥623 7,680	≥540 7,598	≥422 8,500	<422 5,500
Percent of Eligible Students Tested*	At least 95%	At least 95%	At least 95%	At least 95%	At least 95%

UPDATE: The SBE previously approved a requirement that schools/districts be dropped one letter grade for not meeting a specified target in either of the components for growth of the bottom 25%. The Accountability Task Force and Technical Review Team are recommending that requirement be removed.

*Although subgroup participation rates will be reported, this penalty will apply to the overall participation rate only. (A 94.5% participation rate will not be rounded to 95%.)

9/12/2013



From: [Jerry Moore](#)
To: [Accountability](#)
Subject: APA Process and Comments for Change in Acct. Model (4/28/14)
Date: Monday, April 28, 2014 1:46:22 PM

Dear Sir(s):

It was noted recently in an email sent out by MDE to all Superintendents that the accountability model that we have been working with during SY 13-14 would have to be modified due to a requirement by the USDE to increase the percentage that the graduation rate must count within the current formula. It was also noted that this was due to having one accountability formula. There are three major issues, in my mind's eye, that have arisen and will arise due to this change, and all are extremely problematic for school districts at this point and time during the school year and are as follows:

1. The Hold Harmless waver would be nullified.
2. The USDE is truly in control of our acct. formula.
3. The cut scores have been raised for school levels/grades.

To further clarify these three issues, my comments are broken down for each below.

1. The Hold Harmless waver would be nullified: School districts have been told since late last Spring to begin teaching Common Core standards, even though we would be judged by assessments that did not utilize these standards during their creation.

The fact that districts would be "held harmless" was the primary reason that most districts non-apprehensively made this transition of teaching these standards beginning in August of 2013. Further, we ensured our communities, our teaching staffs, our students and our parents of this transition and the "hold harmless" clause. Yes, we knew under the new accountability model that our school levels would still be reported to the media, but we also knew, and promulgated the promise that our school/district levels could not drop during this transition. This is how we built trust with the transition to all parties involved and concerned. If we are to change this policy/promise two weeks before assessments, we have lost all credibility. "We" being defined as school districts, legislature, MDE, the Accountability Task Force, the State School Board and a plethora of other individual involved who promoted this notion to the general public and school employees.

2. The USDE is truly in control of our acct. formula: It was noted that if the USDE changes the formula in any way, then the whole formula is changed because we have one formula currently. To begin, this is not exactly true. There are portions of the formula that are not reported to the USDE, therefore, we actually have two formulas. Secondly, if that be the case, then it needs to be changed, as our rating does not need to be dictated by an outside source. Third, if our formula is dictated by the USDE, we certainly should have had approval from USDE for the formula itself before exposing the public to a lie.

3. The cut scores have been raised for school levels: This is entirely problematic and not acceptable. To begin, I'm having difficulty, via phone calls and emails, of finding anyone who wants to take credit for this malady. Secondly, please refer to bullet number one of this letter concerning credibility, as the same argument applies.

Third, to tell school districts and schools that the goal that they set, based on the fact that they knew exactly what they were capable of attaining academically at the

beginning of the school year, is now an impossibility, is at best embarrassing to our state program and unfair.

To hammer home this point, please note the following example: If I were a student taking a class and knew that I had to have a B in the class to maintain my GPA for scholarship purposes, the first question I would ask is "What constitutes a B?"

Certainly, the student knows in the back of their mind that they would like an A, but for the sake of argument, let's just say that this student knows that they have not taken enough courses, as of yet, and do not have enough background knowledge, most likely, to pull off an A this semester in this class, so they decide it best to aim for a B. When the student begins the class, based on their background knowledge, they quickly realize that a B is going to be tough to attain as well. But, they work hard all semester and calculate, based on their current grades at the end of the semester (as all students do), that they need an 86 on their final exam in order to receive a B average in the class and not hurt their GPA. Then, low and behold, the student walks into the classroom to take their final exam and the teacher tells everyone to listen closely as he has an announcement. He then tells them that they have changed the grading scale. The student quickly calculates and determines that they now have to have a 106 on their final exam in order to receive a B in the class and maintain their B average for scholarship. The student knows they have shown gains in this class all year, but also knows that it is impossible for them to meet their goal and maintain scholarship based on the new scale that was introduced to them on the day of the exam. Fair? Well, I think we all know the answer to that question.

Fourth, the number of components within the formula remained the same even with the graduation percentage increase within the formula. Basically, points were just moved around within the formula to the meet the USDE requirement for graduation rate. Therefore, there were 900 available points before the formula change, and there are still 900 points. It was unnecessary to change the cut scores, which leaves us all scratching our heads as to who is responsible for this and why. The "why" is a hard pill to swallow. It is unclear to me why we seem to think tough standards means more failures in our state. This seems to be an idea that permeates across our state at too many levels recently, but that's clearly a whole other discussion.

The bottom line and the piece of the big elephant we need to be eating right here and now is this: Hold Harmless needs to be a promise that was made and kept, the accountability formula needs to be noted as two formulas (because it is) in order to ensure that we assist and help our schools to grow without being so punitive towards them (as clearly most school districts feel currently) and the cut scores in the current model need to be maintained as they are now and as was promised for credibility and appropriate transitional growth reason, et. Al.

I hope that this response is not clustered with hundreds of other responses, but taken seriously, as many people's reputations across the state ride on the events that surround these decisions.

Cordially,

J. Moore

Jerry O. Moore, Superintendent
Marshall County School District (4700)
(662) 252-4271

"Think, learn, play, plan, dream.....become".

From: Paula Vanderford
To: Accountability
Subject: FW: APA Process on Accountability
Date: Tuesday, April 29, 2014 11:52:49 AM

From: Chrestman, Kim [mailto:kchrestman@wvwsd.k12.ms.us]
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2014 4:04 PM
To: Paula Vanderford
Subject: APA Process on Accountability

Dr. Vanderford,

I will apologize up front for my tone and being upset. I am in a school district with very little funding and it seems we are getting cut left and right, and with more and more mandates. We are working hard to improve our rating (D) and we seem to be making some progress...but then the legs get cut out from under us. Not only that but that it has the appearance that there is a systematic effort to make the public schools of Mississippi look terrible in the public eye. We seem to be under attack at every move we make.

There are a lot of issues I have, but these are the ones I will address in this email.

1. We were promised that we would have the opportunity to improve upon our 2012-13 scores if we wanted to continue to use the current accountability model or move to CCSS. Our 2012-13 scores would be held "harmless", but we would have the opportunity to improve on the **same model as 2012-13**. Water Valley has been working extremely hard with coaches, data rooms, etc. Just when we seem to be making progress and it looks like we might move to a "C" and even have the potential to have a "B" with growth, we get a whole new accountability system. The new accountability model just sent my teachers into "panic" mode because we were telling them they still had a chance to improve...and the data seems to show that we would improve. In January we get a new model which makes it almost impossible to improve. *Definitely Not Fair for those of us working hard to improve and was promised another year to get it done.*
2. We were promised that our 2012-13 scores would be held "harmless" for the 2013-14 school year. That even seems to be in jeopardy from my understanding.
3. For schools with a 12th grade: Cut scores are being raised at the last minute for 2013 – 2014 testing cycle. Many teachers/districts have publicly set goals to reach the scores...but now they are raised...but I am not sure who mandated it. Did the Feds require this or did the SDE just do this?
4. Our scores from last year (9th graders) will be used in this year's accountability model...because it is their 10th grade year. We had terrible Biology scores last year because an instructor just quit teaching at semester. He did not return! It hurt us last year and now their scores will count again this year. What is fair about that??
5. What impact is this going to have on school districts. Predictable future is that it will make public education look bad.....especially those with certain demographics and clientele (poverty districts).

I have two daughters going into education. One is a senior in Elementary Education and a sophomore in Physics/Math. Right now I am communicating to them, choose your school wisely. Make sure it is an A or B. You will be put down, told how bad you are, how you cannot teach, and you will make less money if you work in poverty districts. The SDE of

education has taken over several school districts throughout the state.....even under these extreme circumstances.....even the SDE has been unable to move these districts to A or B school districts. If you are in a good school, you will be looked at as a good teacher. If you are in a low rated school, you will be looked as a poor teacher. A good friend moved from a "C" district where she had a 6th grade QDI of 160 to an "A" school district. Her scores immediately went to 240. Just by changing schools.

Again, I apologize for my frustration. The people at SDE have been my greatest assets over the 30+ years I have been in education. Unbelievable people. I do understand that a lot of this is being legislated to us and SDE. Thanks for all you do for public education.

--

Kim Chrestman, Superintendent
Water Valley School District
544 Market St.
Water Valley, MS 38965
Office: [662 473-1203](tel:6624731203)

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1. There were already 900 points in the system. Taking 50 from history and 50 from science accounted for the extra 100 points added to graduation. As the total number of points in the system neither increased nor decreased, changing the cut scores is not statistically or logically appropriate. Also, the original cut scores were decided upon through a lengthy process which involved superintendents and other stakeholders on the Accountability Taskforce. I just don't understand how all that work and time could be thrown out the window less than a month before testing – especially considering USDOE didn't ask for cut points to be altered. They just wanted the graduation rate to have more weight which was accomplished by making graduation rate worth 200 points and taking points away from science and history.
2. Why is the promise we had of being held harmless possibly being retracted? The only reason we decided to teach CCSS in grades K-8 this school year was because we “knew” that our MCT2 scores would not adversely affect our accreditation rating. We would have never made the K-8 transition to CCSS from Mississippi Standards if we would have had any idea that our accountability rating would be based on test results that assess Mississippi Standards, not CCSS.
3. How does the USDOE legally control Mississippi's accountability model and whether we are held harmless this school year as promised? The Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution states, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." Because education is not mentioned in the Constitution, the State of Mississippi is supposed to have autonomy over its educational system which includes the power to judge the efficacy of our schools and districts. Further, the United States Supreme Court has opined in *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973) that education “is not among the rights afforded explicit protection under our Federal Constitution.” In the end, the federal government does not have the constitutional authority to control education or even mandate that we have an educational system at all.

Walter Moore, Assistant Superintendent
Benton County Schools
231 Court Street
Ashland, MS 38603
662-224-3602 Office
662-224-2607 Fax

Friday, May 02, 2014

Dear Dr. P Vanderford:

I am a 4th grade teacher at S.V. Marshall Elementary in Holmes County, and I'm displeased as well as very concerned about the "pull-out" plan on the "Hold Harmless Exemption" promised to our school for the 2013-2014 school year.

It's been said that your word is the standing bond within a contract, so I ask that you reevaluate and reconsider on behalf of our students' hard work and the community we're building.

Thank you in advance,

Ms. Mary Taylor

Margaret A. Brownlow
Post Office Box 57
182 Vine Street
Tchula, MS 39169
601-942-9800
brownlo6@bellsouth.net

May 3, 2014

Dr. Paula Vanderford
Bureau Manager
Office of Accreditation and Accountability
Post Office Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Dear Dr. Vanderford,

I am writing in regards to the hold harmless exemption that was promised for the 2013-2014 school year. There was a promise that the cut scores would remain for three years, now you all want to renege on your promise. It is unfair to change this exemption so impromptu. Our children have set high expectations for themselves and will be very disappointed if their scores are changed at this point in the school year. Please, do not disappoint our children; therefore, keep your promise regarding the hold harmless exemption.

Thanking you in advance,

Margaret Brownlow
Speech Therapist
Holmes County School District

From: Brian Jernigan
To: Accountability
Subject: Accountability APA and Graduation
Date: Monday, May 05, 2014 1:11:52 PM

I want to voice my concern and ask for a response on the following:

1. The hold harmless that we were all led to believe is now in question. We implemented a very strategic plan of teaching 100% of the Common Core Standards in grades 3-8. We have not been teaching the students from the MS State Framework in Language or Math.

Are we now being forced to tell parents that we were given the flexibility to give your student a chance to internalize the Common Core standards without having to worry about two curricula? But now, our State Department of Education has reversed the decision and we will be fully accountable under the state test this year.

2. Why have the cut scores been increased with schools that have 12th grade?

3. Can we expect to have impact data since we are NOW being held accountable at the end of the year? If not, why?

Lastly,

In terms of counting graduation , why is MDE no longer allowing "in school GED" or certificate students to get credit? The students that are not able to fulfill the regular requirements need to be able to receive some type of credit for finishing. In addition, students that do not just quit and actually finish a program through a school GED should be counted as well. With the way it is now, MDE's message is "If you can't get a regular diploma, then we are not allowing you to get any credit"...How much encouragement is that to students?

--

Thank you!

Brian Jernigan
Deputy Superintendent
Monroe County School District
www.mcscd.us

662.257.2176

"What is now proven was once only imagined" William Blake

From: Gentry, Jason
To: Accountability
Subject: APA Concerns
Date: Monday, May 05, 2014 1:23:49 PM

In responding to the changes within our Accountability System, I understand the weight being given to graduation and the lowering of the points for U.S. History and Biology I assessments. However, it is my concern that the bar has been moved at such a late date for change that all the planning and goal setting that was done throughout the year is for naught. The raising of the cut scores for the 2013-2014 school year was not explained and therefore no input was allowed to be given from school or school districts. This has not allowed us to explain to our teachers the ramifications of the change and how it could negatively impact our schools. Also, without the impact data to measure how this will affect our schools in the short term and long term, how do we know what measures we need to incorporate to reach our target areas. Finally, the harmless exemption that was promised for this year may possibly be cast aside and schools that were planning to use that as a safe measure are now in jeopardy of not being successful at the last minute.

I urge people to fully understand the ramifications of the decisions that are being made and how it will affect the children, schools and educators in Mississippi now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Jason B. Gentry

Principal, Philadelphia High School

Tollie Thigpen

From: Ray Carlock <rcarlock@fcsd.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Monday, May 05, 2014 1:32 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: Franklin County School District - Response to APA Process to revise Accountability System.
Attachments: Revised Account System Response.doc



Franklin County Schools

41 First Street / P.O. Box 605

Meadville, Mississippi 39653

Phone 601-384-2340

Murray Carlock, Superintendent of Education

May 5, 2014

Dr. Paula Vanderford
Bureau Manager,
Office of Accreditation and Accountability
Post Office Box 771, Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Dear Dr. Vanderford:

All school districts in Mississippi were promised a hold harmless exemption for the 2013-14 school year state test scores so that we could go ahead and implement common core curriculums in our school districts. We also were given Impact Data before making decisions about the present accountability system and the changes that it brought to our school ratings. I have personally worked with our school district employees and the public to plan this year's goals for our 2013-14 testing. I am already receiving calls from parents about why did we swap to common core if we are to be held responsible for our scores on the MCT2 and SATP2 testing. We also have not been given any voice in the APA process to revise the weighting of the graduation, science, and U.S. History components for districts and schools with Grade 12 (High Schools) in the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System. I say this because we have not received impact data based on this second revision. Without impact data we can only guess how this new system will affect our school ratings. We have calculated our school ratings to the best of our ability using the new weights for graduation, science, and U.S. History components combined with the new cut scores and we are now in worse shape than we were originally. Most reasonable people would assume that a new system with additional weight given to graduation rate would see higher school ratings for schools with higher graduation rates. This is not the case using the revised system and cut scores. I drove to Hattiesburg to listen to Dr. Carey Wright try to explain this to a group of Superintendents. Her explanation was that the cut scores had to be raised so that when the best of four bell curve models was used, it produced an acceptable number of A and F schools. So my next obvious question is how do you propose to explain this to parents and the public. I would also like to emphasize that this is on the eve of state testing and teachers are nervous enough under normal conditions, imagine how they feel now. I

understand that the Feds wanted more emphasis on the grad rate, but why change the cut scores to punish the schools that have good grad rates. Raising the cut scores while not changing the total number of weighted points in the system and choosing a bell curve that results in an acceptable number of A and F districts is nothing more than manipulating the data to get the results you wanted. We supported the first revision because we were given a voice in the process and felt that the system was fair. I do not agree with the new cut scores which were raised, the removal of the hold harmless exemption, the application of a bell curve to manipulate the data to the desired outcomes, and no impact data based on the new system provided to the Superintendents to help evaluate the system. This last minute change in the accountability system, as we begin state testing, is truly unfair to our students, faculty, and the community. Please consider our plea for fairness and stand up for the promises that were made to all of us. On behalf of our students, we thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Murray Carlock
Superintendent of Education
Franklin County Schools

From: [bduty](#)
To: [Accountability](#)
Cc: [Clay Anglin](#); [bduty](#); [bskeen](#); [Cecil Easterling](#); [Cedric Collins](#); [dlittle](#); [jchancelor](#); [jhughes](#); [jkvzar](#); [Mark Vaughn](#); [rrogers](#); [Susan Deen](#); [Terrell Luckey](#)
Subject: Seriously concerned about most recent changes
Date: Monday, May 05, 2014 1:55:41 PM

To whom it may concern;

I am very concerned about the changes to the cut scores for schools with a 12th grade and their districts. Why, at this late hour, are changes being made to the model that will be used for this school year? I understand that the USDE required a heavier weight for graduation percentages and therefore it was determined that 200 points would be assigned to that category. A statistician, I assume, came up with the rationale for that number. My direct questions are, did USDE also require changing the cut scores or was that a decision from our MDE? Did we have the option to leave them where they were?

If so, what is the rationale for moving them? Is there research or information that district level people have not seen that would clarify for us the necessity of changing them?

Also, what is the reason for not giving us the data we need to make the best decisions possible moving forward. Why is the raw impact data not being made available to us? We need to know how well our scores were under the new model and how well our schools/districts stack up using the new cut scores.

High expectations are so very important to me. A culture of high expectations will only be possible with full disclosure from MDE to districts and from districts to schools. A clear answer to the above questions would be a great start.

Babette Duty

Babette Duty

Deputy Superintendent

Curriculum and Accreditation

Covington County School District

Post Office Box 1269

Collins, MS 39428

Office 601-765-8247

Cell 601-299-1572

bduty@cov.k12.ms.us

From: Nathan Towers
To: Accountability
Subject: Accountability Model/Cut Scores for Elementary Schools without Science
Date: Monday, May 05, 2014 12:18:55 PM

Good Afternoon:

I wanted to know if the Department of Education has created a model or cut scores for schools that do not have 5th grade Science. I have referred to the handout from September and was attempting to predict my school's current level according to some benchmark tests taken this nine weeks.

Thanks for your assistance,

Nathan Towers

--

Nathan C. Towers, Principal
West Bolivar Elementary School
1212 South Main Street
P.O. Box 429
Rosedale, MS 38769
Ph- 662.759.3823
Fx- 662.759.0027

From: [Paula Vanderford](#)
To: [Accountability](#)
Subject: FW: Concerns with proposed cut score changes - APA Comment
Date: Monday, May 05, 2014 2:35:47 PM

From: Chuck Benigno [mailto:cbenigno@laurelschools.org]
Sent: Monday, May 05, 2014 1:15 PM
To: Paula Vanderford
Cc: Carey Wright; Patrick Ross; Jo Ann Malone; Todd Ivey; William B. Jones; Richard Morrison; Sam Bounds; mikea@megagate.com; agape162@yahoo.com; abarrow825@comcast.net; earnestthompson1@bellsouth.net; mbeard@wdam.com; Chuck Benigno; mikea@michaeljaxton.comcastbiz.net; Kenda Covington; John Harper; Tommy Parker; Kim Benton; Brian Freeman
Subject: Concerns with proposed cut score changes - APA Comment

Dr. Vanderford,

I am writing to express my concern with the recent cut score changes that have been proposed as part of the revised Mississippi Accountability Model for schools with a 12th grade. These changes also impact the entire school district since district ratings are tied to the same 900 point formula. I actually like the idea that the graduation rate is going to be worth 200 points and that Biology and US History are going to be reduced to 50 points each. However, I am having trouble understanding why the cut scores have changed so drastically. Please see the summary below of the current status of the Laurel Schools.

1. The Laurel School District is currently rated as a "C" district with a 147 QDI. (147 is a mid-C between the 133-165 QDI range.)
2. The original impact data showed that using the new model would place the Laurel School District at a 516 "D" rating .
3. The 516 score would have placed us 24 points from getting back to a "C" rating. (540 points required to be a "C" school / district)

Even though we fell from a "C" to a "D" district, I was encouraged that we were only 24 points away from getting back to a "C" level. However, I was amazed to see that the new cut score required to be a "C" rated school or district had been raised to a 598. This is a 58 point increase on the same 900 point scale. Please see below the impact of these changes on the Laurel School District.

4. Using the proposed formula and the same exact data, we move to a 534 district which is now 64 points from a "C" rating.
5. We recognize that our current graduation rate (61.3) is one of the lowest in Mississippi.
6. However, watch what happens if we make a significant increase to a 76.3 graduation rate. We would move to a 564 district and would still be 34 points from being a "C" district.
7. So, we improve our graduation rate from one of the lowest in MS to the state average and

we are worse off (34 points away vs. 24 points away).

Current 900 Point Scale (61.3% grad rate) = 516 of 540 points - 24 points from a "C" rating.

Proposed 900 Point Scale (76.3% grad rate) = 564 of 598 - 34 points from a "C" rating.

8. If we are giving the graduation rate more power in the formula, how do we end up being worse off after raising our grad rate by 15 percent?

9. I know everyone is trying to keep a bell curve for how many districts are A-F. However, there is a big difference between being 24 points from a "C" and being 64 points from a "C".

Something is wrong with the new cut scores. I am requesting that we keep the current cut scores so that the graduation rate can more accurately impact a school or district rating. Please accept these comments as an official part of the APA process.

Sincerely,

Chuck Benigno, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Laurel School District

*** This Email was sent by an educator at District Office in Laurel School District MS.

SENATOBIA MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

104 McKie Street
Senatobia, MS 38668

Jay Foster
Superintendent of Education



Bernice T. Jackson
Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Angie Brock
Assistant Superintendent

May 1, 2014



Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Accreditation
Post Office Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Dear Dr. Paula Vanderford:

I am writing in regard to the proposed changes to the state accountability system. The Senatobia Municipal School District has worked for the past three years to become prepared for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards which will be fully implemented beginning the 2014-2015 school year. We have spent countless hours aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessments, writing "I can statements," and increasing the rigor in our instructional practices—not to mention the amount of time we have spent informing our parents and stakeholders about the upcoming changes that will be brought about due to this major shift in education. We were promised that the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 testing results would not cause our district to drop in the accountability system. However, recent communication from the MDE suggests that this "hold harmless" provision seems to be in jeopardy. This is very troubling. Because of these changes, I fear many of our stakeholders will lose trust and confidence in our educational system. To make such changes at this point in the academic year, giving little time for reaction, seems highly unreasonable.

Specifically, I have the following concerns with these changes in the accountability system. Increasing the number of points assigned for graduation rate doubles the number of points that school districts fail to earn in the graduation category. Under this model, schools are not being measured on current performance, but on factors from the past. Also, the reduction of points awarded for the U.S. History and Science proficiency will cause this negative effect to be compounded, as school districts are only awarded half the points they were previously expecting. I made a call to the MDE office and was told that the reason the cut scores were raised was due to an increase in the number of schools receiving an "A" accountability status. I was told this was based on impact data used to evaluate the effects of these changes on schools. In other words, the MDE felt the need to raise these scores based on an increase of "A" schools. To this point, we have been provided no impact data to evaluate the effects of these changes on our schools. It is my hope that this data would be provided in order for us to make informed

SENATOBIA MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

104 McKie Street
Senatobia, MS 38668

Jay Foster
Superintendent of Education



Bernice T. Jackson
Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Angie Brock
Assistant Superintendent

decisions on how these changes will affect our district. We also feel that districts should be provided the rationale for raising cut scores when there was no increase in the total number of weighted points. This gives the impression of having moving targets which are difficult at best to hit.

Again, to change the rules of the game with only two weeks before state testing is very disturbing. We sincerely hope you will reconsider the latest changes to the state accountability model in order to give districts more time to prepare.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Jay Foster", written over a horizontal line.

Jay Foster

Jacob J. McClain Middle School

9479 Brozville Road – P. O. Box 631
Lexington, MS 39095

Phone (662) 834-0875

Fax (662) 834-0617

Ms. Aleen Benson, Principal
Mr. Ernest Palmer, Counselor

Mr. Jason Young, Lead Teacher
Ms. Tammye Hampton, Office Manager

May 1, 2014



Dear Dr. Vanderford,

I am writing this letter to express my grievances regarding the recent changes made in the Administrative Procedures Act Process. Because we are within two weeks of testing for state assessment it is my opinion those changes should not be effective this school term. It is also my opinion that these changes should have been made at the beginning of the school year versus the end of the year. It is true, we work hard through out the school year to increase test scores and better educate our children, but to make the change to the hold harmless exemption is unfair not only to the district and the school but to the students as well.

Please reconsider the recent changes that were made on April 18, 2014. Thank you for your time and attention.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at the above listed number.

Educationally yours,

Aleen N. Benson,
Principal

CC: Dr. O. Wayne Gann
Mr. William Harold Jones
Dr. John R. Kelly
Mr. Charles McClelland
Mr. Richard Morris
Mrs. Rosemary G. Aultman
Mr. Simon F. Weir, II
Mr. Powell Rucker

PICAYUNE SCHOOL DISTRICT

DEAN SHAW
Superintendent

706 Goodyear Boulevard
Picayune, Mississippi 39466

VERA BEECH
Federal Programs/
Curriculum Director

BRENT HARRELL
Assistant Superintendent

(601) 798-3230
Fax (601) 798-1742

WALT ESSLINGER
Support Services Director

LISA PENTON
Finance Director



May 5, 2014

Dear Mrs. Vanderford:

Please reconsider the current Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Process to revise the weighting of the graduation, science, and U.S. History components for districts and schools with Grade 12 (High Schools) in the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System.

The hold harmless exemption that we were promised for the 2013-14 school year is in serious jeopardy. As a district, we have moved forward with Common Core State Standards, yet now we will be tested on MCT2 skills and held accountable for these scores.

The cut scores are being raised at the last minute for 2013 – 2014 testing cycle for schools with a Grade 12. Not only has the five year graduation rate been changed to a four year graduation rate, now this factor has doubled in the accountability system.

High schools have been provided no impact data to evaluate the effects of these changes in our schools.

Mrs. Malone spent countless hours discussing the new accountability system and we attended all webinars to find that in the end, they are changed. Please do what you can to assure that the accountability system does not change in mid-term.

Sincerely

**Dean Shaw
Superintendent**

John Cartwright

From: David Millender <dmillender@amory.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Wednesday, May 07, 2014 8:06 AM
To: Accountability
Cc: Tony Cook
Subject: K-2 Growth model

After looking at the new accountability model that rates k-2 schools based on the growth made by former students at the 4th grade level it seems to me the most fair way to rate k-2 schools is by the growth made by our students before they leave 2nd grade.

John Cartwright

From: Penny Westfaul <pwestfaul@jcsd.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Wednesday, May 07, 2014 8:54 AM
To: Accountability
Subject: May 7, 2014

May 7, 2014

To Whom it May Concern:

This email is in response to the proposed changes to the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System.

I have been in education for 23 years. 15 of those have been in administration. I have never felt so undercut as I do with the possibility of losing the *Hold Harmless exemption* promised to us by MDE. It was like a breath of fresh air when it was announced we would be able to transition fully to CCSS without fear of lowering our accreditation status. Our teachers were very wary and disbelieving at first, but finally allowed themselves to believe that our State Department of Education was listening to them and making a decision that was best for everyone. They could focus on the *new* (CCSS) without having to worry about being evaluated based on the old standards. Now, I am concerned that they will never allow themselves that trust again. Who could blame them? If it wasn't in MDE's power to grant the *Hold Harmless exemption*, then it should have never been promised.

I am officially requesting that the *Hold Harmless exemption* be kept in place and the word of MDE to be honored. The gaps in skills from one grade level to the next between CCSS and the MS Frameworks are vast. There is a very real possibility that accountability levels in the whole state will drop if this is not held in effect.

I am also against the alteration of cut scores and the shift in points for science, US History, and graduation rate at the last minute.

Please don't lose the trust of MS educators.

Sincerely,

Penny Westfaul
Principal
Vancleave Upper Elementary

From: Tony Cook <tcook@amory.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Wednesday, May 07, 2014 11:37 AM
To: Accountability
Subject: APA response on Accountability Model

I have multiple concerns about the proposed accountability model.

1. I don't understand how the number of available points for a high school/district to be rated did not change, but the number of points required for each A-F category was raised significantly. I also don't understand how that will "help" most districts. I see it hurting most districts and a vast majority of the superintendents I have spoken with feel the same way.
2. I used the information we were given last spring to sell our administrators, teachers, parents, and school board on the idea that full implementation of CCSS was the best move for our students in their preparation for the future. We are an "A" rated district and were told we would hold this rating through next school year. Now, it's "uh-oh, you may not be able to hold your rating because the Feds won't approve it." If we had known that was even a possibility, some of us may have made a different decision, but we were not made aware of the situation until this past April. Even Patrick Ross said in our regional meeting in Oxford that it was going to be very difficult to explain to our people. **This is causing us and, to an even greater extent, MDE to lose credibility with educators, parents, and community members.**
3. There are so many changes occurring in education right now that we can't keep up. We have 9 teachers retiring this year. A normal year for us is 2-3. This is happening in lots of districts. Just look at the number of superintendent openings around the state. I don't have time to be the instructional leader of the district because I'm always trying to keep up with the changes in the accountability model, M-STAR, MPES, and new laws.
4. Teachers and principals are being rated using scores based on a curriculum that we haven't even taught this year. We haven't touched the MS Frameworks in K-8 this year because of the issue I discussed in #2, but our teachers and principals will be judged by the assessment based on this curriculum. That's absolutely ludicrous. M-STAR and MPES should have been put off for another year until we made the statewide transition to CCSS, but we had to jump through hoops for the Feds. **We have done both evaluations with validity and we are going to be hit the hardest. It's hard for me to look my people in the eye right now.**
6. It makes no sense that we don't get any extra credit for an Advanced student. In fact, it punishes us because most students will not be Advanced every year. This is going to cause some districts to teach to the middle from now on. There is no real incentive to push students to be Advanced, and that's a shame.
7. The calculation used to determine the bottom 25% of a school's population is not accurate. It is not really the bottom 25% of the school, it is the bottom 25% of each grade within that school added together. Same for the district.

MDE is playing right into the legislature's hands. I'm worried that we are going to look very bad as a state after next year, and the legislature will use that to hammer us even more and pull more funding from us. MDE has the lowest level of trust among educators at this time than at any other time in my 26 years of working in public education in MS. I sat in our regional meeting and listened closely to everything that was said and, not one time, did I hear anyone mention that any decision was based on what

was best for kids. When kids are not the priority, we need to look seriously at what we are doing and why we are doing it.

I really hate to be critical, but I'm very concerned about the state of public education in Mississippi at this time. I chose to become an educator because of the coaches and teachers who greatly my life. I wanted to do the same for students, so I became an educator. But, as I said before, students do not seem to be the priority right now. They are being used as a political football. I'm not sure that I would make the same career choice if I was at that point in my life at this time.

John Cartwright

From: Tollie Thigpen
Sent: Wednesday, May 07, 2014 12:00 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: FW: [accountability] FW: Revision of new accountability model business rules - APA process

From: David Poss [mailto:dposs@amory.k12.ms.us]
Sent: Wednesday, May 07, 2014 11:38 AM
To: Tollie Thigpen
Subject: Re: [accountability] FW: Revision of new accountability model business rules - APA process

Good Morning:

In response to the APA process, I am concerned about the cut points being raised from what was originally planned. According to the business rules, the cut point for an A high school/district was raised from 695-740. The major problem I have with this is that the available points did not change. I understand that the graduation rate is rated more heavily but there is still only 300 points available for Graduation Rate, Biology and U.S. History. I read where the new cut points were supposed to help the D and F schools, however, there cut points have also been raised by approximately 50 points.

I respectfully request that the point cuts be reconsidered.

Thank you,

David Poss
Principal, Amory High School

>>> Tollie Thigpen <TThigpen@mde.k12.ms.us> 4/22/2014 9:00 AM >>>
Good Morning Accountability Listserv Members

Please see the email below in regards to beginning the APA process around revisions to the weighting of various high school components in the accountability model. A webinar recording that walks through these revisions has been posted to the Public Accountability SharePoint site at

<https://districtaccess.mde.k12.ms.us/Accountability/default.aspx>. To view the recording, click on the **Part 8: Weighting of HS Components** link at the bottom of the page.

Tollie Thigpen
Office of Accreditation and Accountability

From: Todd Ivey [mailto:TIvey@mde.k12.ms.us]
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2014 5:51 PM
To: Tollie Thigpen
Subject: [ms_superintendents] Revision of new accountability model business rules - APA process
Importance: High

Dear Superintendents,

On Friday, April 18, the State Board of Education granted approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Process to revise the weighting of the graduation, science, and U.S. History components for districts and schools with Grade 12 (High Schools) in the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System. A memorandum from the Office of Accreditation and the proposed revisions to the business rules are attached for your review. If you have any questions please contact Paula Vanderford, pavanderford@mde.k12.ms.us or Jo Ann Malone, jmalone@mde.k12.ms.us at 601-359-1878.

Todd

Todd Ivey, Deputy State Superintendent
Office of Educational Accountability
Mississippi Department of Education
601-359-5254
Fax 601-359-6740
tivey@mde.k12.ms.us

You are currently subscribed to accountability as: dposs@amory.k12.ms.us.

To unsubscribe click here:

<http://list.mde.k12.ms.us:81/u?id=58125.eaff0e91ccec20ff18af99145fcc5541&n=T&l=accountability&o=392159>

or send a blank email to [leave-392159-](mailto:leave-392159-58125.eaff0e91ccec20ff18af99145fcc5541@list.mde.k12.ms.us)

58125.eaff0e91ccec20ff18af99145fcc5541@list.mde.k12.ms.us

Goodman-Pickens Elementary School
Principal, Bridgett Wheaton Lead Teacher, Emily Schuler
School Motto: "Students Today—Leaders Tomorrow"

May 7, 2014

To the Mississippi Board of Educators:

I am writing this letter in response to the Administrative Procedures Act Process. I was made aware that the hold harmless exemption that was once promised us for the 2013-14 school year is in jeopardy.

I am officially putting my objection to this in writing, especially with MCT2 being just around the corner.

Your support of hold harmless exemption would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance,


Bridgett Wheaton, Principal

John Cartwright

From: Ken Byars <kbyars@amory.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Wednesday, May 07, 2014 9:34 PM
To: Accountability
Cc: Tony Cook
Subject: Concerns over changes

I am deeply concerned that advanced scorers are getting overlooked. If a student scores advanced, it counts no more than if a student scored proficient yet hurts when trying to meet growth. I feel there is a middle to bottom emphasis and advanced students are getting left out. A school district has no incentive to push kids to an advanced level. Some districts will intentionally NOT push kids past a proficient level.

I am also concerned with the computation of the bottom 25%. The bottom 25% of a school might not necessarily be the bottom 25% of each grade. In fact, it is highly unlikely that it will be. For instance, let's pretend that every 7th grader in my school scored minimal on MCT2 math this year and every 8th grader in my school scored proficient, my bottom 25% should be made up of all 7th graders and no 8th graders. The way it stands now, my bottom 25% would be the bottom 25% of 7th graders plus the bottom 25% of eighth graders. My overall bottom 25% would contain proficient students while many minimalists would not be included.

Sincerely,

Ken Byars
Amory Middle School Principal

Sent from my iPhone

Candace Moore - New Accountability

email was not a success

From: Candace Moore
To: accountability@mde.k12.ms.us
Date: 05/08/2014 9:27 AM
Subject: New Accountability
CC: Tony Cook

MS was asked by USDOE to increase accountability with regards to graduation rate. Taking 50 points from history and 50 points from science and adding them to the graduation rate accounts for the request by USDOE. As the total number of points, 900, in the system neither increased nor decreased, changing the cut scores is not statistically or logically appropriate.

Candace T. Moore, PhD
Director of Special Programs
Amory School District
P.O. Box 330; Amory, MS 38821
662-256-5991 (phone)
662-256-6302 (fax)

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John Cartwright

From: Brian Jones <brjones@amory.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2014 10:24 AM
To: Tony Cook; Accountability
Subject: new accountability model business rules - APA process

Concern:

Having an accountability system for 14/15 school year with a test that hasn't fully be developed for next year (CCSS, MCT3) and asking schools and districts to calculate growth on a new test from data that logically can not show growth.

**Brian Jones, Principal
East Amory Elementary School
305 Easthaven Drive
Amory, MS 38821
(662) 256-7191 (662) 256-1647**

John Cartwright

From: Amy Henley <amyhenley@mcsd.us>
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2014 2:12 PM
To: Accountability
Cc: Scott Cantrell
Subject: APA Process

Please consider the following requests:

1. We would like MDE to please consider respecting their former promise of "hold harmless" for two years. If two years is not feasible, we would definitely appreciate at least 2013-2014. We focused 100% on a new curriculum this year based on this promise.
2. Why are cut scores being raised when the total weighted points did not change? Please leave the original cut scores since we are already putting more emphasis on graduation rate.

Thank you,

--

Amy Henley
Federal Programs Director
1619 Hwy 25 North
P.O. Box 209
Amory, MS 38821
amyhenley@mcsd.us
phone: 662-257-2176
fax: 662-257-2181

John Cartwright

From: Scott Cantrell <scottcantrell@mcsd.us>
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2014 2:33 PM
To: Accountability
Cc: Scott Cantrell
Subject: APA Comment concerning accountability model revisions

As I know there are many comments being forwarded to MDE, I will attempt to make my comments as brief as possible.

1. For schools with a 12th grade, there were 900 pts. in the original model for this school year before the USDE required a change to the percentage that graduation rates would count. U.S. History and Science were decreased by 50 pts. each, while the graduation component went to 200 pts. After these adjustments, the model still contained 900 pts. though. Since the original model and new model both contain 900 pts., why were the cut scores increased by an average of 55 pts. within each letter grade range?

2. Many attendance centers do not separate their accountability ratings into separate ratings for elementary, jr. high and high school. This means that an attendance center becomes a school with a 12th grade. Many attendance centers chose to teach the Common Core Standards this year even though we were going to test the MCT2 for grades 3-8. This decision was based on the information districts were given that "hold harmless" would be in play, but now it seems that "hold harmless" may not be in play. Since MDE is aware that many attendance centers chose to teach the CCSS, all the while possibly sacrificing the ability to score well on the MCT2, could the cut scores remain as they were in the original model?

--

Scott Cantrell
Superintendent of Education
Monroe County School District



Clinton Public School District

P. O. Box 300
Clinton, Mississippi 39060

Tim Martin

Assistant Superintendent

May 5, 2014



Dr. Paula Vanderford
Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Accreditation and Accountability
P.O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Dr. Vanderford,

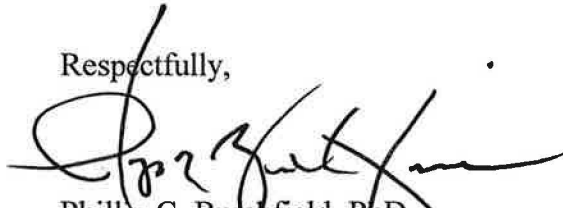
Upon receipt of our impact data from last year's accountability results earlier this year, we were pleased that all schools in the Clinton Public School District would have continued to receive an A-rating in the new accountability model. We have been working hard this year to raise each school's achievement while at the same time making the necessary adjustments to transition to Common Core for next year. When we received the information in April concerning adjustments to the Science, US History, and Graduation scores in the model, we didn't really think much about it due to the number of total points remaining the same for a possible 900 total this year. Then, upon closer examination, we realized that the cut scores had been raised at the high school and district levels and this caused us great concern along with the possibility of not being "Held Harmless" during the current year.

I am attaching two charts showing the effects of the proposed changes as they apply to Clinton High School and the Clinton Public School District as a whole. As you can see, the changes don't affect Clinton High School adversely and actually raise its score from 747 previously to 758.8 which is still comfortably above the new proposed 740 cut score for an A-rating. This is not the case when it comes to CPSD as a district. The changes do raise the district's score from 716 previously to 724, but that leaves us well short of the proposed 740 threshold for an A-rating. The result would be that all 7 schools in CPSD would receive an A-rating, yet the district would receive a B-rating. That outcome doesn't seem logical in any sense and will be almost impossible to explain to anyone inquiring about how that could actually occur.

We respectfully ask that the new proposed cut scores be looked at carefully. We all know that achievement scores for the first couple of years of the PAARC assessment will be much lower than our current scores and raising the cut scores at all, will make it difficult for any district to meet this expectation.

Thank you for your continued support as we strive to move our districts and the state of Mississippi forward.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip G. Burchfield". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "G".

Phillip G. Burchfield, PhD.
Superintendent, Clinton Public School District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim L. Martin". The signature is cursive, with a large initial "T" and "M".

Tim L. Martin
Asst. Superintendent, Clinton Public School District

CLINTON HIGH SCHOOL : 2012—2013 IMPACT DATA

(695 to 740) CLINTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DIST

Grade: A Total Points: 747 758.8	READING	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE	US HISTORY	ACCELERATION ↓
PROFICIENCY	76.8	92.4	70.0 39.9	70.0 39.5	N/A
GROWTH ALL STUDENTS	87.4	98.8	GRADUATION RATE ↓	PARTICIPATION RATE ↓	COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ↓
GROWTH BOTTOM 25%	53.3	89.6	00.5 181	98.5	N/A



The colors above indicate in which quintile the individual component is in compared to other schools in the MS Statewide Accountability System.

(695 to 740) CLINTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DIST : 2012—2013 IMPACT DATA

Grade: A B Total Points: 716 724.3	READING	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE	US HISTORY	ACCELERATION ↓
PROFICIENCY	79.1	87.4	79.8 39.9	79.0 39.5	N/A
GROWTH ALL STUDENTS	79.3	87.9	GRADUATION RATE ↓	PARTICIPATION RATE ↓	COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ↓
GROWTH BOTTOM 25%	62.4	74.0	87.4 174.8	99.6	N/A



^{TL} The colors above indicate in which quintile the individual components is in compared to other schools in the MS Statewide Accountability System.

May 9, 2014

Mississippi Department of Education
P. O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771



To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in reference to the Jefferson County School District. This district has a lot of nepotism. It doesn't post vacancies like it should some are posted and some are not. You have a lot of employees who are given stipends just to make their pay increase. Certain employees are given raises because of who you know. They make up positions for certain people. You have some employees who work hard and don't receive any recognition.

There are several employees who need to be **drug tested**. If they are tested, they should be tested without any knowledge of being tested. I think the state should come and do the drug testing or have them to go to a place designated by the state because the superintendent is aware of everything that is going on.

The Junior High has employee(s) who are doing things and keeping hush about it. However, it remains to be known by the public, and the superintendent knows, also.

The High School has a driver education instructor who hasn't taught driver education since he's been there. This is fraud. He's always away from the campus. All you have to do is post up, and you will see when he leaves the campus. Sometimes he never returns. You have a lot of children in the gym because there are three classes in the gym each day. You have others who leave the campus without permission, security knows who they are.

There is so much corruption in this district. They are not fair to certain people.

You have some that are afraid to speak up for fear of losing their jobs.

I was told that the State Department is close with the Superintendent and nothing was going to be done because these things have been going on for too long. Please investigate this district and its administration.

cc Attorney General

*Copy to:
Paula*

CRYSTAL SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL



OF COPIAH COUNTY SCHOOLS

Bill Broadhead, Principal

James H. Boston, Sr., Assistant Principal

Gerome Leflore, Transportation Director

Suzanne Shorter, Counselor

Phone 601-892-4791

Fax 601-892-2071

201 Newton Street

Crystal Springs, Mississippi 39059

May 7, 2014

Dr. Paula A. Vanderford,

After hearing of the possibility of raising the scale score cut points in the Statewide Accountability System for 2013-2014, I am highly concerned. Raising the score could possibly adversely affect our school's rating. Our school has worked tirelessly all year with specific goals, and we appear on the verge of meeting those. How devastating it would be for our teachers and students to learn that a change this late during the year could tarnish the accomplishment of higher scores. It would be such an unnecessary blow to the hard work of so many. Such a move at this point in time would be no different than our school establishing and publishing that we would use a ten-point scale for grading this year, just to say, "No, I am sorry, you must now have a higher score to obtain that grade." There would be outrage over such, but it is exactly what is happening with the accountability system.

Please consider waiting until the conclusion of the school year to make such a change, if at all. Certainly working on a system with the good of the children in mind will overcome any moves this late in a school year.

Thank you for consideration,

Bill Broadhead

Principal

Crystal Springs High School

John Cartwright

From: Van Pearson <vanpearson@mcsd.us>
Sent: Friday, May 09, 2014 7:09 AM
To: Accountability
Cc: Scott Cantrell
Subject: Concerns about accountability

As an attendance center principal we chose to teach the common core standards this year. We had been advised by MDE our scores would be held harmless. We made this decision trying to prepare our students and staff for the common core standards. This allowed us a school year to prepare. Just a few days ago we were informed the decision had been made to count our scores using the MCT2 standards. This is not an adequate way to check the accountability of our students and staff. Our school scores are determined by elementary, junior high, and high school scores. We have been preparing the entire year using the common core standards and are now being held accountable on the MCT2 standards. Raising the cut scores by an average of 55 points per letter rating within the last couple weeks is extremely harmful to all schools across the state. Making these type decision is extremely unjust to our students and schools.

John Cartwright

From: Chris Kidd <chriskidd@mcsd.us>
Sent: Friday, May 09, 2014 8:33 AM
To: Accountability
Cc: Scott Cantrell
Subject: Accountability

I am the K-6 principal at Hatley Attendance Center. We made the commitment to implement the common core standards this year to give our students and teachers a head start into the new Common Core Curriculum. This decision was made from our district and school levels because we would be "held harmless" in this years MCT II state testing scores. It would be unfair and unjust to hold our students and teachers accountable for this years MCT II scores when we have taught the Common Core all but 2 weeks of this school year.

It is also not rational to raise the cut scores for our schools and districts across the state. We hear everyday that our decisions need to be data driven. What data is shown to justify raising the cut scores on average of 55 points for each letter rating? Why would the cut scores be raised to such a manner when we know as a state that we will embark on a new state test beginning next year. This just does not seem rational or fair to make these kind of crucial decisions in just a couple of weeks time.

--
Chris Kidd
Hatley Elementary Principal

John Cartwright

From: Chad OBrian <chadobrian@mcsd.us>
Sent: Friday, May 09, 2014 8:54 AM
To: Accountability
Cc: Scott Cantrell
Subject: Accountability Model Revisions

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my great concern over the recent increase in cut scores with regard to the new accountability model. I am alarmed at the average 55 pt increase to the accountability levels A-F. There appears to be no sound logic to this increase. Attendance Centers such as Smithville made a decision prior to the start of the school year to teach CCSS, all the while knowing we would test on MCT2. This decision was made with the intent of preparing our students for the transition to PARCC assessments for the 14-15 school year. We realized we may be sacrificing "short term" results on MCT2 for long term results on PARCC (MCT3). This decision was made with the belief that we would be "held harmless" for the 13-14 school year. Now it appears schools are going to be given an accountability rating based on tests that assess a curriculum that wasn't taught. In addition, the standards will be higher than 12-13 when the curriculum was taught. How does this even approach the realm of fairness?

In looking at data from the 12-13 school year when the MCT2 curriculum was actually taught, if the raised cut scores are used, 48% of schools with a 12th grade would be rated a D or F. Why would we expect anything other than catastrophic results in a year when the curriculum wasn't taught? The raised cut scores of the new accountability model undermine the very purpose for which they were created. If the current scores are allowed to remain, many schools will fall multiple levels. I sincerely ask MDE to reconsider the raise in cut scores for the 13-14 school year.

--
Chad O'Brian
Principal
Smithville High School
I Peter 2:15

John Cartwright

From: Kyle Hammond <khammond@louisville.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Friday, May 09, 2014 9:48 AM
To: Accountability
Subject: APA response

I am concerned about the recent revisions to the accountability model for schools with a 12th grade. I have set goals for my school based on the accountability model that was provided to us at the start of the school year. I understand that the USDE requested that more weight should be given to graduation rate. What is not clear is why the original cut scores that were given to us have been raised. The impact data that we were originally given was based on the original data. No impact data has been provided nor has an explanation been given for the increase in cut scores. I am highly concerned that the new cut scores will cause many high schools across the state to drop a level. I have done a projection off of my benchmark data which shows an increase in points from the previous year. However, with the new cut scores I would actually drop an accountability level. Furthermore, we were originally informed that there would be a hold harmless exemption in place for the 2013-2014 school term. We are now being told at the last minute that this exemption will not be in place. It is unrealistic to expect schools to be held accountable to a model that continues to change even after testing has taken place.

Kyle Hammond
Principal, Louisville High School

Wesson Attendance Center

Marilyn Phillips
Principal

High School Principal
Ronald Greer
Guidance Counselor
Stephanie Allen
High School Secretary
Tammy Newman
Bookkeeper/Secretary
Paula Smith

1048 Grove Street
Wesson, Mississippi 39191
High School (601)633-2221/643-2222
Elementary (601)643-2295
Fax (601)643-2458 or (601)643-5838

Assistant Principal
Dr. Barbara Roberson
Elementary Counselor
Ginger Heard
Elementary Secretary
Aretha Butler
Records Clerk
Jacque McCormick

Dr. Vanderford,

May 8, 2014

My name is Marilyn Phillips. I work for the Copiah County School District serving as principal for Wesson Attendance Center. As the educational leader of my school, it is my responsibility to share with you the concerns that I feel will ultimately have a detrimental impact on our school and community.

Based on 2012-2013 impact data, Wesson Attendance Center received a "B" rating. If we used our graduation rate of 87.30%, combined with weighting the Science and US History as suggested, our school would remain at a "B" level rating. However, if you raise cut-points Wesson Attendance Center drops to a "C" rating. How do we explain to our students, teachers, and parents that even though gains are reflected in overall achievement and growth, our school has managed to "regress" to a lower performance level?

Over the past few years, our students and teachers have worked extremely hard, and their determination and commitment have been reflected in their state assessment results. As we closely monitored outcomes based on instructional goals set for this year, we had predicted an increase in our overall cut-points for the 2013-2014 state assessments. This projection was based on current cut-scores and district benchmark data that has been proven reliable over the past couple of years. As an administrator, I have compiled and presented progress monitoring data each nine weeks, not only to our faculty, but also to our schoolboard. Each presentation has supported academic growth at Wesson Attendance Center. Again, how do I explain that although our school may have actually achieved gains and moved forward, we somehow fell behind on the performance level. How does a community that so strongly supports its school understand this development?

Raising the cut-points at this point and time in the year is essentially changing the rules of the game at mid-year. I can't begin to explain the negative impact this change will have on teacher morale as it signals a breakdown of trust in our educational leadership. Teachers will ask for

the rationale in having to actually raise the cut-points. They will ask how the score was determined and by whom. They will ask how does this change truly benefit our students. They will ask, why now!! I won't have an explanation for any of their concerns, and this deeply troubles me as an administrator. I also won't have an explanation as to why our performance level of a "B" was not *carried over* from last year as we were told by MDE. Such confusion leads to a rapid loss of credibility.

Raising the cut-points seems unfair. When the percentage for graduation rate was increased, it was offset by a huge increase in the total cut-points. If they must be raised, I would request that the change not be made until next year. We would also need to receive new impact data. In closing, my final request would be that district leaders and administrators be given a clear explanation of any changes in advance so that we can at least communicate accurately with all stakeholders.

Sincerely,


Marilyn Phillips

To Whom It May Concern:

In August of 2013 when I began to plan for the school year, I was able to do so without being concerned about teaching the MCT2 standards and directing all my focus to the new Common Core curriculum. We were told by the Mississippi Department of Education that we would be able to freeze our scores from the past school year. This allowed us to learn the new curriculum without the pressure of trying to cover the old objectives along with the new. What a wonderful advantage! This whole school year has been full of trial and error getting accustomed to what our students will be expected to know. Now, as the school year is coming to an end, the rules are being changed.

When I give my students an assignment, I give them my expectations. I tell them what is required to make the best grade possible. It would be unfair of me to change my expectations as they were turning the assignment in to be graded. This is what is happening to the teachers in Mississippi. We were told that our scores could be frozen and now the rules are being changed.

Please consider keeping the hold harmless exemption that you promised.

Thank you,

Angie Abbey

5th/6th Grade Math Teacher

Stringer Attendance Center

John Cartwright

From: David Luke <dluke@louisville.k12.ms.us>
Sent: Friday, May 09, 2014 1:57 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: New Cut Scores

I am concerned about the recent revisions to the accountability model for schools with a 12th grade. I, along with each teacher, have set goals for our school based on the accountability model that was provided to us at the start of the school year. I understand that the USDE requested that more weight should be given to graduation rate. What is not clear is why the original cut scores that were given to us have been raised. The impact data that we were originally given was based on the original data. No impact data has been provided nor has an explanation been given for the increase in cut scores. I am highly concerned that the new cut scores will cause many high schools across the state to drop a level. I have done a projection off of our school's benchmark data which shows an increase in points from the previous year. However, with the new cut scores our school would actually drop an accountability level. Furthermore, we were originally informed that there would be a hold harmless exemption in place for the 2013-2014 school term. We are now being told, at the last minute, that this exemption will not be in place. This was done in order for schools to make the transition to the common core state standards. However, as you know, if taught in a manner required to be successful, there are several standards tested by our current state test in each grade level that are not taught in that particular grade level. This means that now we will be held accountable for the old curriculum standards tested this spring even though we taught common core state standards. It is unrealistic to expect schools to be held accountable to a model that continues to change even after testing has taken place.

--

David Luke, Principal
Nanih Waiya Attendance Center
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School Web site: <http://www.nanihwaiyaschools.com/>

Tollie Thigpen

From: Earl Watkins <ewatkins@indianolaschools.org>
Sent: Friday, May 09, 2014 2:20 PM
To: Accountability; Paula Vanderford
Cc: Bill Welch; Patrick Ross
Subject: ISD Response to APA for Accountability Changes
Attachments: DOC050914.pdf

Dr. Vanderford - See the attachment from the Indianola School District.



INDIANOLA
 SCHOOL DISTRICT
A Passionate Pursuit of Excellence

Earl Watkins, Ph.D., Conservator
 ewatkins@indianolaschools.org
 702 Highway Eighty-Two East,
 Indianola, MS 38751
 Telephone 662-884-1200 Fax: 662-887-7042

May 9, 2014

Dr. Paula Vanderford
 Office of Accreditation and Accountability
 Post Office Box 771
 Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Dr. Vanderford:

This submission is in response to the approval of the Mississippi State Board of Education to amend the business rules of the statewide accountability system, effective school year 2013-2014. See the following chart for Gentry High School in the Indianola School District:

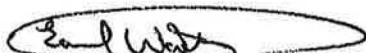
Gentry High School				
Accountability Component	2010	2011	2012	2013
Performance Classification	At Risk of Failing	Low Performing	Low Performing (F)	F
Quality of Dist. Index (QDI)	110	113	131	130
Growth	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met
Graduation Rate	66.9	62.7	61.2	68.4

Note the QDI improvements that Gentry has made over the years while changes in the accountability model negatively impacted the school's rating, resulting in a false message to the community that Gentry was not improving.

The accountability model, as approved in January 2014, will give Gentry a better chance to show its community that it is improving, and that improvement will potentially be recognized by the accountability model. However, the recommended changes to the model will, once again, camouflage the efforts of the staff and community to effect change for the students. Based on our projections, Gentry will potentially be rated a "C" school. If you change the base cut score for the "C" from 540 to 598, Gentry will potentially be rated "D". How can the administrative staff continue to motivate students and teachers to have pride in their school and in their ability if the rules continue to change?

Let us consider the children and the teachers. They need our support and encouragement at this time. A change in the rules will only negatively impact the people who need our support the most. Please allow the cut score for a "C" rating to remain 540 for schools with a 12th grade.

Sincerely,


 Earl Watkins, Ph.D.

Xc: Sunflower County Consolidated School District – Board of Trustees
 P16 Council – Indianola School District



COLUMBIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

613 Bryan Avenue
Columbia, Mississippi 39429
Telephone: 601-736-2366
Fax: 601-736-2653

Marietta W. James, Ed.D.
Superintendent
mjames@columbiaschools.org

May 09, 2014

Dr. Paula Vanderford, Bureau Manager
Office of Accreditation and Accountability
P.O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771



Dr. Vanderford:

The Columbia School District is very concerned that USDE may not agree to hold Mississippi school districts harmless for the next two school years. Districts were informed and, in turn, have informed school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and their communities that, because the State is transitioning to Common Core State Standards assessments, they could keep the letter grades they received for the 2012-2013 school year for the next two years. We urge MDE to work diligently with USDE to uphold the assurance districts were given that they will be held harmless for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years.

Even more concerning, however, is the change in cut points being proposed that came about after MDE learned that the graduation rate was not being given enough weight. It is our understanding that USDE did not tell MDE to lower the points awarded for science or U.S. history nor to change the cut points for assignment of grade classifications. We have not received impact data from MDE regarding how the proposed change in cut points will affect our district, so we have calculated our own impact data. Based on our calculations, we have the following concerns:

- For the Columbia School District, as indicated by impact data provided by MDE in January 2014 with the original cut points, our district was three (3) points below a B rating. With the proposed cut points, we would be forty-two (42) points below a B. Columbia High School was forty-six (46) points above a B using the original cuts points but would be only six (6) points above a B with the proposed cut points.
- With the proposed reduction in the number of points for science for schools with a 12th grade, the science component will account for 5.5% of the total points as opposed to 14.29% at the elementary and middle school levels. While the federal requirement is that students in grades 5, 8, and high school be assessed in science, we do not understand the rationale for science having less weight at the high school level.

Dr. Paula Vanderford
Page 2
May 9, 2014

- According to 5.1.2 in the revised business rules, some schools with grades 5 or 8 will be awarded 100 points for science, while other schools with grades 5 or 8 (and grade 12) will be awarded only 50 points. The proposed revision creates a different standard for schools with different grade configurations.
- Although the total number of possible points remain unchanged, changing cut points for the 2013-2014 school year after students have taken end of year assessments, seems unfair. 2013-2014 goals have been set, focus areas has been determined, and plans have been made. To change these cut points this late in the year is a travesty.

We believe that most, if not all, school districts in the State of Mississippi feel that accountability is important, but we cannot understand why MDE would want to make more school districts look bad by imposing higher cut points for assignment of grade classifications. We respectfully request that the State Board of Education not approve a change in cut points.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marietta W. James". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Marietta W. James, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Columbia School District
613 Bryan Avenue
Columbia, MS 39429

c. State Board Members

Tollie Thigpen

From: Tonia McDonald <toniamcdonald@mcsd.us>
Sent: Friday, May 09, 2014 4:41 PM
To: Accountability
Subject: Concern over the increased cut scores of the new accountability model

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my concern over the recent proposed changes to the new accountability model in regard to the increase in cut scores. The average 55 point increase to the accountability levels A-F is very unsettling to me professionally. I do not understand the reasoning behind such an increase especially when MDE has encouraged school districts across this state to formulate and implement new curriculum based on the new CCSS. Monroe County School District, which contains three attendance centers, made a decision prior to the start of the school year based on recommendations given by the Mississippi Department of Education to teach CCSS, all the while knowing that we would test on MCT2. This decision was made with the intent of allowing and preparing our students for a transition to PARCC assessments during the 2014-2015 school year. The decision was made with the understanding that we may have to sacrifice upfront on the MCT2 assessment this year to be able to capitalize on the long term results within the 2014-2015 PARCC (MCT3). This decision was made with the belief that we would be held "harmless" for the 2013-2014 school year. Now, end of April beginning of May, we have been given the impression (told) that schools within Mississippi are going to be given an accountability rating based on assessments that assess a curriculum that has not even been taught. Furthermore, the standards will be increased higher than 2012-2013 school when the curriculum for MCT2 assessment was actually taught. In my opinion, this approach of attempting to transition from one curriculum/assessment to another curriculum/assessment under this "revised" accountability model does not even come close to adequate, appropriate, or in any way seem fair.

In analyzing the data from 2012-2013 school year, according to the increased cut scores, 48% of our schools with a 12th grade in this state would be rated a D or F. This analysis is of course data from a school year where MCT2 curriculum was actually taught. Why would we expect anything other than disastrous results in a year when the curriculum was not taught? The increased cut scores of the new accountability model debilitate the actual purpose for why they were created. In teaching, we are always told that we should have our end result in mind before we teach the content. I do not believe the same concept has been followed in this decision making and learning process. I sincerely ask Mississippi Department of Education to reconsider the increase of the cut scores for the 2013-2014 school year.

Sincerely,

--

Tonia McDonald, Principal
Smithville Elementary
60011 Hwy. 23
Smithville, MS 38870
toniamcdonald@mesd.us
Phone: 662-651-4277
Fax: 662-651-5265



South Panola School District
 209 Boothe Street, Batesville, Mississippi 38606
 Phone (662) 563-9361/Fax (662) 563-6077
 Web Site: www.southpanola.k12.ms.us

*Copy to:
Paula*

Providing Opportunities for Educational Excellence

To: Dr. Carey M. Wright
 MDE, P. O. Box 771
 Jackson, Mississippi 39205

From: Tim Wilder
 Superintendent
 South Panola School District

Date: May 2, 2014

Subject: **Statewide Accountability System Effective School Year 2013-2014**



Upon the approval of the Proposed Business Rules for the Combined State and Federal Accountability Model, the South Panola School District set academic achievement goals per school and grade level to achieve a **B** district status for the 2013-2014 school year and a **C** status or above at South Panola High School. In the previous year, the South Panola School District achieved a **C** while South Panola High School was a **D** status.

South Panola High School set goals based on the following cut scores outlined and approved by the State Board of Education in January of 2014:

A ≥ 695 623 ≤ **B** < 695 540 ≤ **C** < 623 422 ≤ **D** < 540 **F** < 422

To achieve the goal the South Panola High School administration and teachers implemented the following:

- 4 ½ Week Common Assessments
- 9 Week District Common Assessment provided by CASE 21
- Data meetings to discuss trends, identify areas of weakness and strength by objective, subject area, class periods, teachers, and individual students, and adjusted instruction
- Monitored, tracked, and provided intense remediation for Identified Lowest 25%.
- Identified first time test takers at risk of failing the Subject Area assessments and provided intense remediation throughout the school year.

Again, the goal was set by administrators and teachers for the 2013-2014 school year based on the cut-points mentioned above.

Our teachers have worked diligently to achieve the goals that have been set. We are now being told that the State Board of Education will be asked to vote on May 15, 2014, to change the cut-points for schools with a 12th grade after all state testing has been completed. Changing the cut-points after all testing has been completed becomes problematic for teachers, students, and administrators for goal setting. The proposed cut-points are listed below:

A ≥ 740 680 ≤ **B** < 740 598 ≤ **C** < 680 500 ≤ **D** < 598 **F** < 500

We fully understand and support the decision to change the points from 100 to 200 for the graduation rate. However, we do not believe changing the points for the graduation rate, Science, and US History should result in changing the cut-points to earn the **A**, **B**, **C**, **D**, **F** status.

Please consider voting to keep the cut-points for all schools with a 12th grade as stated in the approved Business Rules from January 2014.

Sincerely,

 Tim Wilder
 Superintendent

Copy to
Paula



To Whom it May Concern:

I voice my opinions on the Jefferson Davis County School District GPA's score. There is major confusion in our district on how the GPA's was giving out. First the school district said academic school and then we was told athletic grading system. I never heard of this one. Plus, we can't get any answers from Superintendent Mike Hayes.

One boy from BHS been in alternative most of the year for ~~school~~ drugs and other behavior problems and graduating number 9. Another student who have missed so many days shouldn't even be graduating to number 7. While students who have made honor roll during their 9-12 school year is not even in top 20 list.

Then there a student at Prentiss High who transferred from Monticello is graduating number 1. When last year at PHS a student who transferred from BHS to PHS was given the number 1 spot.

We the concern parents of the community just want answers.

Thank you
Shonita Johnson

Shonita Johnson
227 Potomac Rd
Couson MS 38927

LUMBERTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

107 Tenth Avenue

P. O. Box 551

Lumberton, Mississippi 39455

Phone (601) 796-2441 — Fax (601) 796-2051

HOLLY C. LADNER
Business Manager

MARY LOU LADNER
Payroll / Personnel

AMBER MARTIN
Secretary

ROBERT D. WALKER, PH.D.
Superintendent

CONNIE RHEAMS
Accounts Payable

May 5, 2014

Dr. Paula Vanderford
Bureau Director
Office of Accreditation and Accountability
Post Office Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-771



Dr. Vanderford,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the newly released Accountability plan and the anticipated impact on my schools and district. The first concern is the change in the weight of US History, and Science in the model. Who determined that the reduction of points should come from these two sections and why? Secondly, the number of possible points to be earned in 2013-14 was and is 900. Why did the number of points required for acquiring each of the accreditation levels go up significantly? The number of available points remained the same, but the number required for attaining any desired letter grade moved up. Under the system proposed in September 2013, a school would have to acquire 77.2% of the possible points to be an A school. The new model introduced less than two weeks ago requires that same school to acquire 82% of the possible points. A low performing D school had to earn 46.88% of the points under the former system and must now earn 55.55% of points just to be a D.

The people that I work with are doing their due diligence to provide high quality learning experiences for students. Teachers are providing rigorous academic activities that meet the requirements of the Common Core State Standards and propel students toward College and Career Readiness. They set goals based on what we were told in the fall and now "someone somewhere" has moved the bar. This is unacceptable to the faculty and staff that have been working to achieve academic goals (UbD), the community in which we live, and the children whom we serve. I respectfully request that the Accountability Task Force be called back to revisit the issues that seem to have been arbitrarily changed by a statistician who is simply a vendor providing what has been asked of him.

I propose the following for your consideration:

1. Restore the "cut scores" to the levels proposed and accepted in September 2013.
2. Provide schools and districts with impact data with the proposed "cut scores" and provide a prediction table for 2014-15 data so that appropriate and accurate goals can be set.
3. Assure that schools and districts be held responsible for testing 95% of students and that they may keep their 2013 accountability level if the 2014 scores would cause them to drop a level or more as we transition to the new curriculum and assessments.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Walker, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Education
Lumberton Public School District
Lumberton, MS

cc: All State Board Members

COPIAH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TELEPHONE (601) 894-1341
FAX (601) 894-2634



RICKEY CLOPTON, SUPERINTENDENT

254 W. GALLATIN - HAZLEHURST, MISS. 39083

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

FROM: Rickey Clopton
Superintendent



TOPIC: Revision of Scale Score Cutpoints for 2013-14 school year for schools (and districts) with a Grade 12 that has 9 components

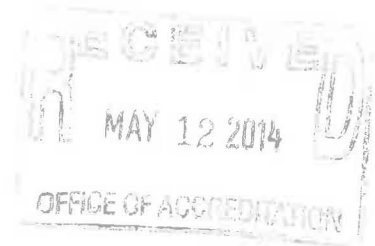
DATE: May 9, 2014

The concerns and information you are receiving were presented to Dr. Wright and Mr. Patrick Ross at the Regional Superintendent's Meeting in Hattiesburg on April 28th. After a lengthy discussion on revising the scale score cutpoints, we left expecting that **new** impact data would be forthcoming. When can we expect to get this new data?

Also, at our meeting, it was brought to our attention that there were four proposals for the cut scale scores. What were the other proposals and why was this one the best option?

Thank you.

May 6, 2014



Dr. Paula Vanderford
Bureau Manager
Office of Accreditation and Accountability
Post Office Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Dear Dr. Vanderford,

The information that Cut/Point scores are being changed and the "Hold Harmless exemption" that was provided is now in jeopardy is quite disturbing. Districts and school communities have made accurate claims of success based on THE guidelines. The office wants to modify the points which in turn will take away deserving schools of their Successful status and the promised opportunity to maintain this status as we transition to new assessments.

Creditability and trust of a school in a community is vital for growth. Schools and communities have celebrated their hard earned success. The consequences of changing the promises made will cause parents a reason to mistrust the school/district/state. It will have a ripple effect. Trust is always fragile and when mistrust begins it is difficult to recover. Our parents and communities are the center in our schools.

Please reconsider and look at the impact on deserving schools that have correctly stated "WE ARE A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL". However, in six months the schools have to restate, "The state said we were successful but now we are not according to the state."

Sincerely,

Roslyn King
S.V. Marshall Elementary
Reading Intervention Teacher