

**OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER**  
**Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items**  
**July 23, 2014**

**OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

09. Approval for a five-year Interagency Agreement (IA) with the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) to continue the school program for children with autism

Awarded Vendor: University of Southern Mississippi  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Purpose: The University will continue with the school program to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for children with autism. The University duties will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Providing training in autism to local education agencies (LEA);
- 2) Providing support and training to parents in behavioral management and educational interventions; and
- 3) Providing coordination of services between the child's LEA, USM, and the parents or guardians.

This is a five-year Interagency Agreement through USM with an anticipated cost of \$559,528 per year. Continuation for years two through five will be determined annually and contingent upon the successful completion of the preceding year's agreement and the availability of funds.

Personnel associated with this Interagency Agreement are not former Department employees or related to any Department employees.

Scope of Interagency Agreement:

- Term of Interagency Agreement: July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2019
- Cost of IA (2014-2019): \$2,797,640
- Method of Award: Interagency Agreement

Funding Source: Federal funds

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

## **Executive Summary**

University-based programs are authorized in Sections 37-23-31 through 37-23-35 of the Mississippi Code. Any state supported university or college may apply for minimum program funds pursuant to the Application Steps outlined in Board Policy 7208. The University of Southern Mississippi completed the application process to create a university-based program for the purposes of 1) providing pre-service and in-service training to teachers of children with autism, a low-incidence condition, and 2) providing services to children with autism. USM proposes to provide a program of education, instruction and training to children with autism in a model demonstration site located at one of its facilities in the Mississippi Gulf Coast area. USM also proposes to assist local education agencies in developing programs on school campuses for the purpose of educating children with autism while providing training on a) evidence-based practices for teaching children with autism and b) the critical elements of autism programs.

# USM Autism Demonstration School

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	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Proposed 2014-2015
Districts Receiving Training	19	18	21	25
Students Served	7	14	27	33
Students Transitioning Back To Local District	0	3	5	8

Grant Awards to USM Autism Demonstration School	
2009-2012	\$1,639,340
2012-2015	\$2,517,163

June 3, 2014

To: Mississippi Department of Education-Office of Special Education

From: Dr. Tim Morse, Director of Training/Positive Behavior Support Specialist;  
The University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast Autism Project

Subj: Year 2 Report for the 2012-2015 Reporting Period

## **Overview**

The University of Southern Mississippi's Autism Project has been established as a university-based program as authorized in Sections 37-23-31 through 37-23-35 of the Mississippi Code. This university-based resource has been designed to enable Mississippi to develop its internal capacity for addressing the needs of students with autism, rather than to have to continually contract with personnel or agencies outside of the state to do the same. Hence, the project is intended to have a statewide outreach as project personnel strive to accomplish their mission, which is to demonstrate for school personnel and parents how to design and implement appropriate school-based programs for students with autism.

The current Interagency Agreement between the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) with respect to the Autism Project stipulates that an annual report be submitted by the Autism Project to the MDE by June 30. Within this report, the following issues are to be addressed: (a) the number of children evaluated; (b) the number of children enrolled in the program and a summary of their attainment of their IEP goals and objectives; (c) the transition activities completed on behalf of any children who transition from the school program at USM back to their local education agency; and, (d) the number of trainings conducted by project personnel and a summary of the learning objectives covered during each training, the number of participants who attended such training, their categorization (teacher, parent, or administrator), and a summary of the participants' evaluations of the quality of the training. Hence, the content in this document comprises the report that is due to the MDE by June 30, 2014.

Given the reporting requirements, this report contains confidential information. For instance, in the section within this report where data are presented regarding the number of IEP goals and objectives that the students, who received services at the project's Autism Demonstration School during the 2013-2014 school year, mastered, the students' first and last names are provided.

As has been the case throughout the operation of the Autism Project, Autism Project staff have accomplished their mission by performing two primary tasks: conducting various training activities and operating an Autism Demonstration School. Training activities that have been developed and implemented continue to include large and small group trainings that are conducted throughout the state as well as at the Autism Project's facility, and distance education activities. Participants continue to include various school personnel, USM students, parents, interested citizens (e.g., Court Appointed Special Advocates), and professionals who work on behalf of students with autism in various capacities (e.g., Mississippi Department of Mental Health employees). Additionally, the MDE used at least part of a five-year statewide autism training plan (2012-2016) that Dr. Morse proposed to secure the services of a

national/international expert in the field of autism (i.e., Emily Rubin) for the purpose of coming to Mississippi in the summer of 2013 to conduct a statewide training.

Regarding the project's Autism Demonstration School, it is located at Long Beach Middle School, and functions as a university-based program for students with autism. This past school year (2013-2014), the Demonstration School expanded to four classrooms for students with autism, Preschool-Grade 2. During the 2013-2014 school year, 30 students with autism received services at the school. As was the case during the previous school year, an Outdoor Play Area, Training Facility, and Teacher Workroom/Make-and-Take Room were operational within the space at Long Beach Middle School that is used for the Autism Project. Autism Project staff are working with USM library staff to transfer the project's Parent Resource and Professional Library materials to the USM library system, where they will be permanently housed. This arrangement will allow for better management of the materials, both with respect to inventorying and distributing them.

The project currently employs 19 personnel in full-time or part-time positions, or as consultants. These include professionals from various disciplines who provide the educational services at the Demonstration School that result in the provision of an appropriate school-based program for a student with autism: Special Education Teachers, Speech Language Pathologists, Instructional Assistants, Board Licensed Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, and a Physical Therapist. Autism Project staff also work with both the Collection Management and Information Resources librarians from The University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast (USM-GC) Library for the purpose of having them populate and manage the Parent and Professional Libraries within their facility.

During their 2014 session, the Mississippi Legislature recognized the work that is being performed by Autism Project staff by appropriating \$50,000 for the Autism Project in Fiscal Year 2015. Additionally, on May 12, 2014 Senator Gray Tollison (Chairperson, Senate Education Committee), Representative John Moore (Chairperson, House Education Committee), and Representative Carolyn Crawford visited the Autism Project's facility for the purpose of learning about the project. In particular, they were interested in how the project can meet the expressed need from public school personnel for ongoing, sustained professional development.

Dr. Morse's work on this project continues to be extended through his participation on the Mississippi Autism Advisory Committee. This committee was established in 2011 by the Mississippi House of Representatives (HB 1125) for the purpose of making recommendations to the legislature, via annual reports, regarding issues the state should address in order to meet the needs of its citizens with autism. In November 2013 the Autism Project hosted one of the committee's regularly scheduled meetings.

In summary, key features of the Autism Project are as follows.

1. The Autism Project has enabled USM to perform outreach activities with Mississippi's K-12 public schools, as is required by the MDE.
2. The project aligns with USM's historical teacher training mission. Via the Autism Demonstration School, the project provides a means through which undergraduate and graduate students from various disciplines can receive training during student teaching placements, practicum assignments, and externships. Furthermore, the school is an example of a university-based program where these personnel can be educated regarding how to employ evidence-based practices and document the effective, innovative interventions they employ.

3. The project has solidified USM's ties with local community agencies, particularly the Long Beach School District, as well as state agencies, including the Mississippi Department of Education, Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the Mississippi Department of Health. Furthermore, project staff are collaborating with professionals from other universities (e.g., Louisiana State University).
4. The project provides a means for conducting applied research, grant writing, and publication of various papers that can contribute to the literature that pertains to students with autism. To date, two project-related papers have been published in a peer-reviewed journal and project staff have made presentations at one international conference, four national conferences, and one state conference.

### **Required Content**

Below the required content for this report is presented. Additional, relevant information is also provided.

#### The number of children evaluated

The project's psychologists completed one comprehensive evaluation using the Psychoeducational Profile-3, administered two academic achievement tests (i.e., the Woodcock-Johnson), and administered 11 school readiness tests (i.e., the Bracken School Readiness Test). The purpose for administering the PEP-3 was to evaluate the annual performance of one student who has been evaluated with this instrument annually during the 3 years he has attended the Autism Demonstration School. The purpose for administering the Woodcock-Johnson was to obtain academic achievement data that were used by the Autism Demonstration School and a student's LEA to develop appropriate school programs for the students. Regarding the administration of the Bracken, we field tested it this school year and, based upon the data we obtained, have decided that we will use it next school year to measure student growth from August 2014-May 2015.

Autism Project staff also completed a full intake process, for the purpose of determining whether a student would be placed at the Autism Demonstration School during the 2014-2015 school year, with 19 students. Finally, the staff supported an assessment activity that was conducted by a USM doctoral candidate with one student at the Autism Demonstration School. The candidate administered a new, non-verbal intelligence test to the student for the purpose of determining its validity.

#### The number of children enrolled in the program and a summary of their attainment of their IEP goals and objectives

Thirty (30) students were enrolled at the Autism Demonstration School at some point in time during the 2013-2014 school year. The attachment, "Autism Project 2013-2014 IEP Summary," presents a summary of the students' attainments of their IEP goals and objectives. Specifically, the number of goals and objectives that were listed for each content area in a student's IEP are identified, as are the number of these goals and objectives that were mastered. Note, however, that, due to extenuating circumstances, the data for three students are not presented. Dr. Morse can be made available to speak about these data.

#### The transition activities completed on behalf of any children who transition from the school program at USM back to their local education agency

One student transitioned to his local school district in January 2014 while five students transitioned back to their school districts at the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

The Director of Special Education from the district into which the student transitioned in January 2014 observed the student at the Autism Demonstration School for a full day, discussed his program with our staff, and took some of the instructional materials that we had been using to his new school so that the staff there could use them with him. Autism Project staff wrote draft IEPs for him and the other five students who transitioned at the end of the school year. Dr. Morse attended the IEP meetings for three of these students.

The project's board licensed psychologist administered the Woodcock-Johnson to one of the five students for the purpose of obtaining academic achievement data that his IEP team could use for making programming and placement decisions. Furthermore, Autism Project staff wrote a document on behalf of each student that was titled, "About Me." The documents were two pages in length and consisted of information about each student's programming needs. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that each document was created in close collaboration with each student's caregivers. The adherence to a "bulleted points" format was calculated to increase the probability that receiving school personnel would read the documents.

The number of trainings conducted by project personnel and a summary of the learning objectives covered during each training, the number of participants who attended such training, their categorization (teacher, parent, or administrator), and a summary of the participants' evaluations of the quality of the training

During the past school year, not only were numerous small and large group trainings conducted by Autism Project staff, but they also supported the completion of the student teaching placement of three USM undergraduate students at the Autism Demonstration School, as well as the completion of various assignments by several undergraduate USM students. A summary and listing of these activities, and related training events (e.g., presentations made by staff at conferences), is presented below.

#### *Summary of the 2013-2014 Trainings*

Creation of an Autism Demonstration School: 4 classrooms for 30 students with autism

Number of Applications for Enrollment during the 2013-2014 school year: 23

69 Onsite presentations/Small group offsite presentations

1 School District Large Group Training (Harrison County January 6, 2014)

1 Workshop

2 Webinars

549 Training participants

3 Student teachers

1 SPE 121L USM practicum student

1 National conference presentation

2 State conference presentations

#### *Summary of the Trainings Since the Autism Project's Inception (on November 1, 2009) - Current as of May 30, 2014*

Creation of an Autism Demonstration School: 4 classrooms for 30 students with autism

Number of Applications for Enrollment during the 2013-2014 school year: 23

191 Onsite presentations/Regional trainings/Workshops/School district trainings/Small group  
offsite presentations/Webinars  
2,435 Training participants  
9 Workshops  
1 International conference presentation  
4 National conference presentations  
9 State conference presentations  
4 SPE 401L USM practicum students  
1 CIE 301L USM Math Lab Student  
2 CIR 309 USM practicum students  
12 SPE 431L and 451L USM practicum students  
1 SPE 121L USM practicum student  
3 Student teachers

*Onsite presentations/Small group offsite presentations*

May 29, 2014. "Service delivery options for students with autism in Mississippi." Training for Dr. Gadke, School Psychologist, Mississippi State University. Long Beach, MS.

May 28, 2014. "Home school programming issues for elementary students with autism." Training for a parent from McComb, MS. Long Beach, MS.

May 6, 2014. "Design and operation of a university-based Autism Demonstration School." Training for 3 personnel from The University of Southern Mississippi's Center for Children's Communication and Development. Long Beach, MS.

May 2, 2014. "Entry level school programming for preschool students with autism." Training for a parent from the Scott County School District. Long Beach, MS.

May 1, 2014. "Comprehensive school programming for preschool and lower elementary students with autism." Training for 4 parents from the Harrison County School District. Long Beach, MS.

April 3, 2014. "Preschool programming strategies for students with autism." Training for 2 caregivers from the Bay/Waveland School District. Long Beach, MS.

March 31, 2014. "Strategies for addressing the challenging behaviors exhibited by students with autism." Training for a special education teacher from Gulfport, Mississippi. Long Beach, MS.

March 27, 2014. "Basic programming strategies for school-age students with autism." Webinar training for 22 school personnel from the Wayne County School District. Long Beach, MS.

March 20, 2014. Initial Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training for an Autism Project employee. Long Beach, MS.



February 28, 2014. CPI Formal Advanced Refresher Program training for 2 Autism Project employees (Autism Spectrum Disorders: Applications of *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention* Training). Long Beach, MS.

March 13, 2014. "Individualized education programs students with autism." Training for a parent from Biloxi, MS. Long Beach, MS.

March 12, 2014. "Basic programming strategies for school-age students with autism." Training for 2 caregivers from Jackson, MS. Long Beach, MS.

March 10, 2014. "Fundamental environmental arrangement strategies for school-age students with autism." Training for a teacher from the Lamar County School District. Long Beach, MS.

March 10, 2014. "Basic programming strategies for school-age students with autism." Training for 2 caregivers from the Rankin County and Long Beach School Districts. Long Beach, MS.

March 6, 2014. "Basic programming strategies for school-age students with autism." Training for 2 caregivers from the Quitman and Gulfport School Districts. Long Beach, MS.

February 21, 2014. "Environmental arrangement strategies for educating students with autism." Training for a teacher from The Chartwell Center, New Orleans, LA. Long Beach, MS.

February 20, 2014. "Strategies for supporting the emotional regulation of individuals with autism." Training for 3 South Mississippi case workers. Long Beach, MS.

February 20, 2014. "Elementary school programming for students with autism." Training for 2 parents of an elementary school student with autism from the Hattiesburg Public School District. Long Beach, MS.

February 20, 2014. "Preschool programming for students with autism." Training for 2 parents of a preschool student with autism from the Jefferson Davis County School District. Long Beach, MS.

February 19, 2014. "The general least restrictive environment requirement and the continuum of alternative placements for children with autism." Training for 4 school personnel and 2 caregivers of a preschool student with autism from the Bay/Waveland School District. Long Beach, MS.

February 17, 2014. "Differences between behavioral health therapy and public school programming for preschool children with autism." Training for 2 parents of a preschool student with autism from the Biloxi Public School District. Long Beach, MS.

February 17, 2014. "School programming for middle school students with autism." Training for a parent from the Pass Christian School District. Long Beach, MS.

February 12, 2014. "Kindergarten programming for students with autism." Training for a parent from the Long Beach School District. Long Beach, MS.

February 12, 2014. "Basic information about autism, and educational services for students with the disorder." Presentation to 35 members of Leadership Gulf Coast. Long Beach, MS.

February 7, 2014. "School programming and progress monitoring of a student with autism." Training for a parent of a student with autism (4 years old; Laurel, MS). Long Beach, MS.

February 7, 2014. "Daily school programming and progress monitoring of a student with autism." Training for 3 caregivers of a student with autism enrolled at the Autism Demonstration School. Long Beach, MS.

February 7, 2014. "Preschool programming for students with autism." Training for 10 personnel from the Jones County School District. Long Beach, MS.

January 24, 2014. "School programming for preschool and lower elementary students with autism." Training for 6 caregivers of children with autism in south Mississippi. Long Beach, MS.

January 17, 2014. "Preschool programming for students with autism." Training for 2 parents from the Harrison County School District. Long Beach, MS.

January 16, 2014. "Elementary programming for students with autism." Training for 2 parents from the Harrison County School District. Long Beach, MS.

January 16, 2014. "Speech-language services for students with autism." Training for a speech-language pathologist from Memorial Hospital, Gulfport. Long Beach, MS.

January 14-15, 2014. "Preschool programming for students with autism." Training for 2 personnel from the Quitman School District. Long Beach, MS.

January 13, 2014. "Introduction to school programming for students with autism." Training for 2 caregivers from the Long Beach School District. Long Beach, MS.

January 10, 2014. "School programming for kindergarten students with autism." Training for 2 caregivers from the Hancock County School District. Long Beach, MS.

January 9, 2014. "School programming for kindergarten students with autism." Training for a parent from the Hancock County School District. Long Beach, MS.

January 9, 2014. "Fundamental behavioral interventions for individuals with autism." Training for a Behavior Intervention Consultant from the South Mississippi Regional Center. Long Beach, MS.

January 6, 2014. "Basic information about autism and school programming strategies for students with the disability." Training for 142 personnel and parents from the Harrison County School District. Lyman Community Center. Lyman, MS.

December 19, 2013. "School-based programming for lower elementary students with autism." Training for a caregiver of a student with autism who has been placed at the USM-Gulf Coast Autism Demonstration School. Long Beach, MS.

December 17, 2013. "School-based programming for lower elementary students with autism." Training for a parent of a student with autism who has been placed at the USM-Gulf Coast Autism Demonstration School. Long Beach, MS.

December 16, 2013. "Basic intervention strategies for high school students with autism." Training for 12 school personnel at Harrison Central High School. Gulfport, MS.

December 12, 2013. "School-based programming for lower elementary students with autism." Training for a parent of a student with autism who has been placed at the USM-Gulf Coast Autism Demonstration School. Long Beach, MS.

December 11, 2013. "Antecedent interventions and positive behavior supports for students with autism." Training for a school administrator. Long Beach, MS.

December 9, 2013. "School-based programming for preschool and lower elementary students with autism." Training for 8 parents and caregivers of students with autism who have been placed at the USM-Gulf Coast Autism Demonstration School. Long Beach, MS.

December 6, 2013. "School programming issues for lower elementary students with autism." Training for 7 parents of students with autism enrolled at the Autism Demonstration School. Long Beach, MS.

December 5, 2013. "School programming issues for preschool and lower elementary students with autism." Training for 5 parents of students with autism enrolled at the Autism Demonstration School. Long Beach, MS.

November 14, 2013. "Behavioral interventions in school-based programs for students with autism." Training for 7 USM students and a professor in an undergraduate "Special Problems" psychology class. Long Beach, MS.

November 12, 2013. "Public school programming issues for students with autism." Training for 11 members of the Mississippi Autism Advisory Committee, school administrators, and legislators. Long Beach, MS.

November 11, 2013. "School programming issues for upper elementary students with autism." Training for 8 school personnel and parents from Pineville Elementary School, Harrison County School District. Pass Christian, MS.

November 7, 2013. "School programming issues for students with autism." Webinar training for 30 school personnel from the Wayne County School District. Long Beach, MS.

November 6, 2013. "School programming issues for students with autism." Training for 3 school personnel from the Gulfport School District. Long Beach, MS.

November 5, 2013. "School programming issues for lower elementary students with autism." Training for 6 parents and caregivers of students with autism enrolled at the Autism Demonstration School. Long Beach, MS.

November 4, 2013. "Speech language services and the role of a speech-language pathologist in the USM-Gulf Coast Autism Project." Training for an undergraduate USM student. Long Beach, MS.

November 1, 2013. "School programming issues for lower elementary students with autism." Training for a parent of a student with autism in the Jackson County School District. Long Beach, MS.

October 29, 2013. "Daily school programming issues for lower elementary students with autism." Training for 7 parents of students attending the Autism Demonstration School. Long Beach, MS.

October 22, 2013. "Daily school programming issues for preschool students with autism." Training for 9 parents of students attending the Autism Demonstration School and one USM undergraduate student. Long Beach, MS.

October 17, 2013. "Teaching reading comprehension to students with autism." Training for a USM undergraduate student. Long Beach, MS.

October 7, 2013. "Fundamental school programming issues for students with autism." Training for 2 representatives of The Chartwell Center, New Orleans. Long Beach, MS.

October 3, 2013. "Early intervention issues for students with autism." Training for a parent of a toddler with autism in the Gulfport School District. Long Beach, MS.

October 3, 2013. "Home schooling programming issues for students with autism." Training for a parent of a student with autism in the Jackson County School District. Long Beach, MS.

September 27, 2013. "School programming issues for students with autism." Training for 23 members of USM TEAAM. Long Beach, MS.

September 26, 2013. "Fundamental school programming issues for students with autism." Three trainings for 29 parents of the students enrolled at the USM-Gulf Coast Autism Demonstration School. Long Beach, MS.

September 23, 2013. "The Autism Project as a placement option for preschool students with autism." Training for 2 caregivers and 2 school personnel from the Gulfport School District. Long Beach, MS.

September 13, 2013. "Assessment issues for students with autism." Training for a University of Southern Mississippi doctoral candidate. Long Beach, MS.

September 11, 2013. "The Autism Project as a placement option for kindergarten students with autism." Training for 1 parent from the Gulfport School District. Long Beach, MS.

September 1, 2013. "The Autism Project as a placement option for preschool and kindergarten students with autism." Training for 2 parents from the Pass Christian and Harrison County School Districts. Long Beach, MS.

August 28, 2013. "The Autism Project as a placement option for preschool and kindergarten students with autism." Training for 3 parents. Long Beach, MS.

August 22, 2013. "The Autism Project and its preschool transition group." Training for 3 parents. Long Beach, MS.

August 15, 2013. "The Autism Project and its preschool transition group." Training for 4 parents. Long Beach, MS.

August 14, 2013. "The Autism Project and its preschool transition group." Training for 3 parents. Long Beach, MS.

June 22, 2013. "The ABCs of disciplining children with disabilities." Training for 39 parents who are members of Families Helping Families of Southeastern Louisiana. Confront and Conquer Retreat. Osyka, MS.

#### *USM Preservice Student Training*

Dr. Morse served as the Cooperating Teacher for three student teachers during the 2013-2014 school year. He continues to work with USM's Field Placement Office to determine how the Autism Project can be used to support preservice teacher training.

#### *National/Regional Conference Presentations*

Morse, T. E. (November 20, 2013). "Guidance for teaching safety skills to students with autism in school - and beyond." Presentation at the 2013 Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence Disabilities Conference. Columbus, OH.

### *State Conference Presentations*

Morse, T. E., Bankston, S., & Ballantyne, E. (February 6, 2014). Strategies for simultaneously addressing the positive behavior support and language needs of students with autism. Presentation at the 2013 Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children Annual Conference. Biloxi, MS.

Morse, T. E., & Bankston, S. (February 6, 2014). Safety skills instruction for students with autism: A comprehensive programming perspective. Presentation at the 2013 Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children Annual Conference. Biloxi, MS.

### *Pending National/Regional/State/Local Proposals for Conference Presentations*

Morse, T. E. (May 17, 2014). "Applying evidence-based practices to develop effective school programs for students with autism." Proposal for a presentation at the 16<sup>th</sup> Conference for the Council for Exceptional Children-Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities. Clearwater, FL.

Morse, T. E. (May 7, 2014). "Applying evidence-based practices to develop effective school programs for students with autism." Proposal for a presentation at the 2015 Council for Exceptional Children Convention and Expo. San Diego, CA.

Morse, T. E. (February 27, 2014). "Using antecedent interventions to evoke appropriate behavior by students with autism." Proposal for a presentation at the 2014 Mississippi Mental Health Care Conference. Pearl, MS.

### *Workshops*

Morse, T. E. (February 5, 2014). School programming for students with autism in Mississippi: Strategies for addressing the basics. Workshop presented at the 2013 Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children Annual Conference. Biloxi, MS.

### *Learning Objectives for the Trainings*

The content that was presented in each training listed above was based upon a 200+ page monograph that Dr. Morse authored:

Morse, T. E. (2014). *School-based programming for students with autism in Mississippi-2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* [Project Monograph]. Long Beach, MS: The University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast Autism Project.

This monograph directs the work of the Autism Project's staff, so its content is relevant to the trainings the staff conducted this past school year. Accordingly, the learning objectives for the trainings were as follows.

After participating in the training, the participant will be able to

1. State the mission of the Autism Project
2. List the criteria that must be met for a student to be eligible to be placed at the Autism Demonstration School
3. Explain how the intervention program at the Autism Demonstration School is predicated upon the fundamental features of autism and, therefore, is broadly applicable to public school programs throughout Mississippi
4. Describe the curriculum that is taught at the Autism Demonstration School, with an emphasis on how it is related to the Common Core State Standards
5. State two interventions instructors can employ for each of the fundamental features of individuals with autism
6. Discuss how an intervention that addresses a fundamental feature of autism can be designed such that it meets the needs of an individual with classic autism as opposed to an individual with high-functioning autism
7. List the fundamental elements of the definition for autism that are put forth in Mississippi's policies that pertain to the provision of special education services for students with autism
8. List three credible resources that can be accessed via the Internet for the purpose of learning about autism
9. Explain how you will use the information that was presented during the training in your school-based program for students with autism, or in non-school environments with your child with autism (to include relatively in-depth information pertaining to topics such as teaching literacy and math)

#### *Participant Evaluations of the Trainings*

Autism Project staff have developed an evaluation form for the trainings the staff conduct. The attachment titled, "Autism Project 2013-2014 Training Evaluations" contains the data that were gathered via this form for the trainings that were conducted by the project's staff during the 2013-2014 school year.

Regarding the training participants' evaluations of these trainings, within our project we have learned that it is extremely difficult to get participants to complete an evaluation of the training if they perceive that there is any way for the project's staff to identify a training participant. Consequently, Autism Project staff have developed a protocol that provides the staff with a high probability of collecting confidential evaluations of these trainings. Nonetheless, some participants will elect to forego evaluating their training experience regardless of the efforts made by Autism Project staff to protect a participant's confidentiality because the participant is not absolutely convinced that their confidentiality will be protected. Regardless, the presentation of our training evaluation data in this report meets the requirements in the Interagency Agreement.

#### *Public Service*

From 2011-2014 Dr. Morse has been a member of the Mississippi Autism Advisory Committee. This committee was established by HB 1125 to study, make recommendations, and develop a strategic plan on how best to educate and train students with Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorders to maximize their potential productivity within the workforce. Dr. Morse was initially appointed by Dr. Tom Burnham, State Superintendent of Education.

*Planned Activities for the 2014-2015 School Year*

The Autism Project staff plan to perform the work documented below during the upcoming 2014-2015 school year.

1. Present the Summer 2014 Autism Institute on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Education-Office of Special Education (June 25-26, 2014).
2. Support professional preparation activities of USM undergraduate and graduate students.
3. Operate 4 classrooms at the Autism Demonstration School, serving 28-30 students.
4. Work with consortia throughout the state to develop (a) regional autism demonstration classrooms and (b) a statewide network of such classrooms that can be connected virtually (i.e., a Mississippi Autism Network for Professional Development).
5. Continue to develop the Autism Demonstration School's Student Intake Process so that it is systematic and rational with respect to everyone who is involved.
6. Conduct individual and small group trainings, on an as requested basis, at the Autism Project's facility.
7. Conduct two types of large group trainings: webinars and a series of two-day regional trainings. The primary focus of these trainings will continue to be the design and implementation of appropriate, comprehensive school-based programs for students with autism. However, when appropriate, detailed information about a particular topic will be presented (e.g., reading or math instruction; low tech AAC supports).
8. Continue to develop transition activities that meet the particular needs of the districts that are receiving students who have attended the Autism Demonstration School. Specifically, we are working to develop a case study/portfolio reporting format that can be used to provide the receiving local education agency (LEA) with detailed information about one of their students who is transitioning back to the LEA after having attended the Autism Demonstration School.
9. In November 2014, Dr. Morse will make a poster presentation, at a national conference, which pertains to the use of antecedent interventions to evoke displays of appropriate behavior by students with autism. Use of these interventions serves as a foundation for student programming at the Autism Demonstration School.

*Pending National/Regional Conference Presentations*

Morse, T. E. (November 19-21, 2014). "Using antecedent interventions to evoke appropriate behavior by students with autism." Poster presentation at the 2014 Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence Disabilities Conference. Columbus, OH.



*Manuscripts in Preparation*

Morse, T. E. Informed eclecticism: A valid approach to appropriate school programming for students with autism.

Morse, T. E. Antecedent interventions for students with autism: A rational approach to evoking displays of appropriate student behavior.

Morse, T. E. An analysis of Mississippi's special education policies as they pertain to public school programming for students with autism.

Morse, T. E. Strategies for ensuring the safety and welfare of students with autism while at school.

**Office of Special Education  
Personal and Professional  
Annual Evaluation Form**

Name of Services Provider: Interagency Agreement (IA) with the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) school program for children with autism								
Name of Person Completing Evaluation: Ellen Davis Burnham			Title of Person Completing Evaluation: Bureau Director II					
Date: June 20, 2014		Fiscal Year of Services: FY 14						
			Total Amount of IA for FY14: \$182,574					
Scope of Work: The University will continue with the school program to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for children with autism.								
				Rating	1	2	3	4
1. Were deliverables returned within timelines established?								
a. Provide a school program that is designed to provide a FAPE for children with autism. (See Attachment A for the MDE's definition of autism and evaluation requirements)								X
b. Provide training in research-based techniques to local education agencies (LEA) interested in increasing their expertise in educating children with autism						X		
c. Provide to parents and or guardians of children with autism support and training in behavioral management.						X		
d. Provide assessments as needed for purposes of diagnosis, eligibility, and development of the Individual Education Program (IEP).						X		
e. Provide for the coordination of services between the child's local education agency (LEA), USM, and the parents or guardians.								X
f. Provide coordination of services between the child's LEA, USM, and the parent or guardians.								X
g. Provide technical assistance to LEAs related to programming and direct services, including onsite training at USM.						X		
h. Provide opportunities for LEA personnel, including support staff, to observe the school.								X
i. Provide follow-up services when students return to their LEA.							*	
j. Report every child who has a current eligibility ruling, current IEP, and is receiving services at USM on December 1 on its December 1 Child Count Report.								X

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<p>k. Submit to the MDE by June 30 an annual report of the year's activities (Years 1-5). The report will document (a) the number of children evaluated, (b) the number of children enrolled in the school program at USM and a summary of their attainment of IEP goals and objectives, (c) the transition activities completed on behalf of any children who transition from the school program at USM back to their LEA, and (d) the number of trainings conducted by project personnel and a summary of the learning objectives covered during each training, the number of participants who attended each training and their categorization (i.e., teacher/parent/administrator/etc.), and a summary of the participants' evaluations of the quality of the training.</p>				X
<p>l. At the conclusion of the five year agreement, submit to MDE a report of an internal evaluation of USM's implementation of its services under this Interagency Agreement (covers year 1-5). The report will include data in support of the provision of items (A-K) above and an analysis of how the data reflect upon the performance of the services. USM shall submit the report by April 15, 2019.</p>	NA			
2. Was the service provider compliant with the Interagency Agreement terms?				
a. Professionalism				X
b. Ethical Behavior				X
c. Confidentiality				X
d. Other				
3. Accountability				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is productive and delivers appropriate amount of service to district.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on quality and expends the necessary time and effort to help district(s) achieve the established goals.</li> </ul>				X

Based on an onsite visit on 01/08/2014 to review the program and their records by Ellen Davis Burnham and Dr. Therrell Myers (Dr. Myers made a second trip on 01/22/2014.) as well as annual report.

\* Dr. Morse was working with the first child to be transitioned back to their resident district.

58/64 = 91%

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Ratings:

4 – Exceeds Expectations – This rating requires a support services partner to fulfill all identified deliverables for the district in the focused area(s) of improvement related to the scope of work.

3 – Meets Expectations – This rating requires a support services partner who has met 90% of identified deliverables for the district in the focused area(s) of improvement related to the scope of work.

2 – Needs Improvement - This rating requires a support services partner who has met less than 90% and more than 70% of the identified deliverables for the district in the focused area(s) of improvement related to the scope of work.

1 – Unsuccessful - This rating requires a support services partner who has met less than 70% of the identified deliverables for the district in the focused area(s) of improvement related to the scope of work.