

**OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER**  
**Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items**  
**September 18-19, 2014**

**OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (K-5)**

09. Approval of the recommended score to determine minimum readiness for kindergarten

**Executive Summary**

Mississippi's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will provide parents, teachers, and early childhood providers with a common understanding of what children know and are able to do upon entering school. The kindergarten readiness score validation took place on July 29, 2014, to establish a scale score indicating a minimum level of readiness for students who are entering kindergarten.

The validation committee was made up of a diverse group of Mississippi educators, which included district superintendents, curriculum coordinators, principals, pre-kindergarten teachers, federal program directors, and early childhood program directors.

The committee recommended a scale score of 530 at the beginning of kindergarten or a score of 498 at the end of pre-kindergarten on the Renaissance STAR Early Literacy Assessment as an indicator of kindergarten readiness. This score is indicative of mastery of knowledge and skills in the area of early literacy and early numeracy at or above 70%.

The recommended scale score is not a required score for students to enroll in kindergarten. The assessment results will help educators identify and support those students who may need additional intervention as quickly as possible.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached



Kindergarten Readiness  
Standards Validation Committee  
July 29, 2014

**District Level**

Kim Crestman, Superintendent

Mary Clark, Curriculum Coordinator

Kelli Speed, Curriculum Coordinator

Janice Dukes, Federal Programs Director/Parent Center Director

Water Valley School District

Rankin County School District

Meridian Public School District

Pearl Public School District

**Building Level**

Kenitra Barnes, Principal

Pass Christian School District

**School Level**

Amy Burks, Pre-K Teacher

Meridian Public School District

**Stakeholders**

Kelli Butler, Director of Program Strategies

Rachel Canter, Director

Barksdale Reading Institute

Mississippi First

**District Collaborative**

Suzanne Hawley, Superintendent

Dawn Davis, Pre-K Resource Coordinator/ELL Coordinator

Quitman School District

Desoto County School District

**Building Level Collaborative**

Dr. Margaret Boyd, Principal

Lake Cormorant Elementary

**Child Care Center Collaborative**

Jennifer Calvert, Director

Calvert's ABC Preschool and

Nursery (5-star center) Aberdeen

**Non-Profit Collaborative**

Danny Spreitler, Executive Director

Gilmore Foundation

**Mississippi Department of Education**

Dr. Kim Benton

Robin Lemonis

Jill Dent

Brittany Herrington

James Mason

Richard Baliko

**Executive Summary**  
**Benchmark Score Validation**  
**Mississippi Kindergarten Readiness Assessment**

To validate the Kindergarten Readiness Benchmark for Mississippi, a committee of thirteen Mississippi educators who are familiar with pre-K and kindergarten students met and reviewed the research, analyses and data provided by Renaissance Learning. The committee was made up of a diverse group of educators and stakeholders including:

- District superintendents,
- Curriculum coordinators,
- Principals,
- Pre-Kindergarten teachers,
- Directors of federal programs,
- Directors of early childhood programs,
- Non-profit organizations, and
- Head Start.

The committee agreed that the benchmark of 530 should be used for the Mississippi Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. The committee agreed that:

1. The purpose of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment is to provide an understanding of what children know and are able to do upon entering kindergarten and to inform the quality of classroom instruction.
2. A score of 530 or higher signifies that a student entering kindergarten has demonstrated mastery of knowledge and skills in the areas of early literacy and early numeracy at or above 70%.
3. The 530 benchmark has been researched and validated.

All committee members also agreed with the statement “I support the benchmark of 530 on the *STAR Early Literacy Assessment* as the minimum rate of readiness desired for students entering Kindergarten.” Comments from participants stressed the value of the 530 benchmark score as a predictor of Grade 3 proficiency, the fact that the benchmark score will help teachers identify students who need additional support, and that the benchmark indicates a desired (and not a mandatory) level of skills.

Additionally, committee members were asked to consider a benchmark score of 498 for students exiting pre-K, as this score places students on the trajectory to earn a 530 at the beginning of kindergarten. The committee determined that a 498 should be the readiness score for students at the end of pre-K.