

**OFFICE OF CHIEF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OFFICER  
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items  
April 16-17, 2015**

**OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION**

06. Approval of recommendations on exceptions to pupil-teacher ratio requirements for grades 1-4

State Law 37-151-77 and State Board Policy 2100 indicate that the State Board of Education is authorized to waive the pupil-teacher requirements for districts with exceptions to the enrollment ratio of 27:1 in grades 1-4.

Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) staff reviewed the report of sections for forty-five (45) districts out of compliance with State Law 37-151-77. Nineteen (19) districts were exempt for A or B Performance Classifications.

Total sections out of compliance in 26 districts	75
Sections that corrected data input errors	01
Sections with dropped enrollment since data entry	05
Sections corrected the excessive enrollment	18
Sections over the maximum due to a rotating schedule	06
Other Explanation	02
<b>Remaining sections not able to reduce the classroom ratio</b>	<b>43</b>

An interdepartmental committee met on Tuesday, February 17, 2015, to consider requests from twelve (12) districts for exceptions to the enrollment ratio of 27:1 in grades 1-4. The waiver requests are detailed in the attached backup material.

If a school district does not meet the class size requirement for grades 1-4 as required by State Law 37-151-77, the state aid for the following fiscal year will be reduced. The reduction will be based on the required pupil-teacher ratio mandated in the statute. A waiver may be granted by the State Board of Education if school districts are making a good faith effort to comply with the statute but complying with the statute is physically impossible, and the cost of temporary classroom space cannot be justified.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

**Office of Accreditation  
Class Size Waiver Requests  
School Year 2014-2015**

**1. Holmes County School District**

<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School Performance Classification</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Total number of Classes with overload</b>
Holmes County	William-Sullivan Elementary	D	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1
Holmes County	William-Dean Elementary		4 <sup>th</sup>	4

Holmes County School District is requesting waiver for one (1) 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class at William-Sullivan Elementary and four (4) 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes at William-Dean Elementary.

**Other Factors Related to the Overloads:**

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district does provide a full-time assistant at William Sullivan Elementary but does not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload at William-Dean Elementary. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

**Justification of Exemption Request:**

*1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* The district has been unable to secure certified teachers to fill all vacancies to alleviate overloads.

*2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The district is currently a critical teacher shortage district. Request have been made for a number of expert citizen licenses. The district has also participated in job fairs, but is still unable to secure the certified teachers needed.

*3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district will continue to recruit early on and request slots through Teach for America early enough to secure certified teachers.

## 2. Marshall County School District

District	School	School Performance Classification	Grade Level	Total number of Classes with overload
Marshall County	Galena Elementary	C	4 <sup>th</sup>	3

Marshall County School District is requesting waiver for three (3) 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes at Galena Elementary.

### **Other Factors Related to the Overloads:**

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

### **Justification of Exemption Request:**

- 1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* The district does not have the funding to add an additional class.
- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* At the end of the month four, the enrollment in fourth grade was 29. Two students transferred out, which put the district in compliance. However, one student enrolled in January.
- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* Enrollment reports will be analyzed and monitored closely. Month 9 enrollment reports will be utilized to plan for classes for the 2015-2016 school year.

### 3. Covington County School District

District	School	School Performance Classification	Grade Level	Total number of Classes with overload
Covington County	Mt. Olive Attendance Center	D	4 <sup>th</sup>	3

Covington County School District is requesting waivers for three (3) 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes at Mt. Olive Attendance Center.

#### **Other Factors Related to the Overloads:**

The district was aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district does provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

#### **Justification of Exemption Request:**

- 1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload. Due to underfunding, the district cannot hire an additional teacher.*
- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload. The instructional leader of the elementary department chose to departmentalize the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade allowing teachers to teach subjects in which they possess expertise. The instructional leader took into account the school's possible accountability score as well as the individual teacher's MSTAR report when making the decision to do so.*
- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year. Teacher's assignments will be closely monitored by the district leadership team. Instructional leaders will have the authority to make scheduling decisions with great oversight from the Central Office staff.*

#### 4. Jackson Public School District

District	School	School Performance Classification	Grade Level	Total number of Classes with overload
Jackson Public	Boyd Elementary	C	3 <sup>rd</sup>	2
Jackson Public	Dawson Elementary	C	1 <sup>st</sup>	2
Jackson Public	Isable Elementary	D	1 <sup>st</sup>	3
Jackson Public	Johnson Elementary	D	1 <sup>st</sup>	3
Jackson Public	Lester Elementary	D	1 <sup>st</sup>	1
Jackson Public	North Jackson Elementary	C	1 <sup>st</sup>	1
Jackson Public	Smith Elementary	C	1 <sup>st</sup>	2
Jackson Public	Spann Elementary	C	1 <sup>st</sup>	2
Jackson Public	Timberlawn Elementary	C	4 <sup>th</sup>	1

Jackson Public School District is requesting waivers for two (2) 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes at Boyd Elementary, two (2) 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes at Dawson Elementary, three (3) 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes at Isable Elementary, three (3) 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes at Johnson Elementary, one (1) 1<sup>st</sup> grade class at Lester Elementary, one (1) 1<sup>st</sup> grade class at North Jackson Elementary, two (2) 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes at Smith Elementary, two (2) 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes at Spann Elementary, and one (1) 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes at Timberlawn Elementary.

**Other Factors Related to the Overloads:**

The district was not aware of these overloads before the first day of school. The district did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for these grades at these particular schools last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

**Justification of Exemption Request:**

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* There is no physical space to accommodate an additional classroom. Also, it is not fiscally sound to add a teacher unit.
2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* There was an increase in student population.
3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* Zone lines will be revisited in the area to reduce overcrowding in addition to adding another grade if student population dictates.

## 5. Walthall County School District

District	School	School Performance Classification	Grade Level	Total number of Classes with overload
Walthall County	Salem Attendance Center	D	4 <sup>th</sup>	1

Walthall County School District is requesting waivers for one (1) 4<sup>th</sup> grade class at Salem Attendance Center.

### **Other Factors Related to the Overloads:**

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district does provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

### **Justification of Exemption Request:**

- 1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* Due to under funding and no applicants, the district did not hire an additional teacher.
- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The district had a teacher to resign. Due to the fact that funding was cut no suitable certified applicants were sought.
- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district will move a teacher to this position next year.

## 6. Coahoma County School District

District	School	School Performance Classification	Grade Level	Total number of Classes with overload
Coahoma County	Lyon Elementary	C	1 <sup>st</sup>	1

Coahoma County School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 1<sup>st</sup> grade class at Lyon Elementary.

### **Other Factors Related to the Overloads:**

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

### **Justification of Exemption Request:**

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* The class is only one student over and the district's inability to recruit a teacher after school had begun made it more advantageous to the student to request a waiver.

2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The district is located in a critical teacher shortage area and it was impossible to find a teacher.

3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* Teacher intent forms were sent out earlier and teacher recruitment will begin sooner. The district started a Cohort Class of staff who have Expert Licenses to help get full certification.

## 7. Canton Public School District

District	School	School Performance Classification	Grade Level	Total number of Classes with overload
Canton Public	Reuben Myers Elementary	C	4 <sup>th</sup>	1
Canton Public	Jimmie Goodloe	D	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1
Canton Public	Jimmie Goodloe	D	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1

Canton Public School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 4<sup>th</sup> grade class at Reuben Myers School, one (1) 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class at Jimmie Goodloe and one (1) 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class at Jimmie Goodloe.

### **Other Factors Related to the Overloads:**

The district was aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload at Reuben Myers Elementary, but did at Jimmie Goodloe Elementary. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

### **Justification of Exemption Request:**

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* It is not fiscally sound for the district to add a teacher unit to accommodate one student at Reuben Myers Elementary. There is no physical space to accommodate additional classrooms at Goodloe Elementary. In addition, the district has been unable to secure qualified applicants for the positions.

2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The district has experienced an unexpected increase in enrollment with the ELL population and transfers from other schools in to the district.

3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district will continue to monitor enrollment numbers and make any necessary adjustments required to resolve any overload issues. The district will add additional teacher units at another school and shift students in order to balance enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year.



## 8. Greenwood Public School District

District	School	School Performance Classification	Grade Level	Total number of Classes with overload
Greenwood	Davis Elementary	C	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3

Greenwood Public School District is requesting a waiver for three (3) 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes at Davis Elementary.

### **Other Factors Related to the Overloads:**

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

### **Justification of Exemption Request:**

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* The newly enrolled students appeared after the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester had begun. All third grade student and teacher schedules would potentially be disrupted if a new class were to be created.

2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* Three new families recently moved into the district with multiple siblings (various grades). Each family had 1 third grader. Enrollment in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes was already at the maximum 27:1 ratio.

3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* If the enrollment exceeds the maximum ratio of 27:1, an additional class will be formed.

## 9. Hazlehurst School District

District	School	School Performance Classification	Grade Level	Total number of Classes with overload
Hazlehurst	Hazlehurst Elementary	D	1 <sup>st</sup>	1

Hazlehurst City School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 1<sup>st</sup> grade class at Hazlehurst Elementary.

### **Other Factors Related to the Overloads:**

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

### **Justification of Exemption Request:**

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* The district's enrollment for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade increased beyond planning projections for the 2014-2015 school year.

2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The district's enrollment for most grades increased beyond the initial projections. The district will add an additional teacher slot to planning for the 2015-2016 school year.

3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district will budget an additional teacher unit to cover any overloads for the 2015-2016 school year.

## 10. Leake County School District

District	School	School Performance Classification	Grade Level	Total number of Classes with overload
Leake County	Leake County Elementary		1 <sup>st</sup>	1

Leake County School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes at Leake County Elementary.

### **Other Factors Related to the Overloads:**

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

### **Justification of Exemption Request:**

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* Leake County Elementary School is the smaller of the two elementary schools in the Leake County School District. At the present time, there are three (3) first grade classrooms at Leake County Elementary and each class is filled to capacity. The district has considered construction of additional classrooms but the campus is landlocked. Each first grade classroom has a full time teacher assistant.

2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The district consolidated in 2010 due to a court order by the US Department of Justice and has gone from four (4) elementary campuses to two (2) elementary campuses. First grade classes at both campuses are filled to capacity.

3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district will monitor grade enrollment closely. The district uses projected enrollment to establish teacher and grade configuration. Enrollment in the district tends to shift in September and sometimes the district experiences significant enrollment increases as late as December of each school year. This makes it difficult to determine if an additional teacher unit is needed and impacts the district's budget.

## 11. Clarksdale Municipal School District

District	School	School Performance Classification	Grade Level	Total number of Classes with overload
Clarksdale Municipal	Kirkpartrick Elementary		1st	1
Clarksdale Municipal	Myrtle Hall		1st	2

Clarksdale Municipal School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 1<sup>st</sup> grade class at Kirkpartrick Elementary and two (2) 1<sup>st</sup> grades at Myrtle Hall Elementary.

### **Other Factors Related to the Overloads:**

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

### **Justification of Exemption Request:**

- 1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* Each school in the district is at capacity in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade.
- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The district faces routine challenges of locating and hiring qualified staff. The district is also a critical shortage area.
- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district will monitor enrollment closely and will work to have appropriate qualified staff in place if there is a need.

## 12. Holly Springs School District

District	School	School Performance Classification	Grade Level	Total number of Classes with overload
Holly Springs	Holly Springs Primary School		1st	2

Holly Springs School District is requesting a waiver for two (2) 1<sup>st</sup> grade class at Holly Springs Primary School.

### **Other Factors Related to the Overloads:**

The district was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The district did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The district did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

### **Justification of Exemption Request:**

- 1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* Each school in the district is at capacity in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade.
- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* Enrollments only spiked during the month of March, unexpectedly. It is not feasible to hire teachers this late into the school year.
- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district will monitor enrollment closely and will work to have appropriate qualified staff in place if there is a need.