

**OFFICE OF CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER**  
**Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items**  
**Consent Agenda**  
**August 17, 2017**

**OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEADING**

E. School districts with need for administrators to participate in the Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program

Background Information: In 1998, the Mississippi Legislature amended the Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program. The legislation enables Mississippi school districts to grant sabbatical leave to licensed teachers employed in Mississippi schools for not less than three years. The purpose is to allow such teachers to participate full-time in an educational leadership program and become local school district administrators. The conditions of eligibility, compensation, reimbursement, obligation, breach of contract, and availability are set forth in law and the State Board of Education policy.

Participating teachers receive the benefits of focused study on a university campus and practical administrative internships in local school districts. Participating school districts benefit from an increased supply of potential candidates for future administrative openings.

School-based accountability for student growth and performance demands knowledgeable and skilled leadership. Through the sabbatical program, local school districts, colleges and universities, the Mississippi Department of Education, and the Mississippi Legislature are working in partnership to ensure that Mississippi has an ample supply of well-informed and well-prepared leaders for tomorrow's schools.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

## **School District Justification of Need for Administrators**

**August 2017**

The Office of Teaching and Leading recommends approval of the following school districts as eligible to participate in the 2017-2018 Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program on the basis of their identified need for school administrators:

### **Franklin County School District**

- Currently four (4) out of seven (7) school level administrators are eligible to retire
- School district is in a rural area and recruitment from outside the district is difficult
- Need to increase pool of potential administrative candidates.

### **Harrison County School District**

- Challenges finding qualified administrators to staff schools
- District serves approximately 14,500 students in 22 schools
- Current vacancies for administrative positions
- District needs quality trained administrators to lead the schools and better serve those students with special needs.

### **Jefferson County School District**

- Hard to find qualified leadership willing to relocate in the district
- Losing two (2) principals for the 2017-2018 school year to a surrounding district
- Extremely difficult to recruit highly qualified teachers and administrators because of high rate of poverty and low rate of economic development
- School district needs capable candidates to lead new programs that will assist in improving the performance of the district.

### **Meridian Public School District**

- District need to train individuals within the district to serve as new administrators and to increase our pool of potential administrative candidates
- Three (3) of the ten (10) principals are eligible for retirement in the 2017-2018 school year
- Four (4) of ten (10) principals are within the first year of their administrative tenure as lead principals.

### **Natchez Adams School District**

- A high turnover in all schools because of the traditionally low performance schools
- Currently eight (8) administrators
- Currently ten (10) assistant principals

- Two (2) administrative vacancies
- No administrators with 25 plus years of experience.

#### **Rankin County School District**

- Currently serves approximately 19,000 students in 28 schools
- School district needs highly qualified school administrators as the district continues to grow
- Several vacancies and anticipate the need for additional administrators over the next three years
- Currently fifteen (15) administrators with 25 or more years of experience.

#### **Union County School District**

- Currently six (6) administrators who have 25 years or more experience
- Expect some or possibly all six (6) administrators to retire over the next three (3) to five (5) years.

#### **Western Line School District**

- Currently short of two (2) certified administrators (assistant principals) that's counted as five (5) percent out of field
- Several central office administrators have multiple administrative jobs due to the inability to find a highly qualified person
- Currently three (3) principals have over 25 years of experience and is eligible for retirement
- Anticipates four (4) to five (5) administrative vacancies in the near future
- Struggled to maintain current staff over the past few years.

**Guidelines**  
**Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program**  
*(For licensed teachers in Mississippi school districts)*

**Mississippi Code Annotated 37-9-77**

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**Eligible Candidates**

Statutory Requirements:

In order to be eligible to participate in this program, the candidate must be a licensed teacher employed in a Mississippi school district for not less than three (3) years.

The candidate must be recommended by the local school board.

The candidate must be admitted to an educational leadership program that was approved by the Mississippi Department of Education by January 1 preceding the date of admission to the program.

State Board Regulations:

Each local school board may set its own criteria for approving recommendations.

The educational leadership program must be full-time.

**Compensation of Candidates**

Statutory Requirements:

The salary prescribed in Section 37-19-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, including annual experience increments, is paid to the participant by the employing school district from non-minimum education program funds.

Candidates participating in this program shall receive credit for teaching experience (one-year) during the sabbatical leave period.

Candidates participating in this full-time program shall continue participation in Public Employees Retirement System and the Public School Employees Health Insurance Plan.

Maximum compensation during the sabbatical is equal to the one-year salary and paid fringe benefits prescribed in the Mississippi Code.

## **Reimbursement by Mississippi Department of Education**

### Statutory Requirements:

Subject to the availability of funds and the determination of the district's need for administrators, the Mississippi Department of Education shall reimburse the sponsoring district for the cost of the participant's salary and paid fringe benefits for one (1) contract year.

The amount of reimbursement shall be based on the then current minimum education program salary schedule prescribed in the Mississippi Code, not to exceed the minimum education program salary for a teacher holding a Class A license and having five (5) years' experience.

The sponsoring school district shall be responsible for the local salary supplement and any portion of the participant's salary that exceeds the maximum amount allowed from state funds. The participant's local salary supplement may not be reduced.

### State Board Regulations:

Local school districts shall submit sabbatical program applications as directed by the Mississippi Department of Education. The Department of Education will approve applications in accordance with the statute and the methodology for approval of subgrants established by the Mississippi Board of Education.

## **Obligation of Candidates**

### Statutory Requirements:

As a condition for participation in the school Administrator Sabbatical Program, the candidate shall agree to employment as an administrator in the sponsoring school district for not less than five (5) years following completion of administrator licensure requirements.

### State Board Regulations:

There shall be a contractual agreement between the candidate and the school district which includes the standard terms and conditions specified by the Mississippi Department of Education.

## **Breach of Contract**

### Statutory Requirements:

A participant who fails to assume employment as an administrator in the sponsoring school district for five (5) years following completion of administrator licensure

requirements, unless the commitment is deferred, shall be in breach of contract and liable for the amount of the salary and fringe benefits received while on sabbatical. That liability shall be to the Mississippi Department of Education for the amount of salary and fringe benefits paid by the State, less 20% for each year the individual was employed as an administrator. In addition, the liability shall be to the local school district for any portion of the salary and fringe benefits paid by the local school district, less 20% of the amount paid for each year of employment as an administrator.

Interest on the amount due shall accrue at the current Stafford Loan rate at the time the breach occurs.

A participant is liable for an amount equal to a reasonable attorney's fee if the claim for re-payment is placed in hands of an attorney for collection after default.

If the school district does not have an administrative vacancy, or if the district does not need the administrator position for the full five-year commitment period, the school board shall defer any part of the employment commitment that has not been met until such a time as an administrator position in the district becomes available.

If such a deferral is made, the sponsoring school district shall employ the person as a teacher in the school district during the period of deferral, unless the person desires to be released from employment by the sponsoring school district and the district agrees.

If the sponsoring school district releases a person from employment, that person may be employed as an administrator in another school district in the state that is in need of administrators as determined by the Mississippi Board of Education, and that employment for the other school district shall be applied to any remaining portion of the five-year employment commitment.

Nothing in these guidelines shall prevent a school district from not renewing the person's contract before the end of the five-year employment commitment in accordance with the School Employment Procedures Law (Section 37-9-101 et seq.). However, if the person is not employed as an administrator by another school district after being released or having his contract not renewed by the sponsoring school district, he shall be liable for repayment of the amount of his salary and fringe benefits, plus interest, less 20% for each year of employment as an administrator. Interest on the amount due shall accrue at the current Stafford Loan rate.

#### State Board Regulations:

Any participant who fails to complete all requirements for obtaining a Mississippi administrator license within eighteen (18) months shall be in breach of contract and liable for the salary and fringe benefits received. Interest shall accrue at the current Stafford Loan rate.

Partial years of employment as an administrator shall be prorated.

## Availability of Sabbatical

### State Board Regulations:

Candidates approved to participate in the Administrator Sabbatical Program prior to July 1, 2001, shall be subject to all requirements of this legislation and all regulations outlined in these guidelines.

## Definitions

### Administrator:

An administrator, as defined by the *Accreditation Requirements of the State Board of Education* (1997), is any staff member employed by a school board who is assigned responsibility for coordinating, directing, supervising, or otherwise administering programs, services, and/or personnel under the auspices of the program, school, or district.

### Administrator License:

An individual hired to fulfill the above responsibilities is required to hold an administrator license as defined in the *Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure* (1997).