

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
Consent Agenda
June 21, 2018

OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEADING

- M. Approval of 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 (3) 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 Mississippi Code Annotated § 37-9-77 and the State Board Policy, Part 3, Chapter 69: Sabbaticals.

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

June 2018

The Office of Teaching and Leading recommends approval of the following school districts as eligible to participate in the 2018-2019 Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program on the basis of their identified need for school administrators:

Biloxi Public School District

- Currently two (2) administrators have over 25 years of experience
- Current turnover rate is 31% for principals and assistant principals in a two (2) year period
- Recruiting experienced and capable principals and assistant principals is becoming a challenge

Jackson Public School District

- Difficulty recruiting highly qualified teachers and administrators
- Need to increase the pool of highly qualified administrators
- Currently three (3) administrative vacancies
- Currently five (5) principals and assistant principals with 25 or more years of experience
- Currently sixteen (16) district level administrators with 25 or more years of experience

Kemper County School District

- Need to build a pool of qualified administrators
- Currently two (2) district level administrators with over 25 years of experience
- Currently 50% of the administrators in the district are from surrounding counties
- School district has employed ten (10) administrators in the last two (2) years

Pascagoula School District

- Twelve (12) administrators have 25 or more years of experience
- Three (3) more administrators will be eligible for retirement within the next two (2) years and eight (8) more within the next five (5) years
- School district is currently filling three (3) administrative positions
- School district needs more qualified personnel who are familiar with the vision, mission, and goals of the district to take key leadership positions.

Rankin County School District

- Currently serves approximately 19,500 students in 28 schools
- School district needs highly qualified school administrators as the district continues to grow
- School district has several vacancies and anticipates the need for additional administrators over the next three (3) years

- Currently six (6) administrators with 25 or more years of experience and four (4) administrators retiring at the end of the 2017-2018 school year

Tupelo School District

- Difficulty recruiting highly qualified teachers and administrators
- Need to increase the pool of highly qualified administrators
- Currently four (4) administrative vacancies
- Currently three (3) principals/assistant principals with 25 or more years of experience
- Currently five (5) district level administrators with 25 or more years of experience

Western Line School District

- Currently two (2) administrative vacancies
- Anticipates three (3) to four (4) administrative vacancies in the future
- Struggled to maintain current staff over the past few years
- Qualified teachers have no desire to seek administrative roles

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

Mississippi Code Annotated § 37-9-77
State Board Policy Chapter 69: Sabbaticals

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 (3) 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.

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 Miss. Code Ann. § 37-19-7, 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).