

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY
Summary of the State Board of Education Agenda Items
Consent Agenda
December 21, 2023

OFFICE OF CHILD NUTRITION

P. Approval of the methodology to award Farm to School Mini Grants to local educational agencies

Background and Purpose: On an annual basis, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) awards competitive Farm to School grants that support planning, developing, and implementing farm to school programs. USDA's Farm to School grants are an important way to help state, regional, and local organizations as they initiate, expand, and institutionalize farm to school efforts. The purpose of these grants is to implement and expand farm to school activities and improve access to local foods in the Child Nutrition Programs. The Office of Child Nutrition has been awarded \$450,000 for the Farm to School Grant. The grants will help Nutrition Directors throughout the state enhance Mississippi's agricultural economy by conducting farm to school activities, purchasing local food products, and providing educational resources to the children in the school districts.

Eligibility:

The following entities are eligible to apply for this competitive grant:

- Independent schools participating in any federal child nutrition programs,
- Individual public schools and/or districts,
- Schools must be grades K-8.

Funding Source: Federal Funds

Basis for Awarding the Grants: Formula

Preference will be given to applicants who currently participate in federal child nutrition programs, such as the School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program. Preference will also be given to applicants who serve a higher rate of low-income children as follows:

- Districts under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) get first priority and will be ranked from highest to lowest based on their Identified Student Percentage (ISP),
- Districts under the Provision 2 Provision will be second priority and will be ranked from highest to lowest based on the percentage of free and reduced students of the base year,
- Pricing Districts will be third priority and will be ranked from highest to lowest based on their percentage of free and reduced children as of October 2023.

A state can choose not to select a high need school if the:

- School fails to meet the deadline for applications completion,
- School does not have the support of its administration,
- State has concerns with school's administration of another child.

Total Amount to be Awarded: \$1,500.00 allowed per school. A district is allowed up to a maximum of five (5) schools.

Recommendation: Approval up to five (5) years

Back-up material: None