

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
October 11, 2018

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

03. Action: Begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To create State Board Policy Part 2, Chapter 2, Rule 2.3 – Student Representatives of the Mississippi State Board of Education [Goal 2 – MBE Strategic Plan]

Executive Summary

On May 17, 2018, the Chair of the State Board of Education requested the State Superintendent to appoint staff to develop a Student Representative program for the State Board, following a report given by Dr. John Kelly on student advisory programs that have been successfully implemented by fifteen state boards of education.

State Board Policy Part 2, Chapter 2, Rule 2.3 – *Student Representatives of the Mississippi State Board of Education* has been created to implement a student program to ensure that student viewpoints are heard. Board appointed Student Representatives will serve as spokesmen for Mississippi students in policy decisions that directly influence them. Student Representatives will develop a thorough understanding of current educational issues, State laws, policies, and regulations and will communicate with high school students statewide. Although Student Representatives will be non-voting participants in board meetings, they will have a voice through actively engaging in the discussions of the State Board by listening, observing and providing meaningful input. Additional duties and responsibilities of the student position are outlined in the board policy.

Eligible public high school students (includes charter schools) will be recruited statewide through a competitive application process defined in board policy. Following a rigorous interview and selection process, Student Representatives will be appointed by the State Board.

This item references Goal 2 of the *Mississippi Board of Education 2016-2020 Strategic Plan*.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

Chapter 2: Organization of the State Board

Rule 2.3 Student Representatives of the Mississippi State Board of Education

Purpose: The Mississippi State Board of Education (State Board), in an effort to include student perspectives on state educational policies, laws and regulations, shall incorporate student representation in a non-voting capacity by and through the appointed position of Student Representative of the State Board.

The Student Representative will serve as a link between board level policy and the classroom. The Student Representative will serve as a trustee on behalf of Mississippi students and will be charged with providing perspectives on issues of interest to students and ensure student's voices are represented. The Student Representative will be responsible for attending State Board meetings as well as standing committee(s) or subcommittee(s) to which he or she may be assigned. Unless invited to attend by an affirmative vote of a majority of the State Board, the Student Representative may not attend Executive Sessions of the State Board. Student Representatives will be excused from school to attend State Board meetings as official school business.

Term of Service: Through a competitive application process, the State Board will appoint one rising junior and one rising senior to serve as Student Representatives consecutively in the initial year of program implementation. The senior representative's term will end on April 30th due to graduation. The junior representative will promote to a senior representative and will continue to serve for a second year and a new junior will be appointed annually. The term of service for rising juniors will begin on July 1st of Year 1 and will end on April 30th of Year 2.

Eligibility: Students who meet the following criteria are eligible to apply for the Student Representative program:

1. Any student who is a Mississippi resident, enrolled in a Mississippi public high school or charter school, and who will be enrolled in good standing in the eleventh grade (or twelfth grade in the 2019-2020 school year) may apply. Confirmation of eligibility will be received from the high school counselor as part of the application process.
2. A student must have an overall grade point average of 2.5 or above. Confirmation of eligibility will be received from the high school counselor as part of the application process.

Upon appointment, Student Representatives must maintain eligibility throughout the term of service.

Application: The Office of Educational Accountability will prepare and disseminate an application packet to all public high schools and charter schools in Mississippi. The application packet will also be posted on the Mississippi Department of Education web site. Students must complete all application requirements and submit the application to the Mississippi Department of Education by the deadline to be considered for the program.

Application requirements will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Student must submit at least 3 recommendation letters (from a teacher who has instructed the student, an administrator, and other adult who knows the student but is not a family member).
2. Student must agree to provide his/her own transportation to board meetings, activities, and events. Student Representatives will be reimbursed for approved travel expenses such as mileage, lodging and meals incurred while traveling on official board business upon submission of a claim to the State Superintendent based upon the guidelines established by the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) in accordance with § 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated.
3. Student must have written consent of a parent or guardian, as well as the approval of the principal and district superintendent to apply for the Student Representative position.
4. Student must have written confirmation from his/her counselor that the eligibility requirements have been met.
5. Student must provide responses to the essay questions.
6. Student will have the opportunity to highlight his/her extracurricular activities, community and volunteer service, work experience and academic achievements and honors.

Screening: Immediately following the application deadline, the Office of Educational Accountability will review the applications received to ensure all application requirements have been met for candidates to be considered for an interview. Applicants who do not meet all eligibility criteria and application requirements will be automatically disqualified. Applications received after the deadline for submission will be disqualified. All qualified applications will be screened as follows:

1. The School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee Chair will work with the State Superintendent to appoint an internal Ad-Hoc Screening Committee of five members composed of one School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee member and four Mississippi Department of Education staff.
2. The Screening Committee will review all qualified applications and rate each application holistically, selecting at least the top 10 semifinalists who reflect the best cross-section of the many outstanding students who apply.

Interview and Appointment: The interview and appointment process will be conducted as follows:

1. The semifinalists will be interviewed by the School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee of the State Board.
2. The School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee will recommend no more than four finalists to the State Board for an interview. One junior representative and one senior representative will be appointed by the State Board in the program implementation year. Subsequently, only one junior representative will be appointed by the State Board annually.

3. The School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee will document the next highest scoring candidates in rank order should an alternate(s) be needed to fulfill the duties of a Student Representative(s) during his/her term.

Duties and Responsibilities: Upon appointment by the State Board, the Student Representative shall, at minimum, fulfill the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Attending monthly State Board meetings is required in addition to attendance of special called meetings or other meetings or events as requested by the Board Chair. When a school activity prevents a Student Representative from attending a State Board meeting, he/she should provide notice to the State Board Chair. Additional absences should be limited to no more than two absences per fiscal year.
2. Preparing for State Board meetings by reviewing the packet of board meeting materials provided prior to the meetings.
3. Attending a one-day orientation session.
4. Participating actively in the discussions of the State Board by listening, observing and providing meaningful input.
5. Working harmoniously with other State Board members and Mississippi Department of Education staff.
6. Accepting the will of the majority vote of the State Board in all cases and giving support to the resulting policy.
7. Developing a thorough understanding of current educational issues, State laws, policies, and regulations that directly impact Mississippi students and sharing this info with high school students statewide.
8. Serving as a spokesman for student viewpoints in policy decisions directly influencing students and communicating with students frequently. It is important that the Student Representative elicit information from students statewide and attempt to formulate objective opinions.
9. Participating in the selection process of the incoming Student Representative.
10. Serving as a mentor for the incoming Student Representative.
11. Preparing and presenting a report to the State Board at the end of the term of service that documents lessons learned and ways to strengthen the Student Representative program in the future.
12. During their senior year, Student Representatives may be given the opportunity to complete a capstone project that will be presented to the State Board and other organizations in their community and to receive academic credit for the project.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-1-3*

Mississippi State Board of Education Student Representative Program Timeline September 20, 2018

Date	Action	Responsible Person(s)
September 20, 2018 (Subcommittee Meeting)	Concept Paper and Project Timeline presented to the Accountability Subcommittee for review and feedback.	Educational Accountability
October 11, 2018 (SBE Meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approval to begin the APA process to establish State Board Policy for Student Representative program ▪ 1st Press Release 	Educational Accountability AG Counsel Communications
November 8, 2018 (SBE Meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approval of State Board Policy for Student Representative program (following APA process) 	Educational Accountability AG Counsel Communications
December 10, 2018	Effective date of board policy revisions filed with Secretary of State.	AG Counsel
December 10, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Application released to district superintendents, high school principals, and counselors ▪ Application posted on SBE web site ▪ 2nd Press Release 	Secondary Education OTSS Communications
February 11, 2019	Application deadline for submission.	Educational Accountability
February 12-28, 2019	Application packets reviewed to ensure they are complete and all eligibility requirements have been met in order for an applicant to be considered for interview.	Educational Accountability

Date	Action	Responsible Person(s)
March 2019 (Dates TBD)	Ad-Hoc Screening Committee will review all qualified applications. The Committee will rate each application holistically, selecting at least 10 semifinalists who reflect the best cross-section of the many outstanding students who apply.	Ad-Hoc Screening Committee
April 2019 (Dates TBD)	Semifinalists will be interviewed by the Accountability Subcommittee.	Accountability Subcommittee
May 9, 2019 (SBE Meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Accountability Subcommittee will recommend the top 4 highest scoring finalists to the SBE for interview and appointment of 2 Student Representatives. The Subcommittee will document the next highest scoring candidates in rank order should an alternate(s) be needed to complete an unfulfilled term of a Student Representative(s). ▪ The State Board of Education will interview the finalists. ▪ Interview results will be compiled and submitted to the State Board Chair following the meeting. 	Accountability Subcommittee State Board of Education Educational Accountability
June 20, 2018 (SBE Meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The State Board of Education will appoint 2 Student Representatives. ▪ Final Press Release 	State Board of Education Communications
July 1, 2019	The term of office will begin for new Student Representatives.	Student Representatives State Board of Education
July 2019 (Date TBD)	Student Representatives will attend an orientation session.	Student Representatives
July 18, 2019 (SBE Meeting)	Student Representatives will attend their first board meeting.	Student Representatives State Board of Education



CONCEPT PAPER

Mississippi State Board of Education Student Representative Program

September 20, 2018

Background: Minutes of the February 15th State Board of Education (SBE) meeting reflect that Dr. John Kelly requested the Board to consider two students to become part of the Board as non-voting members. Dr. Kelly brought forth the tremendous opportunity for the Board to learn from students who are in the classrooms and on campuses every day as well as the opportunity for the students to learn leadership skills from the Board. Dr. Kelly asked if the Board would like for Dr. Carey Wright to appoint someone from her staff to bring back opportunities to the Board about this matter. The Board agreed to move forward with research on the student program. Mr. Frank Spencer, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, was requested by Dr. Wright to conduct research on State Boards of Education across the nation that have implemented student programs and provide a report to the SBE on the results.

During the May 17th SBE meeting, Dr. Kelly gave a report of the research conducted by Mr. Spencer who found that 15 states currently have students serving on their boards. Although most of the states use a statewide student council organization or the Governor's office to make the board appointments, Dr. Kelly recommended that the SBE make the appointments, if state leadership agrees to delegate the responsibility to the Board. Dr. Kelly further recommended that students could serve in an advisory capacity which would not require any changes in state law which requires legislative approval. Dr. Kelly asked the Board if there is an interest in pursuing the student program. Following Board discussion, Mrs. Rosemary Aultman, Chair, confirmed that a task force among the board along with MDE staff will set out the guidelines and the process, using the information that has been gathered from other states and develop our own hybrid plan of how we are going to implement the program. Mrs. Aultman requested Dr. Wright to appoint staff to develop a plan to share with the Board. Dr. Wright agreed to come back to the Board by the end of the summer with a plan.

On May 28th, Dr. Wright requested Sonya Amis, Office of Educational Accountability, to develop the process needed to select the SBE Student Representatives. The Educational Accountability team immediately began building upon the initial information that Frank Spencer compiled in May. Donna Hales reached out to the 15 states who have implemented student programs to request examples of applications, forms, and board policies for the team to use as a guide. The attached spreadsheet reflects the magnitude of information that was collected and recorded from the 13 states that responded to the Department's request for detailed information and assistance (**See *Student Representative Program Spreadsheet by State* attached**).

On July 23rd, the Accountability team and Mrs. Raina Lee, AG Counsel, met with Dr. Wright to present the additional information gathered along with a summary of options to consider based upon the processes reviewed in 13 states (**See *Options to Consider* document attached**). Dr. Wright shared the information with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and received their input on the student selection process. On August 7th, Dr. Wright met with the Educational Accountability team and Raina Lee to share feedback received from the ELT. The decision was made to draft a Concept Paper that describes the Student Representative program components to be shared with the project task force, the School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee, on September 20th for review and feedback in preparation for a brief presentation to the SBE on October 11th. The information prepared by the Educational Accountability team for the Subcommittee meeting was reviewed with Dr. Wright, Dr. Washington Cole, and Raina Lee on September 11th.

Student Representative Program Recommendations

Timeline: The Student Representative program will begin July 1, 2019. (**See Student Representative Program *Timeline* attached**).

SBE Policy Revisions: Since current legislation does not give authority to the SBE to add a student as a member of the board, legal counsel has advised that State Board Policy, Part 2, Chapter 2, *Rule 2.3 - Student Representatives of the Mississippi State Board of Education*, be created and submitted for SBE approval via the APA process.

Student Position Title: Students appointed to the program will be called *Student Representatives of the Mississippi State Board of Education* rather than Student Members of the Board, to avoid a change in state law and the appearance that they are serving on the SBE.

Number of Student Representatives and Term of Office:

Option #1: The State Board of Education will appoint 1 junior and 1 senior student to serve consecutively in the initial year of program implementation. In Year 2, the junior will promote to a senior and continue to serve as a Student Representative for a second term and a new junior will be appointed annually. (*This option will require the recruitment process to be conducted annually.*)

Option #2: The State Board of Education will appoint two rising high school juniors to serve as Student Representatives for a two-year term. (*This option will allow the recruitment process to occur every two years rather than annually.*)

Application Rotation of Congressional Districts:

Option #1: Students in all 4 congressional districts will be eligible for recruitment during each recruitment period and there will be no rotation of congressional districts.

Option #2: To ensure fair and equal representation among students in all 4 congressional districts, the recruitment process will rotate between congressional districts (with students from 2 different congressional districts eligible for application during each recruitment period). (*We have found that some states use a similar rotation method. However, if this option is selected, all eligible students statewide will not have an equal opportunity to apply during each recruitment period.*)

Term Dates: Student Representatives will serve a twenty-two month term which will provide them the opportunity to garner a wealth of information. The dates of service need to be determined by the State Board of Education

X **Option #1:** July 1, 2019 – April 30, 2021. (*The SBE should consider ending the second year of the term on April 30th since the senior student(s) will graduate during the month of May. The final board meeting for the students would occur the third Thursday of April during their senior year.*)

___ **Option #2:** July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021 (two full fiscal years)

Yes Will the Student Representatives be required to attend board meetings during the summer months (June and July), spring break, and other school holidays when school is not in session? (Yes or No)

Yes Will the SBE allow students a certain # of excused absences (over and above absences for school holidays and during summer months)? (Yes or No)

Maximum # absences will be denoted in board policy.

Voting Rights: The Student Representatives will not have voting rights because this would require a change in legislation. Thus, the Student Representatives will have a voice, but not a vote.

Compensation for Travel Expenses:

- Transportation (to/from SBE meetings), lodging, and meals is the responsibility of the Student Representative and his/her parents (guardians). Student Representatives will be reimbursed for approved travel expenses such as mileage, lodging and meals incurred while traveling on official board business upon submission of a claim to the State Superintendent based upon the guidelines established by the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) in accordance with § 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated.
- Legal counsel has advised that current legislation does not support paying a per diem to the Student Representative.
- Estimated travel budget of \$5,000 per year will be needed for each Student Representative. The Chief Operations Officer has authorized this proposed budget.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Any student who is a Mississippi resident, enrolled in a Mississippi public high school or charter school, and who will be enrolled in good standing in the eleventh grade or twelfth grade in the 2019-2020 school year may apply. (Option #1 of the section titled *Number of Student Representatives*. Confirmation of eligibility will be received from the high school counselors as part of the application process.)
2. Student must have an overall GPA of 2.5 or above. (Confirmation of eligibility will be received from the high school counselors as part of the application process.)
3. Student must have the consent of a parent or guardian, as well as the approval of the principal and district superintendent to apply for the Student Representative position.

4. Student must submit at least 3 recommendation letters (from a teacher who has instructed the student, an administrator, and other adult who knows the student but is not a family member).
5. Student must meet all application submission requirements.
6. Student must be able to provide his/her own transportation to board meetings, activities, and events. Allowable costs for transportation, lodging and meals incurred by the student while traveling on official board business will be reimbursed based upon state rules and regulations.

Supplemental Information: The application process will allow students the opportunity to highlight their extracurricular activities, community and volunteer service, work experience and academic achievements and honors.

Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Attending monthly State Board of Education (SBE) meetings, special called SBE meetings, and other SBE activities and events.
2. Preparing for SBE meetings by reviewing the packet of SBE materials provided prior to the meetings.
3. Attending a one-day orientation session.
4. Participating actively in the discussions of the SBE by listening, observing and providing meaningful input.
5. Working harmoniously with other SBE members and Mississippi Department of Education staff.
6. Accepting the will of the majority vote of the SBE in all cases and giving support to the resulting policy.
7. Developing a thorough understanding of current educational issues, State laws, policies, and regulations that directly impact Mississippi students. Sharing this info with high school students statewide.
8. Serving as spokesman for student viewpoints in policy decisions directly influencing students and should visit with students frequently. It is important that the student elicit information from various people and attempt to formulate objective opinions.
9. Participating in the selection process of incoming Student Representative(s).
10. Serving as a mentor and assisting with an orientation session for incoming Student Representative(s).
11. Preparing and presenting a report to the SBE at the end of the term of office that documents lessons learned and ways to strengthen the student program in the future.

Opportunity for Consideration:

Yes **Capstone Project Requirement** - Student Representatives may be required to complete a capstone project by the end of the term of office and receive academic credit for their service. (Note: Since this requirement will take a considerable amount of time and collaboration among MDE offices to implement, it would not take effect during the initial year of the Student Representative program.)

Application Essay Questions (3 questions @ 250 words or less per question):

1. Describe why you are interested in serving as a Student Representative of the Mississippi State Board of Education. What qualities and experience do you possess that make you the best candidate for the position?
2. Describe how your participation as a Student Representative of the Board will benefit Mississippi's education system and how you will represent all public high school students in Mississippi in this position.
3. Keeping in mind the areas of authority of the Mississippi State Board of Education, identify and discuss what you consider to be one of the most difficult issues affecting public education (Pre-K to 12th grade).

Interview Team:

X Option #1:

- All qualified applications will be screened.
 - The School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee Chair will work with the State Superintendent to appoint an internal Ad-Hoc Screening Committee of five members (composed of one School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee member and four MDE staff).
 - The Screening Committee will review all qualified applications and rate each application holistically, selecting at least the top 10 semifinalists who reflect the best cross-section of the many outstanding students who apply.
- The semifinalists will be interviewed by the School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee of the SBE.
- The School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee will recommend the 4 highest scoring finalists to the SBE for interview and appointment of 2 Student Representatives. The School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee will document the next highest scoring candidates in rank order should an alternate(s) be needed to fulfill the duties of a Student Representative(s) during his/her term.

Option #2:

- All qualified applicants will be interviewed.
 - The School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee Chair will work with the State Superintendent to appoint an internal Ad-Hoc Interview Committee of five members (composed of one School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee member and four MDE staff).
 - The Interview Committee will interview all qualified applicants and rate each applicant holistically, selecting at least the top 10 semifinalists who reflect the best cross-section of the many outstanding students who apply.
- The semifinalists will be interviewed by the School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee of the SBE.
- The School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee will recommend the 4 highest scoring finalists to the SBE for interview and appointment of 2 Student Representatives. The School Performance and Accountability Subcommittee will document the next highest scoring candidates in rank order should an alternate(s) be needed to fulfill the duties of a Student Representative(s) during his/her term.