

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER
Summary of the State Board of Education Agenda Item
February 21, 2019

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION
OFFICE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

03. Action: Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To establish State Board Policy Part 3, Chapter 28, Rule 28.7 – Districts of Innovation and Schools of Innovation [Goals 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 – MBE Strategic Plan]

Background Information: On Thursday, February 7, 2019, The Commission on School Accreditation (CSA) met and approved the establishment of Rule 28.7 – Districts of Innovation and Schools of Innovation, for inclusion in the *Mississippi State Board of Education Policy Manual*.

The policy will outline requirements for Districts of Innovation and Schools of Innovation in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-179-1, et seq.

This item references Goals 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 of the *Mississippi Board of Education 2018-2022 Strategic Plan*.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

Part 3 Chapter 28: Curriculum

Rule 28.7: Districts of Innovation and Schools of Innovation

Adoption Date: TBD

In order to participate in the District of Innovation and School of Innovation program established by Miss. Code Ann. § 37-179-1, et seq., local education agencies shall apply through the procedures established by the Mississippi Department of Education. Districts and schools selected through that process and approved by the State Board of Education shall be designated District of Innovation or School of Innovation status for five (5) years, which will be available for renewal according to the rules and guidelines. Each renewal shall not exceed five (5) years.

1. Purpose of a District of Innovation or School of Innovation

Innovative programs are intended to better prepare students for success in life and work. Innovative programs shall focus on reducing achievement gaps by expanding learning experiences for students; increasing participation of subgroups of students in innovative instructional components to enhance student achievement; increasing the number of students who are college- and career-ready; reducing the number of students that exit high school in need of remediation; and motivating students by expanding curriculum choices and learning opportunities for students.

2. Definitions

a. District of Innovation: A District of Innovation is a district that has developed a plan of innovation in compliance with this policy and has been approved by the State Board of Education to be exempted from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions to improve the educational performance of students within the district.

b. School of Innovation:

1. A School of Innovation is a school that voluntarily participates in a district of innovation plan to improve instruction, including waivers and exemptions from local school board policies, selected provisions of rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education, and selected sections of Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-179-1 and 37-179-3.

2. A School of Innovation, independent of a designated District of Innovation, is also defined as a school that voluntarily participates in a School of Innovation plan to improve instruction, including waivers and exemptions from local school board policies, selected provisions of rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education, and selected sections of Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-179-1 and 37-179-3 for only one school in the district. Current models are Early College High Schools (ECHS) or high schools with a Middle College Program (MCP) approved by the State Board of Education. Both models are designed to target

underserved public-school student populations that are at-risk of dropping out of high school or of not continuing in postsecondary school. Underserved students are students that come from households in poverty, students that are first-generation college-goers, or students of color.

- a. An ECHS is a small, independent high school located on a partnering college campus or a location other than a traditional high school campus. The students must complete an application process to enter as freshmen and continue through the ECHS as a cohort. All eligible students are selected by random lottery if the application pool is larger than the defined cohort. The goal of an ECHS is for students to graduate with both a high school diploma and an associate degree from the partnering postsecondary institution. At a minimum, all members of the cohort should graduate from high school meeting the ACT or SAT Mississippi benchmarks for admission to college without remediation and earn college credits while in high school. **An ECHS must have an independently identifiable school site code for accountability purposes and must adhere to all applicable *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.** For multi-district ECHS models, a Memorandum of Understanding must be in place among participating districts, outlining financial considerations such as transportation, child nutrition, and other program costs.
- b. An MCP is a dual credit/dual enrollment (DCDE) program run by a school district (or an individual high school) and a partnering postsecondary institution that offers high school students a wide range of dual credit and dual enrollment classes. The 11th and 12th grade students in the cohort spend a portion of the academic day at the high school and a portion at the partnering postsecondary institution where the classes are taught. Participating students are encouraged to take as many DCDE classes at the postsecondary partner institution as possible, specifically in courses articulated in the Mississippi Articulation Transfer Tool (MATT) or a career-oriented program of study. These students should be supported by a high school/transitional counselor and are monitored closely to ensure that they are meeting college academic expectations. The goal of an MCP is for students to earn an associate degree or advanced national certification, as well as a diploma from their traditional high school. These programs are set up in a cohort model with student entry at the end of the 10th grade year. No waivers are granted for MCPs; however, high schools with MCPs must apply through the School of Innovation application to ensure they meet the approved definition.

3. Waivers and Exemptions

Miss. Code Ann. § 37-179-1 provides for exemptions from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions as approved by the MDE to allow flexibility for Districts of Innovation and Schools of Innovation. Miss. Code Ann. § 37-179-3(4)

includes areas of innovation which the State Board of Education may consider for exemptions. Districts or schools may request additional waivers if the waiver is needed to support innovative practices and does not violate state or federal regulations. Districts or schools are not allowed to request a waiver from state assessment requirements required by state or federal regulation. Absent any waivers, districts shall meet the requirements of the current *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.

4. Application Plan – Approval, Amendment, and Revocation Process

The application plan is a collaborative process between the district, school, and/or partners, and the MDE prior to approval. If waivers from *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*, State Board policies, state or federal laws are needed to implement innovative programs, districts or schools may seek innovative status under Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-179-1 and 37-179-3. Through collaboration with the MDE, a determination may be made as to whether application for District of Innovation or School of Innovation under Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-179-1 and 37-179-3 is required. Innovative schools, such as ECHS and MCP models, shall apply through the School of Innovation application process and timeline.

a. Plan Details

1. The MDE may approve innovative status for up to five (5) new applications each year. An application may be from a single district or a consortium of districts collaborating on an innovative school and/or program. In the case of a consortium, one of the districts shall be the lead agency and act as the “district” responsible for meeting all the guidelines outlined in this policy.
2. The MDE shall collaborate with districts and schools to review plans to approve innovative status to eligible districts.
3. Plans are approved for five (5) years. All districts and schools approved shall be monitored by MDE for progress and continued support during the five-year term.
4. The school or district may request amendments to the plan during the five-year term, as needed; however, amendments shall only be considered during the regular application timeline.
5. Requests for renewals shall be submitted no later than November 1 in the fifth year of the initial term. Any renewal shall be for no more than an additional five years.
6. Renewals shall be based on the ability of the District of Innovation or School of Innovation to meet the goals and objectives of Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-179-1 and 37-179-3 and the performance measures within the approved plan for a sustained period of time.

b. Sample Process Timeline

Time	District	MDE
Year prior to implementing innovative programs	Notify the designated MDE office of interest or intent to apply for Innovative School or District status by August 31.	Assign any interested district an MDE contact to work with them through the planning process.
August to November	Work with MDE contact and stakeholders to develop plan for the innovative school or district.	Provide support along the way through the designated MDE office.
December 1	Submit plans to the designated MDE office for schools planning to open the following year. Prior to submitting to MDE, the plan should be approved for five years by the local school board or boards in the case of a consortium application. Documentation of board(s) approval must be included in the application.	Review plans by the designated MDE program office(s).
January	Prepare district leadership. Key stakeholders from districts will participate in MDE interview.	Interview applying district/school team.
February		Present recommendations to the State Board of Education.

c. Amendments to the Plan

A District of Innovation or School of Innovation seeking an amendment to an approved five-year plan shall submit written justification for the amendment to the designated MDE office. Requests may be submitted as needed. Requests shall be reviewed and approved by the MDE and a recommendation shall be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval. If the amendment is approved, the innovative district may implement the changes to their current five-year plan. No amendments shall be considered that increase the number of years the district is considered a District of Innovation.

d. Revocation of Plan

While the collaborative approach to implementing innovative districts and schools under Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-179-1 and 37-179-3 and the monitoring support provided by the MDE during operation should minimize the need to revoke the waivers granted to an innovative school, there may come a time when an innovative model is not sustainable, not successful, contrary to changes in state or federal laws, or not meeting the purpose of Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-179-1 and 37-179-3. In these situations, the following procedure shall apply.

1. The school and district shall be notified by the MDE of deficiencies and concerns related to the success and sustainability of the model. The MDE may require certain actions to take place in this notification.
2. The district or school shall have 30 days to respond and develop a plan to alleviate the issues.
3. Key district leaders shall appear before an MDE committee to explain how they will address the concerns. The committee may take the following actions:
 - a. Recommend to the State Board of Education that the innovative plan be revoked and determine a process for returning the school or district to “regular” status with minimum academic disruption.
 - b. Allow the district or school to continue in innovative status by taking all actions required by the committee. MDE shall monitor the actions as necessary.
4. If the district or school disagrees with MDE’s recommendation for revocation or with the required actions to cure deficiencies and concerns related to the success and sustainability of the school, the district shall submit a written rebuttal for review by the State Board of Education.
 - a. The written rebuttal must be submitted within 10 days and will be considered for action by the State Board of Education at the first regularly scheduled board meeting following submission. Rebuttals shall be received at least 15 days before the scheduled board meeting to allow a reasonable time for the State Board of Education to consider the matter.
 - b. The district shall be entitled to appear in person at the board meeting to argue the rebuttal for no more than 20 minutes.
5. Should a district or school that has been awarded innovative status decide to terminate their approved innovations, they shall submit a plan to the MDE outlining the reasons for the decision and actions necessary to return to “regular” status. Districts or schools may submit termination plans at any time during the

school year, but changes shall go into effect the following school year and shall be designed to minimize all academic disruptions.

5. District of Innovation or School of Innovation Plan Components

By July 1 of each year, the MDE shall release guidance on the application process, the application requirements, selection procedures, and criteria. At a minimum, the plan application shall be organized with the following sections:

- a. Innovative Program/Design
- b. Annual Reporting and/or Data Sharing agreement
- c. Students
- d. Funding
- e. Staffing
- f. Stakeholder Collaboration
- g. Governance
- h. Waivers and Exemptions
- i. Timeline of Activities
- j. Assurances

An up-to-date copy of the rules, procedures, guidelines, and current application shall be kept on file at the Mississippi Department of Education.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. § 37-179-1 and § 37-179-3 (Adopted TBD)