

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Item
Consent Agenda
April 11, 2019

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION

C. Approval of recommendations on exceptions to pupil-teacher ratio requirements for grades 1-4

Background Information: Mississippi Code Ann. § 37-151-77 and Miss. Admin. Code 7-3: 19.1, State Board Policy Chapter 19 Rule 19.1 – Class Size, indicate that the State Board of Education is authorized to waive the pupil-teacher requirements for districts with exceptions to the enrollment ratio of 27:1 in grades 1-4.

If a school district does not meet the class size requirement for grades 1-4 as required by Miss. Code Ann. § 37-151-77, the state aid for the following fiscal year shall be reduced. The reduction will be based on the required pupil-teacher ratio mandated in the statute. A waiver may be granted by the State Board of Education if school districts are making a good faith effort to comply with the statute but complying with the statute is physically impossible, and the cost of temporary classroom space cannot be justified.

Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) staff have reviewed the records of districts out of compliance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-151-77 and have determined that three (3) districts do not meet the class size requirements and do not qualify for the exemption allowed in Standard 28.2 of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2018* for schools meeting the highest levels of performance.

The waiver requests for the three (3) districts are detailed in the attached backup material. Two (2) of the districts, Jackson Public School District and Holmes County School District, have an accountability rating of “F”.

Note: Jackson Public School District also requested waivers for SY 2017-2018 school year.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

CLASS SIZE WAIVER REQUESTS FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019

1. Harrison County School District

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload	Number of Students in Each Section
River Oaks Elementary	C	2nd	1	29

Harrison County School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 2nd grade class at River Oaks Elementary School.

Harrison County School District provided the following response:

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The District was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The District did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The District did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

- 1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* The overload in the 2nd grade class is due to shortage of teachers and the growing population within the District. The overage includes two (2) students in the class.
- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The District has experienced a teacher shortage in hiring enough certified staff.
- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The District plans to interview and hire another teacher in order to avoid future occurrences.

CLASS SIZE WAIVER REQUESTS FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019

2. Holmes County School District

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload	Number of Students in Each Section
S. V. Marshall Elementary	D	1st	1	28

Holmes County School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 1st grade class at S. V. Marshall Elementary School.

Holmes County School District provided the following response:

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The District was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The District did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The District did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* Due to budgetary concerns, a class cannot be added at this time. The overage includes one (1) student in the class.
2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* An increase in enrollment from the beginning of the school year caused out student population to inflate.
3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* Student enrollment trend data will be reviewed to ensure teacher to student ratios remain in compliance with state statues.

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload	Number of Students in Each Section
William Dean Elementary	F	3rd	2	28, 28

Holmes County School District is requesting a waiver for two (2) 3rd grade class at William Dean Elementary School.

Holmes County School District provided the following response:

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The District was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The District did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The District did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* Due to budgetary concerns, a class cannot be added at this time. The overage incudes one (1) student in each class.
2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* An increase in enrollment from the beginning of the school year caused our student population to inflate.
3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* Student enrollment trend data will be reviewed to ensure teacher to student ratios remain in compliance with state statues.

CLASS SIZE WAIVER REQUESTS FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019

3. Jackson Public School District

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload	Number of Students in Each Section
Galloway Elementary	D	4th	3	28, 28, 28

Jackson Public School District is requesting a waiver for three (3) 4th grade classes at Galloway Elementary School.

Jackson Public School District provided the following response:

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The District was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The District did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The District did request a waiver for this school last year, and the waiver was granted. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

- 1. Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* The additional class could not be provided at this time due to limited staff certification. The overage includes one (1) student in each class.
- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The District is currently facing a teacher shortage.
- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The school's leadership team will be considering many new opportunities to review endorsements on current teacher's licenses and eagerly recruit teachers to join the team.

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload	Number of Students in Each Section
Lee Elementary	D	1st	1	28

Jackson Public School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 1st grade class at Lee Elementary School.

Jackson Public School District provided the following response:

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The District was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The District did provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The District did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* Another class could not be added due to the lack of physical space and a certified teacher. The overage includes one (1) student in one (1) class.
2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The lack of physical space within the school.
3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* As enrollment changes, class size may become within guidelines.

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload	Number of Students in Each Section
Oak Forest Elementary	F	4th	3	29, 30, 30

Jackson Public School District is requesting a waiver for three (3) 4th grade classes at Oak Forest Elementary School.

Jackson Public School District provided the following response:

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The District was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The District did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The District did not request a waiver for this school last year. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* Oak Forest has three (3) 4th grade classes. Adding an additional class would create a staffing overload. The overage includes two (2) students in one (1) class, and three (3) student in two (2) classes.
2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The overload was created by the consolidation of Woodville Heights closing.
3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The plan is to monitor grade level enrolled. If there is a low number of students in a particular grade, a teacher would be moved to the grade that has an overload.

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Sections with overload	Number of Students in Each Section
Watkins Elementary	F	2nd	1	32

Jackson Public School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 2nd grade class at Watkins Elementary School.

Jackson Public School District provided the following response:

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The District was not aware of this overload before the first day of school. The District did not provide a full-time assistant in each class with an overload. The District did request a waiver for this school last year, and was granted the waiver. There is no school reasonably close by to which the children over the maximum could be transferred.

Justification of Exemption Request:

1. *Provide a clear description of why an additional class cannot be added to alleviate the overload.* The overload in the 2nd grade class is due to shortage of teachers and the growing population within the District. The overage includes four (4) students in the class.
2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* The District is facing a teacher shortage and could not find a certified teacher to fill the vacancies.
3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The District is aggressively searching and recruiting for teacher vacancies. The District will have to revisit the teaching positions assigned to 2nd grade due to increased enrollment.