

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Item
Consent Agenda
February 20, 2020

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION

I. 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 good faith effort to comply with the statute by 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 four (4) 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, 2019* for schools meeting the highest levels of performance.

The waiver requests for the four (4) districts are detailed in the attached back-up material. Two (2) of the districts, Holmes County Consolidated School District and Humphreys County School District (Mississippi Achievement School District) have an accountability rating of "F". Two (2) of the districts, Hollandale School District and Jackson Public Schools District have an accountability rating of "D".

Back-up material attached

Recommendation: Approval

CLASS SIZE WAIVER REQUEST SCHOOL YEAR 2019-2020

1. Hollandale School District

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Class Periods with overload	Number of Students in Each Class Periods
Sanders Elementary	D	4 th	1	39

Hollandale School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 4th grade class at Sanders Elementary School.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was 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.* Another class cannot be added because the students are broken into two different sections to receive instruction at 30-minute increments. Therefore, there are not 39 students being instructed at one time. Please see attached SIS Schedule.
- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* Teacher shortage which caused us to maximize the teachers and resources available
- 3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* There is no specific resolution because MSIS does not allow us to input the same course during the same period to show different sections.

2. Holmes County Consolidated School District

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Class Periods with overload	Number of Students in Each Class Periods
S.V. Marshall Elementary	D	3 rd	2	28, 28

Holmes County Consolidate School District is requesting waivers for two (2) 3rd grade classes at S.V. Marshall Elementary School.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was 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 waiver was granted. The District indicated it was non-applicable for a school to be 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.
- 2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* An increase in student enrollment for 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 studied to ensure grade teacher to student ratios remain in compliance with state statutes.

3. Humphreys County School District (MASD)

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Class Periods with overload	Number of Students in Each Class Periods
Ida Green Elementary	F	4 th	6	28, 28, 28, 28, 28, 28

Humphreys County School District is requesting six (6) waivers for 4th grade classes at Ida Green Elementary School.

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. There is a teacher shortage which inhibits the hiring of a licensed educator to accommodate a two-student overload.

2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload. The student/teacher ratio exceeded 27 to 1 by one student in two classrooms. We believe these students would benefit greatly receiving instruction for a licensed educator.

3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year. The school administrator is working with the Director of Talent Management and Human Capital to recruit a licensed educator.

3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year. Review numbers in other grades and look at moving a teacher from another grade that is certified to assist with making another classroom.

4. Jackson Public School District

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Class Periods with overload	Number of Students in Each Class Periods
Boyd Elementary	F	2 nd	2	29, 30

Jackson Public Schools District is requesting waivers for two (2) 2nd grade classes at Boyd Elementary School.

Other Factors Related to the Overloads:

The district was not aware of these overloads 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.* A slot can be added, but currently there is a district shortage of certified teachers.
2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* District shortage of certified teachers.
3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district will aggressively recruit more certified teachers for the 2020-2021 school year; also, under the district's current Optimizing for Equity plan, several schools will be consolidated or repurposed which will place more students in classrooms with a certified teacher.

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Class Periods with overload	Number of Students in Each Class Periods
Isable Elementary	F	1 st	1	28
		3 rd	3	29, 29, 29

The Jackson Public School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 1st grade class and three (3) waivers for the 3rd grade class at Isable Elementary School.

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 school and district actively searched for a certified teacher for an additional slot, but there was not one available when the overload was determined.

2. Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload. The district/school has been trying to actively recruit for the position and a teacher could not be found.

3. Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year. There will be a slot available and recruitment efforts will continue to find a certified staff for the overload.

School	School Accreditation Level	Grade Level	Total number of Class Periods with overload	Number of Students in Each Class Periods
Watkins Elementary	D	3rd	1	28

Jackson Public School District is requesting a waiver for one (1) 3rd grade class at Watkins Elementary School.

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.* A slot was there, but the district could not find a certified teacher at the time of the identified overload.
2. *Describe the emergency, hardship, or other special situation that justifies this overload.* We could not find a certified teacher to fill the vacancy.
3. *Describe plans to resolve this overload for the next school year.* The district is currently aggressively recruiting a certified teacher. The position has been posted on the JPS website.