

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEADING  
ALTERNATIVE QUALIFICATIONS FOR DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Subsection three (3) of the Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-13 authorized and directed the State Board of Education to issue regulations as an alternative to the qualifications prescribed in subsection one (1). Subsection one (1) stipulates the following: *“(1) Each school district shall have a superintendent of schools, selected in the manner provided by law. No person shall be eligible to the office of superintendent of schools unless such person shall hold a valid administrator’s license issued by the State Department of Education and shall have classroom or administrative experience of not less than six (6) years which shall include at least three (3) years of administrative experience as a school building principal (a) in a school with an “A” or “B” accountability rating, or (b) in a school that increased its accountability rating by a letter grade during the period in which the principal was employed as principal at the school, or (c) in a school with comparable accountability rating or improvement in another state which shall be verified by the Mississippi Department of Education.”*

Subsection three (3) reads as follows: *“(3) As an alternative to the qualifications prescribed in subsection (1) of this section (Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-13), the State Board of Education is authorized and directed to issue regulations by January 1, 2018, which include minimum credentials, educational prerequisites, and relevant best practice experience requirements that will qualify a person to serve as a superintendent without having the direct experience or certification as an educator specified in subsection (1) of this section.”*

**Alternative qualifications adopted by the State Board of Education are as follows:**

**Initial Three-Year District Superintendent License Criteria:**

1. Hold at least a Master’s degree or higher from an institution of higher education that was accredited at the time the degree was conferred;  
**AND**
2. ***Have a minimum of six (6) years of documented successful leadership experience, as determined and verified by the appointing local school board. Examples include, but are not limited to, for profit or not for profit organizations, state agencies, business, industry, K-12 education – district level senior/executive leadership direct report to local superintendent of education, higher education or law, senior leadership position such as CEO, Commissioned Officers – Pay Grade 03 or above;***  
**AND**
3. Obtain a position as district superintendent and submit local board resolution of appointment to that position.

**Note:** The Initial Three (3) Year District Superintendent License is non-renewable but, may be converted to a Standard Five-Year District Superintendent License if the following pre-conditions are met.

**The Initial Three-Year District Superintendent License may be converted to the Standard Five-Year District Superintendent License upon completion of the following:**

4. Successful completion of ongoing professional learning aligned to the responsibilities of Mississippi local school district superintendents as outlined in Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-14. The professional learning activities must be completed during the three (3) year validity of the license while actively employed as district superintendent. This would include the completion of Mississippi Department of Education approved professional growth opportunities such as Superintendent’s Academy or Executive Leadership Institute or Educational Administration/Leadership degree program or any other professional growth opportunity approved by the Mississippi Department of Education. If one or more of the specific aforementioned professional growth opportunities were completed prior to obtaining the initial District Superintendent License, the district superintendent shall not be required to complete again;  
**AND**
5. Demonstrate evidence that the district increased its accountability rating by a minimum of one performance classification during the three (3) year period in which the license holder was employed as district superintendent if placed in a local school district that was rated a “C” or lower at the time of appointment as district superintendent or maintained the “A” or “B” rating in a local school district rated as such at the time of appointment;  
**AND**
6. The district superintendent shall earn a successful evaluation rating consistent with the assessment components defined in Miss. Code Ann. § 37-7-301 and as outlined in the current edition of the *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.

**Note:** The Standard Five (5) Year District Superintendent License is renewable. Five-Year District Superintendent License holders must meet current State Board approved license renewal requirements prescribed for the Standard Career Level Administrator License. Current license renewal requirements may be found in the Licensure Guidelines K-12 document.

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Question	Answer
<p>1) <b>“In most small school districts principals report directly to the superintendent. Does the language underlined in criterion number two (2) above mean any principal, regardless of school accountability, qualifies to serve as a superintendent?”</b></p>	<p>All school principals, regardless of district size, shall adhere to criteria as outlined in subsection one (1) of Miss. Code Ann. §37-9-13. The language underlined in criterion number two (2) only includes district level senior/executive leadership positions currently/previously held by personnel who serve(ed) as a direct report to the local superintendent of education.</p>
<p>2) <b>“Does this language mean that curriculum directors, special education directors, transportation directors, vocational directors, and other director positions at the central office level which report directly to the superintendent qualify to be superintendents? If so,”</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. <b>“Does this apply to A and B school districts only or all school districts?”</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b. <b>“Does this override the AG Opinion that states that only central office positions entitled “Assistant Superintendent” qualify candidates to be superintendent?”</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">c. <b>“Is the MDE’s MSIS system’s personnel component the way to accurately verify an employee’s title/position?”</b></p>	<p>The language is intended to include a district level senior/executive direct report to the local superintendent of education.</p> <p>a. Miss. Code Ann. §37-9-13 does not make reference to district level accountability ratings. Only school accountability rating is mentioned in the law. Therefore, the answer to the question is no, the language is not intended to apply to A and B school districts only.</p> <p>b. According to the author of the bill, the language above is in the spirit of the law.</p> <p>c. The candidate/applicant would be required to have experience/position verified by the local school board or their designee (LEA Human Resources office personnel) using the experience verification form. The experience verification form is available from the MDE’s Office of Teaching and Leading.</p>
<p>3) <b>“How are we to know which positions in the state department are considered senior/executive positions? Do we go by the MDE organizational chart and/or check MSIS to see how the MDE enters personnel?”</b></p>	<p>Current and former employees of the Mississippi Department of Education are included as part of those candidates who have served at a state agency(ies). Successful leadership experience is to be determined and verified by the appointing local school board.</p>

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Question	Answer
<p><b>4) Must the six (6) years documented successful leadership experience require 6 consecutive years of experience, or 6 collective years of experience?</b></p>	<p>The candidate/applicant would be required to have a total of six (6) years of successful leadership experience verified by the local school board or their designee.</p>
<p><b>5) May the six (6) years documented successful leadership experience include experience from several leadership positions, or must it be from a single leadership position?</b></p>	<p>The candidate/applicant's six (6) years documented successful leadership experience shall be verified by the local school board of their designee and may include experience from more than one position.</p>