

# MS School Board Association

Administrative Assistant Training

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Executive Director  
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## Mississippi Department of Education

### VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

### MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community



## State Board of Education Goals FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2016-2020

1. All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
2. Every Student Graduates From High School and is Ready for College and Career
3. Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
4. Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
5. Every Community Effectively Using a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes
6. Every School and District is Rated “C” or Higher



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## Overview of Topics

- Major functions of the Office of Accreditation
- Types of Audits
- Reporting to the MDE
- Preparing for an Audit



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## Resources

- Regulatory office within the Mississippi Department of Education
- Primary responsibility is administering the state's performance-based accountability system for public school districts and nonpublic schools seeking accreditation
- Public School Accreditation: Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6
- Non-Public School Accreditation: Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-7  
Operates under the umbrella of the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Commission on School Accreditation (CSA)



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## Resources

- Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6
- *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2018*
- Accountability Resource Manual  
<https://districtaccess.mde.k12.ms.us/Accreditation/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>
- *MS Cumulative Folders and Permanent Records Manual*  
<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/accred>
- *How to Complete the Mississippi Cumulative Folder and Permanent Record Tutorials* <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/accred>



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## Major Functions

- To continuously monitor and report compliance with accreditation standards [See Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6(7) and Accreditation Policy 5.0]
- To implement the State Accountability System and Performance-Based Accreditation System for:
  - 144 Public School Districts
  - 4 SBE Governed Schools
  - 63 Nonpublic and State Agency Schools



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## Major Duties

- Serve as Staff for the Commission on School Accreditation
- Publish Regulations: *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, Non-Public School Accountability Standards, Standards for SBE Governed Schools, Manual for Cumulative Folder & Permanent Records*
- Monitor Compliance with Accreditation Standards and Report to the Commission on School Accreditation and State Board of Education
- Report to the Commission on School Accreditation and State Board of Education the degree of compliance
- Provide Technical Assistance to board members, administrators, teachers, parents, students, legislators, and general public



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## Accreditation Monitoring

The Office of Accreditation fulfills the objectives and duties through a number of processes:

- Conducting public school audits;
  - Comprehensive on-site audits
  - Investigative, unannounced audits
  - Test security audits
- Analyzing annual reports submitted to the MDE; and
- Reviewing reports from other state or federal program offices.



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## MS Public Schools Accountability Standards, 2018

- Federal Laws
- State Laws
- State Board of Education Policies
- Commission on School Accreditation Policies and Standards
- <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/accreditation>



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## Accreditation Policy 2.0

The State Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School Accreditation, is required to establish and implement a process for accountability at the public school district level. School districts are held accountable for Accreditation Policies and Process Standards and receive an annual accreditation status. Standards of the performance-based accreditation system recommended by the Commission and adopted by the State Board of Education are contained in the current edition of *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.



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## 2.3 Annual Accreditation Statuses

In the fall of each year, every public school district will be assigned an annual accreditation status based on compliance with Process Standards and Accreditation Policies.

**ACCREDITED** is assigned to a district that complies with Accreditation Policies and 100% of the Process Standards. (See exceptions in Appendices F and H.)

**PROBATION** is assigned to a district that complies with fewer than 100% of the Accreditation Policies and Process Standards. The district will be required to develop and implement a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) with defined timelines to address the deficiencies. (See Policy 2.8.)

**WITHDRAWN** is assigned to a district that has previously been assigned a PROBATION status and still does not comply with its Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Any school district placed in conservatorship may have its accreditation withdrawn. The district will be required to develop and implement a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) with defined timelines to address the deficiencies. (See Policy 2.8.)



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## What does this Mean to You?



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## 2.1 Assignment of District Accreditation Statuses

The Commission on School Accreditation determines the annual accreditation status of all public school districts in the fall of each school year based on verified accreditation data from the previous school year. An annual district accreditation status is assigned based on compliance with Process Standards. Information concerning district compliance with Process Standards is reported to the Commission on an annual basis. (See Policy 2.2.)



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## Policy 2.1 (con't)

The district superintendent and school principals are responsible for ensuring that all data reported to the Mississippi Department of Education are true and accurate as verified by supporting documentation on file in the school district. **Reporting false information is a violation of the accreditation requirements set forth by the State Board of Education and is one of the violations that may result in the immediate downgrading of the district's accreditation status.**



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## Reporting to the MDE

Examples of reports:

- Corrective Action Plans (Districts assigned Probation Status)
- Personnel Edit Report
- School Board Attendance Report
- Waiver Requests – Class Size Overloads, etc.
- District Reorganizations
- Summer School
- Parent of the Year
- School Calendars (MSIS) 180-days



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## Weather-Related School Closures

- Mississippi Code Ann. § 37-13-63 requires school districts to operate no less than 180 days. However, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) developed guidelines in response to conflicting state laws concerning make-up days following school closures for inclement weather. In 2015, the MDE requested and received an opinion from the Attorney General's Office (attached), which states based on the authority granted in one statute, the Board can decide how districts are to make-up missed school days for weather emergencies, unless the local school board has given the district superintendent the authority to decide whether to make up missed days, as outlined in another statute (Mississippi Code Ann. § 37-13-64).

## Weather-Related School Closures

For districts without a policy granting the superintendent the authority, the MDE requires school districts to make-up each day of school missed, up to four days. If more than four days are missed, the district must make-up those days but have the option of adding a minimum of one hour of instructional time to existing school days rather than adding days to the calendar.

For districts with a policy granting discretion to the superintendent, the school district must provide, upon request, true and accurate, supporting documentation to the Office of Accreditation that the local school board has empowered the superintendent of their district with the authority to declare a weather emergency prior to the closure of any school or schools within the school district. That policy must have been in local board policy prior to any weather events in recent years.

## Non-Weather Related School Closures

While some districts have local policies granting the superintendent the authority to cancel school for reasons in addition to inclement weather, state statute only provides for the exemption to the 180-school day requirement for inclement weather emergencies. Therefore, if a district cancels school for reasons other than extreme weather conditions, the days may need to be made up.

When inquiring as to whether or not days that are not weather-related emergencies must be made up, superintendents should make decisions based on the best interest of the students. Immediate answers from MDE as to whether or not the days will have to be made up may not be available.



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## Audit Documents

Examples of documents needed during an audit:

- Personnel lists
- Contracts
- Master Schedules
- Handbooks
- Calendar
- Board Minutes
- Board Policies
- Strategic Plan
- District/School Safety Plan (Crisis Management Plan)
- Dropout Prevention Plan
- P-16 Council
- Student Records (Graduation, Choice Sheets, Residency, etc.)



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