

Accreditation

Development of a New System

Legislation passed in 1999 and 2000 established the framework for a new system of district and school level accountability. Many of the policies and standards for the new accreditation system have been published in *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards 2001*. After public review, the document was approved by the State Board of Education and replaces *Accreditation Standards of the State Board of Education, Bulletin 171*. *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards 2001* can be accessed on-line at www.mde.k12.ms.us/accred/MPSAS.doc (a Microsoft Word97 document).

District Accreditation

At the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year, the existing district accreditation levels were removed. Every school district was assigned an accreditation status based on compliance with the process standards in *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards 2001*. There are three accreditation statuses.

- Districts in compliance with 100% of the process standards were assigned "Accredited" status.
- Districts with any process standards deficiencies were assigned "Advised" status. Those districts will be required to develop a corrective action plan to address the deficiencies.
- "Withdrawn" status is reserved for a district that has previously been on advised status and does not comply with its corrective action plan. Currently there are no districts in withdrawn status.

School Level Accountability

The major focus of school level accountability will be a system that rewards schools based on student performance and provides intensive assistance to schools not meeting accountability standards. The school level accountability system will be implemented in Fall 2003.

Development of a new comprehensive student assessment system has been underway since 1999. Data from the new assessment programs will play a major role within the new school level accountability system. The strength of the new assessment system is the emphasis on criterion-referenced tests designed to directly measure what is being taught. The Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) measures student performance in reading, language, and mathematics at grades 2 through 8. A writing assessment is administered to students in grades 4 and 7. The Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) assesses student performance in Algebra 1, Biology, U.S. History from 1877, and English II. The English II assessment includes a writing component. The assessments administered during the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years were live -- they yielded useable information about student performance. Standards for student performance on the MCT and the SATP were established during summer 2001.

The new school level accountability system will be piloted during Fall 2002. The following summarizes the current details of the new school level accountability system.

- Schools will be assigned a school performance classification based on achievement and growth as defined below.

Achievement: How well certain students in the school scored on selected measures at the end of the school year. Schools will be held accountable only for students that have been enrolled in the school for a specified length of time.

Growth: The degree to which a school composite score meets or exceeds an expected value. The performance expectation for the school will be based only on students for which the school is held accountable.

- The achievement and growth measures used in the model will depend on the grade level configuration at the school. Many different grade level configurations exist in Mississippi schools.
- Measures of achievement and/or growth will include
 - Mississippi Curriculum Test (reading, language, mathematics)
 - Subject Area Tests (Algebra I and Biology , and English II in the first live year. U.S. History from 1877 may be included later)

Information concerning the development of the school level accountability system can be accessed on-line at www.mde.k12.ms.us/account/sam/sam.htm .

In compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) component will be added to the statewide accountability system. AYP will apply to the schools and school districts and will be implemented in Fall 2003.

Accountability System Implementation Timeline	
November 2001	Districts received first reports containing scale score and proficiency level data for individual students, classes, schools, and districts (from the May 2001 administration of the MCT).
School Year 2001-2002	MCT and SATP assessments were administered.
July 2002	Districts received score reports from the MCT and SATP.
August/September 2002	Growth model is developed using two years of test data.
School Year 2002-2003	MCT and SATP assessments are administered.
July 2003	Districts receive score reports from the MCT and SATP.
August/September 2003	Growth model is run to establish actual 2003 growth expectations. School performance classifications are determined based on achievement and growth. Some schools may be designated as Priority Schools. Estimates of growth expectations for 2004 are available.
September 2003	Assistance teams begin working with Priority Schools.

