



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

August 15, 2022

The Honorable Kim Benton
Interim Superintendent of Education
Mississippi Department of Education
359 North West St.
Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Interim Superintendent Benton:

I am writing in response to Mississippi's request on July 12, 2022, to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to amend its approved consolidated State plan under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), using the COVID-19 State Plan Addendum (Addendum). Mississippi requested these amendments to account for short-term changes to its system of annual meaningful differentiation for the 2021-2022 school year due to extraordinary circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to the waivers the Department granted Mississippi from the accountability requirements of the ESEA for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years and the assessment requirements for the 2019-2020 school year.

Specifically, Mississippi requested the amendments to:

- Shift forward long-term goals and measurements of progress for academic achievement by two years.
- Use current year, rather than banked, end-of-course assessment data to measure proficiency and growth for high schools when calculating its Academic Achievement indicator and science proficiency School Quality or Student Success indicator.
- Make a one-time change in frequency to identify schools in fall 2023 for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) and additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI).
- Modify its methodology for identifying schools for CSI: Low Performing to use three years of data.
- Omit the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school years when determining the number of years in which a school must meet criteria in order to exit CSI status.
- Omit the 2020-2021 school year when determining the number of years in which a school must meet criteria in order to exit ATSI status.
- Adjust its exit criteria for CSI and ATSI schools so that an identified school must increase its composite score on the accountability index in order to exit status.
- Allow CSI and ATSI schools identified in fall 2018 or 2022 to have four years, rather than three, to meet the State-determined exit criteria.

I am approving Mississippi's short-term changes to its ESEA consolidated State plan. This letter and Mississippi's approved Addendum for the 2021-2022 school year will be posted on the Department's website along with the currently approved version of Mississippi's ESEA consolidated State plan

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<http://www.ed.gov/>

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

(available at: <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-consolidated-state-plans/>). Because I am approving changes through the Addendum that are not limited to the 2021-2022 school year (e.g., shifted long-term goals and school identification timeline), the State must submit an updated ESEA consolidated State plan that incorporates those approved changes at a later date.

Please be aware that approval of this amendment to Mississippi’s consolidated State plan is not a determination that all the information and data included in the amended State plan comply with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. It is Mississippi’s responsibility to comply with these civil rights requirements.

I know that you are doing all in your power to support your districts and schools to ensure the health and well-being of students and educators. Thank you for your dedication to this effort. If you have any questions, please contact my staff at OESE.Titlei-a@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

James F. Lane, Ed.D.
Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary
Delegated the Authority to Perform the
Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

cc: Sonja Robertson, MDE
Deborah Donovan, MDE