

with 12.66% going to IHL and 3.94% going to Community College. In 2009, MS appropriated 62.59% of all general funds for education. Of that 62.59%, K-12 received 45.49% with 12.93% going to IHL and 4.17% going to Community College. Thus, MS's total funding of education increased from 2008 to 2009 by 1.67%. In reviewing trend data, educational funding in MS has increased from 57.44% in 2000 to 62.59% in 2009. **(Please see Appendix F2 for Educational Appropriations Spreadsheet.)**

**(F)(1)(ii) State Policies for Equitable Funding**

The Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) ensures that each school district can fund what it costs to “adequately” educate a child. The minimum guaranteed funding per pupil is known as the “base student cost.” In a further provision of the MAEP, Mississippi districts are given *additional* funding based on the number of “at-risk” students—those qualifying for free and reduced lunch. **(Please see Appendix F3 for a more complete explanation of MAEP.)**

While there is not a specific state policy that addresses equitable funding at the school level, school boards are empowered to use the MAEP to differentiate salaries in high-needs schools and to use the “at-risk” component of MAEP to target those schools within the LEA that have higher populations of “at risk” students. The MAEP addresses inherent disparities for equitable distribution of funding between LEAs.

**(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools (40 points)**

The extent to which—

- (i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State, measured (as set forth in Appendix B) by the percentage of total schools in the State that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools;
- (ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student

populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools;

(iii) The State's charter schools receive (as set forth in Appendix B) equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues;

(iv) The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities (for leasing facilities, purchasing facilities, or making tenant improvements), assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports; and the extent to which the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools; and

(v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (F)(2)(i):

- A description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- The number of charter schools allowed under State law and the percentage this represents of the total number of schools in the State.
- The number and types of charter schools currently operating in the State.

Evidence for (F)(2)(ii):

- A description of the State's approach to charter school accountability and authorization, and a description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- For each of the last five years:
  - The number of charter school applications made in the State.
  - The number of charter school applications approved.
  - The number of charter school applications denied and reasons for the denials (academic, financial, low enrollment, other).
  - The number of charter schools closed (including charter schools that were not reauthorized to operate).

Evidence for (F)(2)(iii):

- A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the State’s approach to charter school funding, the amount of funding passed through to charter schools per student, and how those amounts compare with traditional public school per-student funding allocations.

Evidence for (F)(2)(iv):

- A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the statewide facilities supports provided to charter schools, if any.

Evidence for (F)(2)(v):

- A description of how the State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

*Recommended maximum response length: Six pages*

**(F)(2)(i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools.** For years MS’s provision for charter schools was basically an ineffective law that actually expired in 2009. In the past few years, different stakeholder groups began key conversations around making conditions more conducive for charter schools in MS. During the 2010 legislative session, multiple constituencies worked together to develop and ultimately pass legislation that provides for a more encouraging charter school atmosphere. The law, *New Start School Program and Conversion Charter School Act of 2010*, creates a new process for transforming failing state public schools into “New Start Schools” and “Conversion Charter Schools.” Section 16 of the law states “In addition to receiving state funds for operations, public schools converted to conversion charter school status may accept bequests, devises, donations and grants from any public or private source and may apply for federal funding under the federal "Race to the Top" program. It is the intent of the Legislature that in accordance with the conditions of federal funding under the federal "Race to the Top" program, public schools converted to conversion charter school status in Mississippi are authorized to operate conversion charter and autonomous public school programs that are high-performing. It is further the intent of the Legislature that public schools converted to conversion charter school status receive

equitable state and federal funding compared to traditional public schools, as required by the federal "Race to the Top" program, and that the state shall not impose any school facility-related requirements on conversion charter schools which are more restrictive than those applied to traditional public schools. While the law is far from ideal, it does indicate that Mississippians are more open to charter schools. MS is excited about this beginning step toward embracing the charter school concept. Governor Haley Barbour and State Superintendent Tom Burnham support more rigorous charter school laws, so MS will continue to fight for students in the state to be able to choose those schools that are competitive and promote higher student achievement. It is important to note that the number of schools allowed under this law is double the number allowed in the former law. Since the former law expired in 2009 with the new law going into effect on July 1, 2010. Thus, no charter schools currently operate in the state. **(Please see Appendix A4 for copy of the MS Code.)**

**(F)(2)(ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools.** The *New Start School Program and Conversion Charter School Act of 2010* (MS Code §37-9-103 AND §37-9-3) states that the MSBoFE authorizes, approves, monitors, holds accountable, reauthorizes, and closes the conversion charter schools. In Section 7 of the law, legislators included the provision that “a set of academic or vocational, or both, performance-based objectives and student achievement-based objectives. In addition, the conversion charter schools must meet the 2009 Accountability Model and NCLB standards of student achievement. **(Please see Appendix A4 for copy of the MS Code §37-9-103 AND §37-9-3.)**

**(F)(2)(iii) The State’s charter schools receive (as set forth in Appendix A4) equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues.** Section 10 of the *New Start School Program and Conversion Charter School Act of 2010* (MS Code §37-9-103 AND §37-9-3) states “a public school converted to conversion

charter school status, upon approval by the State Board of Education, shall continue to be considered a public school under the authority of the local school district for purposes of receiving transportation services and funding, state funding for students based on per-pupil expenditures, classroom supplies resources, other adequate education program funds, including at-risk funding and any additional operational services provided to local schools by the district.” The law also provides in Section 16, “in addition to receiving state funds for operations, public schools converted to conversion charter school status may accept bequests, devises, donations and grants from any public or private source and may apply for federal funding under the federal "Race to the Top" program. It is the intent of the Legislature that in accordance with the conditions of federal funding under the federal "Race to the Top" program, public schools converted to conversion charter school status in Mississippi are authorized to operate conversion charter and autonomous public school programs that are high-performing. It is further the intent of the Legislature that public schools converted to conversion charter school status receive equitable state and federal funding compared to traditional public schools, as required by the federal "Race to the Top" program, and that the state shall not impose any school facility-related requirements on conversion charter schools which are more restrictive than those applied to traditional public schools.” **(Please see Appendix A4 for copy of the MS Code §37-9-103 AND §37-9-3.)**

**(F)(2)(iv) The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities (for leasing facilities, purchasing facilities, or making tenant improvements), assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports; and the extent to which the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools.**

As stated in (F)(2)(iii), in section 10 of the law “a public school converted to conversion charter school status, upon approval by the State Board of Education, shall continue to be considered a public school under the authority of the local school district for purposes of receiving transportation services and funding, state funding for students based on per-pupil expenditures, classroom supplies resources, other adequate education program funds, including at-risk funding and any additional operational services provided to local schools by the district.” Also in Section 16 of the law states that “conversion charter school status receive

equitable state and federal funding compared to traditional public schools, as required by the federal "Race to the Top" program, and that the state shall not impose any school facility-related requirements on conversion charter schools which are more restrictive than those applied to traditional public schools.” **(Please see Appendix A4 for copy of the MS Code §37-9-103 AND §37-9-3.)**

**(F)(2)(v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.**

LEAs are given operational flexibility under the LEA School Board and Superintendent with the exception of those that are under the Office of School Improvement, Oversight, and Recovery. LEAs may structure the schools within their jurisdiction in ways that meet the needs of the community and students. Within the operational flexibility, LEAs and schools must meet basic accreditation standards and NCLB requirements.

One example of a LEA that made significant changes to the structure of elementary schools in the district is the Clarksdale Municipal School District in the heart of the MS Delta region. The district offers parents a choice between six high quality Magnet Schools in the district’s elementary schools. Magnet Schools in the Clarksdale Municipal School District are public schools designed to significantly enhance the educational experiences of students. The Magnet Schools offer high quality instructional programs including reading, math, science, social studies, music, library, and P.E. aligned with state and national curriculum standards within six innovative themes—Visual and Performing Arts, Aerospace Education and Environmental Studies, Math and Sciences, Language Immersion, Health and Wellness, and International Studies. Never before have programs like these been offered to elementary students in the Clarksdale Municipal School District. These programs are both innovative and filled with exciting and challenging content.

Finally, as a part of MS TCTT adoption, the state is moving toward the concept of effective teachers to take the leadership role in teacher-led innovation schools. These schools will allow groups of effective teachers to submit proposals to enter into contracts with local school districts to design and run schools that will improve student achievement. The contract will be evaluated annually and schools that make greater progress than similar schools will receive bonuses that they can use at their discretion. If

their performance is not better, they will have three years to improve or lose their contract.

**(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions (5 points)**

The extent to which the State, in addition to information provided under other State Reform Conditions Criteria, has created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.

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Evidence for (F)(3):

- A description of the State's other applicable key education laws, statutes, regulations, or relevant legal documents.

*Recommended maximum response length: Two pages*

MS has a long history of educational reform that began in 1982. Most recently, Education Upgrade was Governor Haley Barbour's educational reform work with more aggressive reform laws that followed the 2006 Education Upgrade. **(Please see Appendix F1 for a complete narrative of MS Educational Reform with appropriate descriptions of MS Code.)**

MS is especially proud of the Office of Healthy Schools that has garnered support and collaboration from different entities in the state-- The Bower Foundation, MS Health Policy, American Lung Association, The Behavioral Vital Signs, The Diabetes Foundation of MS, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of MS, MS Department of Health, MS Attorney General's Office, MS Development Authority, UM Medical Center, MS Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, and Just Have A Ball. Because a healthy school is a vital part of a healthy community, a commitment to successful collaboration is required from school administrators, staff, students, parents and the community. The Office of Healthy Schools is committed and prepared to offer technical assistance and services to enable schools and communities to create effective Coordinated School Health Programs based on the eight component