

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: March 26, 2020

Mississippi State Board of Education Suspends Key Policies to Manage Impact of Extended School Closures

JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) today suspended several statewide policies to manage the impact of extended school closures due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) public health crisis. The policy suspensions apply only to students and educator candidates in the 2019-20 school year and educator preparation program applicants through December 2021.

Below is a summary of the key statewide policy suspensions enacted today. View the SBE meeting back-up material on the [Mississippi Department of Education \(MDE\) website](#) for full details and a complete list of SBE policy suspensions for the 2019-20 school year.

Graduation for the Class of 2020

Current seniors who meet all district and state requirements may graduate this school year. The requirement that students take end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, English II, Biology and U.S. History has been suspended for seniors because these assessments cannot be administered in spring 2020. Statewide, students are required to earn a minimum of 24 Carnegie units to graduate.

Students Scheduled to Take High School End-of-Course Assessments

Any student in grades 7 through 12 who is currently enrolled in Algebra I, Biology, English II and/or U. S. History during the 2019-20 school year will not be required to take and/or pass the corresponding end-of-course subject area test(s) or meet one of the options in lieu of passing the test(s) to meet graduation requirements.

High School Credits (Carnegie Units)

School districts shall determine a process for awarding a Carnegie unit credit for courses that are incomplete for school year 2019-20. Local school boards have the authority to suspend or amend their graduation policies for the 2019-20 school year, provided the policies continue to meet state standards.

3rd Graders

Current 3rd graders will be promoted to 4th grade for the 2020-21 school year if the student meets all other district requirements for promotion.

Education Preparation Program Entry

Candidates seeking admission to an SBE-approved traditional or nontraditional educator preparation program on or before December 31, 2021, are exempt from the educator preparation program entry testing criterion. The exemption extends through the 2021 calendar year to mitigate the impact of a prolonged suspension of candidate testing nationwide.

Education Preparation

Spring 2020 educator licensure candidates no longer need to meet the minimum of 12 weeks of full-day student teaching to become licensed. The MDE will continue to work collaboratively

with Education Preparation Providers (EPP) to determine the acceptable experiences necessary for student teaching and demonstration of teaching competency prior to licensure.

Previous SBE Actions

The SBE voted on March 19 to suspend all required federal and state assessments for the 2019-20 school year, to seek a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for federal accountability requirements and to allow school districts to forego the requirement of a 180-day school year per state law. ED informed MDE on March 20 of its intention to issue a formal approval of MDE's waiver request in the coming weeks.

Local Policies

Local school districts have the authority to establish additional policies regarding grading, promotion, retention and graduation. Contact school districts for details on local policies.

Visit the [MDE COVID-19 update webpage](#) for additional guidance and Q&A information.