
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: UPCOMING RELEASE OF DISTRICT AND SCHOOL LEVEL ASSESSMENT RESULTS
UPCOMING RELEASE OF FIRST YEAR OF NCLB AYP SCORES
DATE: 8/7/03
CC: RENICK, BOYD, MAYO, SEWELL

District and School State Assessment Results

As you know, MDE released statewide results on students' performance on the Mississippi Curriculum Test, the Writing Assessment, the Subject Area Test and the Norm Reference Test in late July. MDE will be releasing the district and school level assessment results for these tests next Friday, August 15. Dr. John Jordan, Deputy State Superintendent, is to provide me an advance copy of the results.

No Child Left Behind AYP Results

This is the first year that Mississippi schools will be assessed under NCLB for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results. MDE forwarded preliminary results to the local districts today. Title I schools identified for improvement or corrective action under NCLB have until August 20 to appeal this designation to MDE. Regardless of their appeal, such schools have to immediately notify parents concerning choice or supplemental services as required under NCLB. The State Board will approve final results at its meeting on September 11-12 and results will be released to the public on the 12th. Dr. Jordan is to provide me an advance copy of the results, hopefully by tomorrow.

Federal (NCLB) and state accountability systems vary. NCLB requires each racial and socio-economic subgroup (white, black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, economically disadvantaged, special education, and English as a second language) to be proficient in core academic subjects or to make adequate yearly progress toward proficiency as measured by test results. Over the 12-year course of NCLB, every school in America is expected to move every single student to proficiency.

Mississippi's accountability program measures whether students as a whole have met a baseline score for performance or made a certain amount of growth toward that score. Schools meeting or exceeding the baseline score will be judged successful, exemplary or superior, depending on their score.

It is extremely possible for a school to be superior under the state's program, but to be classified as not making progress under the federal program. Under NCLB, if 7 of the 8 subgroups are meeting AYP and 1 is not, then the entire school has not met AYP. Dr. Susan Rucker, Associate State Superintendent for Innovation and School Improvement, mentioned at the last monthly education breakfast meeting that we could easily have 600 of our 873 elementary and secondary schools classified under NCLB as not having made AYP.

Under NCLB, if a school does not meet AYP for 2 consecutive years, it is identified as a needing assistance school at which point it receives technical assistance from MDE and parents from that school have the option to send their children to any other school in the same district.

Failure to make AYP for 3 consecutive years means that the district must begin offering low-income students supplemental services, such as tutoring. After 4 years, the school has to take corrective action – replace staff, implement new curriculum or extend the school day. After 5 years, the state takes over to restructure the school.

As you can imagine, this should be a big media story. MDE has already taken steps to make sure that the media statewide understand the difference between the state and federal accountability programs and the different assessment results. Dr. Johnson hosted a media briefing last Friday where he discussed the assessment and accountability programs.

MDE is also briefing members of the Legislature on the 21st. I suggested that they also send a letter to or conduct a briefing for the members of the Public Education Forum so that the business/private sector will be in the loop. They are inviting PEF members to the legislative briefing on the 21st.

I have also participated in 2 NGA conference calls on communicating NCLB results to the media and the public and I have shared this info with MDE. I suggested that we copy something that North Carolina did. For those schools identified as not having made AYP, North Carolina presented the number of subgroups for each school that actually did make AYP so that the public had a more accurate picture of each school.

I will keep you posted and will relay advance results as soon as I get them from MDE. We have to spin this as NCLB has enabled us to identify those subgroups/students who are not making progress, so we can help them. NCLB has increased the level of accountability at the school level, which Mississippi's accountability plan already provided for. Mississippi's NCLB plan was the 6th in the nation to be approved and has proven to be a model for other states. We will continue to invest in education to prepare our students to be competitive and to succeed.