
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: PRINCETON REVIEW'S TESTING THE TESTERS 2003
DATE 5/6/03
CC: MAYO, SEWELL

The Princeton Review has released Testing the Testers 2003: An Annual Ranking of State Accountability Systems. Mississippi dropped from 6th to 12th overall. I believe this is due to criteria being weighted differently this year and due to fewer indicators.

The Princeton Review collected data on 22 (as compared to 25 in 2002) relevant indicators from each state and the District of Columbia. States received a score of either zero, one, or two points depending upon how their program performed.

Mississippi received the highest possible score (2 points) on 16 of the 22 indicators, received 1 point on 4 of the indicators, and received 0 points on 2 of the indicators. However, with regard to these 2 indicators, the report points out that although the state does not currently track schools by value-added analysis, the state will begin to do this in Fall 2003. Also, although the state judges schools by test scores only at this point, beginning in Fall 2003, schools will be given annual performance classifications based on 2 factors: meeting annual growth expectation and the percent of students who are achieving at certain levels. Thus, Mississippi should receive 2 points in both of these categories in future reviews.

Each indicator was grouped in one of four major criteria:

1. **Academic Alignment:** High-stakes tests are aligned to academic content knowledge and skills as specified by the states' curriculum standards.
2. **Test Quality:** The tests are capable of determining that those curriculum standards have been met.
3. **Sunshine:** The policies and procedures surrounding the tests are open, and open to ongoing improvement.
4. **Policy:** Accountability systems will tend to affect education in a way that is consistent with the goals of the state.

The above 4 criteria were weighted at 20%, 15%, 30%, and 35% respectively, as compared to 20%, 20%, 30% and 30% in 2002. Thus, the criteria were weighted differently this year. Princeton Review assigns a letter grade to each state for each criterion. Mississippi improved in 2 areas (test quality and sunshine), remained constant in academic alignment, but dropped slightly in policy (B to B-)

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Academic Alignment	B+	B+
Test Quality	A-	A
Sunshine	C-	B+
Policy	B	B-

Thus, Mississippi dropped slightly in the most significant criterion (policy weighted at 35%), which would impact our weighted total of 78.7. New York ranked #1 with a weighted total of 88.5.

Message: The criteria upon which states were judged were weighted differently this year. Mississippi's accountability system continues to be recognized in the top quartile of accountability systems throughout the country. We received maximum score in 16 of the 22 indicators upon which the review was based. Our system received improved scores in 2 of the 4 evaluated areas and remained constant in a third. Mississippi's accountability system is consistent in its performance, having scored well in all four criteria.