

MDE, IHL partner to increase opportunities for students to be better prepared for college

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) have collaborated to create opportunities for students to earn college credit before they enter the state's public universities. Beginning in 2022, freshmen entering Mississippi's public universities who earn an academic or distinguished academic diploma endorsement from the state's public school districts will receive automatic enrollment into any of the state's public universities and will be placed in credit-bearing courses.

Also, effective in the fall of 2019, all eight public universities in Mississippi will award 3 hours of college credit for an Advanced Placement (AP) score of 3 or higher on an AP exam. IHLs may provide up to 6 credits, per exam, depending on the subject and AP exam for students scoring a 4 or 5. As a result, students who are taking college-level courses in high school in the 2018-19 school year can start earning credit for those courses in a uniform manner among all the state's public universities.

Both initiatives provide a pathway for students to be better prepared for college-level work, without the need for remedial coursework. This will lead to increased opportunities for students who wish to attend one of Mississippi's public universities to earn credits while in high school.

"We want to ensure that every student that enters one of our universities finishes with a diploma in hand," said Dr. Glenn Boyce, Commissioner of Higher Education. "Both of these changes will allow students to get a good start on completing college while still in high school. I am pleased that we were able to partner with the Mississippi Department of Education to benefit Mississippi's students."

Dr. Carey Wright, state superintendent of education, said the initiatives are examples of how K-12 education and IHLs can partner to align the classes students take in high school with their college courses.

"We thank the IHL for recognizing that we are raising the bar for academic achievement in Mississippi and for, most importantly, recognizing those students who go above and beyond to prepare themselves for the rigors of college study," she said.

IHL recently revised the requirements for admission to their universities and aligned required and

recommended admission policies with the Mississippi Diploma Academic and Distinguished Endorsement Options developed by MDE. The required College Preparatory Curriculum (CPC) for full admission to public universities now aligns with the course recommendations for the MDE Academic Endorsement, and the recommended CPC for full admission aligns with the course recommendations for the Mississippi Department of Education Distinguished Endorsement.

The IHL wanted to ensure that admission policies are aligned to the college readiness endorsements that MDE adopted and will be available for freshmen entering Mississippi's public high schools and any other high school students who meet the requirements for an academic or distinguished academic diploma endorsement.

"This really makes it a seamless transition," said Jean Massey, executive director of secondary education at MDE.

In 2017, the Mississippi

State Board of Education approved diploma options that take effect in the 2018-19 school year. The traditional diploma will require all students graduating from Mississippi high schools to have the same basic requirements and to earn 24 Carnegie Units.

After meeting the traditional diploma requirements, students can take additional career and technical education coursework to meet the requirements for the CTE endorsement or advanced, college-preparation coursework to earn an academic or distinguished academic endorsement. The CTE and academic endorsements require students to earn 26 Carnegie Units. Students must earn 28 Carnegie Units to qualify for the distinguished academic endorsement.

"The diploma endorsement options will encourage students to take advantage of their high school education to earn a credential that will benefit them in college, postsecondary training or the workforce," said Dr. Carey Wright, state superintendent of education.

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