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High school students offered multiple pathways to graduation

change, drop-out rates have declined for the fourth consecutive year to 10.6 percent, down from 13.9 percent in 2014.

School districts across the state are working diligently to provide support for students who need additional help in order to receive a traditional diploma. Mississippi is being recognized nationally for the hard work taking place in classrooms across the state. Every indicator the Board and the MDE monitors is on the rise, from kindergarten readiness and literacy to student academic performance, and, yes, graduation rates. We have set more rigorous learning standards which are comparable to many high-performing states, and we are reaping the benefits. And, yes, progress is

measured through challenging assessments at the end of course; but, when students understand the expectations and are provided the support and resources, they will rise to meet those expectations. The Board and MDE will continue to set high goals, but, in doing so, will also provide professional development to teachers and administrators to ensure the rigor in the classroom reflects the learning goals for the state.

If Mississippi's educational system is to reach its full potential of producing young people who can meet the challenges of college or a highly skilled job, we must continue to offer students multiple paths for reaching their full potential. Our state's future depends on it.

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