

Mississippi's graduation rate rises to national average

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) released last week the high school graduation rates for the 2017-18 school year, which show the state's graduation rate has hit an all-time high of 84 percent, reaching the most recent national graduation rate.

The graduation rate for students with disabilities increased for the fifth consecutive year to 38.4 percent, up from 23.2 percent in 2014.

The state's drop-out rate fell to an historic low of 10.1 percent, a decrease from 13.9 percent in 2014.

"Students, parents, teachers

and administrators should be proud of the class of 2018's significant achievement," said Dr. Carey Wright, state superintendent of education. "I congratulate our school districts for helping students complete high school prepared for college, postsecondary training, the military and the workforce."

The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) approved new diploma op-

Number of jobs at historic high and unemployment rate near historic low

Press Release

In December the number of nonfarm jobs in Mississippi rose to 1,173,000, which are the most jobs ever recorded in Mississippi. December was the third month in a row in which the number of jobs broke the previous record.

The number of jobs in Mississippi increased by 400 in December. Over the year since December 2017, the number of jobs in our state increased by 11,000. Mississippi's unemployment rate in December 2018 was 4.7%, the third lowest level of unemployment ever recorded in Mississippi. The unemployment rate has now been at, or below, 4.8% for fifteen months.

The December rate is the same as a month earlier in November 2018 and one-tenth of a percentage point lower than a year ago in December 2017, when the rate was 4.8%. The Labor Force, which is made up of everyone who has a job or is looking for a job, declined in December by 3,100 to 1,281,100; however, over the year since December 2017, the Labor Force rose by 3,600.

The number of unemployed Mississippians in December was 60,100, which was the same as a month earlier in November; however, over the year since December 2017, the number of unemployed Mississippians is down by 800.

The number of people working in Mississippi declined in December by 3,100 to 1,221,000, but for the year since December 2017, employment in our state increased by 4,400.

Each diploma option will prepare students to be successful after graduation, whether that be in the workforce, a career and technical training program, the military or college. Also, beginning with freshmen in 2018-19, students who earn an academic or distinguished academic diploma endorsement from a public high school will automatically qualify for admission into any of the state's public universities.

Graduation rates for 2017-18 will be reflected in the accountability ratings for the 2018-19 school year.

2019 Graduation Rate Report: <https://www.mdek12.org/OPR/Reporting/Accountability>.

*County Jail

(Continued from page 1.) to those law books or if they have a question on something, through their attorney whom they can contact," explained Rule.

The audit for compliance was conducted October 3-5, 2018.

Holmes County Sheriff Willie March, for the past few years, has been advocating for increased usage of the jail to house the state's criminal offenders. In recent years funding has been cut by state lawmakers to regional jails, including HHRCF, opting not to pay those jails to house state inmates.

In 1995, the Mississippi Legislature, at a time period when the state correctional facilities system needed help from county sheriffs, authorized the creation of 15 county-owned regional correctional facilities that were allowed to house up to 300 medium custody state inmates with a county jail as part of the facility. Those jails were required statutorily and by a contract with the Department of Corrections (MDOC) to be accredited by the ACA and to provide rehabilitation programs that were equal to those provided by the state.

According to March, a problem developed as for the past 20 years, MDOC has been under contract to pay the county regional jails \$29.74 per day to house medium custody state inmates with an annual 3% increase in the per diem. That increase has not been honored by MDOC.

Counties hosting regional correctional facilities may be forced to absorb the additional costs or close the facility resulting in lost jobs and potential increase in property taxes.

In the Performance Evaluation & Expenditure Review Committee (PEER) Report #592 issued in 2015, states that it costs MDOC \$39.49 to house the same inmate they are paying the county regional jail facilities at \$29.74.

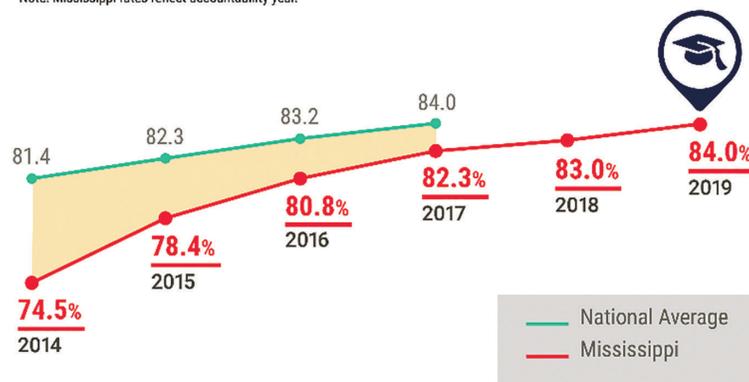
Currently the Mississippi Sheriff's Association, Mississippi Association of Regional Jails, and the Mississippi Association of Regional Jails collectively are petitioning legislators to fully fund county regional jails at \$29.74 per day with a guaranteed 300 inmate capacity and the 3% annual increase of the per diem.

Information from March says that to fully fund the 15 regional jails would require an appropriation of \$48,847,950. To house the same inmates in private or state operated facilities would cost the state \$64,862,325, potentially saving the state \$16,014,375 annually.

in her home for the meeting. Ruth and Suzanne provided the lovely refreshments.

MISSISSIPPI'S GRADUATION RATE

Note: Mississippi rates reflect accountability year.



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WEST REPORT

by
West Civic Club

The guest speaker for January's civic club meeting was Adielade Burge Chapman, from Oxford. She is the house mother for one of the housing units of the college. Ms. Adielade gave us some information on taking care of the silver pieces that we have acquired down through the years. There are several items on the market that will help clean tarnished silver. Like everything else some work and some don't. One very important step in keeping your silver is the way you store the item. It can be put in ziplock bags, but you don't want to keep them in an area that get damp or real hot as the plastic may stick to your silver and cause pitting. You also don't want to keep it where it gets damp. She brought with her several items that she has been collecting. Spoons, forks, knives, bowls, trays, vases and serving dishes. There were different styles, shapes,

colors and values. Some she was given to her from relatives, friends and purchased through estate sales. Silver was first plated in England, their silver is .925 while the most common silver is .850 from Mexico and China. It was a very interesting presentation. When doing an event it is not necessary to always have the same pattern for that event, mix and match makes for interesting conversations at the tables.

Maryann reported about our grant application meeting to the club members so they would also know what is required to receive government moneys for the repair work on our building. The subject of the roof leak and repair was also presented to the club members. We have already spoken to a roofing company and scheduled them to do the repairs. Birthday ladies for this month are Lynn, Natalie and Carol.

Ruth Aldridge hosted us