

# Mississippi State Board of Education suspends key policies to manage impact of extended school closures

## Press Release

The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) on Thursday, March 26, suspended several statewide policies to manage the impact of extended school closures due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) public health crisis. The policy suspensions apply only to students and educator candidates in the 2019-20 school year and educator preparation program applicants through December 2021.

Below is a summary of the key statewide policy suspensions enacted today. View the SBE meeting back-up material on the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) website for full details and a complete list of SBE policy suspensions for the 2019-20 school year.

## Graduation for the Class of 2020

Current seniors who meet all district and state requirements may graduate this school year. The requirement

that students take end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, English II, Biology and U.S. History has been suspended for seniors because these assessments cannot be administered in spring 2020. Statewide, students are required to earn a minimum of 24 Carnegie units to graduate.

## Students Scheduled to Take High School End-of-Course Assessments

Any student in grades 7 through 12 who is currently enrolled in Algebra I, Biology, English II and/or U. S. History during the 2019-20 school year will not be required to take and/or pass the corresponding end-of-course subject area test(s) or meet one of the options in lieu of passing the test(s) to meet graduation requirements.

## High School Credits (Carnegie Units)

School districts shall determine a process for awarding a Carnegie unit credit for

courses that are incomplete for school year 2019-20. Local school boards have the authority to suspend or amend their graduation policies for the 2019-20 school year, provided the policies continue to meet state standards.

## 3rd Graders

Current 3rd graders will be promoted to 4th grade for the 2020-21 school year if the student meets all other district requirements for promotion.

## Education Preparation Program Entry

Candidates seeking admission to an SBE-approved traditional or nontraditional educator preparation program on or before December 31, 2021, are exempt from the educator preparation program entry testing criterion. The exemption extends through the 2021 calendar year to mitigate the impact of a prolonged suspension of candidate testing nationwide.

## Education Preparation

Spring 2020 educator licensure candidates no longer need to meet the minimum of 12 weeks of full-day student teaching to become licensed. The MDE will continue to work collaboratively with Education Preparation Providers (EPP) to determine the acceptable experiences necessary for student teaching and demonstration of teaching competency prior to licensure.

## Previous SBE Actions

The SBE voted on March 19 to suspend all required federal and state assessments for the 2019-20 school year, to seek a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for federal accountability requirements and to allow school districts to forego the requirement of a 180-day school year per state law. ED informed MDE on March 20 of its intention to issue a formal approval of MDE's waiver request in the coming weeks.

## Local Policies

Local school districts have the authority to establish additional policies regarding grading, promotion, retention and graduation. Contact school districts for details on local policies.

Visit the MDE COVID-19 update webpage for additional guidance and Q&A information.

if they need additional services or supports.

"Our mission is to protect children and to support families. A call to MDCPS doesn't necessarily mean we will come to take a child away. It means we will investigate what is needed to protect that child, and do whatever is in our power to strengthen and support that family's ability to care for each other," he said.

# Public should report concerns of child neglect, abuse to state agency

## Press Release

With schools, day care centers and preschools around Mississippi shut down as part of statewide efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, online and hotline reports to the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services abuse and neglect intake center have dropped dramatically over the past weeks.

But child welfare experts and others do not believe this decline reflects a decrease in abuse or neglect. On the contrary, many fear that children are now at a greater risk of being hurt or neglected because families – many facing additional stress over work and health issues – are living in isolation from mandated reporters.

"With fewer eyes on these at-risk children, fewer concerns of abuse and neglect are being made to MDCPS which means we don't know who needs the supports and services we can provide to the families struggling during this stressful time," said Tonya Rogillio, MDCPS deputy commissioner for child welfare.

"It is the legal responsibility and moral obligation of every adult in Mississippi to report any concerns they have regarding child abuse, neglect or exploitation to MDCPS."

fare agency, which receives roughly 25,000 abuse or neglect reports annually, typically sees a decline whenever schools are dismissed for summer vacation or extended holiday periods. When students return to classes, however, the number of reports immediately spike because teachers, school counselors and others like coaches or church group leaders identify concerning signs.

"We suspect that school closures and other important efforts at social distancing are driving the reduction in reports of abuse or neglect because fewer people outside children's immediate families are seeing children on a daily basis," said Taylor Cheeseman, interim MDCPS commissioner.

"We all share an obligation to be their advocates – to be on the alert for signs that a child may be in danger or that a family may need help."

In Mississippi, every adult 18 and older is a legally mandated reporter. That means all adults are responsible for reporting concerns of child abuse or neglect to MDCPS.

Reports can be made online by going to [www.md-cps.ms.gov](http://www.md-cps.ms.gov) and clicking on the Report Abuse link. There is also a mobile app available at no cost for all smart phones. The Mississippi Centralized Intake 24-hour

hotline # is 1-800-222-8000. Given constraints associated with telework in the Agency's response to COVID-19, MDCPS is asking that anyone who can report online rather than by phone.

Cheeseman also encouraged families who are struggling during the COVID-19 shutdown to contact MDCPS

# Disaster permits enacted to bolster healthcare workers

## Press Release

The Mississippi Board of Nursing is enacting a temporary disaster permit to assist in the current healthcare needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic in our state, country and world. This new guideline will allow retired nurses, recent nursing school graduates and other eligible nursing applicants to receive a 120-day permit that will allow them to work within their scope of practice and provide more healthcare service to patients across the State of Mississippi.

Questions related to the changes should be emailed to [smontgomery@msbn.ms.gov](mailto:smontgomery@msbn.ms.gov).

This action is one of several made by the Board in

recent weeks as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal, as always, is to regulate the practice of nursing and promote exceptional healthcare services.

Since Friday, March 27, a nurse applying for the temporary permit can log onto the board's website ([www.msbn.ms.gov](http://www.msbn.ms.gov)) and enter their nurse gateway (NG) profile. If they do not have a profile, one will need to be completed to continue the process. Once in NG, a red banner on the homepage will provide details on applying for the permit.

For more information about the Zoom meeting, please contact Camille Young at 601-594-0945 or [cyoung@cagagroup.com](mailto:cyoung@cagagroup.com).

# Mississippi Dept. of Education compiles learning-at-home resources

## Press Release

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) has compiled a host of learning-at-home resources for students in pre-K through grade 12 to support student learning during the extended school closure.

The resources are available online at [www.mdek12.org/LearningAtHome](http://www.mdek12.org/LearningAtHome).

The learning-at-home resources do not replace what children have learned at school, but instead help students practice the skills and strategies taught by their teachers.

The resources are intended to help parents and caregivers engage students in continued education.

Resources include learning activities, example videos and digital resources that support the Mississippi College-and Career-Readiness Standards to continue and reinforce children's education.

MDE content specialists have selected all resources, which include dedicated webpages for students in pre-K-grade 1, grades 2-3, grades 4-5, grades 6-8 and grades 9-12. Also, resources for students with visual or hearing impairments are

available and guidance on social emotional learning.

During this unusual time of extended school closures nationwide, it is important that students continue to read, write, and engage in social studies, science and math activities.

The MDE learning-at-home webpages will be updated periodically with additional resources.

*Happy Birthday  
In Loving Memory  
of Our Mother  
Viola McClellan Robinson*



April 2, 1923 - June 5, 2003

*Gone But  
Not Forgotten  
Your Children  
& Grandchildren*

## Mallory Community Health Center

would like to announce that we are now offering Telehealth Services for all sites. Since the heightened spread of the Coronavirus, this service is set in place to ensure all patients have the opportunity to continue their visits from the comfort of their home using their cell phone, laptop, or desktop computer. Please give us a call at 662-834-1857 for more information. We are here to assist and serve you.

Remember at  
Mallory Community Health Center,  
You Enter a Patient and Leave A Friend.

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all feed and accessories.



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