



Report to the Mississippi Legislature

A Review of Mississippi's School Recognition Program

#648
December 16, 2020



PEER: The Mississippi Legislature's Oversight Agency

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The Committee assigns top priority to written requests from individual legislators and legislative committees. The Committee also considers PEER staff proposals and written requests from state officials and others.

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December 16, 2020

Honorable Tate Reeves, Governor
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On December 16, 2020, the PEER Committee authorized release of the report titled *A Review of Mississippi's School Recognition Program*.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lydia Chassaniol".

Senator Lydia Chassaniol, Chair

This report does not recommend increased funding or additional staff.

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A Review of Mississippi's School Recognition Program

CONCLUSION: Since 2017, the Mississippi Legislature has appropriated \$98.6 million to the Mississippi School Recognition Program. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the suspension of statewide assessments during the spring of 2020, the Legislature will not have up-to-date information with which to appropriate funds for the program to be disbursed in FY 2022. In a change from the early years of the program, teacher committees no longer determine the recipients and amounts of award money, rather the money is now evenly distributed among eligible employees. State law does not mandate MDE's implementation responsibilities and a plan to reward high-performing teachers in low-performing schools has not been developed. Of the six states identified by PEER with statutory school recognition programs, Mississippi's program is the only one that requires award funds to be used exclusively as salary supplements for teachers and staff.

Background

In recent years pay for performance has become a popular education reform. These reforms are popular because economic and management theories suggest that well-designed incentive pay programs could improve teacher effectiveness. In Mississippi, the Legislature has enacted legislation to address the issue of incentivizing teachers for students' academic performance. In 2006, the Legislature enacted the Mississippi Performance Based Pay plan, which was designed to reward certified teachers, administrators, and non-licensed personnel at individual schools showing improvement in student test scores. In 2013, the Legislature enacted the Pilot-Performance-Based Compensation System, which allowed teachers and administrators in four pilot school districts to receive additional compensation for improving instruction and student learning. In 2014, the Legislature enacted the School Recognition Program which established a financial award of \$100 or \$75 per pupil in average daily attendance for teachers in schools sustaining high performance or demonstrating exemplary performance by improving at least one letter grade in the state's accountability rating system.

How has the program been funded?

Since the 2017 Regular Session, the Legislature has appropriated between \$20 million and \$28 million each year for the School Recognition Program Fund. Financial awards are disbursed to eligible school districts from this fund. Normally, assessment tests in the spring of one school year are used to determine district and school accountability ratings for the following school year with program award disbursement in the next fiscal year.

How have MDE and the school districts implemented the program?

The program is a joint effort of MDE and the individual districts and schools. Through annual instructions, MDE provides the general parameters of the program, in which school districts play an administrative role in paying award amounts, such as assisting schools in calculating amounts for eligible employees, preparing supplemental contracts, and obtaining local school board approval of the supplemental contracts.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the program?

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Board of Education granted approval to suspend all federal and state requirements of the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System for the 2019-2020 school year. Because of the suspension of statewide tests in the spring of 2020, MDE did not have sufficient data to produce accountability ratings for the 2020-2021 school year. Therefore the State Board of Education allowed districts and schools to maintain the same accountability rating in the 2020-2021 school year as assigned in the fall of the 2019-2020 school year. However, this method presents the Legislature with a conundrum because basing an FY 2022 appropriation for the program on ratings that are not up-to-date could result in the Legislature appropriating more or less funds for the program than necessary.

Report Conclusions

1

Since the creation of the School Recognition Program, the Legislature has appropriated a total of \$98.6 million to fund the financial awards to public schools.

2

Because statewide assessments were not administered in the spring of 2020 to determine accountability ratings for the 2020-2021 school year and because schools were allowed to retain their accountability ratings from the 2019-2020 school year, the Legislature will not have up-to-date accountability rating information on which to appropriate funds for the School Recognition Program to be disbursed during FY 2022.

3

The School Recognition Program's enabling legislation does not mandate the Mississippi Department of Education's program implementation responsibilities and does not include a definition of "staff" eligible to receive a financial incentive payment.

4

During FY 2018 and FY 2019, teacher committees within eligible schools used varying methodologies to identify recipients of School Recognition Program award money resulting in inequitable allocations of such money to employees. MDE's instructions for FY 2020 and FY 2021 deleted the use of teacher committees and required award money to be evenly distributed to eligible employees.

5

While the financial awards provisions of MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-10 have been implemented, a plan to reward high-performing teachers in low-performing schools has not been developed.

6

Of the states analyzed by PEER that have school recognition programs mandated in state law, Mississippi is the only state that requires financial award funds to be used exclusively as salary supplements for teachers and staff.

7

PEER identified at least three states with school recognition programs administered by the states' department of education. However, none of the states provide financial incentives to schools or teachers for being recognized for exemplary academic performance.

Recommendations

1. The Legislature should consider amending MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-10 (1972) to require MDE to promulgate rules and regulations for the administration of the School Recognition Program. For information purposes only, such rules and regulations should be provided to the chairs of the Senate and House Education committees by June 1 of each calendar year.
2. If the intent of the Legislature is for certified employees of a school to be the only eligible recipients of School Recognition Program awards, the Legislature should consider amending Section 37-19-10 (4) by deleting the word staff and stating that the awards must be used for nonrecurring salary supplements for certified employees of the school receiving the financial award.
3. If the Legislature intends to appropriate School Recognition Program award money during the 2021 Regular Session to be distributed during FY 2022, MDE staff should make a recommendation to the Senate and House Appropriation and Education committees regarding the basis on which to compute the amount needed for the award program since state assessments, which produce the schools' accountability ratings that have been the basis for the award amount in the past, were not conducted during the spring of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. MDE's rules and regulations should require each school receiving financial award money to post on its website the total amount of award money received by the school's certified employees and the reason for the receipt of such money—e.g., the school achieved an "A" accountability rating, etc.

A Review of Mississippi's School Recognition Program

Introduction

Authority

The PEER Committee reviewed Mississippi's School Recognition Program enacted into state law in House Bill 504 (2014 Regular Session). The Committee conducted this review in accordance with MISS. CODE ANN. Sections 5-3-51 et seq. (1972).

Scope and Purpose

In recent years, education policymakers have shown growing interest in the potential of incentive pay for teachers as a way to improve student performance. Champions of this approach contend that incentive pay based on student performance can motivate teachers to improve their teaching practices, which in turn will boost student achievement; in addition, over the longer term, rewarding quality teaching has the potential to entice better teachers into entering the profession. However, some critics argue that paying teachers for student performance may erode teacher satisfaction with the intrinsic rewards of teaching and undermine morale.¹

Since 2006, the Mississippi Legislature has enacted three programs designed to reward school personnel at individual schools showing improvement in student test scores. The Legislature enacted the most recent of these programs—the School Recognition Program—in 2014 and has appropriated \$98.6 million since that time to incentivize teachers instructing in the state's schools.

In reviewing Mississippi's School Recognition Program, PEER sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the history of Mississippi's School Recognition Program and how has the program been funded?
2. How have the Mississippi Department of Education and the school districts implemented the School Recognition Program?
3. Do other states have school recognition programs similar to Mississippi's program?
4. Does research support the effectiveness of school recognition programs?

Method

In conducting this review, PEER:

- researched Mississippi statutes and appropriation bills regarding teacher compensation plans;
- obtained studies of Mississippi's pilot-performance-pay plan produced by the Mississippi State University Research & Curriculum Unit;

¹ Research Brief, RB-9649, RAND Corporation (2012).

- analyzed financial and programmatic information provided by the Mississippi Department of Education;
- surveyed twenty-one Mississippi school districts regarding their implementation of the School Recognition Program and the distribution of award money;
- analyzed laws and regulations of school recognition programs in selected states; and,
- conducted a search of and analyzed academic research regarding school recognition and teacher pay incentive programs.

What is the History of Mississippi's School Recognition Program and How Has the Program Been Funded?

In recent years pay for performance has become a popular education reform. These reforms are popular because economic and management theories suggest that well-designed incentive pay programs could improve teacher effectiveness.

In Mississippi, the Legislature has enacted legislation designed to address the issue of incentivizing teachers for students' academic performance. This chapter will discuss the following pay for performance programs within Mississippi:

- Mississippi Performance Based Pay plan;
- Pilot-Performance-Based Compensation System; and,
- School Recognition Program.

This chapter will also discuss how the most recent pay for performance plan, the School Recognition Program, has been funded by the Legislature.

Mississippi Performance-Based Pay Plan

Enacted in 2006, the Mississippi Performance Based Pay plan was designed to reward certified teachers, administrators, and non-licensed personnel at individual schools showing improvement in student test scores.

During its 2006 Regular Session, the Legislature enacted into law Senate Bill 2602, known as the "Mississippi Education Reform Act of 2006." In enacting the law, the Legislature determined that:

...the quality and accountability of public education and its effect upon the social, cultural and economic enhancement of the people of Mississippi is a matter of public policy, the object of which is the education and performance of its children and youth.

The law was comprehensive in nature and amended various CODE sections affecting the state's education system. In addition to amending the state's incremental teacher salary schedule, S.B. 2602 also authorized funds for additional base compensation for teachers holding licenses in critical subject areas and those employed in a public school district located in a geographical area of the state designated as a critical teacher shortage area by the State Board of Education. These additional compensations were subject to funds being appropriated for such purposes.

Another new provision included in S.B. 2602 was the "Mississippi Performance Based Pay" (MPBP) Plan, currently codified as MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-7 (4). As shown in Appendix A, page 26, the plan was designed to reward certified teachers, administrators, and non-licensed personnel at individual schools showing improvement in student test scores. The bill required the Mississippi Department of Education to implement the MPBP at the end of each year after all student achievement scores had been standardized. In addition, individual schools were required to submit plans to the local school boards detailing how all teachers, regardless of subject area, and administrators would be responsible for improving student achievement for their schools and be eligible for an incentive reward.

With regard to the funding of the MPBP, S.B. 2602 stated that funds would be available “only after full funding of MAEP² and if funds were made available for that purpose.” Since the enactment of S.B. 2602, the Legislature has not provided specific funding for the MPBP.

Pilot-Performance-Based Compensation System

Enacted in 2013, the Pilot-Performance-Based Compensation System allowed teachers and administrators in four pilot school districts—Lamar County, Clarksdale, Gulfport, and Rankin County—to receive additional compensation for improving instruction and student learning.

During its 2013 Regular Session, the Legislature enacted into law Senate Bill 2658, known as the “Mississippi Education Works Program.” S.B. 2658 included two provisions that affected Mississippi teachers.

The first provision was a teacher education scholars program administered by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning. The program provided an annual scholarship not to exceed \$15,000 for each approved teacher education scholar enrolled in a Mississippi public or private university in the junior year and admitted into a teacher education program. The scholarship—i.e., loan—did not have to be repaid if the scholar remained as a Mississippi public school teacher for five years. Any teacher who received a scholarship was exempt from the repayment requirement if the teacher became employed in a school with an accountability rating of “D” or “F.” In addition to the repayment exemption, such teachers could also receive a supplement of \$6,000 for each year the teacher remained in the “D” or “F” school, up to a maximum of five years.

The second provision was a performance-based compensation (PBC) system piloted in four Mississippi school districts—Lamar County, Clarksdale, Gulfport, and Rankin County. The performance-based compensation system is now codified as MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-9 (1972), as shown in Appendix B, page 27. S.B. 2658 required the Mississippi State University (MSU) Research and Curriculum Unit (RCU) to collect and analyze the results of the four pilot school districts’ efforts to implement a performance-based compensation system. S.B. 2658 stated that effective with the 2014-2015 school year, the school districts participating in the Pilot Performance-Based Compensation System could award additional compensation to teachers and administrators. With regard to the results of the pilot study, MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-9 (1) (c) states the following:

Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, the Department of Education will develop proposed legislation based on pilot results for statewide implementation of a Performance-Based Compensation System.

Pilot Study Conducted by the MSU Research & Curriculum Unit

As required by S.B. 2658, the MSU Research & Curriculum Unit studied the pilot performance-based-compensation system and concluded that additional research on the relationship between teacher effectiveness ratings, teacher practice, and student performance was needed if these markers were to be used to award bonuses.

Beginning with its 2013 Regular Session, and continuing through the 2015 Regular Session, the Legislature included within MDE’s annual appropriation bill \$1.5 million for the pilot performance-based compensation system—i.e., a total of \$4.5 million. According to MDE staff, the department entered into a grant agreement each fiscal year with the RCU to conduct the pilot study.

² Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP), the state’s per-pupil funding formula for education.

The RCU’s pilot study included the following research questions:

1. In what way(s) is performance pay influencing teacher effectiveness and student performance in the pilot districts?
2. In what way(s) is performance pay influencing teaching and learning in the pilot districts?

During each year of the pilot, the RCU disseminated surveys to teachers and administrators in participating school districts to gain feedback on the PBC pilot, including implementation, training, and general perceptions. RCU staff administered a separate survey—States of Concern Questionnaire—twice during Year 2 of the pilot study that was designed to capture individual- and group-level concerns about the PBC pilot program. In addition to surveys, the RCU held focus groups with teachers, administrators, and central office personnel from each of the participating districts. During Year 1 and Year 2, the RCU had 3,090 participants in its focus groups and surveys. Districts in the pilot study were given autonomy in deciding goals, bonus amounts, faculty included, and other PBC components after complying with the minimum standards and guidelines of the study.

In addition to analyzing data gathered through surveys and focus groups, RCU staff performed statistical analyses on several quantitative measures of district performance, including school-level data on student achievement and teacher-evaluation scores.

Each fiscal year’s grant agreement included an amount to be sub-granted to the four pilot districts to fund performance pay for teachers and administrators who met each district’s PBC plan, which was either a district-developed plan not based on assessments used for statewide testing or a standardized plan based on the statewide accountability model. Each grant agreement also included an amount to be retained by the RCU for conducting the research study and preparing reports describing the results of the study.

Exhibit 1, below, shows how the appropriated funds for the pilot study were expended during the life of the pilot study. Amounts allocated for performance pay for each district were based on the district’s enrollment for each fiscal year of the grant.

Because the pilot districts were allowed to make decisions regarding the amounts of bonus payments to eligible employees, such payments varied, as shown below:

- Clarksdale: \$231 to \$769;
- Gulfport: \$1,000 to \$5,000;
- Lamar County: \$600 to \$1,500; and,
- Rankin County: \$400 to \$750.

Exhibit 1: Expenditure of Appropriated Funds for Performance-Based-Compensation Pilot Study

School District	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	Total
Clarksdale	\$114,615	\$113,170	\$110,833	\$338,618
Lamar County	367,707	363,070	355,575	1,086,352
Gulfport	220,703	217,919	213,421	652,043
Rankin County	718,555	709,492	694,847	2,122,894
RCU	78,420	96,349	94,566	269,335
Indirect			1,783	1,783
Total	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,471,025	\$4,471,025

NOTE: Although the Legislature appropriated \$1.5 million for FY 2016 for the pilot study, the Governor executed a budget reduction during that fiscal year, resulting in less money for the pilot study during FY 2016.

SOURCE: Mississippi State University, Research & Curriculum Unit.

In December 2015, RCU staff summarized the results of the pilot study for Years 1 and 2, as detailed below.

- A majority of teachers and administrators believed teacher compensation should be based on a combination of experience, educational credentials, and performance.
- It was unclear whether PBC negatively impacted collegiality and morale among teachers.
- Not all participating schools awarded PBC bonuses, and the percentage of teachers in a district receiving a bonus varied widely.
- PBC bonus amounts were relatively low in most districts.
- Teachers were ambivalent about PBC.
- PBC may not be the most effective way of motivating teachers.
- Participation in PBC may create some unexpected benefits, such as teachers taking more time to review student data and using it to improve practice.
- Schools and districts were in need of greater support as they plan for and implement PBC.
- Implementation of multiple new programs and initiatives at the same time was a source of stress for teachers and could cloud research findings.
- PBC programs were overshadowed by broader budgetary concerns.

In their report on Year 3 of the pilot study, RCU staff concluded that additional research on the relationship between teacher effectiveness ratings, teacher practice, and student performance was recommended, particularly if these markers were to be used to award teacher bonuses.

As stated on page 27, MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-9 (1) required MDE to submit proposed legislation based on findings from the pilot study. According to MDE staff, the department did not draft such proposed legislation but relied on RCU staff to develop the required legislation. RCU developed legislation for a “differentiated compensation plan” by analyzing the results of the pilot study and by researching other states’ performance-pay initiatives. Appendix C, page 28, presents the proposed legislation, which was not introduced during the Legislature’s 2016 Regular Session.

School Recognition Program

Enacted in 2014, the School Recognition Program established a financial award of \$100 or \$75 per pupil in average daily attendance for teachers in schools sustaining high performance or demonstrating exemplary performance by improving at least one letter grade in the state’s accountability rating system.

During its 2014 Regular Session, the Legislature enacted into law House Bill 504, which included three major provisions. H.B. 504 revised the state’s teacher minimum salary schedule for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016, limited an educational employee to receiving only one \$6,000 salary supplement for possessing a qualifying certification allowed by state law, and created the School Recognition Program to provide financial awards to public schools beginning with the 2016-2017 school year.

Exhibit 2, page 7, provides the chronology of the enactment of H.B. 504. Appendix D, page 30, details the statutory provisions of the School Recognition Program.

Exhibit 2: Chronology of Enactment of House Bill 504 (2014 Regular Session)

Date	Action
January 20, 2014	H.B. 504 introduced with the following short title: <i>An Act to Bring Forward Section 37-19-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, Which Establishes the Teachers' Salary Scale, For Purposes of Possible Amendment; and for Related Purposes.</i> The bill brought forward existing language and did not include any amendments.
February 3, 2014	House Education Committee adopted a Committee Substitute for H.B. 504 and sent it to the House Appropriations Committee, which approved the Committee Substitute on February 4 with no changes. The Committee Substitute amended the state's statutory teacher salary schedule and required the Mississippi Department of Education to establish a rubric for compensating teachers. There was no mention of the School Recognition Program in the Committee Substitute for H.B. 504.
February 5, 2014	House passes H.B. 504 (Committee Substitute) and transmits it to the Senate.
March 4, 2014	Senate Education Committee reports out a "strike-all" for H.B. 504. The "strike-all" amends the House's version of the teacher pay schedule and includes a section creating a School Recognition Program.
March 5, 2014	Senate passes H.B. 504 ("strike-all").
March 31, 2014 April 1, 2014	Senate and House adopt a Conference Report for H.B. 504 that tracks the "strike-all" version previously adopted by the Senate, with only minor revisions to the "strike-all" version.
April 22, 2014	Governor Phil Bryant signs H.B. 504, with an effective date of July 1, 2014.

SOURCE: PEER staff analysis of Legislature's bill status website.

While the financial awards provisions of MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-10 have been implemented, a plan to reward high-performing teachers in low-performing schools has not been developed.

As shown on page 31, the Legislature's stated intention in MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-10 (7) was that a plan be developed to reward high-performing teachers in low-performing schools. This provision was not included in the Senate's "strike-all" version of House Bill 504, but was inserted by conferees into the Conference Report for H.B. 504 that was adopted by the Senate and House. As shown in Appendix D, financial awards will be provided to schools that improve a letter grade in the state's accountability rating system—i.e., "F" to "D;" "D" to "C;" and "C" to "B." Presumably, the Legislature's rationale for stating an intention for a plan to be developed to reward high-performing teachers in low-performing schools is that although a school may not improve a letter grade on the state's accountability rating system there are teachers in low-performing schools who have exemplary teaching practices who should be rewarded.

According to MDE staff, the department has not proposed a plan to the Legislature to reward high-performing teachers in low-performing schools because "it was a legislative initiative."

Funding of the School Recognition Program

Since creation of the School Recognition Program, the Legislature has appropriated a total of \$98,645,826 to fund the financial awards to public schools.

MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-10 (6) creates in the State Treasury a “School Recognition Program Fund” into which appropriated funds for the program are deposited and from which the financial awards are disbursed to eligible school districts. Since the creation of the program, the Legislature has appropriated the following amounts:

- \$20,381,159 (H.B. 1502, Regular Session 2017 for FY 2018);
- \$25,251,494 (H.B. 1592, Regular Session 2018 for FY 2019);
- \$24,992,201 (H.B. 1643, Regular Session 2019 for FY 2020); and,
- \$28,020,972 (H.B. 1806, Regular Session 2020 for FY 2021).

Appendix E, page 32, shows the award amounts by school districts for FY 2018 through FY 2021.

The Mississippi Statewide Accountability System assigns a performance rating of A, B, C, D, or F for each school and district based on established criteria regarding student achievement, individual student growth, graduation rate, and participation rate. Statewide assessments, typically administered each spring, are used to measure proficiency and growth in proficiency for students in grades 3-8 and high school students taking end-of-course subject area assessments in Algebra I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History.

As shown in Appendix D, page 30, schools that achieve an “A” accountability rating can receive a financial award of \$100 per student in average daily attendance; those achieving a “B” can receive \$75 per student in average daily attendance; and those achieving an accountability rating one letter higher than their previous rating can receive \$100 per student in average daily attendance. After each year’s statewide assessments are completed, MDE staff analyzes the results and assigns an accountability rating for each school within each district. For the purposes of the School Recognition Program, MDE compiles a spreadsheet of schools that meet the criteria stated in MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-10 (2) to arrive at the total amount of state funds that need to be appropriated by the Legislature so that financial awards can be disbursed to the eligible schools.

Because statewide assessments were not administered in the spring of 2020 to determine accountability ratings for the 2020-2021 school year and because schools were allowed to retain their accountability ratings from the 2019-2020 school year, the Legislature will not have up-to-date accountability rating information on which to appropriate funds for the School Recognition Program to be disbursed during FY 2022.

Because of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, on March 19, 2020, during its regularly scheduled meeting, the State Board of Education granted approval to suspend all federal and state requirements of the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System for the 2019-2020 school year. (On March 27, 2020, MDE received a waiver from the U. S. Department of Education related to federal assessment and accountability requirements.)

Normally, assessment tests in the spring of one school year are used to determine district and school accountability ratings for the following school year with School Recognition Program award disbursement in the next fiscal year. For example, the most recent awards process would have been as follows:

- assessments would have been administered in the spring of 2020 (school year 2019-2020);

- MDE would have determined district and school accountability ratings in the fall of 2020 (school year 2020-2021) and calculated award amounts and the School Recognition Program total;
- the Legislature would appropriate School Recognition Program funds in the spring of 2021 to be disbursed during FY 2022; and,
- School Recognition Program Funds would have been disbursed in the fall of 2021 (school year and fiscal year 2021-2022).

MDE reported to school districts that, because of the suspension of the statewide assessments in the spring of 2020, the department would not have sufficient data to produce accountability determinations as required by state and federal law for the 2019-2020 school year, which would have been reported publicly in the fall of 2020. The State Board of Education, during its March 19, 2020, meeting, approved a MDE recommendation that districts and schools maintain the same accountability designation in the 2020-2021 school year as assigned in the fall of the 2019-2020 school year with no cumulative impact for cases where multiple years with the same designation could lead to a more severe consequence, such as a district with multi-year “F” ratings could face a state takeover of school operations.

Allowing districts and schools to retain their 2019-2020 accountability ratings for the 2020-2021 school year presents the Legislature with a conundrum. Basing a FY 2022 appropriation for the School Recognition Program on ratings that are not up-to-date through assessment testing could result in the Legislature appropriating more or less funds for the program than necessary. For example, allowing districts and schools to retain their previous accountability ratings does not take into account the fact that some districts might have improved in their academic performance while others might have declined—i.e., districts and schools could be overpaid or underpaid due to awards being based on a prior school year’s performance rather than the most recent school year’s performance. Given the measures that districts and schools had to comply with due to the COVID-19 pandemic—e.g., closures and virtual learning—MDE and the Legislature have no objective bases on which to fund the School Recognition Program for FY 2022. To date, the State Board of Education has not determined a policy to address this situation.

How Have the Mississippi Department of Education and the School Districts Implemented the School Recognition Program?

Mississippi's School Recognition Program is a joint effort of the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and the individual districts and schools. Through annual instructions, MDE provides the general parameters of the program, in which school districts play an administrative role in paying award amounts, such as assisting schools in calculating amounts for eligible employees, preparing supplemental contracts, and obtaining local school board approval of the supplemental contracts.

Implementation by the Mississippi Department of Education

The School Recognition Program's enabling legislation does not mandate the Mississippi Department of Education's program implementation responsibilities and does not include a definition of "staff" eligible to receive a financial incentive payment.

As described on page 3, the Mississippi Performance-Based Pay plan (MPBP) (MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-7 (4) (a) [1972]), which the Legislature did not fund, was a predecessor to the current School Recognition Program. In enacting the MPBP, the Legislature tasked the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) with developing "the MPBP policies and procedures and report to the Legislature and Governor by December 1, 2006." Unlike the MPBP legislation, House Bill 504 (2014 Regular Session) that created the School Recognition Program did not mandate that MDE develop the processes and procedures for implementation of the program, which was a novel financial incentive program that had never been administered by the department. In addition to the absence of a mandate for MDE to develop processes and procedures for the program, House Bill 504 stated that the school recognition awards could be used for nonrecurring salary supplements to teachers and staff, with no specificity or definition of *staff*. The program's enabling legislation also did not address the method for determining each employee's nonrecurring salary supplement—i.e., whether the supplements should be distributed evenly or unevenly among employees. In all likelihood, the reason House Bill 504 was silent with regard to MDE's responsibilities and lacks a definition of "staff" is because the bill is very similar to Florida's school recognition program legislation, which does not mandate any responsibilities of the Florida Department of Education and does not include a definition of "staff."

In the absence of statutory implementation guidance for the School Recognition Program, MDE staff consulted with the chairs of the Senate and House Education committees to discern the legislative intent of the program. (Neither legislator initially consulted by MDE regarding the program is currently a member of the Legislature.) MDE staff's consultation with the committee chairs resulted in the development of the initial instructions—i.e., rules and regulations—for the program, which the department disseminated to the school districts after the Legislature appropriated funds to be distributed to eligible employees during FY 2018. (See Appendix F, page 35, for the initial instructions.) In developing the initial instructions, MDE staff and the committee chairs chose to define "staff" as only certified employees who are required to hold a license issued by MDE, such as teachers, counselors, librarians, instructional coaches, etc. MDE staff stated to PEER that the department has not sought an Attorney General opinion to determine whether the department's definition of "staff" complies with the program's enabling legislation.

In subsequent years, MDE staff, in consultation with the Senate and House Education committee chairs, has revised the initial implementation instructions based on feedback received from district and school employees regarding the program. Exhibit 3, below, illustrates the major revisions that have occurred since the development of the initial instructions.

Exhibit 3: Revisions of the FY 2017-2018 District Instructions for the School Recognition Program

The initial instructions for the implementation of the School Recognition Program by the districts and schools are shown in Appendix F, page 35. Since the compilation of those instructions, the Mississippi Department of Education has issued three iterations of the instructions, with the FY 2017-2018 instructions serving as the foundation of those iterations. This exhibit presents the major revisions of the initial instructions that have occurred in subsequent fiscal years.

District Instructions for FY 2018-2019

- Added within the “Eligible Teachers and Staff” category the following:
 - *Staff from Alternative Schools, Career and Technical Education Centers, and Early College locations should be included for eligibility. (The ADA for those locations have also been added to those schools for the calculation.).*

District Instructions for FY 2019-2020

- Added within the “Eligible Teachers and Staff” category the following:
 - *The award will be evenly distributed to all eligible staff.*
- Deleted the use of Teacher Committees

District Instructions for FY 2020-2021

- Added within the “Eligible Teachers and Staff” category the following:
 - *Eligible staff include those that worked during the rating period of the eligible school and are no longer employed at that school location, but still employed within the district.*
 - *The award shall not be paid to staff that was not employed at an eligible school during FY 2018-2019.*
 - *Part-time staff shall receive half of the award allocation given to full-time staff or a prorated amount based on the percentage of time served, not to exceed regular (full-time) allocation amount.*
 - *Staff working at multiple locations shall receive a prorated amount based on the percentage of time at each location.*
 - *Eligible staff can only receive one award.*
 - *[Awards should not be paid to Administrators or Principals] unless they worked at an eligible school in an eligible position during 2018-2019.*

SOURCE: PEER analysis of district instruction, fiscal years 2018 through 2021.

Implementation by the Districts and Schools

During FY 2018 and FY 2019, teacher committees within eligible schools used varying methodologies to identify recipients of School Recognition Program award money resulting in inequitable allocations of such money to employees. MDE's instructions for FY 2020 and FY 2021 deleted the use of teacher committees and required award money to be evenly distributed to eligible employees.

As shown in Appendix F, page 35, the initial instructions for the School Recognition Program provided for teacher committees to be responsible for determining which eligible employees would receive an award and the amount of the award. The instructions allowed each teacher committee to develop the methodology on which award amounts would be based. (As noted on page 13, MDE revised the instructions for FY 2020 and FY 2021 to require awards to be distributed evenly, thereby deleting the role of teacher committees.)

To determine how teacher committees computed amounts to be awarded and identified recipients of those awards during FY 2018, PEER surveyed a sample of schools from Mississippi school districts. The following sections illustrate information provided by some of the schools.

- Five of the schools evenly distributed the school's recognition award money to the school's eligible staff during FY 2018.
- One school reported that the teacher committee chose to allocate a higher amount to employees who taught in areas subjected to state assessment tests, while employees who taught in other areas received a lesser amount. However, it does not appear that the teacher committee uniformly adhered to its own methodology because:
 - two math teachers received \$1,432.83 each;
 - two math teachers received \$477.62 each; and,
 - the school's band instructor received \$955.22, an amount twice that of six subject-area teachers.
- One school reported that its teacher committee was comprised of three teachers. In allocating award money in FY 2018, one member of the teacher committee received \$3,923.10, the highest amount awarded, while the other two members of the teacher committee received \$2,672, the second highest amount awarded. The remaining fifteen eligible certified employees received awards ranging from \$2,672 each to \$100 each.
- One school's methodology included \$2,319.54 for certified teachers in areas subjected to state assessment tests; \$1,500 for certified teachers in K-2; and \$200 for resource teachers and other certified staff.
- One school reported that the teacher committee chose to allocate the highest amount to "subject area test" teachers; the second highest amount to returning teachers, professional school counselors, and a media specialist/librarian; and a base amount to new teachers and ROTC teachers. The amounts received by the eligible employees were:
 - 2 "subject area test" teachers received \$2,200 each, one of whom was a member of the teacher committee;
 - 20 teachers/counselors/media/librarian specialist received \$1,630 each; and,
 - 20 teachers received \$300 each.

- The teacher committee at one school chose to allocate 30% of the award money to the three “core subject” teachers and to allocate the remaining award money evenly to the remaining eligible employees. The three core teachers received \$2,532.52 each, which was twice as much as the \$1,266.26 received by each of the remaining eligible employees.
- In one district, the teacher committee awarded \$1,600 to each classroom teacher and awarded \$50 to each special education teacher. At another school in the same district, the teacher committee chose to award \$1,949.20 to each classroom and special education teacher.
- In one district, the teacher committee at a high school allocated \$2,229.55 each to teachers instructing in areas subjected to state assessments and \$1,486.37 each to teachers instructing in areas that are not subjected to state assessments. The teacher committee at another high school in the same district allocated awards based on attendance, with teachers having eight or fewer absences each receiving \$1,676.84 and other teachers each receiving \$1,294.72.

In all likelihood, the use of teacher committees during the first two years of Mississippi’s School Recognition Program resulted from Mississippi’s program being similar to Florida’s program. As stated on page 16, Florida school districts use “school advisory councils,” which are statutorily required and established, to assist schools in making budgetary decisions, including the distribution of financial incentive awards. Reportedly, after the first two years of the School Recognition Program’s operation, feedback to MDE and the Senate and House Education committee chairs indicated that teachers did not believe that the distribution of award money was fair or equitable. As a result, MDE’s instructions to districts for FY 2020 and FY 2021 were revised to state that awards were to be evenly distributed to all eligible staff.

To determine how schools computed amounts to be awarded and identified recipients of those awards during FY 2020, after the deletion of teacher committees and with the revision of instructions, PEER surveyed a sample of schools from Mississippi school districts. Based on information provided to PEER, the schools complied with the requirement to distribute award money evenly among eligible employees.

While MDE has made efforts to ensure a more fair and equitable distribution of award money to eligible employees through the development of instructions for FY 2020 and FY 2021, the instructions, according to school personnel, have presented challenges for districts and schools receiving award money. For example, eligible employees who worked during a rating period at an eligible school and left employment at the school but became employed by another school in the same district may now receive an award payment—i.e., the award payment follows the employee. Prior instructions did not require such employees to receive an award payment. Also, the current instructions allow employees who work at multiple eligible schools within a district to receive a prorated award amount based on the percentage of time spent at each school, which requires the schools and districts to compute such percentages of time. Finally, MISS. CODE ANN Section 37-19-10 (1972) states that school recognition program awards shall not be used for administrators. However, in some schools, administrators (primarily principals) teach classes and a portion of their work day is spent in an eligible position. The FY 2021 instructions provide that administrators or principals may receive a prorated award amount if they worked at an eligible school in an eligible position during a rating period, which requires the schools and districts to compute such percentages of time.

Do Other States Have School Recognition Programs Similar to Mississippi's Program?

PEER identified five states, in addition to Mississippi, that have a school recognition program mandated in state law: Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, and Missouri. In addition, PEER identified three states—California, Ohio, and Virginia—that have school recognition programs established by each state's department of education. This chapter presents a summary of each state's program.

States with Statutory School Recognition Programs

Of the states analyzed by PEER that have school recognition programs mandated in state law, Mississippi is the only state that requires financial award funds to be used exclusively as salary supplements for teachers and staff.

Alabama Legislative School Performance Recognition Program

Enacted by the Alabama Legislature in 2012, the Alabama Legislative School Performance Recognition Program is codified as Ala. Code § 16-6C-3. (See Appendix G, page 37, for the statute.) The program is designed to reward public schools that either:

- demonstrate high performance by being ranked in the top 25 percent of public schools, as ranked in the Alabama school grading system; or,
- demonstrate exemplary progress by improving the overall annual ranking of the school by at least one letter grade, as ranked in the Alabama school grading system.

Rules governing how the program is to be administered and implemented are promulgated by the Alabama State Department of Education. (ASDE).

According to ASDE staff, the department compiles Alabama's annual education report card that includes the schools' performance grades, which are used to identify those schools complying with the criteria to receive a reward. ASDE staff stated that the Alabama Legislature most recently appropriated \$250,000 for the department's use as reward payments. In selecting schools to receive a current reward, the department's intent is to identify the top 25 schools that performed in the top 25 percent of public schools (the first criteria) and the top 25 schools that improved their annual ranking by at least one letter grade (the second criteria), for a total of 50 schools statewide to be rewarded. ASDE staff stated that each of the schools would receive \$5,000 as a reward, with the principal of each school, subject to the district superintendent's approval, deciding how to use the reward money.

Arkansas School Recognition Program

Enacted by the Arkansas Legislature in 2012, the Arkansas School Recognition Program is codified as Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-2107. (See Appendix H page 39, for the statute.) The program is designed to reward public or charter schools that:

- are in the top 5% of all Arkansas public schools in student performance or student academic growth, which includes high school graduation rates for secondary schools; or,
- are in the top 6% to 10% of all Arkansas public schools in student performance or student academic growth, which includes high school graduation rates for secondary schools.

Schools in the top 5% of all public schools receive a financial reward of \$100 per student, while those schools in the top 6-10% of all public schools receive a financial reward of \$50 per student. The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has promulgated rules regarding the school recognition program.

According to ADE staff, the Arkansas Legislature has included within the Public School Fund appropriation \$7 million for the past three fiscal years, for a total of \$21 million, to be used as reward payments. Section 6-15-2107 provides that a committee at each school comprised of the principal; a teacher elected by the faculty; and a parent representative selected by the local parent-teacher association shall determine how the school's financial reward will be utilized. Section 6-15-2107 provides that financial rewards can be used for:

- nonrecurring bonuses for faculty and staff;
- nonrecurring expenditures for educational equipment or materials to assist in maintaining and improving student performance; or,
- temporary personnel for the school to assist in maintaining and improving student performance.

During 2019, Arkansas' public and charter schools received a total of \$6,700,100 in financial reward payments.

Colorado School Awards Program

Enacted by the Colorado Legislature in 2009, the Colorado School Recognition Program is codified as Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 22-11-601. (See Appendix I page 41, for the statutes enacting the individual awards.) The program consists of the following types of school recognitions:

- ***John Irwin Schools of Excellence Award:*** This award is presented to schools that received an "Exceeds Expectations" rating on the Academic Achievement indicator of the School Performance Frameworks reflecting exceptional performance in Math, English Language Arts, and Science.
- ***Governor's Distinguished Improvement Award:*** This award is presented to schools that "exceed" expectations on the School Performance Frameworks indicator related to longitudinal academic growth and "meet or exceed" expectations on the indicator related to academic growth gaps.
- ***Centers of Excellence Award:*** This award is presented to public schools that enroll a student population of which at least 75% are at-risk pupils and that demonstrate the highest rates of student longitudinal growth, as measured by the Colorado Growth Model.
- ***High School Academic Growth Award:*** This award is presented to high schools that demonstrate the highest levels of students' academic growth in reading, writing, and math within each classification used by the statewide association for high school activities for the sport of football.

Although the Colorado School Recognition Program is based on student achievement for schools and districts, the Colorado Legislature does not appropriate any funds to be conferred with the recognitions. When departmental funds are available, the Colorado Department of Education hosts an awards ceremony and reception where banners, certificates, and award trophies are presented to the honoree schools.

Florida School Awards Program

Enacted by the Florida Legislature in 2002, the Florida School Recognition Program is codified as Fla. Stat. Ann. § 1008.36. (See Appendix J page 44, for the statute.) The program is designed to provide financial awards to public or charter schools that:

- sustain high performance by receiving a school grade of “A,” making excellent progress; or,
- demonstrate exemplary improvement due to innovation and effort by improving at least one letter grade or by improving more than one letter grade and sustaining the improvement the following school year.

While not included in the program’s enabling legislation, funds for the School Recognition Program are awarded by the Florida Commissioner of Education in the amount of up to \$100 per full-time equivalent student for each qualifying school.

Fla. Stat. Ann. § 1001.452 requires district school boards to establish an advisory council for each school in the district. Section 1001.452 requires each school advisory council (SAC) to be composed of the principal and an “appropriately balanced number of teachers, education support employees, students, parents, and other business and community citizens who are representative of the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school.” School advisory councils generally assist a school in the preparation of the school’s annual budget and assist in the preparation and evaluation of a school’s improvement plan required by state law.

With regard to the distribution of the school’s financial award funds, state law does not provide any guidance as to how a school’s staff and advisory council should come to an agreement on the distribution of the awards. The Florida Department of Education recommends that each district develop a policy for the distribution process. In some districts, the SAC develops one or two proposals that comply with the statutory uses of the funds. The SAC prepares a ballot with the proposal(s) along with a “none of the above” option for secret ballot voting by the school’s staff. Voting is an iterative process until one of the proposals on the ballot receives a majority of the votes. Fla. Stat. Ann. § 1008.36 states that if the school staff and the school advisory council cannot reach agreement on the distribution of the financial award funds by February 1, the awards must be equally distributed to all classroom teachers currently teaching in the school.

Section 1008.36 provides that financial rewards can be used for:

- nonrecurring bonuses to faculty and staff;
- nonrecurring expenditures for educational equipment or materials to assist in maintaining and improving student performance; or,
- temporary personnel for the school to assist in maintaining and improving student performance.

For FY 2021, the Florida Legislature appropriated \$134,582,877 for the School Recognition Program. However, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis vetoed the appropriation on June 29, 2020, as part of an effort to reduce spending in the state’s FY 2021 budget.

Missouri School Recognition and Rewards Program

Enacted by the Missouri Legislature in 2019, the Missouri School Recognition and Rewards Program is codified as Mo. Rev. Stat. § 161.1120. (See Appendix K page 45, for the statute.) The program is designed to provide incentives to schools and teachers to improve schools in need of intervention. (Subject to appropriation, Missouri state law allows the Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) to establish a school turnaround program to assist schools designated by the department as in need of intervention. The

department is required to use an outcome-based measure to set criteria for the designation of schools in need of intervention.)

Section 161.1120 creates in the state treasury the “School Recognition and Reward Fund” consisting of legislative appropriations, gifts, contributions, grants, or bequests received from federal, private, or other sources. State law provides that the DESE shall award grants from the Fund to local educational agencies with schools in need of intervention, which shall use the grants to reward eligible schools, teachers employed by eligible schools, or both the eligible schools and the teachers. The DESE has not promulgated any regulations to govern the reward program.

According to DESE staff, the Missouri Legislature has not appropriated funds for the School Recognition and Rewards Program since its creation and the program is essentially dormant.

Other States with School Recognition Programs

PEER identified at least three states with school recognition programs administered by the states’ department of education. However, none of the states provide financial incentives to schools or teachers for being recognized for exemplary academic performance.

California School Recognition

The California Department of Education recognizes California’s exemplary schools, teachers, and classified school employees for achievement and for advancing excellence in education. The California School Recognition Program involves a series of distinct events recognizing awardees in the following programs:

- California Distinguished Schools;
- California Exemplary Arts Education;
- California Exemplary Physical Activity and Nutrition Education;
- California Exemplary Career Technical Education;
- California Green Ribbon Schools;
- California Teachers of the Year;
- Civic Learning;
- Classified School Employees of the Year;
- Model Continuation High School Recognition;
- National ESEA Distinguished Schools; and,
- Superintendent’s Awards for Excellence in Museum Education.

All of the awards have specific selection criteria and typically involve an application process for potential recipients. None of the awards includes a financial incentive in the form of an appropriation from the California Legislature. However, the California Department of Education partners with sponsors—e.g., businesses, universities, or advocacy organizations—that provide financial support for award ceremony events held throughout the state.

Ohio School Performance Award Program

The Ohio State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction have established the following six awards to recognize schools:

- **Schools of Promise:** recognizes and highlights schools that are making substantial progress in ensuring high achievement for all students;
- **Schools of Honor:** recognizes schools that have sustained high achievement and substantial progress while serving a significant number of economically disadvantaged students;
- **All A Award:** recognizes districts and schools that earn straight A's on all applicable report card measures;
- **Overall A Award:** recognizes schools that earn an Overall A on their report card;
- **Momentum Award:** recognizes districts and schools for exceeding expectations in student growth for the year; and,
- **Distinguished Schools:** recognizes schools that demonstrate a wide array of strengths, including team approaches to teaching and learning, focused professional development opportunities for staff, individualized programs for student success, and strong partnerships between the school, parents, and the community.

None of Ohio's school award programs includes financial incentives for the recipients.

Virginia State Board Exemplar Program

In April 2018, the Virginia Board of Education approved the criteria for the exemplar performance school recognition program, which is aligned with the board's accreditation standards. The program consists of two awards: Highest Achievement Award and Continuous Improvement Award.

To earn the Board of Education's **Highest Achievement Award**, a school must earn a state accreditation rating of "Accredited," and meet the following benchmarks:

- 70% pass rate on state assessments in science and mathematics;
- 75% pass rate on state assessments in English reading and writing;
- no more than a 5% gap or a 10% gap in English reading and writing between the lowest-performing group and all other students in the school; and,
- no more than a 5% gap or a 10% gap in mathematics between the lowest-performing group and all other students in the school.

To earn the Board of Education's **Continuous Improvement Award**, a school must earn a state accreditation rating of Accredited or Accredited with Conditions, and meet at least one of the following benchmarks for improved performance on accreditation-related school quality indicators:

- a cumulative 10-point increase over three years in the combined rates for reading and mathematics and in the pass rate for science, with improvement each year on each indicator;
- a cumulative 10-point increase over three years in the combined rates for reading and mathematics for two or more student groups, with improvement each year for each group on both indicators;
- a cumulative 15% decrease in the chronic absenteeism rate over three years, with a decrease each year; or.
- for schools with a graduating class, a cumulative four-point increase in the Graduation and Completion Index over three years, with an increase each year, and a cumulative 15% decrease in the dropout rate, with a decrease each year.

The Virginia Exemplar Program does not include a monetary award for recipients. Currently, the only tangible recognition that schools receive is in the form of certificates and banners.

Comparison of Mississippi's School Recognition Program to Other States' Programs

Enacted twelve years later, Mississippi's School Recognition Program has many of the same attributes of the Florida School Recognition Program that was enacted in 2002. However, unlike Florida's program, the Mississippi program only allows schools to use financial award funds for salary supplements to teachers.

Of the five states with school recognition programs written into state law analyzed by PEER, Mississippi's School Recognition Program is most similar to the program enacted by the Florida Legislature in 2002. Florida's school recognition program was an outgrowth of former-Governor Jeb Bush's "A+ Plan," which included high curriculum standards with annual testing for grades 3-10, an A to F school grade system, rewarding success through various bonus plans, and school choice. When designing Mississippi's school recognition program legislation, it is apparent that Mississippi legislators drew heavily from the Florida legislation, as described below:

- Both programs have an almost identical declaration by the Legislature: *The Legislature finds that there is a need for a performance incentive program for outstanding teachers and staff in highly productive schools.* The Florida legislation uses the word "faculty" rather than "teachers."
- One reason schools could receive financial awards is almost identical in both states' legislation: *Sustain high performance by earning a school accountability rating of "A."* The Florida legislation uses the word "receiving" rather than "earning."
- Another reason schools could receive financial awards is almost identical in both states' legislation: *Demonstrate exemplary performance in improving at least one (1) letter grade.* The Florida legislation uses the word "improvement" rather than "performance."
- Mississippi schools' allowable use of financial awards is almost identical to a use allowed by Florida schools: *Nonrecurring salary supplements to the teachers and staff...* The Florida legislation uses the word "bonuses" rather than "salary supplements" and the word "faculty" rather than "teachers."

There are three distinct differences between the Mississippi legislation and the Florida legislation. Mississippi state law allows schools earning a "B" rating to receive financial awards, while Florida state law does not specifically mention schools earning a "B" rating as being eligible to receive financial awards. In addition, Mississippi state law mandates the amount of financial awards to be received by schools meeting the recognition criteria—i.e., \$100 or \$75 per pupil—while Florida state law does not mandate a specific award amount per pupil. (As stated on page 16, the Florida Commissioner of Education provides an amount of up to \$100 per full-time equivalent pupil for each qualifying school receiving an award.) Finally, Mississippi state law only allows qualifying schools receiving a financial award to use the funds for nonrecurring salary supplements to teachers and staff in the schools. As stated on page 16, Florida state law allows schools to use their financial award funds as nonrecurring bonuses to faculty and staff, as well as educational equipment/materials and employment of temporary personnel.

There is one similarity between the Mississippi and Florida legislation that has been interpreted differently by each state's school districts. Both states allow school recognition financial incentives to be provided to *teachers* (Mississippi)/*faculty* (Florida)

and *staff*. During the first year of Mississippi's School Recognition Program, the Senate and House Education committee chairs (who are no longer members of the Legislature) and MDE staff agreed that financial incentives would be provided to certified employees only, although Mississippi's law included the designation of *staff* as a potential recipient of such money. (Mississippi's law does state that school recognition awards shall not be used for administrators.) In Florida, school districts have provided their school recognition financial incentives to teachers, along with other school employees, such as administrators, non-instructional staff, substitutes, retirees, and custodial employees.

By including specific amounts per pupil to be received by schools meeting performance criteria, Mississippi's school recognition program legislation is also similar to that of Arkansas, which includes specific amounts—\$100 and \$50 per pupil—to be received by schools achieving high student performance and high student academic growth. However, Mississippi's legislation differs from the Arkansas legislation because, like the Florida school recognition legislation, the Arkansas legislation allows schools to use their financial award funds as nonrecurring bonuses to faculty and staff, as well as educational equipment/materials and employment of temporary personnel. Mississippi's legislation limits school financial award funds to be used only for teacher salary supplements.

Does Research Support the Effectiveness of School Recognition Programs?

Any discussion of the effects of merit pay programs should begin with a disclaimer—there are many distinct programs that fall under the general name of “merit pay,” there are many desired effects to be achieved with such programs, and the specific implementation of a merit pay program affects what outcomes can be expected to be achieved. As such, while there are literature reviews³ and even meta-analyses⁴ on the subject,⁵ generalizations from those to the expected performance of any given plan, including Mississippi’s plan, should be undertaken only with great caution.

Individual vs. Group Assessment and Reward

The literature on merit pay programs includes discussion of both individual and group incentive plans.⁶ That is, an individual-based merit pay plan tracks outcomes nominally attributable to individual teachers and rewards those teachers for improvement. For instance, Dee and Wyckoff⁷ discuss a plan that uses a variety of measures attributed to individual teachers to assess eligibility for a similarly individual pay raise.

This sort of plan makes intuitive sense if one assumes the goal of a merit pay plan is to improve pedagogical performance—e.g., by adopting more effective teaching methods (improving quality of individual teaching) or by spending extra time on tutoring (improving quantity of individual teaching). Individual-based awards should motivate individual performance.

There are complications to individual-level rewards—i.e., no teacher teaches in a vacuum, nor are the effects of one teacher’s effort easily isolated from those attributable to other teachers, peers, and the broader school environment. Additionally, individual-level rewards may contribute to competition rather than collegiality among faculty; since cooperation is often taken to be good for performance, individual-level merit pay programs may have unintended negative effects by virtue of this assessment and reward structure.

Some merit pay plans provide rewards to a group—e.g., such plans might assess and reward whole schools, grades, or subjects. For instance, Goodman and Turner⁸ discuss a program in New York in which the majority of participating schools assigned schoolwide bonuses based on test scores. (This study is particularly noteworthy in that schools were allowed to essentially design their own merit pay scheme; in at least this one case, those

³ Podgursky, M., & Springer, M. G. (2007). *Credentials versus Performance: Review of the Teacher Performance Pay Research*. Peabody Journal of Education, 82(4), 551-573.

⁴ Pham, L. D., Nguyen, T. D., & Springer, M. G. (2017, June). Teacher merit pay and student test scores: A meta-analysis. In Association for Education Finance and Policy Annual Meeting, Washington, DC.

⁵ A literature review, like this one, seeks to cover what has been written on a subject and draw general conclusions. A meta-analysis is a method of combining distinct statistical analyses of the same subject matter in order to, at least theoretically, draw a mathematically rigorous conclusion about the overarching results of those analyses.

⁶ E.g., Imberman, S. A. (2015). “How effective are financial incentives for teachers?” IZA World of Labor.

⁷ Dee, T., and J. Wyckoff. “Incentives, Selection, and Teacher Performance: Evidence from IMPACT.” NBER Working Paper No. 19529, 2013.

⁸ Goodman, S. F., and L. J. Turner. “The design of teacher incentive pay and educational outcomes: Evidence from the New York City bonus program.” *Journal of Labor Economics* 31:2 (2013): 409-420.

responsible for choosing the plan believed that group rewards were more desirable than individual ones, though the reasons for this decision are not clear.)

However, group-level merit pay programs themselves may have unintended consequences—i.e., notably, this sort of program may encourage free-riding, in which some teachers exert less effort because individual effort is neither measured nor rewarded.

It is worth noting that these concerns with individual- versus group-level reward structures are primarily theoretical, rather than empirical. They assume a fairly simplified motivational structure among teachers. It may instead be the case that, while teachers desire greater pay, their primary motivation for exerting effort in the classroom is the well-being of the students, and thus that variations in the locus of financial incentive do not serve to increase or decrease effort. In any case, PEER's literature search did not find any empirical studies designed to validly assess the effects of individual vs. group reward structures.

Methods of Measuring Merit

The locus of measurement and reward is not the only way that merit pay systems can differ from one another. Perhaps the most important difference among existing merit pay systems is in the definition of merit itself. There are many different ways of measuring merit; so many that with the exception of different studies conducted on the same program at the same time,⁹ no two studies examined by PEER measured merit in exactly the same way.

Standardized test scores are at least a part of merit assessment in the overwhelming majority of studies reviewed by PEER. By their very nature, being standardized and usually expressed in numeric form, these test scores lend themselves to a system of evaluation. But different standardized tests, even those nominally testing the same underlying attribute, define what they test differently. It is an empirical question to what degree any two tests measure the same thing, and thus not one whose answer can be assumed. In other words, the results of a study discussing merit pay as defined in terms of one standard test cannot be assumed to generalize to a merit pay plan defined in terms of another. This affects Mississippi's public policymakers' ability to take results from the literature—i.e., any merit pay plan based on standardized tests unique to this state will at best be able to take only indirect lessons from even the most rigorous literature using other tests.

The use of standardized test scores in merit pay plans faces further choices. The use of unmodified test scores runs a risk—i.e., since not every student has equivalent test-taking ability, a comparison of unmodified test scores is at least partially a comparison of the students assigned to a teacher, classroom, school, or subject. This practice conflates the contributions of the student with those of the entity being measured. This conflation is difficult to avoid when using tests designed for measuring student ability as a tool to measure other things.

A frequent attempt to solve this problem involves the use of modified standardized test scores, which in this context will be subsumed under the name “value-added modeling.”¹⁰

⁹ E.g., Fryer, R. G. “Teacher incentives and student achievement: Evidence from New York City public schools.” *Journal of Labor Economics* 31:2 (2013): 373–407 and Goodman, S. F., and L. J. Turner. “The design of teacher incentive pay and educational outcomes: Evidence from the New York City bonus program.” *Journal of Labor Economics* 31:2 (2013): 409–420.

¹⁰ In the current context, value-added models include very simple attempts to control for student ability like the comparison of growth scores. While a detailed discussion of the mathematical aspects of standardized test scores is beyond the scope of this report, it is worth saying that even these comparatively simple methods face many of the problems mentioned above; the

Value-added modeling is the attempt to mathematically modify standardized test scores to control for student ability, in order to gain a truer picture of the contributions of the entity of interest (e.g., teachers, classrooms, or schools). Value-added modeling has the benefit of increasing prima facie fairness; however, it does bring its own challenges for merit pay plans. From the perspective of teachers and schools under a merit-pay plan, value-added models may lack transparency. It is often difficult to reproduce the calculations going into a value-added model, which means that educators may not be able to see any relationship between their efforts and rewards. But perhaps even more importantly, value-added models do not obviously have the ability to support the strong inferences about educator merit necessary in a high-stakes scenario like a merit pay plan.¹¹

For Mississippi's School Recognition program—i.e., merit pay plan—, a lesson that might be drawn is that there are pitfalls in the use of standardized tests in a merit pay plan, whether those tests are modified in a value-added model or not. This is not the same as saying that standardized tests should not be used; it is simply a recognition that any novel merit pay plan should be designed with an eye toward avoiding these well-documented issues.

Merit pay plans often combine their use of standardized test scores with classroom observation data or teacher evaluations. The literature generally supports this practice,¹² with the caveat that care should be taken that the other sources of data are representative and objective, rather than producing results that merely reproduce existing salary hierarchies.

Distinctions Among Outcomes

A public policymaker should be cautious in drawing conclusions from the literature on merit pay plans' ability to affect valuable outcomes. The literature generally agrees that tying financial rewards to the results of a particular evaluative mechanism results in at least short-term improvement on that mechanism.¹³ But this should not be taken to mean that they produce the outcomes that are desired. Even validated tests may relate poorly to the life outcomes actually valued;¹⁴ even short-term improvement on a standardized test does not guarantee long-term improvement in what the test measures.¹⁵

Additionally, some studies have found that merit pay plans may achieve their results only in a way contrary to their original intention. Public policymakers should be careful about a plan that too explicitly ties financial incentive to particular, gameable tests, because such a plan incentivizes undesirable responses, like cheating and teaching to the test, in addition to desirable ones like additional pedagogical time or effort.¹⁶

mathematical work necessary for a standardized test to support straightforward measurements of growth is both difficult and rare.

¹¹ Pivovarov, M., Amrein-Beardsley, A., & Broatch, J. (2016). Value-added models (VAMs): Caveat emptor. *Statistics and Public Policy*, 3(1), 1-9.

¹² E.g., Ballou, D., & Springer, M.G. Using Student Test Scores to Measure Teacher Performance: Some Problems in the Design and Implementation of Evaluation Systems. *Educational Researcher*. 2015;44(2):77-86.

¹³ E.g., Podgursky, M., & Springer, M. G. (2007). Credentials versus performance: Review of the teacher performance pay research. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 82(4), 551-573.

¹⁴ Allensworth, E. M., & Clark, K. (2020). High School GPAs and ACT Scores as Predictors of College Completion: Examining Assumptions About Consistency Across High Schools. *Educational Researcher*, 49(3), 198-211.

¹⁵ Glewwe, P., Ilias, N., & Kremer, M. (2010). Teacher incentives. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 2(3), 205-27.

¹⁶ One example of the unintended consequences of a merit pay system is given in Eberts, R., Hollenbeck, K., & Stone, J. (2002). Teacher performance incentives and student outcomes. *Journal of Human Resources*, 37, 913-927. Ballou and Springer present an empirical analysis regarding

Conclusions from the Literature

For all of the reasons stated on pages 21 through 23, public policymakers should be careful in attempting to draw lessons from the literature on merit pay plans.

Plans may be designed in very different ways, to assess and reward groups or individuals; they may measure merit in many different ways, including by modified or unmodified standardized test data, with or without supplement from additional data. As such, conclusions drawn from even the most rigorous study of a particular merit pay plan may not generalize to another case, in particular Mississippi's School Recognition Program.

With these extensive caveats in mind, some general conclusions can be drawn. A rigorous meta-analysis of the literature on merit pay plans concludes that, in general, they have statistically significant positive effects on student test scores.¹⁷ This holds true even if the studies in the meta-analysis is limited to randomized controlled trials, the most rigorous subset of the literature. However, this meta-analysis should be thought of as an average of existing efforts, not a projection about what might be achieved in Mississippi.

Taken individually, there are a number of rigorous, randomized trials of merit pay plans that show no effects or even negative effects, alongside the more positive trials. This may be due to the differential effectiveness of different merit pay plan designs—i.e., it may be that choices made regarding factors mentioned in this review affect the outcomes of merit pay plans. But the literature is not set up to support generalizable conclusions on this subject; from the fact that different designs had different effectiveness in particular incarnations, it does not follow that the different designs caused that differential effectiveness.

In designing a merit pay plan for educators, Mississippi public policy makers should be aware that while the literature does support the idea that the big and diverse tent of merit pay contains mostly successful experiments, there is simply insufficient data to say very much at all about how an individual, new program will turn out, or even about why the existing successes are successful and the failures fail.

Podgursky and Springer offer advice regarding merit pay plans: “Although the literature is not sufficiently robust to prescribe how systems should be designed (e.g., optimal size of bonuses, mix of individual vs. group incentives), it is sufficiently positive to suggest that further experiments and pilot programs by districts and states are in order. As these are introduced, however, it is important to bring them out in a way that makes [for] effective evaluation.”¹⁸ For Mississippi, this means a limited-scale pilot set up for fully randomized evaluation rather than a statewide rollout; it also means careful consideration of the goals the state wants to achieve with this program and thoughtful operationalization of the measures the state uses to assess merit, with an eye toward the concerns discussed in this chapter.

the potential for high-stakes standardized tests to incentivize illicit test-coaching in Ballou, D., & Springer, M. G. (2015). Using student test scores to measure teacher performance: Some problems in the design and implementation of evaluation systems. *Educational Researcher*, 44(2), 77-86.

¹⁷ Pham, L. D., Nguyen, T. D., & Springer, M. G. (2017, June). “Teacher merit pay and student test scores: A meta-analysis.” In Association for Education Finance and Policy Annual Meeting, Washington, DC.

¹⁸ Podgursky, M., & Springer, M. G. (2007). *Credentials versus Performance: Review of the Teacher Performance Pay Research*. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 82(4), 551-573.

Recommendations

1. The Legislature should consider amending MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-10 (1972) to require the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) to promulgate rules and regulations for the administration of the School Recognition Program. For information purposes, such rules and regulations should be provided to the chairs of the Senate and House Education committees by June 1 of each calendar year.
2. If the intent of the Legislature is for certified employees of a school to be the only eligible recipients of School Recognition Program awards, the Legislature should consider amending Section 37-19-10 (4) by deleting the word ***staff*** and stating that the awards must be used for nonrecurring salary supplements for ***certified employees*** of the school receiving the financial award.
3. If the Legislature intends to appropriate School Recognition Program award money during the 2021 Regular Session to be distributed during FY 2022, MDE staff should make a recommendation to the Senate and House Appropriation and Education committees regarding a basis on which to compute the amount needed for the award program since state assessments, which produce the schools' accountability ratings that have been the basis for the award amount in the past, were not conducted during the spring of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. MDE's rules and regulations should require each school receiving financial award money to post on its website the total amount of award money received by the school's certified employees and the reason for the receipt of such money—e.g., the school achieved an "A" accountability rating, etc.

Appendix A: Mississippi Performance-Based Pay Plan, MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-7 (4)

- a) This section shall be known and may be cited as the “Mississippi Performance-Based Pay (MPBP)” plan. In addition to the minimum base pay described in this section, only after full funding of MAEP and if funds are available for that purpose, the State of Mississippi may provide monies from state funds to school districts for the purposes of rewarding certified teachers, administrators and non-licensed personnel at individual schools showing improvement in student test scores. The MPBP plan shall be developed by the State Department of Education based on the following criteria:
- i. It is the express intent of this legislation that the MPBP plan shall utilize only existing standards of accreditation and assessment as established by the State Board of Education.
 - ii. To ensure that all of Mississippi’s teachers, administrators and nonlicensed personnel at all schools have equal access to the monies set aside in this section, the MPBP program shall be designed to calculate each school’s performance as determined by the school’s increase in scores from the prior school year. The MPBP program shall be based on a standardized scores rating where all levels of schools can be judged in a statistically fair and reasonable way upon implementation. At the end of each year, after all student achievement scores have been standardized, the State Department of Education shall implement the MPBP plan.
 - iii. To ensure all teachers cooperate in the spirit of teamwork, individual schools shall submit a plan to the local school district to be approved before the beginning of each school year beginning July 1, 2008. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, how all teachers, regardless of subject area, and administrators will be responsible for improving student achievement for their individual school.
- b) The State Board of Education shall develop the processes and procedures for designating schools eligible to participate in the MPBP. State assessment results, growth in student achievement at individual schools and other measures deemed appropriate in designating successful student achievement shall be used in establishing MPBP criteria. The State Board of Education shall develop the MPBP policies and procedures and report to the Legislature and Governor by December 1, 2006.

SOURCE: Mississippi CODE Annotated Section 37-19-7 (4).

Appendix B: Pilot-Performance-Based Compensation System, MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-9 (1)

- 1) There is established a Pilot-Performance-Based Compensation System for school years 2013-2015.
 - a) Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, a pilot study will be conducted in Lamar County, Clarksdale, Gulfport and Rankin County School Districts as outlined in subsection (2) of this section. Measures of effective instruction, instrumentation, student learning growth and performance evaluation results will be collected. Reporting data from the pilot study will be disseminated to all school districts.
 - b) The results of the pilot study in the four (4) districts in combination with Teacher Improvement Fund (TIF), School Improvement Grant (SIG), and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Districts will be collected and analyzed by the Mississippi State University Research and Curriculum Unit and reported to the Department of Education for policy recommendations. Effective with the 2014-2015 school year, the school districts participating in the Pilot Performance-Based Compensation System pursuant to this section may award additional teacher and administrator pay based thereon.
 - c) Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, the Department of Education will develop proposed legislation based on pilot results for statewide implementation of a Performance-Based Compensation System.
 - d) Recommended legislation will be reported to the Chairs of the House and Senate Education Committees and the Governor by November 30, 2015, for consideration during the 2016 Regular Session of the Legislature.

NOTE: Subsection (2) of Section 37-19-9, which is not presented in the exhibit, details the components that must be included in the statewide performance compensation system for instructional personnel and school administrators.

SOURCE: Mississippi CODE Annotated Section 37-19-9 (1).

Appendix C: Proposed Legislation Developed by the MSU Research & Curriculum Unit

1. This section shall be known and may be cited as the “Differentiated Compensation (DC)” plan.
2. Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, local districts may establish salary schedules and incentive programs for teachers and certified staff based on criteria other than years of service and degrees. A salary schedule adopted by a school district that includes performance measures and criteria other than years of service and degrees shall be known as a differentiated compensation (DC) plan. The State of Mississippi may provide monies from state funds to school districts for the purpose of funding the incentive components of a DC plan. Incentives may be awarded to certified teachers and other instructional faculty/staff who demonstrate educational excellence, assume additional academic responsibilities, and/or fill hard-to-staff positions. Local DC plans shall be developed by districts in consultation with and approved by the Mississippi Department of Education.
3. The local DC plans shall be based on the following criteria:
 - a) Effectiveness
 - I. As determined by the educator evaluation system adopted by the Mississippi Department of Education for teachers, counselors, principals, and other certified staff, and
 - II. Other locally established criteria that are objective, reliable, and measurable.
 - b) Employment in a hard-to-staff subject area, grade level, or school.
 - c) Service in roles that require additional academic responsibilities, such as, but not limited to, mentors, academic coaches, lead teachers, and department heads. This does not include supplements for coaching or other extra-curricular student activities.
4. All Mississippi school districts shall be eligible to receive available state grants for incentivizing instructional faculty/staff as part of a DC program.
5. Districts shall have flexibility in determining the allocation of their funds so long as they follow DC guidelines and the district’s approved DC plan. Each district DC plan must be developed in consultation with teachers and other staff impacted by the district plan. Each district shall submit the DC plan, which should align with the district’s goals and vision, to the State Department of Education for approval.
6. In no case shall a district reduce the salary of a teacher below that paid to a teacher employed in the same district in the prior year.
7. No state funds for DC incentive components may be used to provide supplements for athletic or other extracurricular duties.
8. DC payments to individuals may take the form of either additional base compensation or a one-time payment. DC payments, especially for teachers, should be substantial enough to be meaningful. Districts may not divide their allocation equally among all teachers qualifying for a payment; rather, exact payment amounts should be finalized and communicated to teachers prior to the beginning of each school year and no later than 30 days after the start of the school year. Excess funds remaining at the end of the year may be retained by the

district for DC payments in following years. Districts shall be allowed to equally prorate payments should their allocation not be sufficient to cover payments for all qualifying teachers at the previously stipulated amount.

9. Districts shall retain the authority to allocate local and MAEP funding to teacher salaries or stipends as desired.
10. Districts may choose to fund an approved DC plan without additional state funds.
11. As the State Department of Education sets qualification criteria for DC funds, it shall do so in a way that strives to include educators in schools across all performance categories in the state accountability model (i.e., A, B, C, D, and F). School qualification for participation in DC should be based on multiple measures; school accountability rating shall not be the only qualifying factor.
12. Funding for the DC plan shall be provided by the State of Mississippi as part of its allocation for MAEP funding. The DC plan shall only be enacted in years when MAEP is fully funded and when funds are available.
13. This legislation will establish and fund a DC office at the State Department of Education beginning July 1, 2016. This office will be responsible for:
 - I. Setting policies and procedures for district DC plans and statewide implementation
 - II. Approving district DC plans and disbursing any available funds to districts
 - III. Providing technical assistance to districts with DC plan development and implementation
 - IV. Developing a process for monitoring and evaluating the impact of DC
 - V. Beginning July 1, 2016, no more than 5% of the annual state DC plan allocation shall be used by the State Department of Education to fund this office.

SOURCE: Mississippi State University Research & Curriculum Unit.

Appendix D: School Recognition Program, MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-19-10 (1972)

- 1) The Legislature finds that there is a need for a performance incentive program for outstanding teachers and staff in highly productive schools.
- 2) Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, the School Recognition Program is created to provide financial awards to public schools that:
 - a) Sustain high performance by earning a school accountability rating of "A" which shall be funded at One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) per pupil in average daily attendance;
 - b) Sustain high performance by earning a school accountability rating of "B" which shall be funded at Seventy-Five Dollars (\$75.00) per pupil in average daily attendance; or
 - c) Demonstrate exemplary performance by improving at least one (1) letter grade, which shall be funded at One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) per pupil in average daily attendance.
- 3) All public schools, including charter schools, earning the appropriate school rating are eligible to participate in the program.
- 4) School recognition awards must be used for nonrecurring salary supplements to the teachers and staff employed in the school receiving the financial award. Any nonrecurring salary supplements paid to teachers and staff shall be prospective, shall be paid over the remainder of the year, and shall not be considered part of the local supplement. For contracted individuals, there shall be an amendment to the existing contract.
- 5) School recognition awards shall not be used for administrators.
- 6) There is hereby created in the State Treasury, the School Recognition Program Fund which shall be used by the State Department of Education, depending on the availability of funds as appropriated, to provide financial awards to schools under this section. It shall be the duty of the State Department of Education to file with the State Treasurer and the State Fiscal Officer such data and information as may be required to enable the said State Treasurer and State Fiscal Officer to distribute the School Recognition Program Funds by electronic funds transfer to the several school districts at the time required and provided under the provisions of this section. Such data and information so filed shall show in detail the amount of funds to which each school district is entitled from the School Recognition Program Fund. Such data and information so filed may be revised from time to time as necessitated by law. At the time provided by law, the State Treasurer and the State Fiscal Officer shall distribute to the several school districts the amounts to which they are entitled from the School Recognition Program Fund as provided by this section. Such distribution shall be made by electronic funds transfer to the depositories of the several school districts designated in writing to the State Treasurer based upon the data and information supplied by the State Department of Education for such distribution. In such instances, the State Treasurer shall submit a request for an electronic funds transfer to the State Fiscal Officer, which shall set forth the purpose, amount and payees, and shall be in such form as may be approved by the State Fiscal Officer so as to provide the necessary information as would be required for a requisition and issuance of a

warrant. A copy of the record of said electronic funds transfers shall be transmitted by the school district depositories to the Treasurer, who shall file duplicates with the State Fiscal Officer. The Treasurer and State Fiscal Officer shall jointly promulgate regulations for the utilization of electronic funds transfers to school districts from the School Recognition Program Fund.

- 7) It is the intent of the Legislature to develop a plan to reward high-performing teachers in schools with an accountability rating of "C," "D" and "F" by July 1, 2016.

SOURCE: Mississippi CODE Annotated Section 37-19-10.

Appendix E: Mississippi School Recognition Program Awards, FY 2018 through FY 2021

School District	FY 2018 Awards [^]	FY 2019 Awards [^]	FY 2020 Awards [^]	FY 2021 Awards [^]	Total for Four FYs
Aberdeen	\$51,547	\$30,902	\$106,378	\$0	\$188,827
Alcorn	\$179,770	\$205,652	\$165,671	\$278,738	\$829,831
Amite County	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$37,312	\$37,312
Amory	\$36,337	\$152,773	\$137,086	\$133,513	\$459,709
Attala County	\$23,802	\$24,285	\$53,411	\$45,947	\$147,445
Baldwyn	\$33,163	\$74,270	\$22,649	\$71,162	\$201,244
Bay St Louis Waveland	\$114,551	\$90,547	\$110,433	\$160,625	\$476,156
Benton County	\$18,276	\$97,272	\$24,653	\$70,962	\$211,163
Biloxi Public	\$408,978	\$463,705	\$549,215	\$549,593	\$1,971,491
Booneville	\$109,733	\$101,652	\$121,230	\$97,394	\$430,009
Brookhaven	\$132,049	\$69,728	\$41,464	\$39,186	\$282,427
Calhoun County	\$115,883	\$33,228	\$82,319	\$123,390	\$353,820
Canton Public	\$123,768	\$146,906	\$89,103	\$160,955	\$520,732
Carroll County	\$43,739	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$43,739
Chickasaw County	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Choctaw County	\$47,236	\$51,197	\$120,922	\$99,189	\$318,544
Claiborne County	\$0	\$106,073	\$96,037	\$17,942	\$220,052
Clarksdale Municipal	\$46,040	\$134,540	\$23,679	\$116,490	\$320,749
Cleveland	\$81,739	\$145,123	\$117,603	\$94,337	\$438,802
Clinton	\$342,978	\$464,353	\$477,211	\$443,507	\$1,728,049
Coahoma County AHS	\$0	\$27,839	\$0	\$0	\$27,839
Coahoma County	\$22,234	\$35,675	\$63,864	\$40,720	\$162,493
Coffeeville	\$0	\$31,295	\$0	\$17,589	\$48,884
Columbia	\$86,836	\$85,770	\$108,719	\$119,318	\$400,643
Columbus Municipal	\$102,146	\$98,859	\$187,674	\$125,929	\$514,608
Copiah County	\$118,250	\$138,761	\$119,135	\$177,952	\$554,098
Corinth	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$178,407	\$178,407
Covington County	\$118,589	\$83,871	\$73,273	\$208,757	\$484,490
DeSoto County	\$2,140,105	\$2,303,604	\$2,516,231	\$2,328,971	\$9,288,911
Durant Public	\$0	\$50,540	\$0	\$0	\$50,540
East Jasper Consolidated	\$0	\$59,567	\$35,606	\$70,037	\$165,210
East Tallahatchie Consolidated	\$0	\$58,929	\$47,759	\$22,656	\$129,344
Enterprise	\$75,827	\$82,363	\$86,924	\$77,602	\$322,716
Forest Municipal	\$98,547	\$37,220	\$69,352	\$69,825	\$274,944
Forrest County AHS	\$39,254	\$39,537	\$0	\$0	\$78,791
Forrest County	\$105,354	\$91,421	\$119,186	\$160,448	\$476,409
Franklin County	\$70,710	\$64,452	\$73,316	\$63,473	\$271,951
George County	\$164,665	\$246,820	\$269,461	\$198,167	\$879,113
Greene County	\$140,467	\$75,216	\$50,369	\$96,497	\$362,549
Greenville Public	\$35,551	\$239,570	\$179,962	\$93,564	\$548,647
Greenwood Public	\$70,503	\$202,914	\$85,353	\$33,766	\$392,536
Grenada	\$78,862	\$225,852	\$322,528	\$320,153	\$947,395
Gulfport	\$395,958	\$443,877	\$417,134	\$419,563	\$1,676,532
Hancock County	\$371,459	\$168,115	\$288,842	\$377,982	\$1,206,398
Harrison County	\$602,924	\$1,018,706	\$1,088,252	\$987,401	\$3,697,283
Hattiesburg Public	\$50,339	\$165,391	\$74,648	\$196,765	\$487,143
Hazlehurst City	\$27,811	\$36,537	\$0	\$100,814	\$165,162
Hinds County	\$358,066	\$194,127	\$326,097	\$63,534	\$941,824
Hollandale	\$0	\$54,140	\$0	\$23,689	\$77,829
Holly Springs	\$75,742	\$28,032	\$0	\$52,697	\$156,471
Holmes County	\$64,067	\$70,536	\$79,540	\$28,798	\$242,941
Houston	\$39,006	\$164,860	\$121,208	\$99,354	\$424,428
Humphreys County	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$77,935	\$77,935
Itawamba County	\$135,335	\$182,858	\$57,044	\$278,753	\$653,990
Jackson County	\$764,177	\$689,429	\$657,355	\$731,587	\$2,842,548
Jackson Public	\$458,742	\$861,126	\$824,709	\$ 898,758	\$3,043,335
Jefferson County	\$0	\$51,742	\$0	\$57,317	\$109,059
Jefferson Davis County	\$25,837	\$100,277	\$39,899	\$90,558	\$256,571

Jones County	\$561,977	\$293,096	\$397,961	\$598,784	\$1,851,818
Kemper County	\$14,703	\$44,996	\$36,859	\$0	\$96,558
Kosciusko	\$38,038	\$97,038	\$146,693	\$99,655	\$381,424
Lafayette County	\$191,313	\$217,649	\$249,952	\$228,915	\$887,829
Lamar County	\$535,586	\$766,665	\$854,299	\$864,360	\$3,020,910
Lauderdale County	\$383,244	\$403,616	\$294,688	\$432,787	\$1,514,335
Laurel	\$136,482	\$150,832	\$61,298	\$77,402	\$426,014
Lawrence County	\$29,633	\$113,986	\$71,713	\$56,793	\$272,125
Leake County	\$43,587	\$182,410	\$0	\$258,529	\$484,526
Lee County	\$182,581	\$417,801	\$209,680	\$360,165	\$1,170,227
Leflore County	\$112,004	\$38,629	\$149,141	\$56,382	\$356,156
Leland	\$0	\$40,217	\$32,195	\$21,039	\$93,451
Lincoln County	\$58,244	\$134,469	\$54,786	\$265,807	\$513,306
Long Beach	\$286,492	\$193,690	\$281,450	\$234,364	\$995,996
Louisville Municipal	\$124,689	\$86,047	\$127,440	\$201,593	\$539,769
Lowndes County	\$274,300	\$317,591	\$376,574	\$391,967	\$1,360,432
Lumberton Public	\$0	\$14,554	\$31,603	\$0	\$46,157
Madison County	\$800,118	\$1,001,805	\$965,925	\$1,158,484	\$3,926,332
Marion County	\$42,056	\$87,201	\$69,963	\$118,970	\$318,190
Marshall County	\$105,332	\$122,993	\$97,565	\$67,820	\$393,710
McComb	\$94,337	\$63,571	\$92,249	\$58,365	\$308,522
Meridian Public	\$70,295	\$211,005	\$61,868	\$193,311	\$536,479
Midtown Public Charter	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$23,404	\$23,404
Monroe County	\$0	\$109,170	\$34,997	\$196,704	\$340,871
Montgomery County	\$0	\$23,237	\$12,306	\$0	\$35,543
Moss Point Separate	\$0	\$134,728	\$41,789	\$50,144	\$226,661
Natchez-Adams	\$75,314	\$189,006	\$103,379	\$114,897	\$482,596
Neshoba County	\$190,268	\$88,372	\$209,872	\$278,200	\$766,712
Nettleton	\$45,775	\$35,235	\$113,809	\$27,941	\$222,760
New Albany Public	\$154,445	\$191,069	\$128,726	\$196,827	\$671,067
Newton County	\$81,715	\$169,223	\$0	\$163,650	\$414,588
Newton Municipal	\$36,430	\$45,543	\$99,308	\$43,062	\$224,343
North Bolivar Consolidated	\$40,558	\$34,076	\$24,011	\$24,899	\$123,544
North Panola	\$0	\$42,386	\$59,502	\$37,888	\$139,776
North Pike	\$67,417	\$67,510	\$73,666	\$154,565	\$363,158
North Tippah	\$126,559	\$24,988	\$98,060	\$71,645	\$321,252
Noxubee County	\$0	\$43,030	\$81,576	\$0	\$124,606
Ocean Springs	\$398,552	\$459,586	\$532,786	\$551,170	\$1,942,094
Okolona Separate	\$0	\$35,782	\$62,794	\$0	\$98,576
Oxford	\$343,026	\$376,263	\$365,936	\$355,499	\$1,440,724
Pascagoula Gautier	\$332,251	\$360,251	\$401,738	\$426,898	\$1,521,138
Pass Christian	\$158,017	\$121,614	\$179,853	\$178,354	\$637,838
Pearl Public	\$239,563	\$335,611	\$293,580	\$311,764	\$1,180,518
Pearl River County	\$130,221	\$211,552	\$257,565	\$246,323	\$845,661
Perry County	\$29,870	\$44,941	\$0	\$70,446	\$145,257
Petal	\$317,593	\$370,676	\$382,692	\$388,895	\$1,459,856
Philadelphia Public	\$13,882	\$84,451	\$0	\$89,746	\$188,079
Picayune	\$167,490	\$66,078	\$151,063	\$211,115	\$595,746
Pontotoc City	\$144,805	\$117,713	\$147,049	\$205,540	\$615,107
Pontotoc County	\$204,629	\$120,013	\$253,057	\$286,783	\$864,482
Poplarville Separate	\$114,115	\$163,464	\$144,086	\$122,089	\$543,754
Prentiss County	\$176,791	\$87,549	\$160,459	\$214,843	\$639,642
Quitman County	\$0	\$98,365	\$66,331	\$38,358	\$203,054
Quitman	\$88,244	\$50,250	\$37,548	\$38,089	\$214,131
Rankin County	\$1,415,151	\$1,374,461	\$1,438,594	\$1,567,980	\$5,796,186
Reimagine Prep Charter	\$0	\$0	\$38,259	\$51,105	\$89,364
Richton	\$26,966	\$55,803	\$26,681	\$26,500	\$135,950
Scott County	\$283,823	\$57,905	\$115,594	\$226,524	\$683,846
Senatobia Municipal	\$30,708	\$0	\$89,745	\$98,225	\$218,678
Simpson County	\$39,978	\$89,933	\$101,914	\$173,981	\$405,806
Smilow Prep Charter	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$37,691	\$37,691
Smith County	\$0	\$69,622	\$137,264	\$175,488	\$382,374
South Delta	\$0	\$64,438	\$0	\$0	\$64,438
South Panola	\$0	\$350,544	\$205,657	\$334,674	\$890,875
South Pike	\$0	\$18,722	\$66,005	\$38,199	\$122,926
South Tippah	\$187,594	\$117,474	\$145,737	\$220,053	\$670,858
Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated	\$182,066	\$110,359	\$366,768	\$12,019	\$671,212
Stone County	\$153,499	\$222,666	\$190,344	\$205,662	\$772,171

Sunflower County	\$110,512	\$137,076	\$96,216	\$236,890	\$580,694
Tate County	\$96,240	\$136,047	\$69,466	\$85,816	\$387,569
Tishomingo County	\$114,351	\$162,407	\$236,936	\$200,824	\$714,518
Tunica County	\$97,479	\$47,742	\$169,364	\$84,854	\$399,439
Tupelo Public	\$355,807	\$369,903	\$467,030	\$526,024	\$1,718,764
Union County	\$107,355	\$231,425	\$200,219	\$265,808	\$804,807
Union Public	\$80,585	\$80,304	\$58,807	\$83,727	\$303,423
Vicksburg-Warren	\$160,740	\$403,323	\$232,804	\$184,540	\$981,407
Walthall County	\$40,389	\$51,647	\$0	\$104,132	\$196,168
Water Valley	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$42,455	\$42,455
Wayne County	\$96,089	\$63,986	\$126,458	\$174,133	\$460,666
Webster County	\$59,495	\$76,060	\$116,562	\$134,691	\$386,808
West Bolivar Consolidated	\$0	\$77,769	\$0	\$0	\$77,769
West Jasper Consolidated	\$35,201	\$112,431	\$87,816	\$71,713	\$307,161
West Point Consolidated	\$97,354	\$119,776	\$115,323	\$137,110	\$469,563
West Tallahatchie	\$0	\$71,721	\$0	\$25,116	\$96,837
Western Line	\$51,295	\$91,228	\$87,277	\$164,823	\$394,623
Wilkinson County	\$0	\$63,030	\$54,673	\$0	\$117,703
Winona Separate	\$0	\$104,647	\$0	\$0	\$104,647
Yazoo City Municipal	\$0	\$96,096	\$0	\$0	\$96,096
Yazoo County	\$49,000	\$19,322	\$46,744	\$36,407	\$151,473
Total	\$20,381,159	\$25,251,494	\$24,992,201	\$28,020,972	\$98,645,826

^ FY 2018 awards based on accountability rating for school year 2015-2016; FY 2019 awards based on accountability rating for school year 2016-2017; FY 2020 awards based on accountability rating for school year 2017-2018; and, FY 2021 awards based on accountability rating for school year 2018-2019.

SOURCE: PEER analysis of Mississippi Department of Education data.

Appendix F: District Instructions for the School Recognition Program, FY 2017-2018

General Information

Program is authorized in Miss. Code § 37-19-10.

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) will provide a report to all districts who are included in the program. The report will detail each eligible school within the district and the gross amount of the award for that school.

School Eligibility

- School will receive an award of \$100 per ADA at that school if the 2015-2016 Accountability Ratings were an “A;” or,
- School will receive an award of \$75 per ADA at that school if the 2015-2016 Accountability Ratings were a “B;” or,
- School will receive an award of \$100 per ADA at that school if the 2015-2016 Accountability Rating improved from an “F” to a “D” or from a “D” to a “C.”
- Schools shall not be eligible to receive both awards.

Eligible Teachers and Staff

- The award shall be paid to the current staff of the eligible school. There is no requirement to pay any portion of the award to staff who have left that school or employment in the district.
- Eligible staff shall include all certified employees who are required to hold a license issued by the MDE, such as teachers, counselors, librarians, instructional coaches, etc.
- Awards may not be paid to Administrators or Principals.

Teacher Committees

- Each eligible school should form a teacher committee by August 30.
- No Administrator may serve on the committee.
- The committee is responsible for determining which eligible employees will receive the award and the amount of the award.
- The amount may be distributed equally among eligible employees or on some other methodology as determined by the committee.
- The Teacher Committee Response Form should be completed by the committee signed, dated, and returned to the Superintendent by the district deadline.
- Each committee members should provide their name and signature on the form.

District Responsibility

- Upon receipt of the report from MDE, notify all eligible schools to form a teacher committee.
- Code the revenue to Fund 2020-School Recognition Program Fund; Function 3290

- The School Business Administrator should calculate the employer share of the FICA (7.65%) cost to arrive at the net award amount for each eligible school.
- PERS should not be withheld according to 25-11-103(1)(k) Earned Compensation and PERS regulation Chapter 65-104(d).
- The District should provide each teacher committee the attached “Teacher Committee Response Form” (Form A) containing:
 - The School Name
 - The Net Amount of the award
 - The Number of Certified Staff at that location who are eligible to receive the award
- The district should determine a deadline for the teacher committee to complete the response form and return it to the Superintendent. The response forms must be kept on file in the business office.
- Upon receipt of the Teacher Committee Response Forms, the district should prepare a District Response Form (Form B) including a section for each school receiving an award. The Superintendent should sign the form(s) and submit to MDE no later than October 1.
- If MDE does not receive the form by October 1, all eligible staff at the schools will receive an equal share of the award.
- Forms should be emailed to MDE
- Supplemental contracts should be prepared for each eligible employee receiving an award.
- The district should obtain Board approval of the supplemental contracts.
- Award payments should be processed in a single payroll, utilizing the standard electronic deposit method.
- Payments must be made to employees prior to **December 1, 2017**.

MDE Responsibility

- MDE shall submit the calculation of the School Recognition Program to the Legislature, based on the Accountability results for each school.
- Upon appropriation of the program, MDE will notify districts of the eligible schools and the gross award amount.
- MDE will provide guidance on the implementation of the program.
- Upon receipt of the signed district response forms, MDE will schedule payments to the districts in October or November via electronic deposit.

SOURCE: Mississippi Department of Education.

Appendix G: Alabama CODE Section 16-6C-3, Legislative School Performance Recognition Program

(a) The Legislative School Performance Recognition Program is created within the State Department of Education to reward public schools that either:

(1) Demonstrate high performance by being ranked in the top 25 percent of public schools, as ranked in the school grading system created in Section 16-6C-2.

(2) Demonstrate exemplary progress by improving the overall annual ranking of the school by at least one letter grade, as ranked in the school grading system created in Section 16-6C-2.

(b) All public schools that are ranked in the school grading system created in Section 16-6C-2 are eligible to participate in the program.

(c) The State Superintendent of Education shall prescribe guidelines for how the program shall be administered and implemented by not later than December 31, 2013, but the program may not be implemented by the State Superintendent of Education or the State Department of Education until both of the following have occurred:

(1) Rules governing how the program is to be administered and implemented have been promulgated by the State Department of Education pursuant to the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act.

(2) The school grading system created in Section 16-6C-2 is in its second academic year of implementation.

(d) In developing the program, the State Superintendent of Education shall seek input from parents, teachers, school administrators, existing State Department of Education advisory groups or task forces, and other education stakeholders on how the program may properly reflect not only the overall academic proficiency of each public school but also the academic improvements made by each public school.

(e) Selected schools shall receive financial awards depending on the availability of funds appropriated by the Legislature to the program. The State Superintendent of Education shall distribute funds to eligible schools on a competitive basis based on the criteria set forth in this section as well as in the rules governing how the program is to be administered and implemented. When funds are awarded, the State Superintendent of Education may award no more than 20 percent of the total appropriation to those schools eligible for an award pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (a). Any remaining amounts shall be awarded to those schools eligible for an award pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (a). No school may be eligible for an award pursuant to both subdivision (1) and subdivision (2) of subsection (a) at the same time.

(f) Subject to the rules governing how the program is to be administered and implemented, a school eligible for an award pursuant to subdivision (1) or subdivision (2) of subsection (a) shall be exempt from any statute or regulation related to the prescribed use of funds at the school level, or any categorical spending requirements imposed through the appropriation of funds from the state, except those requirements associated with the receipt of federal funds. A school eligible for an award pursuant to subdivision

(1) or subdivision (2) of subsection (a) shall be eligible for the flexibility provided by this subsection regardless of whether the school receives a financial award as contemplated by subsection (e).

(g) A list of schools eligible for an award pursuant to subdivision (1) or subdivision (2) of subsection (a) shall be annually posted by the State Superintendent of Education on the website of the department.

SOURCE: Alabama statutes.

Appendix H: Arkansas CODE Section 6-15-2107, Arkansas School Recognition Program

(a) The General Assembly finds that there is a need for an incentive program for outstanding schools. The General Assembly further finds that performance-based incentives are commonplace in the private sector and should be infused into the public sector as a reward for productivity.

(b) The Arkansas School Recognition Program is created to provide financial awards to public schools that experience high student performance and those with high student academic growth, which includes high school graduation rate comparisons for secondary schools.

(c)

(1)

(A) If funds are available, a public school or public charter school shall receive performance-based funding of:

(i) One hundred dollars (\$100) per student who attends the public school or public charter school if:

(a) The public school or public charter school is in the top five percent (5%) of all public schools in Arkansas in student performance under the criteria set forth by rule of the State Board of Education;

(b) The public school or public charter school is in the top five percent (5%) of all public schools in Arkansas in student academic growth under the criteria set forth by rule of the state board; or

(c) The public school or public charter school meets the criteria established by the state board to be used in lieu of the criteria set forth in subdivisions (c)(1)(A)(i)(a) and (b) of this section to reward top-performing public schools; or

(ii) Fifty dollars (\$50) per student who attends the public school or public charter school if:

(a) The public school or public charter school is in the top ten percent (10%) but below the top five percent (5%) of all public schools in Arkansas in student performance under the criteria set forth by rule of the state board;

(b) The public school or public charter school is in the top ten percent (10%) but below the top five percent (5%) of all public schools in Arkansas in student academic growth under the criteria set forth by rule of the state board; or

(c) The public school or public charter school meets the criteria established by the state board to be used in lieu of the criteria set forth in subdivisions (c)(1)(A)(ii)(a) and (b) of this section to reward high-performing public schools that do not meet the eligibility criteria set forth in subdivision (c)(1)(A)(i) of this section.

(B) The rewards listed in subdivision (c)(1)(A) of this section:

(i) Shall begin after the 2012-2013 state-mandated assessments; and

(ii) Shall be based upon the results of state-mandated assessments.

(2) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education may disburse available performance-based funding appropriated by the General Assembly on a pro rata basis.

(d)

(1) All eligible schools shall receive performance-based funding.

(2)

(A) Funds shall be distributed to the school's fiscal agent and placed in the school's account and shall be used for purposes listed in subsection (e) of this section as determined by a committee which shall include:

(i) The principal;

(ii) A teacher elected by the faculty; and

(iii) A parent representative selected by the local parent-teacher association or some other local parental involvement group.

(B) The committee shall make its determination by December 15 of each applicable year.

(e) School recognition awards shall be used for the following:

(1) Nonrecurring bonuses to the faculty and staff;

(2) Nonrecurring expenditures for educational equipment or materials to assist in maintaining and improving student performance; or

(3) Temporary personnel for the school to assist in maintaining and improving student performance.

(f) School recognition awards are exempt from §§ 6-17-119 and 6-20-412.

(g) The General Assembly shall appropriate and fund sufficient funds to implement this section.

SOURCE: Arkansas statutes.

Appendix I: Colorado School Awards Program, Various CODE Sections

22-11-601. Colorado school awards program - created - rules

- 1) There is hereby established the Colorado school awards program, referred to in this part 6 as the "program", to be administered by the department. The state board shall promulgate rules for the administration of this part 6 and the program. The rules shall include but need not be limited to procedures for transmitting the financial awards to public schools of school districts and institute charter schools that demonstrate outstanding performance.
- 2) In addition to the monetary awards made and distributed pursuant to sections 22-11-602, 22-11-603, 22-11-603.5, and 22-11-605, the state board may annually apply moneys from the school awards program fund created in section 22-11-605 to provide tangible items of recognition, such as banners or trophies, to schools that are identified as eligible to receive the John Irwin schools of excellence awards, the governor's distinguished improvement awards, the centers of excellence awards, and the academic growth awards created in section 22-11-603.7.

22-11-602. Colorado school awards program - John Irwin schools of excellence awards - rules

- 1) The state board shall annually present financial awards to the highest performing public schools in the state based on the schools' levels of attainment on the performance indicator concerning student achievement levels on the statewide assessments.
- 2) Of the moneys available for the program pursuant to this part 6, one third shall be awarded to the public schools with the highest level of attainment on the performance indicator concerning student achievement levels, as calculated pursuant to section 22-11-204 (3). An award granted pursuant to this section shall be known as a "John Irwin Schools of Excellence Award".
- 3) Subject to available appropriations, the amount of each award issued pursuant to this section shall be five thousand, ten thousand, or fifteen thousand dollars, depending on the number of pupils attending the public school receiving the award. If the available appropriations are insufficient to award each school the amount specified in this subsection (3), the department shall reduce all awards for that year proportionately. The state board shall establish by rule the pupil size of the public school for each award amount.

22-11-603. Governor's distinguished improvement awards - rules

- 1) The state board shall annually present financial awards to the public schools in the state demonstrating the highest rates of student longitudinal growth, including longitudinal growth across multiple years, as measured by the Colorado growth model. The technical advisory panel convened pursuant to section 22-11-202 shall recommend to the state board, and the state board shall establish by rule, the method by which to identify schools that demonstrate the highest rate of student longitudinal growth in one or more school years, as measured by the Colorado growth model. The technical advisory panel shall take school size into account in preparing its recommendations.

- 2) Of the moneys available for awards pursuant to this part 6, two thirds shall be awarded pursuant to this section.
- 3) An award issued pursuant to this section shall be known as a "Governor's Distinguished Improvement Award".

22-11-603.5. Centers of excellence awards

- 1) (a) The state board shall annually present financial awards to public schools in the state that enroll a student population of which at least seventy-five percent are at-risk pupils, as defined in section 22-54-103 (1.5), and that demonstrate the highest rates of student longitudinal growth, as measured by the Colorado growth model. The technical advisory panel convened pursuant to section 22-11-202 shall recommend to the state board, and the state board shall establish by rule, the method by which to identify schools that qualify for an award pursuant to this section.

(b) Awards issued pursuant to this section shall be known as "Centers of Excellence Awards".
- 2) A school that receives an award pursuant to this section shall not qualify for an award pursuant to section 22-11-603.
- 3) Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 22-11-602 (2) and 22-11-603 (2), of the moneys available for awards pursuant to this part 3, in the 2009-10 budget year and budget years thereafter, two hundred fifty thousand dollars shall be awarded to schools annually pursuant to this section. The department shall apportion the remainder between the "John Irwin schools of excellence awards" and the "Governor's Distinguished Improvement Awards" as provided in sections 22-11-602 (2) and 22-11-603 (2), respectively.

22-11-603.7. Academic growth awards - rules - definitions

- 1) (a) Subject to available appropriations, the state board shall annually present an award to the public high school that demonstrates the highest levels of student academic growth within each classification. The awards presented pursuant to this section must be in the form of trophies that resemble the trophies presented for athletic accomplishments. The technical advisory panel convened pursuant to section 22-11-202 shall recommend to the state board, and the state board shall establish by rule, the method by which to identify the public high schools that demonstrate the highest rate of student longitudinal growth in one or more school years, as measured by the Colorado growth model.

(b) The awards issued pursuant to this section are named for each classification and known as the academic growth award for that classification.
- 2) Notwithstanding any provision of this part 6 to the contrary, of any moneys that the department may receive pursuant to section 22-11-605 (1) in the form of public or private gifts, grants, or donations, in the 2014-15 budget year and each budget year thereafter, the department shall use up to one thousand five hundred dollars to award trophies pursuant to this section. The department shall apportion the remainder of the moneys available for awards as provided in sections 22-11-602, 22-11-603, and 22-11-603.5.

- 3) As used in this section, "classification" means the grouping of schools established biennially by the statewide association for high school activities for the sport of football.

22-11-604. Colorado school awards program - distribution of award

- 1) Any award presented by the state board pursuant to this part 6 shall be spent or distributed for use within the public school as the principal of the public school, after consultation with the school accountability committee for the public school, deems appropriate.
- 2) Any moneys made available to a district public school in the form of an award pursuant to the provisions of this part 6 shall not supplant moneys made available to the public school from funding received by the school district pursuant to article 54 of this title or pursuant to the taxing authority of the school district. Any moneys made available to an institute charter school in the form of an award pursuant to the provisions of this part 6 shall not supplant moneys payable to the institute charter school pursuant to part 5 of article 30.5 of this title.

22-11-605 School awards program fund—creation--contributions

- 1) The department may accept and expend gifts, grants, and donations from any source, public or private, to make financial awards and purchase tangible items of recognition, such as banners or trophies, to award to public schools pursuant to the provisions of the part 6. The department shall transmit all public and private gifts, grants, and donations received pursuant to this section to the state treasurer who shall credit the same, in addition to any appropriations made by the general assembly, to the school awards program fund, which is hereby created in the state treasury and referred to in this section as the "fund."
- 2) Subject to annual appropriation, the department may expend money that is appropriated to the fund to make financial awards and purchase tangible items of recognition, such as banners or trophies, to award to public schools pursuant to the provisions of this part 6. In accordance with section 24-36-114, the state treasurer shall credit all interest derived from the deposit and investment of money in the fund to the general fund. The department shall use any money credited or appropriated to the fund exclusively for awards and items of recognition and shall not use the money to pay for the expenses of the department in administering the program established in this part 6.

SOURCE: Colorado statutes.

Appendix J: Florida CODE Section 1008.36, Florida School Recognition Program

1. The Legislature finds that there is a need for a performance incentive program for outstanding faculty and staff in highly productive schools. The Legislature further finds that performance-based incentives are commonplace in the private sector and should be infused into the public sector as a reward for productivity.
2. The Florida School Recognition Program is created to provide financial awards to public schools that:
 - a) Sustain high performance by receiving a school grade of “A,” making excellent progress; or
 - b) Demonstrate exemplary improvement due to innovation and effort by improving at least one letter grade or by improving more than one letter grade and sustaining the improvement the following school year.
3. All public schools, including charter schools, that receive a school grade pursuant to Section 1008.34 are eligible to participate in the program.
4. All selected schools shall receive financial awards depending on the availability of funds appropriated and the number and size of schools selected to receive an award. Funds must be distributed to the school’s fiscal agent and placed in the school’s account and must be used for purposes listed in subsection (5) as determined jointly by the school’s staff and school advisory council. If school staff and the school advisory council cannot reach agreement by February 1, the awards must be equally distributed to all classroom teachers currently teaching in the school. If a school selected to receive a school recognition award is no longer in existence at the time the award is paid, the district school superintendent shall distribute the funds to teachers who taught at the school in the previous year in the form of a bonus.
5. School recognition awards must be used for the following:
 - a) Nonrecurring bonuses to the faculty and staff;
 - b) Nonrecurring expenditures for educational equipment or materials to assist in maintaining and improving student performance; or
 - c) Temporary personnel for the school to assist in maintaining and improving student performance.

Notwithstanding statutory provisions to the contrary, incentive awards are not subject to collective bargaining.

SOURCE: Florida Statute 1008.36

Appendix K: Missouri CODE Section 161.1120, School Recognition and Award Program

14. For purposes of this section, the term "**eligible school**" means a school in need of intervention that:
- d) Meets predetermined exit criteria within four school years after the day on which the school is designated a school in need of intervention; or
 - e) If granted an extension under section [161.1115](#), meets predetermined exit criteria within the extension period.
15. Subject to appropriation, the department shall establish a statewide program to be known as the "School Recognition and Reward Program" to provide incentives to schools and teachers to improve schools in need of intervention.
16. There is hereby created in the state treasury the "School Recognition and Reward Fund". The fund shall consist of all moneys that may be appropriated to it by the general assembly and any gifts, contributions, grants, or bequests received from federal, private, or other sources for the purpose of distributing grants to local educational agencies as described in this section. The state treasurer shall be custodian of the fund. In accordance with sections [30.170](#) and [30.180](#), the state treasurer may approve disbursements of public moneys in accordance with distribution requirements and procedures developed by the department of elementary and secondary education. The fund shall be a dedicated fund and, upon appropriation, moneys in the fund shall be used solely for the administration of grants to local educational agencies as described in this section. Notwithstanding the provisions of section [33.080](#) to the contrary, any moneys remaining in the fund at the end of the biennium shall not revert to the credit of the general revenue fund. The state treasurer shall invest moneys in the fund in the same manner as other funds are invested. Any interest and moneys earned on such investments shall be credited to the fund.
17. The department shall award grants from the school recognition and reward fund to local educational agencies with eligible schools. The department shall require, as a condition of awarding a grant, that the local educational agency use the grant moneys to reward eligible schools, teachers employed by eligible schools, or both the eligible schools and the teachers.

SOURCE: Missouri statutes.

Agency Response



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

December 8, 2020

Mr. James Barber
Executive Director
PEER
P O Box 1204
Jackson, MS 39215-1204

RE: A Review of Mississippi's School Recognition Program

Dear Mr. Barber:

The Mississippi Department of Education has reviewed the PEER report titled *A Review of Mississippi's School Recognition Program*. The department is in support of programs that recognize the hard work of teachers across the state. We will continue to implement the programs enacted and as directed by the legislature.

If you have any additional questions, please contact me or the Chief of Operations at (601) 359-5254.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Carey M. Wright in black ink.

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

c: Felicia Gavin, Ph.D.
Chief of Operations

PEER Committee Staff

James A. Barber, Executive Director

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Ted Booth, General Counsel
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