

Mississippi Statewide Assessment System 2007-2008

The primary purposes of the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System are to provide information needed for state-level decisions about the effectiveness of instructional programs in local school districts and to provide districts with information to be used in improving instruction. The Mississippi Statewide Assessment System promotes instructional improvement in classrooms throughout the state and provides valid, reliable data for accountability purposes in compliance with MS Code 37-16-1, SB 2156, SB 2488, and the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.

The objectives of this program include the following: assistance in the identification of educational needs at the state, district, and school levels; assessing how well districts and schools are meeting state goals and academic growth standards; providing information to aid in the development of policy issues and concerns; providing a basis for comparison of school, district, and state performance; and producing data which can be used to aid in the identification of exceptional educational programs or processes.

Mississippi Curriculum Test, Second Edition The Mississippi Curriculum Test, Second Edition (MCT2) was designed to measure student performance in reading/language arts and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and consists of customized criterion-referenced reading/language arts and mathematics. The MCT2 is based on the *2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework, Revised* and the *2007 Mississippi Mathematics Framework, Revised*, which define what students are expected to know and be able to do and are the basis for teacher instruction. Mississippi teachers reviewed all test items and established the performance level standards. These assessments allow Mississippi to be in compliance with the requirements of the federal legislation No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The MCT2 was not used for holding schools accountable for state academic achievement or the academic growth (improvement) of students but was used for the computation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The May 2008 administration was the first live administration, and standards for performance levels were set following that administration. The results will also provide information that will be used for the purpose of improving instruction and accelerating student achievement. Pearson Educational Measurement is the contractor for the MCT2.

Grades 4 and 7 Writing Assessments The writing assessments measure student performance in on-demand writing. No writing assessments were administered in 2007 – 2008; rather, these assessments were eliminated for one year only so that teachers and students could focus on preparing for the MCT2. The Grades 4 and 7 Writing Assessment will be administered in March 2009 under the Mississippi Writing Assessment Program for Grades 4, 7, and 10. These new writing assessment will allow students in grades 4 and 7 to respond to their choice of two prompts designed to elicit narrative, informative, or persuasive responses. This assessment is aligned to the *2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework – Revised*, and Mississippi teachers developed and field tested prompts to be used for the operational assessment. Mississippi teachers also revised the past rubric to improve the clarity of the language to better support classroom instruction; the revised rubric will be used to score student responses from the 2009 administration.

Elementary and Middle Grades Science Assessments The Elementary and Middle Grades Science Assessments are criterion-referenced assessments in grades 5 and 8 that allow Mississippi to be in full compliance with the requirements of the federal legislation under *No Child Left Behind*. These assessments are fully customized criterion-referenced tests, and a committee of Mississippi teachers selected by the MDE approved the items that appear on these tests. The tests are aligned with the grade-appropriate objectives in the *Mississippi Curriculum Science Framework 2001* as specified by teacher committees and will meet the requirements of *NCLB*. The results of these assessments will provide information that will be used for the purpose of improving student

achievement; the results are not currently used in Mississippi's school accountability system. Riverside Publishing is the contractor for the Elementary and Middle Grades Science Assessments.

Subject Area Testing Program The Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) consists of end-of-course, criterion-referenced tests in Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and U.S. History from 1877. The tests for Algebra I, Biology I, and U.S. History contain multiple-choice items. The test for English II consists of two components: a multiple-choice test and a writing assessment. 2007 – 2008 was the first live test administration for first-time test takers for both the English II multiple-choice test and the Algebra I test, both of which were based upon the *2006 Mississippi Language Arts Framework, Revised* and the *2007 Mississippi Mathematics Framework, Revised*, respectively. The SATP provides a meaningful assessment of secondary academic content tied to the state's content standards and promotes instructional strategies integrating both content and problem solving. All Subject Area Tests count for graduation; however, the tests required for graduation are determined by the year the student entered the ninth grade. The Subject Area Tests are used for holding schools accountable for academic achievement, the academic growth (improvement) of students, and for the computation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Pearson Educational Measurement is the contractor for the SATP; however, no state accountability models were used in 2007 – 2008.

Mississippi Career Planning and Assessment System, Second Edition The Mississippi Career Planning and Assessment System, Second Edition (MS-CPAS2) is the state vocational testing program. The purpose of the MS-CPAS2 Occupation-Specific Tests is to assess the performance of local vocational programs, as required by the Carl Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, in producing students with essential occupation specific knowledge by assessing students with both critical thinking and knowledge level questions. The Research and Curriculum Unit at Mississippi State University is the contractor for the MS-CPAS2.

Functional Literacy Examination The Functional Literacy Examination (FLE) was the minimum competency test currently required to receive a Mississippi high school diploma. It was initially given in the 11th grade with repeat testing in the 11th and 12th grades for those not passing. The test included multiple-choice questions in reading, mathematics, and written communications, along with a direct writing prompt. The FLE was initially developed and implemented in the mid-1980s. With the implementation of the Subject Area Testing Program, students were required to pass the Subject Area Tests to receive a high school diploma, and the FLE was phased out. Students entering ninth grade in 2001-02 (class of 2005) are the last students required to pass any portion of the FLE. Students who failed to pass only the mathematics section of the FLE as a part of their graduation requirements were allowed to participate in an FLE test administration in 2007-2008; however, beginning in 2008 – 2009, these students must meet the graduation requirement by passing the Algebra I Subject Area Test. Refer to State Board of Education Policy 7602 for more information.