

Mississippi Governor's Education Human Capital
Task Force: Final Recommendation Report

Addressing Mississippi's Teacher Shortage: A Collaborative Action Plan

Report Date: August 16, 2021

Report Commissioned by The Honorable Governor Tate Reeves

Authored by the Mississippi Governor's Education Human Capital Task Force
Members with support from the Southern Regional Education Board

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Executive Summary

Since the Great Recession, the teacher shortage crisis has affected every state in the nation. To improve the education system for Mississippi's children and teachers, it is vital that state policymakers and education stakeholders take bold, innovative steps to mitigate the shortage and reverse any damage it may have done. The Mississippi's Governor's Education Human Capital Task Force (referred to as the Task Force), a small multi-stakeholder group convened by Governor Tate Reeves, was tasked with researching areas of need and formulating innovative solution recommendations that can help strengthen the teacher workforce across Mississippi. The Task Force developed recommendations paying careful attention to issues of equity and diversity and positive student outcomes. Yet these recommended actions will help only if implemented thoughtfully and collaboratively across the state. The proposals span the teacher career continuum and look to provide solutions driven by outcomes and backed by evidence, data and best practice.

The recommended action steps in the report are separated into four priority-ordered sections:

- A Comprehensive State Policy Framework to Bolster the Teacher Pipeline
- State Data Systems to Improve Education Outcomes and Inform Workforce Development
- Improvements and Innovations to Better Prepare the Teachers of the Future
- Marketing to Better Recruit New Teacher Talent

It is vital that these sections are not read in a vacuum. The Task Force envisions a holistic set of solutions working interdependently to break down silos and tackle the root causes of the teacher pipeline issue to improve education and the state's workforce. None of the recommended action steps can be instituted without collaboration and efforts from those engaged in Mississippi education, including policymakers, board and commission members, state government staff, school and institutional leaders and practitioners, advocates, parents and students.

Ending the Teacher Shortage



Mississippi's economy depends on good teachers in every classroom. These solutions require educators and leaders to collaborate across traditional silos toward that target.

Who is the Governor's Education Human Capital Task Force?

At the request of Governor Tate Reeves, the Southern Regional Education Board convened the Task Force (see Appendix A for members) to research promising practices and make thoughtful recommendations to alleviate the teacher shortage crisis in Mississippi.

Task Force members began meeting in early 2020 (see Appendix B timeline) and worked diligently in accordance with their self-governing charge:

"For key agencies and shareholders to collaborate and take action to increase the effectiveness, quantity and diversity of teachers in Mississippi classrooms and improve how we attract, prepare, license, hire, support and retain them."

The solutions and action steps presented in this report are the product of careful research, consideration, and conversation with stakeholders from across Mississippi, including current teachers, educator preparation programs, and leaders from state agencies.

Summary List of Recommended Action Steps

Section 2: A Comprehensive State Policy Framework to Bolster the Teacher Pipeline

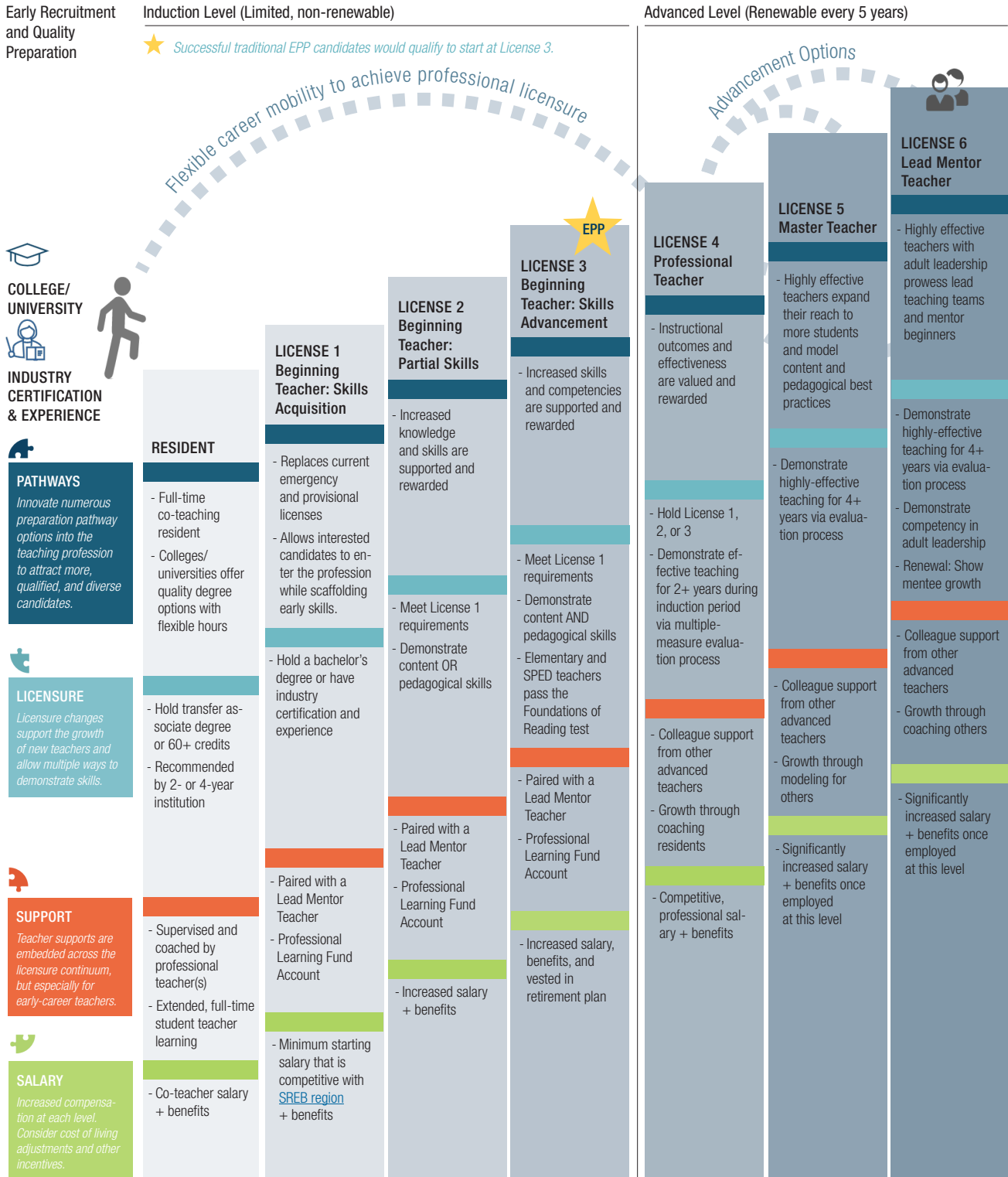
Action Step: Redesign Teacher Pathways, Supports, Licensure and Compensation

- 1) The Task Force recommends the legislature require the State Board of Education to set a processing fee for state educator licensure in regulation.
- 2) The Task Force recommends expanding pathways into teaching, redesigning teacher licensure, improving teacher supports and revising teacher compensation.
- 3) The Task Force requests state leaders and the State Board of Education to ask the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development to review and create a long-term operational and policy plan guided by the Task Force's framework outlined in Section 2.
- 4) The Task Force recommends holding all teacher candidates — no matter their pathway into the profession — to the same standards and clearly outline the expectations for successful preparation.
- 5) The Task Force recommends four induction level licenses, including a residency license and three levels of beginning teacher licenses.
- 6) The Task Force recommends three renewable, advanced licenses, including a new professional teacher, master teacher and lead mentor teacher license.
- 7) The Task Force requests additional collaboration with numerous education stakeholders and policymakers, to help the state identify appropriate, research-based requirements for each license. All the advanced licenses should require demonstration of effective teaching through multiple measures of effectiveness (three or more).
- 8) The Task Force recommends that the new license regulations clearly include flexible mobility options for early and advanced career teachers to have career autonomy and options for demonstrating their knowledge, skills, competencies, and effectiveness.
- 9) The Task Force recommends that the framework contain essential integrated teacher supports and professional learning.
- 10) The Task Force recommends that the framework contain crucial embedded financial support for professional learning for all induction level licensees (levels 1-3).
- 11) The Task Force suggests the MDE create a consumer report rating the quality of professional learning opportunities and resources to guide teachers in seeking the most useful skill and competency development opportunities.
- 12) The Task Force recommends a minimum statewide salary schedule be developed alongside the new licensure structure.
- 13) The Task Force recommends that the minimum statewide compensation policy also include incentive pay for teacher leaders employed in low-socioeconomic school districts.
- 14) The Task Force recommends that a regular cost-of-living adjustment be explored and added to a new teacher compensation structure.
- 15) The Task Force recommends using a phase-in approach to facilitate long-term collaboration and implementation.

Proposed Teacher Professional Advancement Framework

To provide every Mississippi student with effective teachers

The Mississippi Governor's Education Human Capital Task Force recommends strengthening teacher pathways, supports, licensure and compensation to elevate the profession and rebuild the teacher pipeline.



Section 3: A Comprehensive State Policy Framework to Bolster the Teacher Pipeline

Action Step: Improve the P-20 State Longitudinal Data System

- 1) The Task Force requests that Governor Reeves or the state legislature direct the SLDS Governing Board to collaborate with stakeholders to produce a strategic and operational plan measuring the impact of the teachers and state teacher workforce policies. This plan should ensure the SLDS functions at its highest capacity, clearly and efficiently reporting to state agencies and local stakeholders actionable information related to student progress in P-12 classrooms and the connection between educational outcomes to workforce development efforts.
- 2) The Task Force urges Mississippi policymakers to devote a portion of federal emergency funds to improve the functionality, usefulness and accessibility of the SLDS.

Section 4: State Data Systems to Improve Education Outcomes and Inform Workforce Development

Action Step: Innovate Educator Preparation Curricula

- 1) The Task Force urges the Education Achievement Council to convene all two-year and four-year colleges to negotiate and modify select education preparation courses to be offered at community colleges.
- 2) The Task Force highly recommends a statewide two-year to four-year college (2+2) teaching pathway be developed and implemented.
- 3) The Task Force urges educator preparation providers to pursue multiple innovations and improvements to prepare their teacher candidates for teaching in a real-world classroom, including: early and continuous clinical experiences; increased informal practice; increased virtual and technological pedagogical study; addressing socio-emotional learning and cultural responsiveness; and aligning K-12 standards with teacher content requirements.
- 4) The Task Force urges state agencies to consider creating an educator preparation program accountability system to guarantee the quality, content and rigor of programs provided to their students.
- 5) The Task Force recommends creating a new introductory education course that would be taught, accepted and universally transferable across all two- and four-year institutions in Mississippi including dual-enrolled high school students.

Section 5: Improvements and Innovations to Better Prepare the Teachers of the Future

Action Step: Improve State Teacher Marketing Campaigns and Incentives

- 1) The Task Force recommends that the Mississippi Department of Education explore hiring an outside consulting group or using the state's university experts to assess marketing needs and provide support.
- 2) The Task Force recommends the Mississippi Department of Education fully utilize their Talent Acquisition group, in partnership with the Department of Employment Security and the State Workforce Investment Board, to expand statewide workforce development priorities to teaching and leading within the education system.
- 3) The Task Force recommends exploring financial incentives at the state and district level, and discounted teacher degree programs or loan forgiveness programs at the state level, as incentives to enter a teaching career.

Section 1

Introduction: The Teacher Shortage in Mississippi

Every Student Deserves an Effective Teacher

Teachers are the difference makers for students' success. This is an undeniable and unifying cause that Mississippi policymakers, education stakeholders, and the public can rally around. But the data is clear — Mississippi has a shortage of teachers in STEM subjects and special education, as well as additional subjects in hard-to-staff geographical areas.¹ Not only is there an ongoing teacher shortage crisis around the nation, but the lack of interest in education as a career has significantly affected the teacher pipeline.

Mississippi children need more well-prepared, effective teachers to provide the education they require and deserve. The state and the nation cannot afford to fill vacancies with teachers who are inexperienced, underprepared, and ill-equipped for the realities of teaching in diverse classrooms. The lack of interest in the profession, coupled with the lack of appropriate preparation and continuous support for beginning and struggling teachers, causes too many to leave the profession within their first five years. And leaving the profession is not just an early-career issue — seasoned teachers who want to grow in their craft without an appropriate career trajectory leave the classroom to fulfill their personal goals. High turnover is costly to districts. Teacher shortages in quantity, quality and diversity cause decreased learning, increased class sizes and highly stressed educators with not enough support — all factors that worsen the shortage.

Teacher shortages are the type of crisis that can put an entire society at risk.

Workforce and Economic Implications

A teacher shortage crisis is not only an education issue, but also a workforce and economic crisis waiting to happen, as teaching is the profession that enables all other professions. According to Nicole Smith, the chief economist and research professor at the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, when students do not have good teachers, it can affect their cognitive growth — which over time can result in measurable economic loss. Teacher shortages are the type of crisis that “can put an entire society at risk.”²

Nearly two-thirds of the workforce in the southeast is comprised of workers with a high school diploma or less.³ This leaves a large portion of the workforce vulnerable, especially as automation continues to replace workers in numerous industries. A Southern Regional Education Board economic outlook shows that if action is not taken to better educate and prepare Mississippi's workforce, 440,000 workers and their children could be unemployable or stuck in low-wage jobs by 2030, causing an endless cycle of poverty.⁴ Automation technology is largely to blame for future worker displacement and Covid-19 sped up the automation timeline by approximately 5 years. By 2025, nearly one-third of work activities in the SREB region could be automated, leaving workers jobless or underemployed.⁵

The Mississippi Education Achievement Council issued a resolution adopting a postsecondary achievement goal to uplift and strengthen the state’s workforce. Currently only 45% of Mississippians aged 25 to 64 have a credential beyond high school. The council’s goal is for Mississippi to increase the postsecondary attainment of its workforce to 55% by 2030 and to 60% by 2035.

It is crucial that the teacher shortage crisis is mitigated to give the next generation of the Mississippi workforce a fighting chance. It became glaringly obvious during the Covid-19 pandemic that teachers are a cornerstone of American society. The work teachers do daily not only allows their students to learn and grow but plays an integral part in driving and developing local and regional workforces and economies.

Culture of Appreciation and Respect

More than ever, teachers feel unappreciated. While many outside the profession aggrandize the perks of teaching, like summers off, the true gravity of the workload teachers perform goes unnoticed. Teaching is not limited to an eight-hour day job. Many teachers spend their days enriching the lives of their students, and nights grading and planning for the lessons ahead. Some even work second jobs to pay bills and student debt. Teaching duties continue throughout the summer with continuing education to renew a license and planning for the upcoming school year — in addition to second jobs to support their family.

Teachers provide safe, positive learning environments for our students and go above and beyond their job description to nurture and care for our children. It is past time we show respect for this foremost, essential profession.

Longstanding Investments Lead to Success

The Mississippi legislature and state agencies have instituted policies that invest in our youth and the future workforce of the state such as the Teacher Center. The careful consideration, thoughtful policy, and consistent, ample funding enacted by Mississippi state leaders regarding early literacy is a prominent example of the state’s ability and commitment to improve education.⁶ The Literacy-Based Promotion Act, first passed in 2013, places an emphasis on grade-level reading skills, particularly as students’ progress through grades K-3, and has led to nationally lauded results in student reading growth and achievement.⁷

The complicated issue of a lack of effective teachers cannot be addressed with a single policy change. The only way to truly solve these issues is through a holistic set of solutions that address the root causes. The Task Force developed a bold, innovative set of action steps for Mississippi that incorporates and expands upon previous efforts, as well as introducing new ideas. The recommendations span the entire teacher career continuum, from preparation to teacher career advancement:

- A policy framework that incorporates multiple facets governing teaching — pathways into and through the profession, licensure, supports, and compensation (Section 2).
- Fully connecting the longitudinal data system to help improve research into policies and their effects not only on students and teachers, but on the entire Mississippi workforce and economy (Section 3).

- Educator preparation access and quality to equip Mississippi’s teachers with necessary skills and competencies, no matter their preparation route (Section 4).
- Better recruitment through marketing to improve the number and diversity of effective teachers (Section 5).

The Task Force shares in the commitment to students, teachers, and the future workforce and believes the only way to reverse the teacher shortage is to institute comprehensive changes that are research-based, continuously studied, and appropriately funded. **The following lists of action steps require leaders and stakeholders from across Mississippi to establish a long-term commitment, invest significant funding, and work together to enact judicious policy to truly uplift and improve the teaching profession and prepare today’s youth for tomorrow’s workforce.**

The Task Force developed a bold, innovative set of action steps for Mississippi that incorporates and expands upon previous efforts, as well as introduces never-before-seen ideas.

Section 2

Ending the Teacher Shortage: A Comprehensive State Policy Framework to Bolster the Teacher Pipeline

Why is there a Teacher Shortage?

When it comes to student performance, teachers are estimated to have two to three times⁸ the effect on student learning than any other school factor including services, facilities, even leadership. Yet across the nation, and in all the southeastern states, there are teacher shortages in three or more subject areas⁹ from pre-K through high school. According to the U.S. Department of Education’s Teacher Shortage Area Report, Mississippi has shortages in all grades, P-12, in mathematics, science, special education, and world languages for the 2021-22 school year, based on unfilled job postings.¹⁰

At least part of the teacher shortage can be explained in financial terms. Though over a period of four years, 13 Southern states approved teachers raises, it is still critical to address the lack of competitive salaries in the region as this is the primary reason for low teacher recruitment.¹¹ Further, the South must address inherent issues with the way step-and-lane salary schedules compensate teachers.¹² Historically speaking, teacher salaries are worth less now than they were in the 1980s, in constant dollars. Teachers in Mississippi are paid 15.2% less than their similarly educated peers.¹³ And it is vital to address the benefits afforded to teachers, particularly for retention. High-quality, low-cost healthcare¹⁴ and appropriate retirement plan choices¹⁵ can be boons to help recruit and retain teachers.

For those who choose to enter the profession, retention remains a problem. Annually, around 8% of American educators leave the classroom, costing districts up to \$21,000 per teacher in turnover expenses. Turnover is highest in the South. According to a recent national estimate, about 18% of teachers leave the profession before completing their fifth year in the classroom, and it is as high as 45% in the Southern region.¹⁶ National surveys cite challenging working conditions, including lack of support, overwhelming stress, and inadequate pay and benefits as reasons educators leave the profession. In 2019, the Texas Association of Schools Boards surveyed a random national sample of public-school teachers and found the top three reasons teachers have considered leaving the profession are inadequate pay and benefits, stress and burnout, and feeling undervalued and not respected.¹⁷

About 45% of teachers in the region leave before completing their fifth year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has added more stress to the teaching profession, and even though there has not been the mass exodus that some feared,¹⁸ *Education Week’s* newest poll shows that more teachers are thinking of leaving the profession now than prior to the pandemic. Some 33% of a nationally representative sample are “very likely to leave teaching in the next two years,” when only 13% of these teachers would have said the same in the fall of 2019.¹⁹

Teacher Shortage Issue: Diversity

In addition to an overall teacher shortage, there is a severe lack of diversity among teachers. Mississippi's teacher workforce must better reflect the student population. During the 2020-21 school year, 57% of Mississippi's P-12 students were minorities.²⁰ The lack of teacher diversity, both race and gender, has an impact on Mississippi's diverse student body.²¹

“Minority students often perform better on standardized tests, have improved attendance, and are suspended less frequently (which may suggest either different degrees of behavior or different treatment, or both) when they have at least one same-race teacher.”²² Research has shown that having at least one Black teacher in grades 3 through 5 increases the chances that low-income students of both sexes will aim to get a postsecondary education.²³ A teacher workforce more closely reflecting student demographics would benefit all; improved achievement is also documented, for example, in white students who have a minority teacher.

Teacher Shortage Issue: Experience and Qualification

Compounding the overall shortage of teachers and the lack of a diverse teacher workforce is the issue of the high number of inexperienced teachers in Mississippi's and our nation's schools.

In 2016, the Mississippi Department of Education showed their commitment to providing every student with a highly effective teacher by releasing a “State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators.” MDE found that inexperienced teachers, those with 0-3 years of experience accounted for 26% of all teachers in the 2014-2015 school year, with a district-based range from 9% to 51%.²⁴

In addition to inexperienced teachers making up a quarter of the state's teaching force, the use of stopgap measures of emergency and provisional licenses put many uncertified teachers in front of Mississippi students. The lack of experienced and highly qualified teachers has a direct impact on children. Research shows that children taught by a highly effective teacher for three years in a row average 50 percentile points of growth, while teachers who are not at least minimally effective can cause student achievement to decline.²⁵

Teacher Shortage Issue: Equity

In the “State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators,” the MDE highlighted the inequity of teacher placement across the state. It was found that students in high-minority and high-poverty districts are disproportionately taught by inexperienced teachers and a higher number of non-highly qualified teachers. Districts with the highest minority and poverty student populations both had inexperienced teacher populations that were $\geq 37\%$, while districts with the lowest minority and poverty student populations had inexperienced teacher populations that were 15% or less.²⁶

The lack of effective and qualified teachers in every school affects not only student learning in grades P-12 but the economy of Mississippi and the nation. Teaching is the profession that makes all other professions possible. Without fixing the teacher shortage issue, there is limited potential to grow the state's economy and workforce.

Solving the Crisis with Holistic Transformation

To end the teacher shortage, many focus on teacher compensation — which is important, but by no means the only piece of the profession that needs reform. Short-term state system solutions like increasing uncertified teachers, rehiring retirees, across-the-board pay raises, and lessening or waiving requirements are not helping bring an end to the shortage and may in fact be exacerbating the issue over time. Teachers continue to leave the profession due to a lack of support.²⁷ It is vital that schools provide their beginning and struggling teachers with the resources to grow and improve in their practice.²⁸ In addition to supports, teachers need a fulfilling career trajectory. Many teachers leave the classroom to take on a role with larger leadership responsibilities, such as content specialist or administration. They must be provided with opportunities to lead and grow from their classroom.²⁹

There is no “silver bullet” to ending the teacher shortage. It is vital that policymakers and education stakeholders advocate for an all-inclusive strategy that ties together successful solutions showing promise in rebuilding the teacher pipeline. By addressing the main reasons for leaving or not entering the profession in the first place, Mississippi can begin to make innovative, long-lasting changes to the teaching profession. By compensating, supporting, and providing career autonomy to teachers, Mississippi can uplift and empower the teaching profession — lessening the teacher shortage via both recruitment and retention.

The Teaching Profession Many pieces at play



Resetting our Values

While creating this bold, innovative framework, the Task Force placed one goal, providing every Mississippi child with an effective teacher, at the forefront. The Task Force developed a list of values to support this goal:

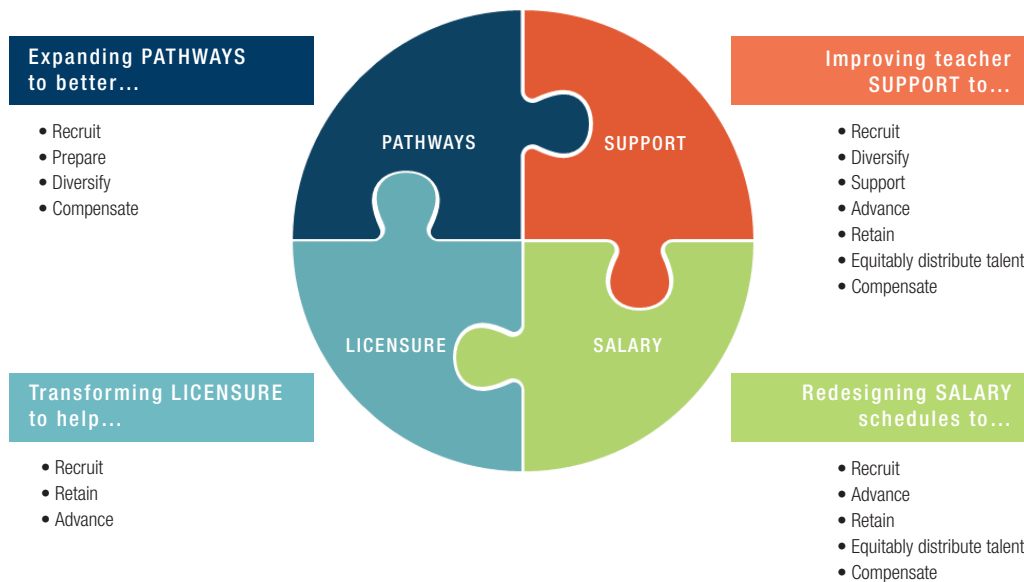
- Outcomes-driven success must be the basis of our state teacher workforce policies.
- Mississippi must expand pathways into the teaching profession while also setting equal standards that apply to all teachers no matter their preparation pathway.
- It is important to provide teachers a menu of options to demonstrate competencies and effectiveness in order to broaden access and diversity in recruitment.
- Providing standardized, robust teacher supports and a new compensation policy is vital to increasing the diversity and equity of the profession.
- Increasing career autonomy for teachers is important for retention.
- This must be a collaborative process with great alignment across P-12 education, higher education and the workforce needs of the state.

Four Pieces of Change

These values led the Task Force to focus their solution on four pillars of action to rebuild the teacher pipeline: **expand pathways into teaching, redesign teacher licensure, improve teacher supports, and revise teacher compensation and salary schedules.** For each of these four pillars, the Task Force proposes new ways to recruit, prepare, license, support, retain, compensate and diversify Mississippi's teacher workforce — with a specific interest in equitable distribution of talent.

Four Pieces to Reverse the Teacher Shortage

Bringing the pieces together



Immediate Action Step: Set Licensure Fees

Licensure is one of the ways the state protects the health, safety, and general welfare of students and educators. Mississippi's Department of Education currently receives hundreds upon hundreds of application requests weekly for an initial license, licensure renewal, license class level upgrade, and add-on endorsements.

As of the writing of this report, there are only 10 staff members that serve to meet the needs of those seeking to obtain or maintain their Mississippi license, making it difficult to handle the incoming applications, as well as all the other expectations of the licensure department. Nearly all other states charge a processing fee, and it does not act as a barrier to educators seeking licensure.

To expand the capacity of the MDE licensure team, **the Task Force recommends the legislature require the State Board of Education to set a processing fee for state educator licensure in regulation.** The Task Force recommends at least a \$50 initial license processing fee that would apply to all applicants, as well as a \$25 late renewal fee for those licensees who do not renew their license within their renewal window. It is also strongly advised that when these processing fees are increased, they never exceed the fee amounts charged by Mississippi's neighboring states. The established fee would apply to all applicants regardless of license, residency, or preparation pathway. Upon payment of the processing fee, a six-month window opens for applicants to submit all licensure related documents.

This fee will support additional personnel, help to update existing processing systems, and provide capacity for the licensure office to implement other licensure changes such as those recommended in this report. The fee will create sustainability, allowing the licensure division to be more self-sufficient, relying less on state budget allocations.

Action Step: Redesign Teacher Pathways, Supports, Licensure and Compensation

The Mississippi Legislature and State Board of Education are clearly committed to investing in efforts to help mitigate and reverse the teacher shortage. In Mississippi Annotated Code §37-19-7 governing teacher salaries, the legislature instituted bonuses for teachers who obtain National Board Certification, work in hard-to-staff areas, or mentor beginning teachers, as well as introducing school performance bonuses.³⁰ The state provides loan repayment of up to \$12,000, in four yearly \$3,000 awards, for alternative path teachers.³¹ And in April of 2021, the legislature established the William F. Winter and Jack Reed Sr. Teacher Loan Repayment Program to help teachers repay their undergraduate loans. This program is available to 150 traditionally prepared first-year teachers, with incentives for teachers in hard-to-staff geographic locations.³² The 2021 reenactment of Mississippi Annotated Code §37-149-1, which governs the Mississippi Teacher Center, shows the legislator's investment in the children of Mississippi being taught by quality professionals by focusing on teacher recruitment, enhanced training and initial instructional support.³³

The Task Force developed a bold, comprehensive solution framework that encompasses these investments — yet guides the state to yield a higher return on investment in our students and teachers. **The Task Force requests state leaders and the State Board of Education to ask the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development to review and create a long-term operational and policy plan guided by the Task Force's framework outlined in this section.**

The New Solution Framework: Bold, Uplifting, Thoughtful

The Task Force's solution framework is based on license structure changes that streamline and support multiple entry pathways and teacher advancement options, including reciprocity. Strong teacher supports and new compensation policies are woven through the licenses to implement the system-wide solution that the Task Force believes is the appropriate way to transform Mississippi's teaching profession.

Entry Pathways

The Task Force understands that enhancing and widening the preparation pathways into the teaching profession is the first step to lessening the teacher shortage crisis. By expanding and refocusing entry pathways, the framework creates more opportunities, expands access to teaching and diversifies the profession — all while maintaining the same high standards for all pathways.

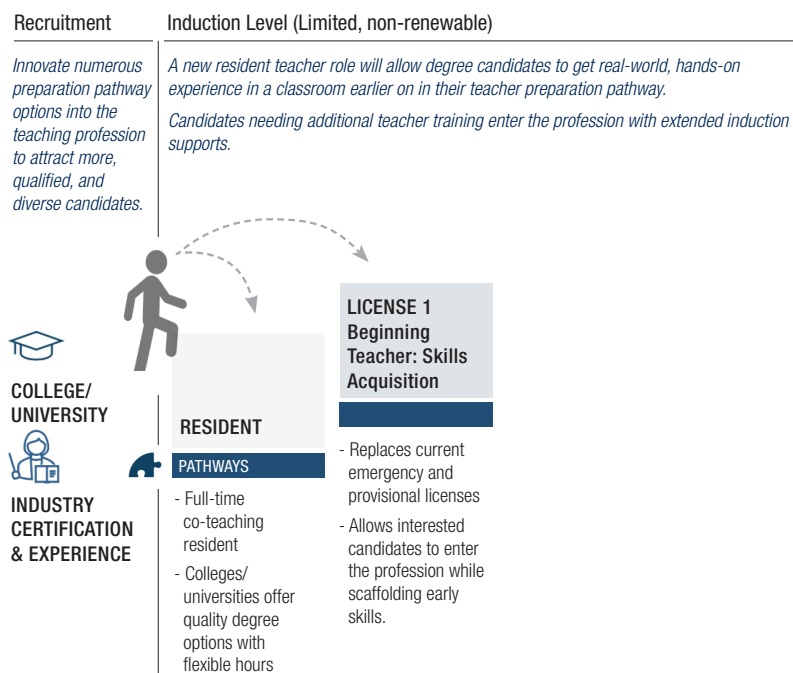
The preparation pathways in the new framework include existing and new pathways, including:

- Traditional educator preparation programs with required clinical experiences offered by institutions of higher learning
- A future 2+2 pathway (combination of community college and university education)
- Alternative preparation programs which can include those offered by institutions of higher learning or other programs such as Teach for America or Troops to Teachers

- Career and Technical Education and career changers who have knowledge and experience of an industry or field
- A new and expanded resident pathway to provide candidates full-time, on-the-job experience of the teaching profession while earning a four-year degree
- In addition, the Task Force encourages the state to continue to offer and expand other successful recruitment paths to teaching, such as grow-your-own programs, teacher academies, and internships.

Broaden the **PATHWAYS** Into Teaching

Create opportunity and access

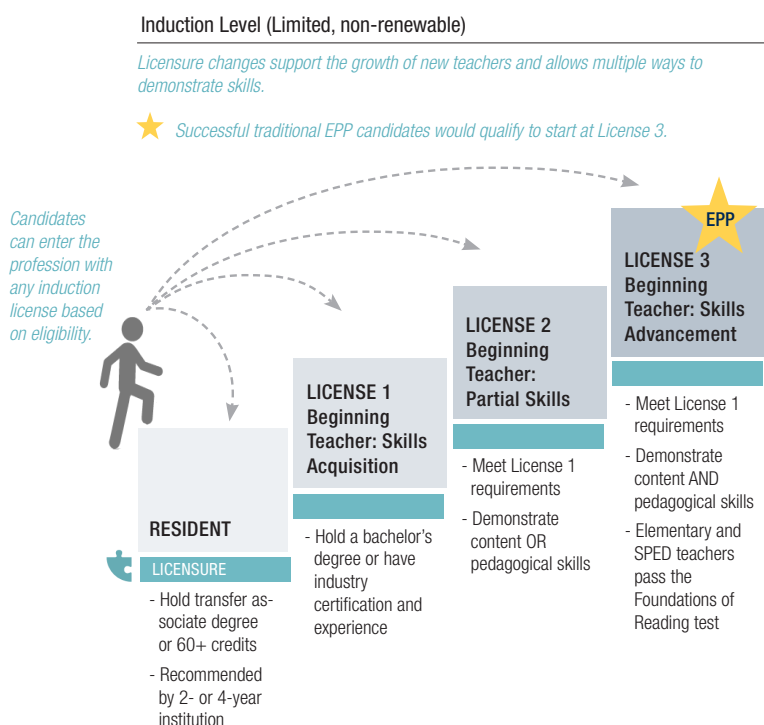


The Task Force recommends holding all teacher candidates — no matter their pathway into the profession — to the same standards and clearly outlining the expectations for successful preparation. No matter if you are a traditional EPP candidate or an alternative pathway candidate, the new framework will expect every teacher to have content knowledge, pedagogical competencies, and overall effectiveness in the classroom to obtain renewable licensure.

Induction Licenses

In tandem with making the teacher profession more accessible, it is imperative that early career teachers are provided time and quality support for skill building and instructional growth. A culture of rigorous yet balanced expectations and supportive growth is key for retention. The framework addresses this with a set of scaffolded induction licenses starting with an expanded practice pathway, as research shows combining clinical and in-classroom experience is the number one way to improve a candidate's preparation (see section 4 for more information). Initial induction licenses should be tied to increased competency while supporting teachers to gain the knowledge and skills they need with quality mentorship and individualized professional learning.

Redesigning **LICENSURE** to Support Professional Advancement Allow career autonomy and advancement, reward excellence



The Task Force recommends four induction licenses:

- *Residency Teaching License* — Would require a candidate to have a recommendation for residency from any 2- or 4-year institution and possess either an associate degree or 60+ course credit hours. This allows 3rd and 4th year college students, or even master's students, to work all year, full-time (4 days per week), in a classroom as a co-teacher with responsibilities similar to those of a teacher's assistant and student teacher. This license is an expansion of the pre-service license that exists today and would allow Mississippi to recruit college students earlier and provide significantly more on-the-job training. Districts can build relationships with these residents and use this pathway

as a major teacher pipeline and diversity strategy that will complement local grow-your-own initiatives. It is important to note the Task Force does not envision this license as replacing classified teacher’s assistants, but instead as a pipeline pathway.

- *License 1, Beginning Teacher: Skills Acquisition* — Would require a candidate to possess a bachelor’s degree. For career and technical education, candidates should have a valid industry license and 5+ years of experience. This would be the first initial license and replace all emergency or provisional certificates currently. While candidates would not have to demonstrate proficient teaching skills to apply, they would receive intense supports from a mentor teacher and financial assistance to help access and complete quality professional learning independently, online or through a program or university.
- *License 2, Beginning Teacher: Partial Skills* — Would require a candidate to possess a bachelor’s degree and proof of content knowledge *or* pedagogical competencies. The progression to this license for teachers is a positive step along the scaffolded induction licenses, requiring teachers to show an advancement in skills proven through state approved processes. As with License 1, License 2 teachers would still receive intense supports through a mentor teacher and financial assistance to help access quality professional learning independently, online, or through a program or university.
- *License 3, Beginning Teacher: Skills Advancement* — Would require a candidate to possess a bachelor’s degree and demonstration of content knowledge and pedagogical competencies. There should be an added requirement of passing the Foundations of Reading test for all elementary and special education teachers. This is the last license in the scaffolded induction license series before a teacher enters the second half of the envisioned framework. By the time teachers reach license 3, they should be able to demonstrate greatly increased skill levels through state-approved processes. As with the previous two induction licenses, license 3 holders would be afforded intense supports from a mentor teacher and financial assistance to help access and complete quality professional learning independently, online, or through a program or university.
 - ***Most EPP completers would enter at a license 3. This is important to the Task Force — to incentivize candidates to seek traditional preparation, as more recent research shows that traditionally prepared candidates are more effective and stay in the profession longer. ***

**Content Demonstration Options
for License Candidates:**

- Pass any state board-approved content assessment
- OR**
- for grade 6-12 teachers only, complete 18+ course content hours with 2.75+ GPA

**Pedagogy Demonstration Options
License Candidates:**

- Pass any state board-approved pedagogical assessment
- OR**
- Pass a multi-part pedagogical evaluation by an administrator and mentor teacher, including assessing validated student survey results

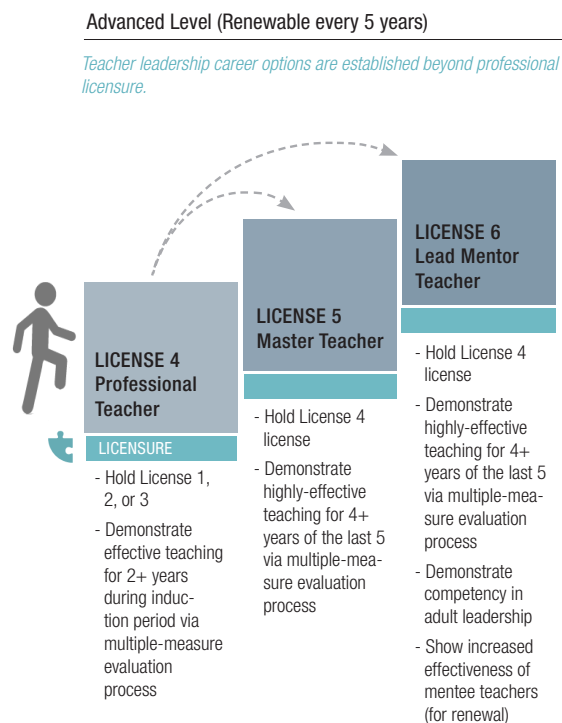
As highlighted above, Licenses 1 through 3 should be accompanied by both mentorship support from advanced teachers and a personalized professional development plan with dedicated dollars to help beginning teachers gain the skills they need to become truly effective teachers for Mississippi’s children (see more in the Teacher Supports section below). The Task Force knows these supports embedded in the envisioned induction licenses are crucial pieces to help end the teacher shortage by aiding beginning teachers who are currently leaving at alarming rates within the first years of teaching.

The four induction licenses are intended to be non-renewable and limited as to how long they can be held — licenses 1-3 could be held for a combined total of 5 years, while the residency license could be held for up to 3 years while completing a bachelor’s degree.

Advanced Licenses

The three proposed advanced licenses provide a career trajectory with increased compensation upon demonstration of effectiveness, more responsibility, and leading from the classroom. Advanced teachers are paramount in the framework to provide Mississippi’s beginning teachers with the quality instructional modeling and mentorship support they need to be successful in the classroom. The advanced licenses would help with recruitment, licensure, equity, quality, support, retention, advancement and compensation.

Redesigning **LICENSURE** to Support Professional Advancement Allow career autonomy and advancement, reward excellence



The Task Force recommends three renewable, advanced licenses:

- License 4, Professional Teacher — This is envisioned as the first renewable license. It would be similar to the current Mississippi renewable professional teaching certificate.
 - Five-year renewable license

- Renewable licensure would now be based on a teacher’s ability to apply their content and pedagogical competencies in the classroom, demonstrating minimal effective instruction and positive student outcomes.
- Teachers should be afforded every opportunity to prove effectiveness before the possibility of exiting the profession.
- The Task Force discussed exploring the following list of possible outcomes-based measures:
 - ◆ Annual performance review through the existing Professional Growth System with a summative score of “Level 3” or higher for at least two years of the induction period. The PGS review should include principal and peer teacher observations — the Task Force believes that observations are valuable but should be conducted by trained administrators and peers.
 - ◆ Validated, research-based student surveys administered multiple times per year. Student surveys have previously been explored by MDE and are supported by research.³⁴
- License 5, Master Teacher — This teacher has highly effective instruction and increased positive student outcomes. **The Task Force defines a highly effective teacher as one who demonstrates advanced practices, regularly exceeds expectations, and consistently achieves positive student impact.**
 - Five-year renewable license
 - This license would enable highly effective teachers to be promoted to teach students at increased capacities or fill a specialty role in the school.
 - This license would be held to the same possible outcome-based measures as License 4 but should require teachers to have a PGS summative score of “Level 3” or higher for at least four years.
- License 6, Lead Mentor Teacher — This teacher has highly effective instruction and increased positive student outcomes.
 - Five-year renewable license
 - This license would enable highly effective and skilled leaders to mentor a set of their peers.
 - This license would be held to the same possible outcome-based measures as License 4 but should require teachers to have a PGS summative score of “Level 3” or higher for at least four years.
 - Additional requirements should include:
 - ◆ Proven competencies for mentoring and coaching their peers, achievable through a menu of equally rigorous options such as state-approved training, state-approved micro-credentials, or an advanced degree aligned with teacher leader model standards
 - ◆ Evidence of peer growth over time

These licenses encompass the Task Force’s vision of outcomes-based professional licensure, detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Outcomes-Based Professional Licensure

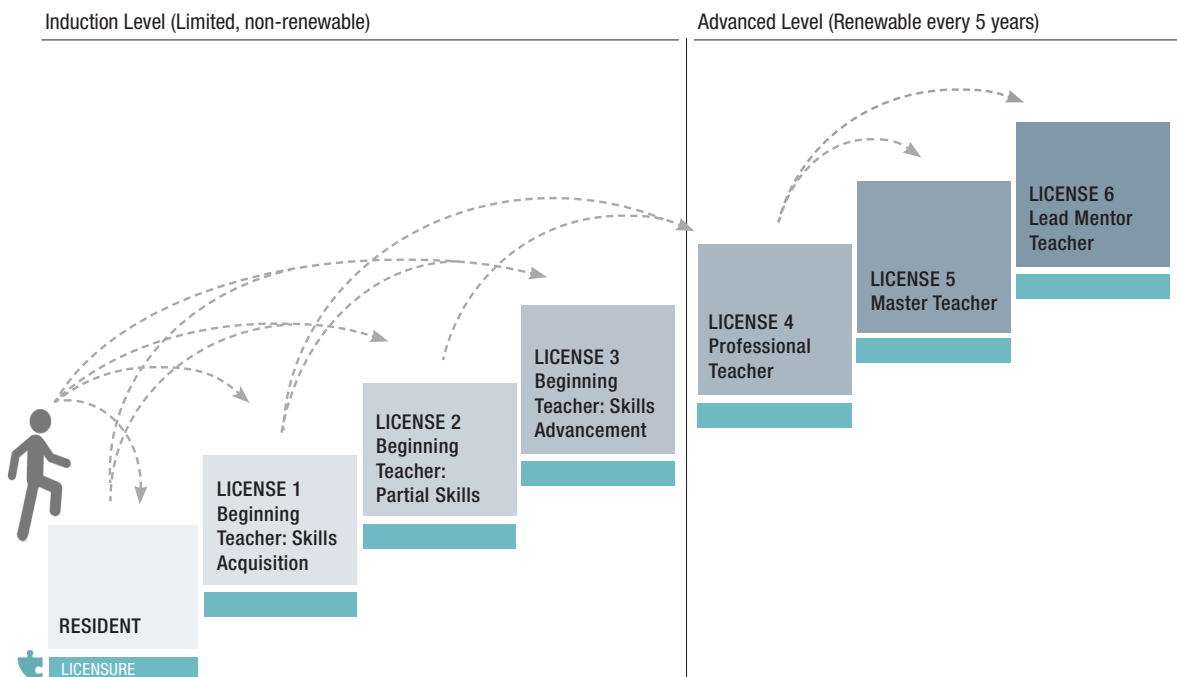
Goals	Proposition	Rationale
<p>Focus professional licensure on outcomes like instructional effectiveness and student learning growth.</p> <p>Create a balanced system of multiple, useful measures to determine effectiveness.</p>	<p>Require teachers to meet a minimum level of effectiveness to obtain and renew a professional teaching license (License 4).</p> <p>Establish multiple measures for this purpose (3 or more).</p>	<p>Ensure the professional workforce is of quality.</p> <p>Licensure process becomes more student-focused.</p> <p>Use measures that correlate to effectiveness.</p> <p>Reward professional expertise with higher salary.</p>

Through additional collaboration with numerous education stakeholders and policymakers, the state should identify appropriate, research-based requirements for each license. All the advanced licenses should require demonstration of effective teaching through multiple measures of effectiveness (three or more). To meet the goal of providing every Mississippi child with an effective, quality educator, the requirements for each license must rely on outcomes-based measures and minimize or eliminate input-based measures.

Career Autonomy and Flexible Options

The teaching profession should provide more career autonomy, flexibility and leadership opportunities to keep excellent, motivated educators in the classroom and helping our students grow.

Flexible Career Mobility

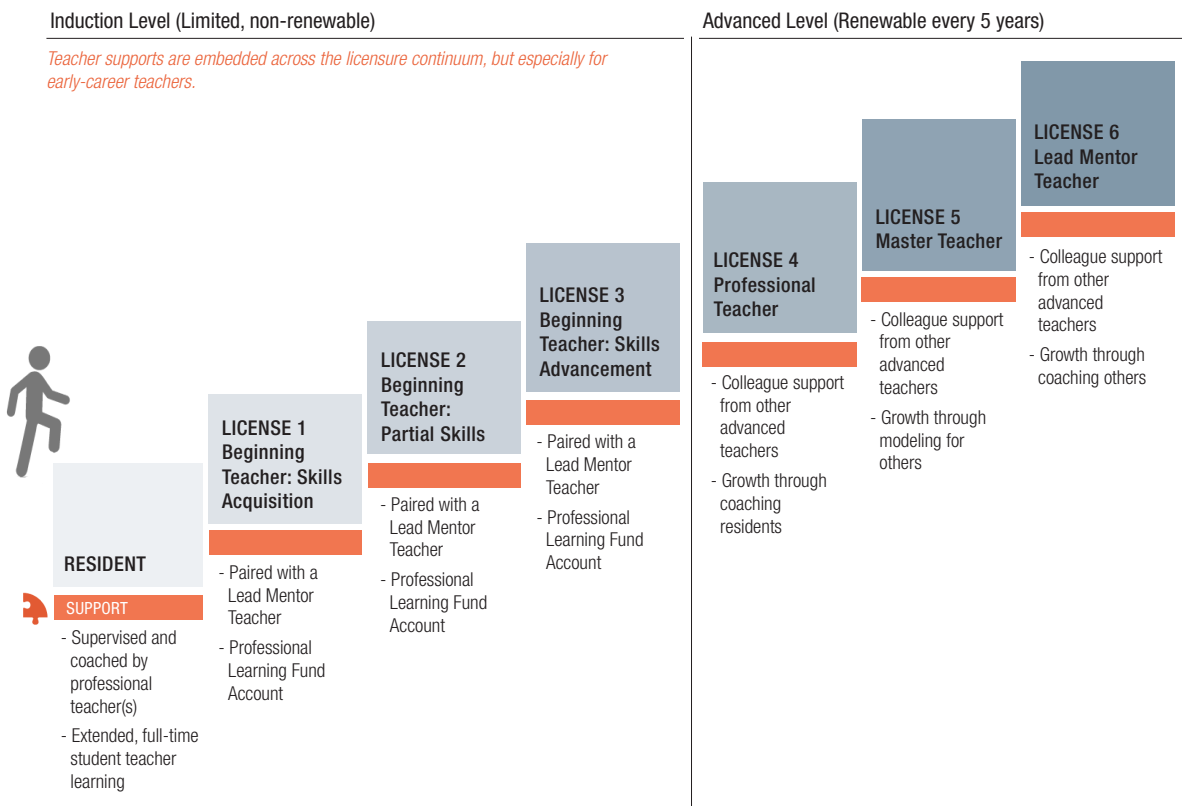


In addition to the license structure proposed above, **the Task Force recommends that the new license regulations clearly include flexible mobility options for early and advanced career teachers to have career autonomy and multiple options for demonstrating their knowledge, skills, competencies and effectiveness.** These mobility options should allow teachers different pathways to professional licensure and into advanced roles if a teacher so chooses. In other words, teachers would not have to move up the licensure levels one by one but could enter at any of the induction licenses, and with proper demonstration of requirements “hop” over a license level within one school year (for example, from a resident to License 2 or 3, or from License 1 to 3, or from License 1 or 2 to 4 after a successful three-year induction period)

Teacher Supports and Professional Learning

As briefly mentioned in the licensure outline, **integrating teacher supports and professional learning is an essential part of the Task Force’s framework.** Teachers in induction (residency and licenses 1-3) should be given personal, dedicated professional learning and mentorship support from advanced teachers. By integrating mentorship support into the licensure structure, all beginning teachers will be afforded the same opportunity to receive support from their more advanced peers.

SUPPORT Continuous Growth Grow excellent teachers into teacher leaders



The Task Force envisions a lead mentor teacher mentoring a team of colleagues. The team would not only benefit from the knowledge and experience and coaching of the lead mentor teacher, but from support of other professional and master teacher peers. The Task Force based their idea for a team mentorship model on the Opportunity Culture Model built by Public Impact,³⁵ which shares many of the principles and beliefs held by the Task Force.

Another crucial recommendation within the licensure structure is to embed and implement financial support for professional learning for all induction licensees (Licenses 1-3). The goal of providing financial support is to provide beginning teachers with dedicated dollars (\$2k-3k per teacher) to engage in high-quality professional learning to help individual skill and knowledge growth related to their challenge areas. These dollars would be awarded based on license obtainment, not on an annual basis yet distributed and overseen through the local districts. Any unused funds would revert to the state. Colleges, universities, district offices and private entities could provide courses, micro-credentials or improved degree programs to assist beginning teachers in becoming more effective and achieving higher tiered certification. See more in Table 2.

In addition, robust trainings, stackable micro-credentials and endorsed degree programs should be developed by the state, LEAs, IHLs or private entities to help professional teachers obtain and demonstrate competencies in adult leadership and mentoring for License 6.

To guarantee proper use of the professional learning dollars for quality teacher support, **the Task Force suggests the MDE create a consumer report rating the quality of professional learning opportunities and resources to guide teachers to seek the most useful skill and competency development opportunities.**

Table 2: Professional Learning Fund Account

Goals	Proposition	Rationale
<p>Enable early-career teachers to obtain valuable, individualized learning experiences.</p> <p>Create a culture encouraging growth and advancement in teaching.</p>	<p>Create a Professional Learning Fund Account for each induction-level license (Licenses 1-3).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated per teacher, held by district for oversight. • Unused funds revert to the state. • MDE should create “consumer report” of quality professional learning. 	<p>Removes out of pocket costs to teachers for professional learning, which helps ensure equity.</p> <p>Creates system of transparency as to what professional learning is of quality.</p> <p>Gives some autonomy to teachers and leaders regarding professional learning.</p>

Embedded Incentives and Salary Structure

Incentives and salary are another key embedded component of the Task Force’s framework. To avoid mistakes made by other states when instituting a tiered licensure structure, the Task Force recommends that the legislature codify a new state salary structure to coincide with the licensure framework. The proposal makes a paradigm shift from an input-based pay structure; teachers are rewarded in the current step salary schedule by years in the profession and degrees earned. The new structure would continue the Task Force’s belief that teachers should be provided a competitive salary for demonstrating instructional growth and positive student outcomes.

In the new framework, a teacher’s salary would progress up stair steps from residency, license 1 to license 6, though the teacher retains the autonomy to choose a career path. Salary increases with each license level, as each license requires growth in competencies and responsibility. Another advantage is that this new structure would allow an effective teacher to progress in salary faster than in the current Mississippi salary schedule.

Table 3: Professional Salary Structure

Goals	Proposition	Rationale
Provide incentives for growth in practice. Create career advancement for teachers. Learn from failed pay-for-performance models. Base pay on competencies and outcomes, over input measures.	Adjust the current minimum salary schedule to the new licensure system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reward skills acquisition. Reward proof of competency and effectiveness. Reward leading from the classroom. 	Removes out-of-pocket costs to teachers for professional learning, which helps ensure equity. Creates system of transparency as to what professional learning is of quality. Gives some autonomy to teachers and leaders regarding professional learning.

The Task Force recommends a new minimum statewide salary schedule be developed alongside the new licensure structure, with the following details under consideration:

- A Residency license state minimum salary level should reward the additional responsibilities that students take on in this role (above classic student teachers) but reflect co-teacher or assistant duties. The state should also award a benefits package to these residents, as they are full-time positions.
- License 1 teacher state minimum salary should be set at a level that is competitive with the Southern region’s beginning teacher salary average — approximately \$39,750 in 2019-2020 for SREB states — plus benefits.
- License 2 teacher state minimum salary should be increased above License 1, rewarding increased skills and competencies shown by the licensee during induction, plus benefits.
- License 3 teacher state minimum salary should be increased above License 2, rewarding increased skills and competencies shown by the licensee during induction. In addition to benefits, License 3 teachers should be vested in the state’s retirement system.

- License 4, the first renewable license, should have a state minimum salary level set significantly above License 3, commensurate with the required demonstrations of effective classroom instruction and positive student impact. The salary level should be competitive with other Southern states, as well as considerate of salaries in comparable industries in Mississippi.
- Licenses 5 and 6 minimum salaries should provide a significantly increased salary above License 4, with license 6 higher than license 5, commensurate with taking on additional responsibilities in the classroom and a leadership role among colleagues. This salary should be awarded, not upon licensure achievement, but rather once a teacher has been *hired* for the specific advanced role in a school.

*** The Task Force suggests new minimum teacher salaries by state licensure level to help ensure that all districts will have funds to incentivize advanced roles — these do not factor in additional supplements or bonuses that some districts may opt to add. It is important to note that all the induction and advanced level licenses reflect new minimum statewide standards. Districts should still be able to apply additional criteria, such as achievement of National Board Certification, and appropriate incentives to hire teachers for various beginning or professional teaching roles, as well as advanced roles to meet their students’ specific needs.

In addition, the Task Force recommends that the minimum statewide compensation policy also include incentive pay for teacher leaders employed in low-socioeconomic school districts.

Mississippi policymakers should develop an incentive formula for advanced teacher salaries that provide state-supported, scaled pay increases for master and lead mentor teachers employed in schools serving low-socioeconomic students and in hard-to-fill subjects such as math, science and special education, to help ensure equitable distribution of talent across the state and across disciplines.

The Task Force also recommends that a regular cost-of-living adjustment be explored and added to a new teacher compensation structure. As inflation rises, salaries should also rise. This provides continuous increases to teachers regardless of their licensure progression, which is a comparable practice in any other industry.

Other Incentive Strategy Ideas

The Task Force’s focus on equity across Mississippi has led to multiple recommendations on how to recruit teachers to hard-to-staff schools and subjects. It is crucial that a collaborative study is conducted to recognize where there is an increased need for highly effective teachers. Once these areas are identified, the Task Force suggests exploring strategies to recruit teachers in addition to salary-based incentives. Ideas include:

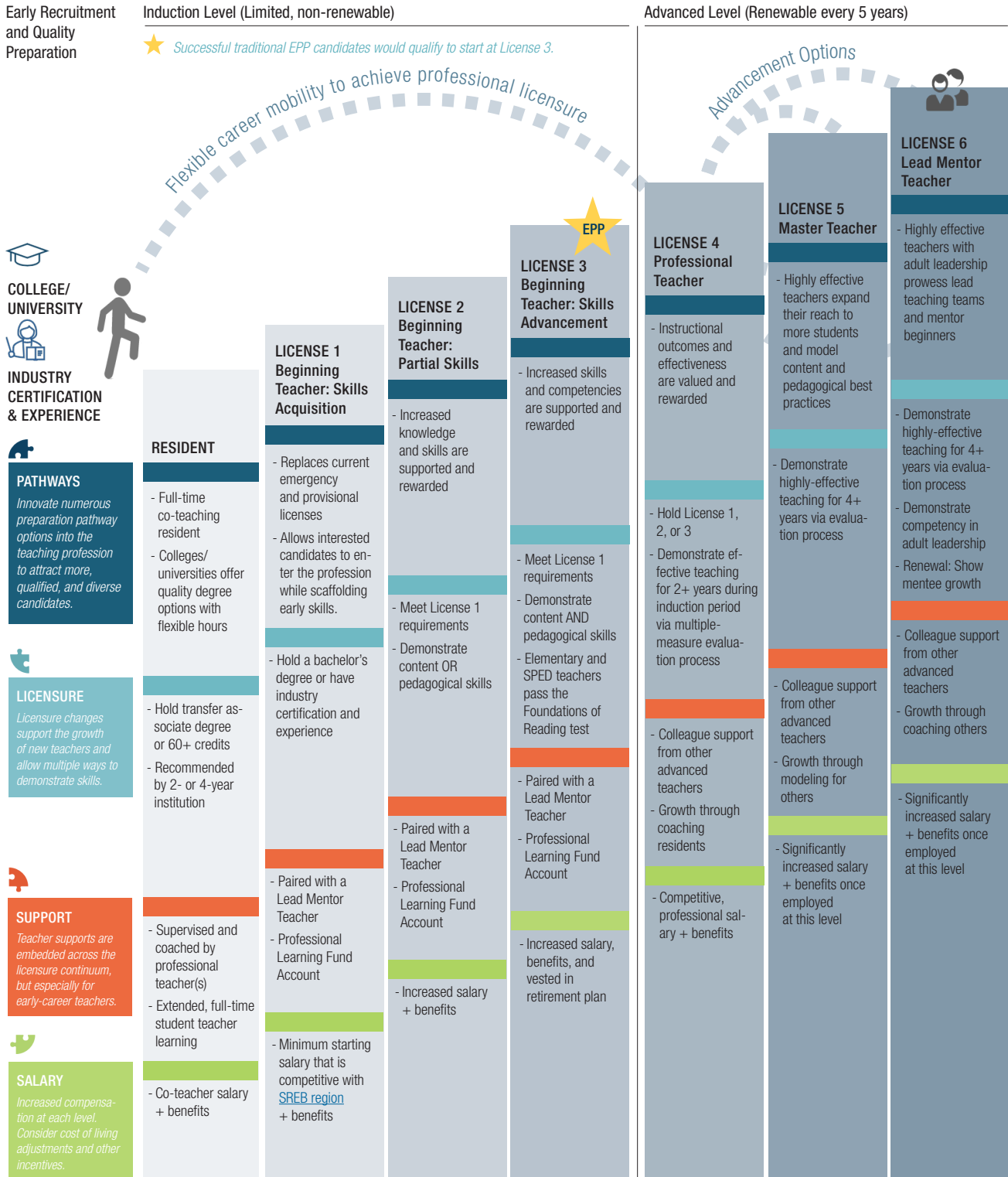
- Sign-on bonuses
- Loan forgiveness programs for those who work in hard-to-staff schools or subjects
- Reduced college tuition costs for teachers

State- and local-based partnerships to develop rural hubs and housing for teachers — for example, the Carl Small Town Center at Mississippi State University.

Proposed Teacher Professional Advancement Framework

To provide every Mississippi student with effective teachers

The Mississippi Governor's Education Human Capital Task Force recommends strengthening teacher pathways, supports, licensure and compensation to elevate the profession and rebuild the teacher pipeline.



Long-term Commitment and Systemic Implementation

Teachers are the most consequential factor leading to student success. The single best thing we can do to improve every child’s education in Mississippi is focus on keeping great teachers in the classroom and encourage more to enter the profession by improving the experience of educators: from recruitment to preparation to retention.

The path to becoming a teacher and growing in the profession has not kept up with other high-skill professional careers. Pressed by a growing need for effective educators, Mississippi must:

- revitalize teachers’ professional career paths in a way that invites a more diverse population into the profession
- offer individual support, advancement and growth opportunities
- encourage highly effective teachers to lead from the classroom
- provide fair compensation that grows as teachers expand their professional impact

The comprehensive framework posed by the Task Force presents a purposeful approach to solving the teacher shortage issue and the many challenges that have caused or worsened the shortage over the last two decades. This framework presents a major change for state systems, which is necessary to standardize the most successful strategies used in Mississippi and around the country. Our goal is to attract and retain excellent teachers and equitably share talent across the state to help every student in Mississippi have an excellent teacher year after year — and we can only do this with bold, innovative systems change.

This proposed framework invites significant collaboration among practitioners, state board members, state agencies, the legislature and the governor’s office to develop operational plans, enact policy and implement change. **To fully develop, adopt and implement this framework, the Task Force finalizes this recommendation with a suggested phase-in approach to collaboration and implementation, shown in Table 4.**

Table 4: Potential Phase-in Timeline

2022	Groundwork Year – No Budget Impact	Define and communicate the framework with state leaders Engage stakeholder feedback sessions to refine proposal Engage State Board of Education and the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development Develop financial/salary model Develop final educator effectiveness measures
2023	Systems Preparation Year 1	Approve final educator effectiveness measures Collaborate (P-20) to create micro-credentials and other licensure content and pedagogical assessment options Prepare multiple systems changes at MDE

2024	Systems Preparation Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize and codify financial model with a legislative working group Pilot micro-credentials and other licensure content and pedagogical assessment options Implement effectiveness measures Implement multiple systems changes at MDE
2025	Final Policy Changes and Implementation Phase-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete all legislative and board rule changes Finalize revenue adjustments Launch new teacher licensure system in 25% of districts in the state Plan and begin a continuous improvement review
2025	Statewide Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch new teacher pathways, supports, licensure and salary system in 100% of the state Adopt the continuous improvement review

Section 3

State Data Systems to Improve Education Outcomes and Inform Workforce Development

To achieve innovative, systemic change as recommended in Section 2, it is critical to analyze the effects of such change. Mississippi should simultaneously study the implementation and the outcomes of changing state and local policies to education — not only its effect on P-12 student outcomes and teacher efficacy, but on postsecondary achievement and the state’s workforce. Robust data analysis is an exceptionally valuable tool for highlighting, addressing and solving problems like filling the current and future teacher pipeline and improving education to build the workforce of the future.

As Mississippi moves to enact a comprehensive policy plan to reverse teacher shortages, access to robust data is imperative if the state is to identify problems and assess how well various strategies are working. Mississippi LifeTracks, the existing statewide longitudinal data system, should better connect additional key data from early learning, P-12, postsecondary and the workforce. Fully integrating and automating data sharing from all state education agencies into the statewide longitudinal database will allow for data-driven decision making, not only within education but also for workforce and economic development efforts.

Access to robust data is imperative to reverse teacher shortages.

Action Step: Improve the P-20 State Longitudinal Data System

During the Great Recession, the U.S. Department of Education provided grant funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009) for states — including Mississippi — “to design, develop, and implement Statewide P-20 Longitudinal Data Systems to capture, analyze, and use student data from preschool to high school, college, and the workforce.”³⁶ A fully integrated SLDS allows states to safely and securely link citizen data from preschool through the workforce to help answer key questions regarding education outcomes, workforce preparation and economic outcomes.³⁷ Many of the states with the most fully developed longitudinal data systems, such as Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland and North Carolina in the Southern region, began receiving grant funding from the federal government in the mid- to late-2000s.³⁸

The Maryland Longitudinal Data System was first funded³⁹ in 2006 from an Institute of Education Sciences grant, followed by a 2009 grant from the U.S. Department of Education. According to a report by the Workforce Data Quality Campaign, Maryland officials estimated that the Maryland Longitudinal Data System costs \$2,747,000 to implement, which included \$800,000 for contractors designing the system and \$300,000 to hire key staff. The annual budget to maintain the Maryland Longitudinal Data System is \$2,077,000, which includes \$1,300,000 for the salaries of the 13 full-time MLDS Center employees who maintain the system.⁴⁰ Another example of an established, centralized SLDS is the Common

Education Data Analysis and Reporting System in North Carolina.^{41,42,43} Mississippi can look to these neighboring state systems for examples of integrating additional education data into the SLDS, as well as funding streams.

Immediate Recommended Action Steps

As required in Mississippi Annotated Code §37-154-1, several Mississippi state agencies were tasked with developing and sharing data through a state longitudinal database to “allow stakeholders and policy-makers access to data on state residents from birth to the workforce to drive accountability and investment decisions.” This led to Mississippi’s current SLDS, also known as the Mississippi LifeTracks system, supported by nSPARC at Mississippi State University. The law also created the SLDS Governing Board connecting state health, education and workforce agencies and offices.

Maximizing the SLDS is needed now to fully measure educational impact.

The system has been supported by three federal grants, and in 2021, the legislature restored full appropriations of \$1.4 million to support the operation of the SLDS. While P-20 education data is shared via the SLDS across multiple state agencies, the SLDS is not being used to its fullest extent. This is due to the lack of a formalized priority research agenda, inefficient funds to allow for robust data reporting, the absence of certain key education data being collected or properly stored in an efficient system, and technological and capacity limitations of certain state education agency systems.

The Task Force recognizes that these issues must be rectified for the SLDS that is necessary and achievable for the state, schools and institutions to better support Mississippi students who move into the Mississippi workforce.

- 1) To maximize the usefulness and accessibility of the SLDS, **the Task Force requests that Governor Reeves or the state legislature direct the SLDS Governing Board to collaborate with stake-holders to produce a strategic and operational plan measuring the impact of the teachers and state teacher workforce policies. This plan should ensure the SLDS functions at its highest capacity, clearly and efficiently reporting to state agencies and local stakeholders actionable information related to student progress in P-12 classrooms and the connection between educational outcomes to workforce development efforts.** Maximizing the SLDS is needed now more than ever to fully measure educational impact with our students during and after the pandemic, and to plan for the workforce and economy of the future.

To improve the functionality and usefulness of the SLDS, the Task Force developed a list of target data, reporting and functionality goals to enable deeper analysis of P-20 education outcomes and their effect on workforce development, as well improved policy and practice for teacher preparation and retention. These targets are recommended to ultimately allow for a more useful study of Mississippi residents from birth through the workforce utilizing data from health, education, and workforce agencies. While some of these goals may be hard to meet, the Task Force encourages the SLDS Governing Board to engage creative, innovative minds to find a way forward, while being careful to abide by all state and federal data protection laws.

A. Better measure P-20 and workforce data connections to understand how education outcomes effect the state economy long-term.

- Use the common de-identification numbering system processes⁴⁴ as established in Mississippi Annotated Code §37-154-3 — which safely and securely rely on social security numbers to de-identify personal data — to integrate the following data fully and efficiently into the SLDS:
 - public early childhood records
 - P-20 transcripts, assessment scores, attendance data, degrees conferred, certificates, and out-of-state school data when available
 - professional licenses, endorsements, industry credentials, and any accessible employee records
- Upgrade current state education agency systems that feed critical education data to SLDS, such as the ELMS and MSIS systems housed at the MDE, so that these systems can better collect additional data and automate data transfers to the SLDS.

Using the SLDS to Answer Critical Workforce Questions

Mississippi should use data through the SLDS to analyze and answer questions like:

- Have more workers accessed post-secondary training for up-skilling during the pandemic?
- How has education attainment of low-socioeconomic students changed over the past decade? Is this affecting workforce development?
- How has the introduction of new standards or programs affected educational outcomes of P-12 students? How is this affecting PSE attainment?

B. Measure teacher impact on student outcomes in P-12, as this directly affects postsecondary and workforce achievement.

- Enable data systems at the MDE to fully collect and share with the SLDS data on the teacher workforce and student outcomes to allow for deeper insight into the teacher shortage issue, as well as assist the state in finding further solutions to attract, retain and equitably distribute talent, including:
 - collecting, securely storing and automatically transferring Professional Growth System data from all school districts from MDE to the SLDS
 - linking student data to their assigned teachers to identify best practices in education

Using the SLDS to Understand Teacher Impact

Mississippi should use data through the SLDS to analyze and answer questions like:

- Is the teacher shortage worsening or improving in districts due to the pandemic?
- Where and how are our most effective teachers being prepared?
- How are beginning versus veteran teachers performing?
- What types of supports are increasing teacher retention?
- Why are teachers moving to other districts? Where are they going? Why are some leaving the profession?

- linking P-12 student outcomes with their teacher’s preparation program to identify best practices in educator preparation
 - developing a form for current educators allowing for their past (in-state) P-12 transcripts and employment records to be collected and used for teacher workforce analysis
 - surveying and studying educators who move, leave the field or retire to predict teacher workforce needs and understand why teachers leave
- Enable IHL to collect and integrate educator preparation candidate data into the system, including transcripts and student-teacher performance, but also additional data such as exit surveys to collect data on those who enter educator preparation programs but decide to leave prior to degree completion. By recognizing why candidates leave and if certain candidates (elementary, secondary, STEM, etc.) leave more frequently, preparation providers can take strides to mitigate the causes.
- 2) **The Task Force urges Mississippi policymakers to devote a portion of federal emergency funds to improve the functionality, usefulness and accessibility of the SLDS.** The American Rescue Plan funds, including Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief, Governors’ Emergency Education Relief, and the Higher Education Emergency Relief, could be used with the rationale of studying how Covid-19 impacted student outcomes and the teacher workforce.

Once a strategic and operational plan is established for the SLDS, there are several key resources needed for state agencies, institutions of higher learning, local education agencies and others to implement the necessary changes. The resources may include:

- Additional funding to nSPARC at Mississippi State University for database improvements and universal report sharing to all stakeholders
- Additional funding for key technology upgrades for existing data systems housed at the MDE
- Proper state agency staff training for data collection and sharing within upgraded systems
- Proper training for LEAs on data collection and reporting to MDE
- Proper training for LEAs on teacher and principal observations, student growth and other measures, as well as proper training on data collection and reporting to MDE
- Ability to connect the data from the SLDS with data visualization tools (e.g., Tableau, Power BI, SAS) for reporting by Mississippi colleges and universities

The Task Force strongly believes that a more efficient and robust SLDS is urgently needed for accountability and innovation of education and workforce systems to improve the state economy. By improving the data sharing capabilities and research objectives of the longitudinal data system, Mississippi can better study and inform successful long-term investments to sustain the economy and workforce for generations.

Section 4

Improvements and Innovations to Better Prepare Teachers of the Future

In the face of the teacher shortage crisis, Mississippi state leaders have focused on implementing innovative support programs, especially in the areas of elementary education and reading instruction. The MDE operates the first state-run teacher residency,⁴⁵ regularly convenes educators at state summits, and collaborates with state partners to generate recommendations for legislators, preparation program leaders, and school and district administrators.

Though Mississippi has taken some innovative steps in the realm of educator support and preparation, Mississippi educator preparation providers are not producing enough graduates in the high-need license areas of mathematics, science, and special education, as well as other subject teachers serving in certain areas of the state.

Troubling Declines in Teacher Preparation

Teachers are the most important influence on the academic growth of our students, as well as a valuable influence on cognitive growth. When it comes to student performance, teachers are estimated to have two to three times⁴⁶ the effect of any other school factor including services, facilities, even leadership. As seen in Section 2, all the SREB states are seeing shortages in quantity and quality of the teacher workforce. Most of the SREB states are also seeing alarming declines in the teacher candidate pool.⁴⁷

In both 2018 and 2019, ACT survey data showed that only 4% of Mississippi high school students are considering education as a college major.⁴⁸ On the 2019 ACT survey, Mississippi's top five indicated college majors were:⁴⁹ undecided, nursing, medicine, business administration and management, and mechanical engineering.

This lack of interest in an education career is not due to lack of educator preparation pathways. As of 2021, Mississippi has 15 institutions of higher education offering at least one major in educator preparation (beginning in May 2022 there will be 14 programs), as well as alternate route options, such as alternative programs offered by colleges, Teach for America, and the American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence.⁵⁰

Though 2018-19 teacher preparation enrollment and completion rates rose significantly for the first time in a decade, the number of completers is still down more than 700 per year from the highest levels in 2009-10. As shown in Table 5 below, there has been a downward trend in candidates completing educator preparation over the past decade. Even with an increase in completers from 2017-18 to 2018-19, it is too soon to say whether the declining trend is over.⁵¹

Teacher preparation completion has declined 30% in Mississippi over the last decade.

Table 5: Mississippi Teacher Preparation Enrollment and Completion Data

Academic Year	Enrollees	Completers	Percent Change in Completers
2018-19	4,224	1,653	24%
2017-18	2,651	1,334	-6%
2016-17	2,620	1,405	-21%
2015-16	2,795	1,778	-5%
2014-15	3,252	1,867	-20%
2013-14	3,896	2,325	1%
2012-13	4,166	2,305	4%
2011-12	4,901	2,215	-4%
2010-11	5,200	2,307	-2%
2009-10	4,247	2,358	10%
2008-09	4,277	2,150	N/A

Source: U.S. Department of Education Title II reports

Diversity Problems in Teacher Preparation and the Workforce

Just as concerning as the lack of interest in an education profession is data showing that interest in teaching by minority and male students continues to be low. According to federal Title II reports, in 2018-19 Mississippi educator preparation enrollees were 79% female⁵² and 77%⁵³ white. The gender trend has stayed consistent since 2010-11, when enrollees were 78% female⁵⁴ and 71% white,⁵⁵ yet these numbers show an 8% decrease in the number of enrollees of color in eight years.

In 2020-21, 56% of Mississippi's teachers were white women, with Black women making up the second most represented race-gender combination at 21%. White male teachers represent 13% of the profession, and Black males only 6%. The lack of diversity in both race and gender has an impact on Mississippi's diverse student body.⁵⁶ During the 2020-21 school year, 57% of Mississippi's P-12 students were minorities.⁵⁷ Research has shown that having at least one Black teacher in grades 3 through 5 increases the chances that low-income students of both sexes will aim to get a postsecondary education.⁵⁸

Enhanced Clinical Experiences

Research shows that more time student-teaching is the number one way to help prepare teacher candidates for real-world classrooms.^{59,60} The SREB Teacher Preparation Commission report highlights the need for high-quality clinical experiences for teacher candidates in which they benefit from professional feedback and mentorship from a highly effective cooperating teacher. The report also emphasizes the benefits of earlier, more frequent, and more varied field experiences, which better prepare candidates for early-career success than a single-site experience in their senior year.⁶¹ A leading best practice includes rigorous, year-long teacher residencies, as required for all teacher candidates in Louisiana and West Virginia.⁶²

The use of early and frequent clinical experiences exposes teacher candidates to the profession more fully and moves them from theory to practice throughout their education. The thorough preparation of teachers is crucial not only in recruiting teacher candidates but in retaining quality teachers. Clinicals provide teacher candidates with vital knowledge and resources, but they also provide EPPs and local school districts with strong partnership opportunities. Furthermore, EPP programs, both traditional and alternative, have a unique opportunity due to the COVID-19 pandemic to make even more innovative changes to their required clinicals. The pandemic has made it clear that technology and distance learning are tools that must be in every educator's repertoire.⁶³

More time student-teaching is the best way to prepare teacher candidates for real-world classrooms.

Student and Teacher Mental Health

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for increased attention to social-emotional learning for both students and teachers. In 2020, MDE provided the state with new social-emotional learning standards⁶⁴ noting that “the development of SEL skills fosters social competencies and increases positive social skills, reduces behavioral problems, decreases emotional stress, and improves academic outcomes for students.”⁶⁵ These standards will provide guidance to EPP programs as they prepare teacher candidates to address their students' social-emotional health.

Embedding mental health considerations throughout the currently established curricula and in candidate clinicals will help future teachers be better prepared to deal with the realities of their students' social and emotional health and struggles, as well as their own in hard times.

Curriculum Rigor

Rigor of curricula is a challenge facing many EPPs across the nation, which is bringing increased attention. A report by the Council of Chief State School Officers focuses on increasing the rigor of EPPs to benefit teacher candidates and their future pupils and suggests “building aligned systems of initial approval and reauthorization around clear and rigorous standards [to] elevate the quality of all programs while supporting their ongoing improvement.”⁶⁶ Many states tackle the rigor issue by instituting an EPP accountability system. Both Tennessee⁶⁷ and North Carolina⁶⁸ have robust EPP accountability systems. By aligning state standards for K-12 students and content requirement for teachers, EPPs can increase the rigor of the program and produce more content-aware teachers.

Action Step: Improve Access to Teacher Pathways

Mississippi must work to recruit more talent and diversity into the teaching profession, while also doing a better job preparing future teachers. A successful strategy to recruit teachers, especially in hard-to-staff areas, is grow-your-own programs,⁶⁹ which are active in Mississippi. These programs recruit talented local individuals and help them along the preparation pathway while fostering a relationship with the community, with the end goal of having those candidates return to teach in local schools. Another successful solution gaining traction in the education community is the 2+2 pathway for teaching, which helps grow the teacher pipeline by allowing students to begin their teaching degree at a community college and finish at a 4-year institution of higher education. Like grow-your-own programs, the 2+2 pathway can help foster relationship with hard-to-staff areas, while also providing much needed cost savings to students.

The Task Force encourages expanding access for more students to enter teaching preparation by helping recruit more diverse candidates, complementing rural educators and grow-your-own campaigns, and providing needed savings to students. The goal of these recommendations is to attract students earlier on to teaching and provide a comprehensive, hands-on, cost-effective education.

Immediate Recommended Action Steps

- 1) To help build a statewide two- to four-year college teaching pathway, the Task Force recommends that students in two-year colleges interested in pursuing teaching should be allowed to experience additional teacher preparation courses prior to transfer. This adjustment in course sequencing will provide students with more opportunities to explore education as a program of study. And provide four-year institutions with greater flexibility in programming, which should allow for additional time for practicum and clinical experiences during the junior and senior years.

The Task Force urges the Education Achievement Council to convene all two-year and four-year colleges to negotiate and modify select education preparation courses to be offered at community colleges. To achieve this recommendation, general education requirements will need to be adjusted and certain education (EDU) courses may need to be revamped, however this would provide an opportunity to conduct a much-needed education curricula review. This effort hinges on open collaboration and negotiation between Mississippi two- and four-year institutions, and a willingness for universities to implement the changes.

By modifying education major courses for transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions, students will be able to advance in course completion at a faster rate, as well as experience higher-level teaching courses earlier in their college career. The earlier exposure to education courses in community college may encourage more students to pursue an education degree. This modification will streamline matriculation and provide for significant cost savings for students.

- 2) In conjunction with expanding the existing pre-service license to a residency license providing early access to more interested students (see Section 2 for more) and teaching 300-level courses at the 200-level in community college, **the Task Force highly recommends that a statewide two-year to four-year college (2+2) teaching pathway be developed and implemented.** A coalition between Mississippi Community College Board, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, and Mississippi Association of Independent Colleges and Universities should be developed, bringing together individual two- and four-year institutions across the state, with the goal of creating one or more statewide teaching associate degrees that transfer to all or at least many four-year institutions in the state. Once new associate degrees are approved, this coalition should also support partnerships that enable statewide articulation agreements utilizing the community colleges' uniform course numbering system.

To create a statewide 2+2 teaching pathway, the coalition of state-level leaders can rely on the collaborations and negotiations initiated among institutions through the course recommendation above. These conversations can lead to agreements on one or two key introductory teaching courses for the associate degree(s) that all or most institutions will accept as transfer education, humanities or social science courses. Two potential ideas include an introduction to special education and a redesigned Foundations of Education course.



North Carolina has implemented a 2+2 pathway for teaching which also allows dual-enrolled high school students to take part in the pathway. North Carolina's community college system and four-year partners worked to create new Associate of Arts in Teacher Education and Associate of Science in Teacher Education for STEM subjects now taught by 90% of community colleges.

Also important to this work is a negotiation of core curriculum requirements between two- and four-year institutions in the state. MIHL currently requires all bachelor's degree programs to have a minimum of 120 course hours and a maximum of 124 course hours unless a special exception has been granted. Within the required course hours MIHL mandates 30 hours of a core curriculum, which includes English, math, natural science, humanities, fine arts, and social or behavioral science. At the community college level, each college sets the credit hours required to receive a degree, as well as the required core curriculum hours. In Mississippi, associate degrees require a minimum of 60 credit hours, with a range of required core curriculum credit hours between 32 and 40. Currently there is no agreed upon core curriculum between community colleges and four-year colleges, nor is there an agreed-upon basic teaching introduction curriculum. Core curriculums differ not only by required credit hours but by allowing different courses to fulfill requirements. Basic teaching introduction curriculum differs in the same ways the core curricula do.

To make this pathway possible, it is necessary that MCCB, MIHL, MAC and the institutions they represent agree upon both a core curriculum and a basic teacher introduction curriculum that will allow overlap and encompass both the associate degrees and the bachelor's degrees offered at all (or most) two- and four-year institutions.

Action Step: Innovate Educator Preparation Curricula

As interest in the profession continues to decline and retirement rates increase over the next ten years throughout the nation, Mississippi will need to consider innovative ways to increase access to the teaching career through both traditional and non-traditional preparation pathways. This can be done through increased pathways, as mentioned above, *and* through innovation and change to existing teacher preparation curricula.

To help recruit and retain excellent teachers, the Task Force believes there is room and need for innovations within the existing educator preparation curricula. The Task Force advises state leaders to provide an opportunity for institutions of higher learning and their partners to collaborate and enact changes to their curricula to better prepare teacher candidates.

Immediate and Continuous Recommended Action Steps

- 3) **The Task Force urges educator preparation providers to pursue the following innovations and improvements to prepare their teacher candidates for teaching in a real-world classroom:**
 - a. Embed early and continuous clinical opportunities that allow students to move from theory to practice throughout their education, starting with introductory education courses through graduation.
 - b. Increase informal practice, modeled practice, simulated and formal hands-on practice requirements to candidates within traditional and alternative preparation program courses.
 - c. Increase pedagogical training related to virtual and e-learning best practices and other beneficial technologies.
 - d. Embed the state's new social-emotional learning standards, culturally responsive pedagogy, student and school data analysis, special education coursework, and best practices in classroom management throughout all courses offered to teacher candidates.
 - e. Align state standards for K-12 students and content requirement for teachers regularly.
- 4) **The Task Force urges state agencies to consider creating an educator preparation program accountability system to guarantee the quality, content and rigor programs provide to their students.** This accountability system, modeled from systems in states like Tennessee and North Carolina, could help ensure that Mississippi's teachers are more appropriately prepared for real-world classrooms. This system should hold all EPPs — traditional and alternative — to the same standards. In collecting and reporting program outcome data, it would provide useful information to improve individual EPPs.
- 5) After reviewing evidence⁷⁰ that early knowledge of and exposure to the education profession is a crucial tool in recruiting more high school and college students to teaching, the Task Force developed the following proposal to help improve educator preparation programs. The Task Force is confident this proposal will help embed early and continuous exposure to teaching for both education and non-education majors in as many postsecondary institutions as possible — thus increasing opportunities to inspire more Mississippi college students to pursue the profession.

The Task Force recommends creating a new introductory education course that would be taught, accepted and universally transferable across any two- and four-year institution in Mississippi — including dual-enrolled high school students. This could be a course on “American Education and Society” and should be accepted as a three-hour credit course within any student’s first 30 college credit hours. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the history of education in the United States and the value of the profession in society, while allowing students early in their college career to learn hands-on what it means to be an educator, prior to declaring their major. The class should require 15-20 hours of field practicum in K-12 schools, assigned under the tutelage of a state licensed teacher. Course enrollees should audit a K-12 classroom, as well as tutor K-12 students to complete the course practicum hour requirement.

To achieve this recommendation, the Task Force advises that this new “American Education and Society” course be accepted as a general education course in the social sciences. The Task Force urges collaborative discussions commence between the MDE, MIHL, MCCB and two- and four-year institution leaders to outline and operationalize this new transferable course.

Section 5

Marketing to Better Recruit New Teaching Talent

In all careers, it is vital to attract the most qualified and passionate candidates. Education is no different. The U.S. government's Institute of Education Sciences states that data use, institutional partnerships, and relationship-based recruitment are the cornerstones to recruiting a diverse teacher workforce.⁷¹ One specific use for data the IES mentions is creating marketing campaigns to target underrepresented groups, such as males and minorities.

Education agencies should expand from advertising to marketing the profession. While advertising focuses solely on employment opportunities, marketing is a comprehensive set of actions used to exhibit missions, values and goals. Marketing encourages long-term relationships, while advertising only fulfills short-term hiring goals.⁷²

As referenced in Section 4 of this report, the number of candidates enrolling in and completing educator preparation programs is worrisome, as is the number of high school students considering education as a career choice. Marketing can be a highly effective tool to target those who had not previously considered teaching as a career choice. These marketing campaigns can be as simple as Virginia's Education Wizard⁷³ or as complex as California's television ad campaign⁷⁴ collaboration with TEACH.org⁷⁵ and the Ad Council.

Education agencies should expand from advertising to marketing the profession.

Mississippi has its own education marketing website: TeachMS.org.⁷⁶ The current website can be upgraded, like similar state websites such as North Carolina's,⁷⁷ to employ the full power of technology in marketing. Mississippi not only has its own Teach website but also a Talent Acquisition Office that can help attract more teachers to the state.

A successful marketing campaign, bolstered by stronger preparation and paired with existing recruiting initiatives at the Mississippi Department of Education, can help attract new talent to the teaching profession in Mississippi. It is imperative, though, that the profession being marketed is attractive and lucrative to potential teacher candidates. Previous sections of this report highlight new efforts to elevate the esteem of the teaching profession, but it is also important to actualize this information for the teacher workforce and the public in general — that is where a revitalized marketing campaign plays a crucial role.

Action Step: Improve State Teacher Marketing Campaigns and Incentives

The Task Force believes that reinvigorating the Mississippi campaign to recruit new teachers is a vital piece of solving the teacher shortage crisis.

Immediate and Continuous Recommended Action Steps

- 1) **The Task Force recommends that the MDE explore hiring an outside consulting group or using the state’s university experts to assess marketing needs and provide support.** A fully formed marketing campaign is beyond the in-house capacity of the Mississippi Department of Education, but outside entities with specific expertise can help provide a fully realized campaign. The Task Force suggests expanding communication of the value of Mississippi’s teachers. One approach a marketing campaign could take is that “Teachers make all other careers possible.” Conveying to the public what those in education know to be true can help elevate the profession and attract new talent.

It is important to focus portions of the campaign on Generation Z — including the methods of delivery and the message of altruism that speaks to the younger generation. The Task Force believes there is room for growth within the large marketing campaign in the following ways:

- Expand the TeachMS campaign to appeal to new audiences.
 - Revamp the TeachMS.org website to be more user-friendly and make more information easily accessible (look to the TeachNC.org website for redesign ideas). The information needs to target the major barriers to the profession: how to find an EPP that meets the students’ needs, affordability, completing assessments and applications for licensure.
 - Advertise the teaching profession, link to the TeachMS.org site on all state education websites and employ advertisements on additional sites within the government’s purview (e.g., state parks websites).
 - Use virtual high school, college and graduate school fairs and the Governor’s Job Fair Network to inform potential candidates about the teaching career.
 - Utilize existing career and jobs fairs at high schools to inform potential candidates about the teaching career.
 - Explore and use new marketing research conducted by TEACH.org to target the most effective messaging strategies to target the next generation of teachers.
- 2) **The Task Force recommends that MDE leadership fully utilizes their Talent Acquisition group, in partnership with the Department of Employment Security and the State Workforce Investment Board, to expand statewide workforce development priorities to teaching and leading within the education system.** Agency leaders must be united in the mission to promote and recruit new candidates into the teaching career.
 - 3) **The Task Force recommends exploring financial incentives at the state and district level, and discounted teacher degree programs or loan forgiveness programs at the state level, as incentives to enter a teaching career.** The Task Force encourages the governor, legislature, and the MDE to explore incentives that can be provided at the state or local level, including but not limited to:
 - Discounted teacher degree programs offered by Mississippi public colleges and universities
 - Revitalizing teacher loan forgiveness programs for teachers serving in hard-to-staff schools or subject areas (previous state programs lost state funding in 2011)

- Raising starting salaries to a more competitive level with the southern region
- District signing bonuses for hard-to-fill positions
- Stipends for housing provided to those moving to rural districts
- Combining financial incentives with mentorship and professional development requirements to ensure the investment leads to the support and growth of teachers (see Section 2 for more on this).

Section 6

Conclusion and Call to Action

To commit to and invest in our students and educators through redesigning our policies and practices governing the teaching profession, centralizing state data collection and analysis, improving teacher preparation and access to the profession, and being innovative in our recruitment and retention efforts, Mississippi will raise every child’s academic and cognitive skills and lead the nation in student growth. The ideas and plan of action presented by the Governor’s Task Force will:

- Recruit, prepare and retain a better, more diverse, more equitably distributed teacher talent pool
- Restore the respect the teaching profession deserves
- Assure the public that licensed teachers demonstrate, more than ever before, increasing mastery, knowledge and instructional competencies
- Guarantee the state’s investment in your teachers and your students is a fruitful investment, not only in educating the next generation but in the future of Mississippi’s workforce and economy

Every child deserves to study under a well-trained, supported and respected educator.

As parents, citizens and educators, we urge Governor Reeves and all our state elected and appointed leaders to build a long-term, multi-year plan to see the Task Force recommendations through. With a once-in-a-century urgency to invest in our children, and the massive influx of federal funding and resources, now is the time to rebuild and transform our education systems.

Above all in education, every child deserves to go to school each year and study under a well-trained, effective, supported and respected educator. This report encompasses a bold, well-rounded action plan to get Mississippi closer to this reality and to be a national leader in teacher workforce innovation.

Appendix A

The Mississippi Governor's Education Human Capital Task Force

Membership List

The Honorable Tate Reeves, Governor

Dr. Richard Blackburn, former Dean of Education, Mississippi State University

Dr. Ben Burnett, Dean of Education, William Cary University

Dr. Debra Burson, Bureau Director, Educator Preparation, Mississippi Department of Education

Kelly Butler, Chief Executive Officer, Barksdale Reading Institute

Glen East, Superintendent of Education, Gulfport School District

Dr. Karen Elam, Member, Mississippi State Board of Education

LaJeremy Hughes, Elementary Teacher, Della Davidson Elementary, Oxford School District

Dr. Teresa Jayroe, Dean of Education, Mississippi State University

Audra Love Dean, Assistant Executive Director for Academic and Student Affairs,
Mississippi Community College Board

Heather Morrison, Director, P-20 Partnerships, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning

Dr. Cory Murphy, Executive Director, Teaching and Leading, Mississippi Department of Education

Dr. Felecia Nave, President, Alcorn State University

Dr. David Rock, Dean, School of Education, University of Mississippi

Robin Stewart, Director, Office of Job Connections, Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Sara Stygles, Lead Teacher, Oak Grove Middle School, Lamar County School District

Lillie Bryant Sweazy, Secondary Teacher, Natchez High School, Natchez-Adams School District

Jackie Turner, Executive Director, Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Dr. Carey Wright, State Superintendent of Education

SREB Support Staff (in alphabetical order):

Megan Boren, Stevie Lawrence, Stephen Pruitt, and Jessica Snellings

Appendix B

The Mississippi Governor’s Education Human Capital Task Force

Timeline of Events

Winter 2020	Task Force Established
	Governor Reeves and the Southern Regional Education Board work to establish a roundtable of diverse education leaders and practitioners in Mississippi to collaborate and innovatively find solutions to the state’s teacher shortage crisis. The Governor’s Task Force is asked to bring together several previous task forces’ work and build on efforts already in place.
February 13, 2020	First Task Force Meeting — Jackson, MS
	Governor Reeves, with the help of SREB, hosted the initial meeting of the Task Force. The members fully defined their charge and priorities and began to collect and analyze evidence of current efforts to improve the teacher pipeline in Mississippi.
April 2020	Task Force meeting #2
	Due to the pandemic, the Task Force began meeting virtually. SREB presented research on Mississippi policies and practices related to teacher preparation, pathways, recruitment and retention, as well as best practices from around the region and nation regarding successful research and strategies that have led to increasing the quantity, quality and diversity of teachers.
May 2020	Task Force meeting #3
	The Task Force formed three initial sub-groups to work simultaneously on pressing issues for the state: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immediate supports needed for teachers during COVID-19• Strengthening existing state programs to recruit and retain teachers• Upgrading licensure and compensation
June 2020	Task Force meeting #4 and #5
	The three subgroups continued to research, brainstorm and debate strategies and solutions.
July 2020	Task Force meeting #6
	The Task Force worked to produce an interim recommendation report to Governor Reeves with immediate action steps that should be taken to help recruit and retain quality teachers and better prepare teachers for the changes in education due to the pandemic.

August 2020	Task Force meeting #7
The first interim report was published by the Task Force and can be accessed here: https://www.sreb.org/mississippi-education-human-capital-roundtable .	
September 2020 – February 2021	Task Force meetings #8-13
Members continued to research, brainstorm and debate strategies to better market the teaching profession, upgrade teacher licensure and compensation and create teacher leadership opportunities statewide.	
March 2021	Task Force meetings #14-15 and Educator Focus Groups
The Task Force requested SREB and TeachPlus Mississippi to conduct educator focus groups with K-12 and higher education practitioners to learn more about the barriers that prevent great teachers from entering or remaining in the profession. As the focus group research commenced, the Task Force began researching teacher preparation successes and challenges.	
April 2021	Task Force meetings #16-17
SREB presented the focus group research to the Task Force. The members continued to research and innovatively brainstorm improvements for teacher preparation.	
July – August 2021	Task Force meetings #18-22
The Task Force worked to refine and consolidate their recommended action items regarding redesigning teacher pathways, licensure, supports and compensation; improving teacher preparation policies and curricula; access to P-20 longitudinal data; and better marketing the teaching profession. The Task Force aims to present their final recommendation report to Governor Reeves in August 2021.	

Appendix C

Acronym Guide

2+2 – Two plus two pathway to a baccalaureate degree, consisting of two years of coursework in a community college and two years of coursework from a college or university

ELMS – Education Licensure Management System

EPP – educator preparation program

FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

IHLs – institutions of higher learning

LEA – local education agency or school district

MAC – Mississippi Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

MCCB – Mississippi Community College Board

MDE – Mississippi Department of Education

MIHL – Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning

MLDS – Maryland Longitudinal Database System

MSIS – Mississippi Student Information System

NBCT – National Board-Certified teacher

nSPARC – National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center at Mississippi State University

PGS – Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System

SBE – State Board of Education

SLDS – state longitudinal data system

SREB – Southern Regional Education Board

STEM – science, mathematics, engineering and technology

U.S.ED – United States Department of Education

Endnotes

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