

MISSISSIPPI POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BOARD



IHL Executive Offices, Room 218
3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, MS 39211

September 18, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.

Teleconference: 1-888-822-7517, Access code: 2791682#
Zoom: <https://itsmsgov.zoom.us/j/88972500616>

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EXECUTIVE SESSION IF DETERMINED NECESSARY

ADJOURNMENT

MINUTES

BE IT REMEMBERED, that the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board held a regular meeting on Thursday, June 22, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. Members of the Board participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom or teleconference. Members of the media and public were invited to attend the meeting in Room 218 of the Education and Research Center, 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, Mississippi, 39211.

The following member(s) participated remotely:

- Ben Burnett, MAICU appointee
- Tyrone Jackson, MCCB institutional appointee
- Mark Keenum, IHL institutional appointee
- Sharon Ross, Governor's appointee
- Jim Turcotte, Governor's appointee and Chairman
- Dianne Watson, MCCB appointee

The following member(s) did not participate:

- Steven Cunningham, IHL Board appointee
- Barney Daly, Lt. Governor's appointee
- Isabelle Higbee, MAICU appointee

Also in attendance either in person or remotely were:

- Jennifer Rogers, Director of Student Financial Aid and Postsecondary Board Director
- Meg Harris, Assistant Director of Operations, Student Financial Aid
- Tiffany Barner, Office and Program Administrator, Student Financial Aid
- Frances West, Program Administrator, Student Financial Aid
- Adele Russell, Student Service Representative, Student Financial Aid
- Melissa Temple, Director of Nursing, IHL
- Rachel DeVaughan-Patrick, Mississippi Community College Board
- Stephanie Jones, University of Mississippi Medical Center
- Erin Eaton, Mississippi Community College Board
- Laura Diven-Brown, University of Mississippi
- Rebecca Cockrell, William Carey University
- Anna Moak Sparks

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. by Chairman Turcotte.

MINUTES

On motion by Dr. Tyrone Jackson and seconded by Dr. Dianne Watson, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the board meeting held on April 11, 2023, as originally drafted.

REGULAR AGENDA

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Item 1: Dr. Jennifer Rogers presented the FY 2024 Annual Operating Budget and Program Allocation for final approval. On motion by Dr. Keenum, seconded by Dr. Jackson, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the final FY 2024 Annual Operating Budget and Program Allocation as presented.

1. Final Approval of the FY 2024 Annual Operating Budget

Request:

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid requests final approval of the Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Operating Budget and Program Allocation.

Summary:

A draft budget and the proposed allocation were presented to the Board in April for initial approval. No changes have been made to the budget and only slight changes are recommended to the allocation.

Chart 1 shows the amount available to SFA from all funding sources for FY 2023 and FY 2024. The FY 2024 Appropriated column shows the funds appropriated. The FY 2024 Allocated column shows the funds allocated. For the upcoming fiscal year, the Legislature appropriated more funds for the Winter-Reed Teacher Loan Repayment program than SFA is able to spend due to limitations in the authorizing legislation; therefore, the allocation for the program is less than the appropriation. Similarly, SFA has more cash on hand (from collections) than was appropriated. Therefore, the allocation of cash on hand is more than the appropriation. Nevertheless, the total amounts allocated equal the total amounts appropriated, so SFA will not exceed its total spending authority. SFA will request reappropriation of the excess Winter-Reed funds in FY 2025. The Annual Operating Budget has not changed since April.

Chart 2 shows the allocation of funds by program. The proposed allocations have changed only slightly since April and the presentation of the funds has changed. The new allocation includes no funds for the Critical Needs Dyslexia Therapy Forgivable Loan program due to a lack of applicants and slightly less for the SREB Regional Contract Forgivable Loan program because the final seat cost, announced in May, is slightly less than what was projected. The new Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program is being tracked by the Department of Finance and Administration and Legislative Budget Office as a separate budget from the regular SFA Budget. That is why the program is presented separately at the bottom of the chart.

The proposed allocations are as follows:

- Fund administrative budget with a Personnel increase for a new position and a Contractual Services increase for anticipated programming and IT support costs.
- Fully fund grant budgets (MTAG, MESH, and HELP).
- Award 9 new contract seats and all renewals for SREB, as required in Section 4.
- Award the maximum \$70,000 in funding for SLPL, as allowed in Section 10.
- Award new and renewal applicants on the remaining authorized forgivable loan program, CNDT. All nursing loans were discontinued by SB 2373.
- Award all eligible LAW applicants, as required in Section 5.
- Award up to \$2 million to as many eligible FAITH Scholarship applicants as possible.
- Award 150 new and all renewal teachers through WRTR, as required in Section 12.
- Award about 25,000 high school students through the new dual credit/dual enrollment program.

Recommendation:

Board staff recommends approval of this item.

REGULAR AGENDA

Chart 1:

FY 2024 Annual Operating Budget				
Funding Source	FY 2023	FY 2024 Allocated	FY 2024 Appropriated	Unallocated / (Overallocated)
<i>GOVERNMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS</i>				
General Support	\$ 50,631,667	\$ 50,649,256	\$ 50,649,256	\$ -
Other General Support - DE/DC	\$ -	\$ 9,823,000	\$ 9,823,000	\$ -
Education Enhancement Fund - New				
FAITH (New)	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ -
Winter-Reed (New)	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 1,150,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 850,000
Education Enhancement Fund - Reappropriated				
FAITH (Reappropriated)		\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ -
Winter-Reed (Reappropriated)		\$ 1,100,000	\$ 1,100,000	\$ -
State Special Funds - ARPA				
Nursing Loan Repayment	\$ -	\$ 6,000,000	\$ 6,000,000	\$ -
Total Governmental Appropriations	\$ 53,631,667	\$ 70,722,256	\$ 71,572,256	\$ 850,000
<i>GRANTS AND CONTRACTS</i>				
Federal	\$ 3,500,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Grants and Contracts	\$ 3,500,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<i>INTEREST INCOME</i>				
Nissan	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Interest Income	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<i>OTHER SOURCES</i>				
Law Fund	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ -
Total Other Sources	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ -
<i>CASH ON HAND</i>				
Estimated Collections	\$ 2,990,000	\$ 2,570,000	\$ 1,720,000	\$ (850,000)
Total Cash on Hand	\$ 2,990,000	\$ 2,570,000	\$ 1,720,000	\$ (850,000)
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDING	\$ 60,131,667	\$ 73,312,256	\$ 73,312,256	\$ -

REGULAR AGENDA

Chart 2:

FY 2024 Allocation						
Program	FY23 Actual Awards	FY23 Actual Expenditures	FY24 Allocated Awards	FY24 Allocated Amounts	FY24 Appropriated Amounts	Unallocated / (Overallocated)
SFA BUDGET						
1- Administration						
Salaries, Wages and Fringes		\$ 791,606		\$ 822,745	\$ 822,745	\$ -
Travel		\$ 8,000		\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ -
Contractual Service		\$ 536,040		\$ 620,000	\$ 620,000	\$ -
Commodities		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ -
Equipment		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ -
Total Administration		\$ 1,355,646		\$ 1,470,745	\$ 1,470,745	\$ -
2- MTAG/MESG and HELP						
MTAG	17,753	\$ 9,921,151	18,060	\$ 10,473,044	\$ 10,298,248	\$ (174,796)
MESG	3,505	\$ 7,921,120	3,564	\$ 8,141,376	\$ 8,005,496	\$ (135,880)
HELP	<u>4,528</u>	<u>\$ 30,373,123</u>	<u>4,647</u>	<u>\$ 32,313,982</u>	<u>\$ 31,774,658</u>	<u>\$ (539,324)</u>
Total MTAG/MESG and HELP	25,786	\$ 48,215,394	26,271	\$ 50,928,402	\$ 50,078,402	\$ (850,000)
3 - Forgivable Loan Programs						
Teacher Programs:						
CNDT (Graduate)	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Nursing Programs:						
NELB	186	\$ 636,365	0	\$ -	\$ -	-
NELM (Graduate)	14	\$ 42,500	0	\$ -	\$ -	-
NELP (Graduate)	9	\$ 31,878	0	\$ -	\$ -	-
NELR	12	\$ 28,834	0	\$ -	\$ -	-
NERM (Graduate)	4	\$ 13,500	0	\$ -	\$ -	-
NTSP (Graduate)	1	\$ 10,000	0	\$ -	\$ -	-
Health-Related Programs:						
SLPL (Graduate)	5	\$ 59,061	5	\$ 70,000	\$ 70,000	\$ -
SREB (Graduate)	<u>31</u>	<u>\$ 595,200</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>\$ 652,608</u>	<u>\$ 652,608</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Total Forgivable Loan Programs	262	\$ 1,417,338	38	\$ 722,608	\$ 722,608	\$ -
4 - Other						
NEW FAITH Scholarship	0	\$ -	200	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -
LAW	7	\$ 75,348	10	\$ 117,500	\$ 117,500	\$ -
Nissan	1	\$ 4,949	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
GEER Summer Grant	3,897	\$ 2,985,950	-	-	-	-
Winter-Reed Loan Repayment	<u>236</u>	<u>\$ 813,500</u>	<u>450</u>	<u>\$ 2,250,000</u>	<u>\$ 3,100,000</u>	<u>\$ 850,000</u>
Total Other	4,141	\$ 3,879,747	660	\$ 4,367,500	\$ 5,217,500	\$ 850,000
5 - Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit						
Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit	-	-	24,560	\$ 9,823,000	\$ 9,823,000	\$ -
Total DE/DC	0	\$ -	24,560	\$ 9,823,000	\$ 9,823,000	\$ -
Total Loans, Schols & Grants	30,189	\$ 53,512,479	51,529	\$ 65,841,510	\$ 65,841,510	\$ -
SFA BUDGET	30,189	\$ 54,868,125	51,529	\$ 67,312,256	\$ 67,312,256	\$ -
NULR BUDGET						
1 - Nurse Loan Repayment	0	\$ -	333	\$ 6,000,000	\$ 6,000,000	\$ -
NULR BUDGET	0	\$ -	333	\$ 6,000,000	\$ 6,000,000	\$ -
COMBINED BUDGETS						
Total Administration		\$ 1,355,646		\$ 1,470,745	\$ 1,470,745	\$ -
Total Loans, Schols, and Grants	30,189	\$ 53,512,479	51,862	\$ 71,841,510	\$ 71,841,510	\$ -
COMBINED BUDGETS	30,189	\$ 54,868,125	51,862	\$ 73,312,256	\$ 73,312,256	\$ -

REGULAR AGENDA

Item 2: Dr. Rogers presented the FY 2025 Budget Request for approval. On motion by Dr. Keenum, seconded by Dr. Watson, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the final FY 2025 Budget Request as presented.

2. Approve the FY 2025 Budget Request

Request:

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid requests approval of the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request.

Summary:

Board policy Part 601, Chapter 9, Rule 9.1 (IV) states, “Annually, the Board will review the annual legislative budget request for the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid and make a budget recommendation to the Agency.”

Chart 3 is the FY 2025 Combined Budget Request with Expenditures by Program. The chart includes the FY 2023 actual awards and expenditures, the FY 2024 appropriated awards and expenditures, the FY 2025 projected awards and expenditures, and the change from FY 2024. The primary changes are as follows:

- Administration: Funds are requested to provide cost of living salary increases for all current employees, hire a new employee to assist with newly created legislative programs, and to provide for the increased cost of programming and other IT-related costs.
- MTAG/MESG and HELP: MTAG is unavailable to students who qualify for the maximum federal Pell grant. The formula for determining eligibility for the federal Pell grant is changing for the 24-25 aid year. More Mississippi residents are expected to be eligible for the maximum Pell grant under the new formula. Therefore, fewer students will be eligible for MTAG. Lack of information from the federal government has limited our ability to project program costs for the coming years. A modest growth rate of 1% is anticipated in the number of recipients for MESG and HELP. The HELP Grant program budget also anticipates tuition increases of 3%.
- Forgivable Loan Programs: SFA requests the Legislature transition the remaining forgivable loan programs to loan repayment programs and phase out funding for the SREB Regional Contract Forgivable Loan program.
- Other: SFA anticipates the need to expand the FAITH Scholarship program to award more students after the first year.
- Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Scholarship Program: The DEDC scholarship will currently cover the tuition for only six credit hours (typically two courses, either academic or CTE) at a participating Mississippi college or university. However, a joint coalition representing K-12, the community colleges, and the universities requested the program cover up to 15 hours per student. The additional request would provide adequate funding to cover up to 9 hours per student. Additional funding would then be requested in FY 2026 and FY 2027 to gradually expand the program to cover up to 15 hours.
- NULR: In the Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program, no additional funds will be requested in FY 2025. The \$6,000,000 funding from Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds will cover awards through FY 2026. Depending on the outcomes of the program, SFA could request funds from a state source beginning in FY 2027 to continue the program.

REGULAR AGENDA

Chart 4 is the FY 2025 Combined Budget Request with Funding by Source. The chart shows the FY 2023 budgeted amount, the FY 2024 appropriated amount, the FY 2025 requested amount, and the comparison between FY 2024 and FY 2025. This chart includes the funding sources for both the SFA and NULR budgets.

Exhibit 1 is the FY 2025 SFA Budget Narrative, which corresponds to the SFA budget.

Exhibit 2 is the FY 2025 NULR Budget Narrative, which corresponds to the NULR budget.

Recommendation:

Board staff recommends approval of this item.

Chart 3:

SFA BUDGET - FY 2025									
Expenditures by Program	FY23 Actual Awards	FY23 Actual Expenditures	FY24 Allocated Awards	FY24 AOB / Appropriated Amount	FY25 MBR Awards	FY25 MBR Amounts	FY25 Awards +/- FY24 Allocated	FY25 Amounts +/- FY24 AOB	Change
1- Administration									
Salaries, Wages and Fringes		\$ 791,606		\$ 822,745		\$ 944,883		\$ 122,137	
Travel		\$ 8,000		\$ 8,000		\$ 8,000		\$ -	
Contractual Service		\$ 536,040		\$ 620,000		\$ 620,000		\$ -	
Commodities		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ -	
Equipment		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000		\$ -	
Total Administration		\$ 1,355,646		\$ 1,470,745		\$ 1,592,883		\$ 122,137	8.3%
2- MTAG/MESG and HELP									
MTAG	17,753	\$ 9,921,151	18,060	\$ 10,298,248	18,060	\$ 10,473,044	0	\$ 174,796	
MESG	3,505	\$ 7,921,120	3,564	\$ 8,005,496	3,600	\$ 8,222,790	36	\$ 217,294	
HELP	4,528	\$ 30,373,123	4,647	\$ 31,774,658	4,693	\$ 33,616,235	46	\$ 1,841,577	
Total MTAG/MESG/HELP	25,786	\$ 48,215,394	26,271	\$ 50,078,402	26,353	\$ 52,312,070	82	\$ 2,233,667	4.5%
3 - Forgivable Loan Programs									
Teacher Programs:									
CNDT (Graduate)	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	
Nursing Programs:									
NELB	186	\$ 636,365	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	
NELM (Graduate)	14	\$ 42,500	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	
NELP (Graduate)	9	\$ 31,878	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	
NELR	12	\$ 28,834	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	
NERM (Graduate)	4	\$ 13,500	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	
NTSP (Graduate)	1	\$ 10,000	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	
Health/Science Programs:									
SLPL (Graduate)	5	\$ 59,061	5	\$ 70,000	0	\$ -	-5	\$ (70,000)	
SREB (Graduate)	31	\$ 595,200	33	\$ 652,608	25	\$ 500,000	-8	\$ (152,608)	
Total Forgivable Loan Programs	262	\$ 1,417,338	38	\$ 722,608	25	\$ 500,000	-13	\$ (222,608)	-30.8%
4 - Other									
FAITH Scholarship	0	\$ -	200	\$ 2,000,000	300	\$ 3,000,000	100	\$ 1,000,000	
LAW	7	\$ 75,348	10	\$ 117,500	15	\$ 176,250	5	\$ 58,750	
Nissan	1	\$ 4,949	0	\$ -	1	\$ 10,000	1	\$ 10,000	
GEER Summer Grant	3,897	\$ 2,985,950.00	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	0	\$ -	
Winter-Reed Loan Repay	236	\$ 813,500	450	\$ 3,100,000	450	\$ 2,250,000	0	\$ (850,000)	
Total Other	4,141	\$ 3,879,747	660	\$ 5,217,500	766	\$ 5,436,250	106	\$ 218,750	4.2%
5- Dual Enroll/Dual Credit Schol Prg									
DEDC	0	\$ -	24,560	\$ 9,823,000	25,000	\$ 15,000,000	440	\$ 5,177,000	
Total DEDC	0	\$ -	24,560	\$ 9,823,000	25,000	\$ 15,000,000	440	\$ 5,177,000	52.7%
TOTAL Loans, Schols, Grants	30,189	\$ 53,512,479	51,529	\$ 65,841,510	52,144	\$ 73,248,320	615	\$ 7,406,809	11.2%
TOTAL SFA BUDGET	30,189	\$ 54,868,125	51,529	\$ 67,312,256	52,144	\$ 74,841,202	615	\$ 7,528,947	11.2%
NULR BUDGET - FY 2025									
1 - NULR	0	\$ -	333	\$ 6,000,000	0	\$ -	-333	\$ (6,000,000)	-100%
TOTAL NULR BUDGET	0	\$ -	333	\$ 6,000,000	0	\$ -	(333)	\$ (6,000,000)	-100.0%
COMBINED BUDGETS - FY 2025									
SFA	30,189	\$ 54,868,125	51,529	\$ 67,312,256	52,144	\$ 74,841,202	615	\$ 7,528,947	11.2%
NULR	0	\$ -	333	\$ 6,000,000	0	\$ -	-333	\$ (6,000,000)	-100.0%
TOTAL COMBINED BUDGETS	30,189	\$ 54,868,125	51,862	\$ 73,312,256	52,144	\$ 74,841,202	282	\$ 1,528,947	2.1%

REGULAR AGENDA

Chart 4:

COMBINED BUDGETS FY 2025 Funding Sources	FY23 Amount	FY24 AOB / Appropriated Amount	FY25 MBR Amount	FY25 MBR Amount +/- FY24 AOB	Change
GOV. APPROPRIATIONS					
General Support	\$ 50,631,667	\$ 50,649,256	\$ 51,811,202	\$ 1,161,946	2.3%
Other General Support - DE/DC	\$ -	\$ 9,823,000	\$ 15,000,000	\$ 5,177,000	52.7%
EEF - New					
FAITH (New)	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	200.0%
Winter-Reed (New)	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 1,400,000	\$ (600,000)	-30.0%
EEF - Reappropriated					
FAITH (Reappropriated)		\$ 1,000,000	\$ -	\$ (1,000,000)	-100.0%
Winter-Reed (Reappropriated)		\$ 1,100,000	\$ 850,000	\$ (250,000)	-22.7%
State Special Funds - ARPA					
Nursing Loan Repayment	\$ -	\$ 6,000,000	\$ -	\$ (6,000,000)	-100.0%
Total Gov. Appropriations	\$ 53,631,667	\$ 71,572,256	\$ 72,061,202	\$ 488,946	0.7%
GRANTS AND CONTRACTS					
Federal	\$ 3,500,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
State	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
Total Grants and Contracts	\$ 3,500,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
INTEREST INCOME					
Nissan	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	-
Total Interest Income	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	-
OTHER SOURCES					
Law Fund	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ -	0.0%
Total Other Sources	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ -	0.0%
CASH ON HAND					
Estimated Collections	\$ 2,990,000	\$ 1,720,000	\$ 2,750,000	\$ 1,030,000	59.9%
Total Cash on Hand	\$ 2,990,000	\$ 1,720,000	\$ 2,750,000	\$ 1,030,000	59.9%
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDING	\$ 60,131,667	\$ 73,312,256	\$ 74,841,202	\$ 1,528,946	2.1%

REGULAR AGENDA

Exhibit 1:

NARRATIVE FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST

State Student Financial Aid

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid (SFA) is the administering agency for all state-funded student financial aid programs. The office is guided by a two-fold public service mission to provide financial assistance to students in pursuit of educational and professional goals and to help the state fulfill workforce needs in specific service areas and achieve the goal of a more educated citizenry. The office seeks to build public awareness of the diverse financial resources available through ongoing communication with individuals, colleges and universities, secondary schools, governing boards, legislators, communities, and other constituency groups.

SFA works independently and in partnership with other college prep and planning organizations to build public awareness of the financial resources offered by the state. The office provides direct information through high school counselors, counselor association meetings, and counselor training events. College access partners in turn provide direct information to students. Due in part to these ongoing efforts, the ever-increasing cost of attendance, and the college readiness efforts at the K-12 level, more students than ever before are expected to pursue state-supported financial assistance.

FY 2025 Appropriation Request

On behalf of the students and the state of Mississippi, SFA requests **\$74,841,202 for FY25**, which represents **an increase of \$7,528,947 or 11.2%** over FY24. The FY25 request includes a request for **\$51,811,202 in General Support Funds**, which represents **an increase of \$1,161,946 or 2.3%** over FY24; a request for **\$15,000,000 in Other General Support Funds for Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit**, which represents **an increase of \$5,177,000 or 52.7%** over FY24; a request for **\$4,400,000 in New Education Enhancement Funds**, which represents **an increase of \$1,400,000 or 46.7%** over FY24; a request for **\$850,000 in Reappropriated Education Enhancement Funds**, which represents **a decrease of \$1,250,000 or 59.5%** from FY24; and a request for **\$5,560,000 in Other Special Funds** (includes Federal and State Grants and Contracts, Interest Income, Cash on Hand and Other Sources), which represents **an increase of \$2,080,000 or 59.8%** over FY24.

1-Administration

- I. Program Description: SFA is responsible for the comprehensive planning, management and evaluation processes required to administer the state's many, diverse financial assistance programs. The office assesses and allocates resources, implements fiscal accountability measures, and annually evaluates all program components for compliance with statutes and legislative intent as well as for effectiveness in recruiting and retaining students in higher education in Mississippi.
- II. Program Objective: SFA seeks to communicate the accomplishments, needs, and value of the state's financial assistance programs to numerous and varied constituency groups; to implement effective management strategies; to be wise stewards of state resources; and to provide prompt, quality service.
- III. Current program activities as supported by the funding in Columns 5-12 (FY24 Estimated and FY25 Increase/Decrease for continuations) of MBR-1-03 and designated Budget Unit Decisions columns of MBR-1-03-A: (D) Additional Needs – **\$122,137**: Funds are requested to provide cost of living salary increases for all current employees, hire a new employee to assist with newly created legislative programs, and to provide for the increased cost of programming and other IT-related costs.

REGULAR AGENDA

2-MTAG/MESG and HELP

- I. Program Description: SFA is responsible for the comprehensive management, including budgeting, disbursement of funds and evaluation, of three (3) grant programs. In March of 1995, two (2) grant programs, the Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grant (MTAG) and the Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant (MESG), were created to assist Mississippi students who do not qualify for full Pell grants. In April of 1997, an additional grant program, the Higher Education Legislative Plan for Needy Students (HELP), was created to provide need-based financial assistance, as determined by parental adjusted gross income.
- II. Program Objective: Provide adequate resources to support the delivery of the three (3) grant programs and to ensure compliance with the appropriate state laws in delivering financial aid.
- III. Current program activities as supported by the funding in Columns 5-12 (FY24 Estimated and FY25 Increase/Decrease for continuations) of MBR-1-03 and designated Budget Unit Decisions columns of MBR-1-03-A: (D) Additional Needs – **\$2,233,667**: MTAG is unavailable to students who qualify for the maximum federal Pell grant. The formula for determining eligibility for the federal Pell grant is changing for the 24-25 aid year. More Mississippi residents are expected to be eligible for the maximum Pell grant under the new formula. Therefore, fewer students will be eligible for MTAG. Lack of information from the federal government has limited our ability to project program costs for the coming years. A modest growth rate of 1% is anticipated in the number of recipients for MESG and HELP. The HELP Grant program budget also anticipates tuition increases of 3%. The **MTAG request is \$10,473,044**, which represents an **increase of \$174,796** over FY24. The **MESG request is \$8,222,790**, which represents an **increase of \$217,294** over FY24. The **HELP request is \$33,616,2350**, which represents an **increase of \$1,841,577** over FY24.

3-FORGIVABLE LOAN AND REPAYMENT PROGRAMS

- I. Program Description: For future teachers, SFA operates the legislatively created Critical Needs Dyslexia Therapy Teacher Forgivable Loan Program (CNDT). SFA also continues to administer two health/science related programs: Speech-Language Pathologist Forgivable Loan Program (SLPL) and the Southern Regional Education Board Forgivable Loan Program for optometry (SREB).
- II. Program Objective: Student Financial aid programs have been developed:
 - a. To meet demonstrated critical shortages in the fields of medicine, nursing, nursing education, physical and natural sciences, and teacher education;
 - b. To attract, educate, and retain qualified teachers and medical personnel to serve the people of Mississippi;
 - c. To insure that the best interest of Mississippi is served by providing students with financial assistance for programs of study not offered in regularly supported Mississippi institutions; and
 - d. To manifest the belief that the continued growth and development of Mississippi requires improved levels of postsecondary educational attainment; and
 - e. To meet the needs of specific student groups.
- III. Current program activities as supported by the funding in Columns 5-12 (FY24 Estimated and FY25 Increase/Decrease for continuations) of MBR-1-03 and designated Budget Unit Decisions columns of MBR-1-03-A: (D) Additional Needs – **(\$222,608)**: A decrease in expenditures for the Forgivable Loan Programs is requested. SFA, under advisement from the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board (Postsecondary Board or Board), requests the Legislature target available funds to ensure full funding of the undergraduate grant programs, and transition the remaining forgivable loan programs to loan repayment programs. *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-14 (2)* requires the

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Board to award grants first and limit loans to renewal applicants only on a first-come, first-served basis with preference for renewals. The Postsecondary Board is also requesting the Legislature phase out funding for the SREB Regional Contract program, because the Board advocates for loan repayment programs instead of forgivable loan programs.

TEACHER PROGRAM:

The Critical Needs Dyslexia Therapy Teacher Forgivable Loan (CNDT) funds are available to Mississippi teachers who are seeking a Class AA Educator's License with a 203 Endorsement for Dyslexia Therapy. The **CNDT request for FY25 is \$0**, which represents **no change from FY24**.

NURSING PROGRAMS:

The Nursing Education Forgivable Loan Programs – Bachelor's (NELB); Master's (NELM); Ph.D./DNP (NELP); RN to BSN (NELR); and RN to MSN (NERM) were all repealed in SB 2373 by the 2023 Mississippi Legislature. Also repealed was the Nursing Teacher Stipend Forgivable Loan Program (NTSP).

HEALTH/SCIENCE RELATED PROGRAMS:

The Speech-Language Pathologist Forgivable Loan Program (SLPL) was first created by the 2012 Legislature for students seeking a first master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology, Communicative Disorders, or Communication Sciences and Disorders. The loan will be forgiven for recipients who serve as licensed speech-language pathologists in a Mississippi public or charter school for one year for each year of funding received. The **SLPL request for FY25 is \$0** which represents a **decrease of \$70,000 from FY24**.

The Southern Regional Education Board Forgivable Loan Programs (SREB) awards students in out-of-state optometry programs contracted through the SREB Regional Contract Program. Mississippi contracts 9 seats per entering class, for a total of 36 contract seats each year. The cost of each contract seat typically increases annually. Rates are unknown for FY 25. Nevertheless, because no other forgivable loan programs have been funded in recent years, SFA, under direction of the Postsecondary Board, requests the Legislature phase out the SREB program in order to target all available funds for the undergraduate grant programs and loan repayment programs. To phase out the program, SFA would award renewal students only. The **SREB request is \$500,000 for 25 seats**, which represents a **decrease of \$152,608 from FY24**.

4. OTHER

- I. Program Description: SFA operated the GEER Summer Grant during the summer of 2022 and received spending authority in both FY22 and FY23. This program concludes in FY23. SFA will operate the FAITH Scholarship beginning in FY24, which will be funded through EEF funds deposited in the FAITH Scholarship Trust. SFA operates the William F. Winter and Jack Reed, Sr. Teacher Loan Repayment Program (WRTR), which is funded separately through EEF funds deposited in the Winter-Reed Trust. SFA operates the Law Enforcement Officers and Firemen Scholarship Program (LAW), which is funded by the Mississippi Legislature and partially through a special fund, and the Nissan Scholarship, which is funded through the Nissan Trust.
- II. Program Objective: Student Financial aid programs have been developed:
 - a. To manifest the belief that the continued growth and development of Mississippi requires improved levels of postsecondary educational attainment and
 - b. To meet the needs of specific student groups.

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- III. Current program activities as supported by the funding in Columns 5-12 (FY24 Estimated and FY25 Increase/Decrease for continuations) of MBR-1-03 and designated Budget Unit Decisions columns of MBR-1-03-A: (D) Additional Needs – **\$218,750**: An overall increase in expenditures for the Other programs is expected. Increases and decreases are requested as follows for the following programs based on increases and decreases in demand and eligibility.

The Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship was created during the 2022 Legislative Session to make full awards to students who have interacted with the state's foster care system. SFA will begin to make awards in FY24. The **FAITH FY25 request is a total \$3,000,000**, which represents a **\$1,000,000 increase over the FY24 budget**. For the total requested, \$3,000,000 is requested in new EEF funds.

The Law Enforcement Officers and Firemen Scholarship Program (LAW) provides education to the dependent children or spouses of deceased or disabled service men and women. The **FY25 LAW request is \$176,250**, which represents an **increase of \$58,750 over FY24**.

The Nissan Scholarship Program (NISS) provides aid to students at public institutions who major in a field that will advance the automotive industry in Mississippi. The **NISS request is \$10,000**, which represents an **increase of \$10,000 over FY24**.

The William F. Winter – Jack Reed, Sr. Teacher Loan Repayment Program (WRTR) helps new teachers repay their undergraduate student loans. The **FY25 WRTR request is \$2,250,000**, which represents a **decrease of \$850,000 from FY24**. Additional funding was appropriated for WRTR in FY24 than was needed. For the total requested, \$1,400,000 is requested in new EEF funds and \$850,000 is requested for the lapsed EEF funds originally appropriated in FY24 to be re-appropriated.

5. DUAL ENROLLMENT/DUAL CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

- I. Program Description: SFA administers the Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Scholarship program was created by the 2023 Mississippi Legislature to provide funds for Mississippi students to earn college credit while still in high school.
- II. Program Objective: To offer improved opportunities for qualified high school students to simultaneously enroll in college courses that provide pathways leading to academic or career technical postsecondary credit.
- III. Current program activities as supported by the funding in Columns 5-12 (FY24 Estimated and FY25 Increase/Decrease for continuations) of MBR-1-03 and designated Budget Unit Decisions columns of MBR-1-03-A: (D) Additional Needs – **\$5,177,000**: The scholarship will currently cover the tuition for only six credit hours (typically two courses, either academic or CTE) at a participating Mississippi college or university. However, a joint coalition representing K-12, the community colleges, and the universities requested the program cover up to 15 hours per student. The **FY25 DEDC request is \$15,000,000**, which represents an **increase of \$5,177,000 or 52.7% over FY24**. The request would provide adequate funding to cover up to 9 hours per student. Additional funding would be requested in FY 2026 and FY 2027 to gradually expand the program to cover up to 15 hours.

Funding Request Explanation:

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SFA requests \$74,841,202 for FY25, which includes \$66,811,202 in General Funds (Section 1) and \$7,180,000 in Special Funds (Section 2). The General Funds request includes \$15 million for the Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Scholarship Program, which was funded separately (SB 2961) in FY24 but will be included in the SFA Appropriation moving forward. The Special Funds request includes \$4,400,000 in new EEF Funds (\$3,000,000 for FAITH and \$1,400,000 for WRTR) and \$2,780,000 in spending authority for investments (\$10,000 for NISS and \$20,000 for LAW) and cash on hand from collections (\$2,750,000).

The total budget request also includes \$850,000 in lapsed FY24 WRTR funds to be reappropriated in FY25. According to Mississippi Code Section 37-106-36, “money in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not lapse.”

Exhibit 2:

NARRATIVE
FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST

Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid (SFA) is the administering agency for the Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program, which was created by the 2023 Mississippi Legislature in SB 2373.

FY 2025 Appropriation Request

SFA requests **\$0 for FY25**, which represents a **decrease of \$6,000,000 or 100.0%** from FY24.

1-NULR

- I. Program Description: SFA is responsible for the comprehensive management of the Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program.
- II. Program Objective: To minimize the healthcare industry’s workforce shortages by creating an incentive and reducing barriers in the form of loan repayment program for RNs and LPNs to enter the nursing profession and become established on a solid career pathway.
- III. Current program activities as supported by the funding in Columns 5-12 (FY24 Estimated and FY25 Increase/Decrease for continuations) of MBR-1-03 and designated Budget Unit Decisions columns of MBR-1-03-A: (D) Additional Needs – **(\$6,000,000)**: No additional funds are requested. The \$6,000,000 funding from Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds will cover awards through FY 2026. Depending on the outcomes of the program, SFA could request funds from a state source beginning in FY 2027 to continue the program.

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Item 3: Dr. Rogers requested approval of Student Financial Aid's five-year strategic plan. On motion by Dr. Jackson, seconded by Dr. Watson, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the FY 2025-2029 Five-Year Strategic Plan as presented.

3. Approve the FY 2025-29 Five-Year Strategic Plan

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid requests approval of the FY 2025-29 Five-Year Strategic Plan. Board policy does not currently require approval of the Five-Year Strategic Plan, but the Plan is required annually by the Legislative Budget Office.

Chart 5 is the FY 2025-29 Five-Year Strategic Plan with Expenditures by Program. The plan includes the SFA budget, the NULR budget, and the Combined budgets. There is no written strategic plan for the NULR budget, because the program is funded with Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Beyond the FY 2025 request noted above, the plan anticipates the following changes:

- Administration: Funds are requested to provide cost of living salary increases for all current employees.
- MTAG/MESG and HELP: Lack of information about the impact of the upcoming Pell formula changes has limited our ability to project program costs for the coming years. A modest growth rate of 1% is anticipated in the number of recipients for MESG and HELP through FY 2027. The HELP Grant program budget also anticipates tuition increases of 3% each year.
- Forgivable Loan Programs: SFA requests the Legislature transition the remaining forgivable loan programs to loan repayment programs and phase out funding for the SREB Regional Contract Forgivable Loan program by FY 2027.
- Other: SFA anticipates the need to expand the FAITH Scholarship program to award more students after the first year.
- Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Scholarship Program: The DEDC scholarship will currently cover the tuition for only six credit hours (typically two courses, either academic or CTE) at a participating Mississippi college or university. Additional funding would then be requested in FY 2026 and FY 2027 to gradually expand the program to cover up to 15 hours.
- NULR: No additional funds will be requested. Depending on the outcomes of the program, SFA could request funds from a state source beginning in FY 2027 to continue the program.

Chart 6 is the FY 2025-29 Five-Year Strategic Plan with Funding by Source. The plan includes the SFA budget, the NULR budget, and the combined budgets.

Exhibit 3 is the FY 2025-29 SFA Five-Year Strategic Plan Narrative.

Recommendation:

Board staff recommends approval of this item.

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Chart 5:

SFA 5-Year Strategic Plan (FY 2025 - FY 2029)					
Expenditures by Program	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
1- Administration					
Salaries, Wages and Fringes	\$ 944,883	\$ 973,229	\$ 1,002,426	\$ 1,032,499	\$ 1,063,474
Travel	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
Contractual Service	\$ 620,000	\$ 620,000	\$ 620,000	\$ 620,000	\$ 620,000
Commodities	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Equipment	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Total Administration	\$ 1,592,883	\$ 1,621,229	\$ 1,650,426	\$ 1,680,499	\$ 1,711,474
2- MTAG/MESG and HELP					
MTAG	\$ 10,473,044	\$ 10,473,044	\$ 10,473,044	\$ 10,473,044	\$ 10,473,044
MESG	\$ 8,222,790	\$ 8,305,018	\$ 8,388,068	\$ 8,388,068	\$ 8,388,068
HELP	\$ 33,616,235	\$ 34,970,970	\$ 36,380,300	\$ 37,471,709	\$ 38,595,860
Total MTAG/MESG and HELP	\$52,312,070	\$53,749,032	\$55,241,412	\$56,332,821	\$57,456,972
3 - Forgivable Loan Programs					
Teacher Programs:					
CNDT (Graduate)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Nursing Programs:					
NELB	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
NELM (Graduate)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
NELP (Graduate)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
NELR	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
NERM (Graduate)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
NTSP (Graduate)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Health/Science Related Programs:					
SLPL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
SREB	\$ 500,000	\$ 357,000	\$ 198,000	\$ -	\$ -
Total Forgive Ln/Repay Programs	\$ 500,000	\$ 357,000	\$ 198,000	\$ -	\$ -
4 - Other					
FAITH Scholarship	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000
LAW	\$ 176,250	\$ 176,250	\$ 176,250	\$ 176,250	\$ 176,250
Nissan	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
GEER Summer Grant	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Winter-Reed Loan Repay	\$ 2,250,000	\$ 2,250,000	\$ 2,250,000	\$ 2,250,000	\$ 2,250,000
Total Other	\$ 5,436,250	\$ 6,446,250	\$ 7,446,250	\$ 7,446,250	\$ 7,446,250
5- Dual Enroll/Dual Credit Schol Prg					
DEDC	\$ 15,000,000	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 25,000,000	\$ 25,000,000	\$ 25,000,000
Total DEDC	\$15,000,000	\$20,000,000	\$25,000,000	\$25,000,000	\$25,000,000
TOTAL Lns, Schols, Grants	\$73,248,320	\$80,552,282	\$87,885,662	\$88,779,071	\$89,903,222
TOTAL SFA BUDGET	\$74,841,202	\$82,173,511	\$89,536,088	\$90,459,570	\$91,614,696
NULR 5-Year Strategic Plan (FY 2025 - FY 2029)					
1 - NULR	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL NULR BUDGET	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
COMBINED BUDGETS 5-Year Strategic Plan (FY 2025 - FY 2029)					
SFA	\$ 74,841,202	\$ 82,173,511	\$ 89,536,088	\$ 90,459,570	\$ 91,614,696
NULR	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL COMBINED BUDGETS	\$74,841,202	\$82,173,511	\$89,536,088	\$90,459,570	\$91,614,696

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Chart 6:

SFA 5-Year Strategic Plan (FY 2025 - FY 2029)					
Funding Source	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
GOV. APPROPRIATIONS					
General Support	\$ 51,811,202	\$ 54,383,511	\$ 56,496,088	\$ 57,669,570	\$ 58,824,696
Other General Support - DE/DC	\$ 15,000,000	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 25,000,000	\$ 25,000,000	\$ 25,000,000
EEF - New					
FAITH (New)	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000
Winter-Reed (New)	\$ 1,400,000	\$ 2,250,000	\$ 2,250,000	\$ 2,250,000	\$ 2,250,000
EEF - Reappropriated					
FAITH (Reappropriated)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Winter-Reed (Reappropriated)	\$ 850,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State Special Funds - ARPA					
Nursing Loan Repayment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Gov. Appropriations	\$72,061,202	\$80,633,511	\$88,746,088	\$89,919,570	\$91,074,696
GRANTS AND CONTRACTS					
Federal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Grants and Contracts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
INTEREST INCOME					
Nissan	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Total Interest Income	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
OTHER SOURCES					
Law Fund	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Total Other Sources	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
CASH ON HAND					
Estimated Collections	\$ 2,750,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 750,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000
Total Cash on Hand	\$ 2,750,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 750,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDING	\$74,841,202	\$82,173,511	\$89,536,088	\$90,459,570	\$91,614,696

Exhibit 3:

**The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid
157-00**

2025-2029 Five-Year Strategic Plan

1. Comprehensive Mission Statement

The two-fold public service mission of the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid is to provide financial assistance to students in pursuit of educational and professional goals and to help the state achieve the goal of a more educated citizenry while alleviating critical workforce needs in specific service areas.

2. Philosophy

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid is committed to the advancement of our state through education and workforce development. It is our belief that student financial assistance benefits not only the individual but also the general public. The philosophy of the Office is to alleviate the familial

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burden of paying for college, while being good stewards of the state's limited resources. The Office strives to operate efficiently by utilizing technology and leveraging partnerships; transparently by reporting on our operations and being accessible to the public; and safely by complying with all state and federal laws enacted for the protection of privacy.

3. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

Statewide Goal #1: Economic Development – To develop a robust state economy that provides the opportunity for productive employment for all Mississippians.

Relevant Benchmarks #1:

- Percentage of the civilian non-institutional population 16 years and over employed
- Job vacancy rate, by industry and occupation
- Wage and salary disbursements (total earnings)
- Average annual pay
- Median household income
- Percentage of workers whose family income falls above 150% of the federal poverty guidelines

Statewide Goal #2: Public Schools - To make available a quality K-12 public education for all Mississippians that prepares them, upon high school graduation, to either enter the labor force with an employable skill or to successfully complete a higher education program.

Relevant Benchmarks #2:

- Percentage of public school core academic subject classes staffed with teachers who are highly qualified
- Percentage of public school teachers certified through alternative programs

Statewide Goal #3: Higher Education - To make available an accessible, quality public higher education at an affordable cost that prepares Mississippians to become productive, financially self-sufficient members of society while meeting the human resource needs of Mississippi and its employers, including the creation of new jobs through the commercialization of university-based research.

Relevant Benchmarks #3:

- Percentage of full-time, first-time enrollment cohort who earns half of the total required credit hours for graduation by the end of the first year at a community college or by the end of the second year at a university
- Percentage of full-time, first-time enrollment cohort who graduate with a college credential in the appropriate time-frame
- Percentage of state's population age 25 years and over with a bachelor's degree or higher
- Number of graduates in high-need disciplines (i.e., science, technology, engineering, math, education, including non-teaching areas and nursing), by discipline
- Number of graduates in teaching from Mississippi public higher educational institutions
- Percentage of teacher candidates from Mississippi public higher educational institutions who become Mississippi public school teachers following graduation
- Percentage of graduates in high-need disciplines practicing in Mississippi, by discipline
- Percentage of Mississippi median family income required to cover tuition and fees at Mississippi community colleges and at Mississippi public four-year higher educational institutions
- Average student debt upon graduation

Statewide Goal #4: Health – To protect Mississippians from risks to public health and to provide them with the health- related information and access to quality healthcare necessary to increase the length and quality of their lives.

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Relevant Benchmarks #4:

- Number of health professional shortage areas
- Number of practitioners needed to remove health professional shortage area designations, by type of practitioner.

Statewide Goal # 5: To create an efficient government and an informed and engaged citizenry that helps to address social problems through the payment of taxes, the election of capable leaders at all levels of government, and participation in charitable organizations through contributions and volunteerism.

Relevant Benchmarks #5:

- Administrative efficiency: Expenditures on state government administrative activities as a percentage of total operational expenditures
- Average wait time for state government services
- Number and average cost of regulatory actions taken, by regulatory body and type of action
- State dollars saved by providing government services online (e.g., document retrieval, issuance of new business permits, license renewal)

4. Overview of the Agency 5-Year Strategic Plan:

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid will continue to administer effectively and efficiently the state's many, diverse financial assistance programs. The Office will budget responsibly and provide meaningful support to the Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board. The Office seeks to make college more accessible to and affordable for Mississippi students through the timely, simple disbursement of financial aid.

The Office will continue efforts to improve communication with students, parents, and high school counselors about the state-supported financial aid programs available. The Office partners closely with the staff of Get2College, a program of the Woodward Hines Education Foundation (WHEF). Get2College offers free college planning and financial aid help to students statewide. The staff of Get2College is highly knowledgeable of college access and is cross-trained on state financial aid. The Office will continue to utilize social media and conduct workshops for high school counselors, but the Office will rely more heavily on partners like Get2College to represent state aid at college fairs, College Nights/Parent Nights, and other outreach initiatives. The Office will also coordinate its efforts with the Mississippi Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, the ACT Council and State Organization, College Countdown, Mississippi Counselors Association, and the Magnolia School Counselors Association among others.

The accessibility of all state-funded financial aid programs will be evaluated annually through careful monitoring of program rules and regulations and the application process to determine if any such rules and regulations and/or the application process have consistently limited student access to a program or created an undue hardship to eligible applicants.

The Office will maximize its use of technology to provide efficient delivery of financial resources to students, accurate assessment of program development, and increased personnel productivity.

The Office will implement management strategies that ensure all authorized programs grow and develop in an orderly and rational manner, that the resources entrusted to the office are used effectively and efficiently, and that the programs and services of the system are of the highest quality.

The Office will administer the residency-based Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant (MTAG) and the merit-based Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant (MESG) according to law to make college more accessible and affordable for some Mississippi students. MTAG is unavailable to students who qualify for the maximum federal Pell grant. The formula for determining eligibility for

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the federal Pell grant is changing for the 24-25 aid year. More Mississippi residents are expected to be eligible for the maximum Pell grant under the new formula. Therefore, fewer students will be eligible for MTAG. Lack of information from the federal government has limited our ability to project program costs for the coming years. At this time, no increase in appropriation is requested for MTAG in the upcoming years. A modest growth rate of 1% is anticipated in the number of recipients for MESG through FY 2027.

The Office will continue to advocate for more need-based aid programs to ensure that low- and moderate-income Mississippi students have access to affordable higher education opportunities. Currently, low-income students (full Pell-eligible) cannot by law qualify for MTAG, but can qualify for the Higher Education Legislative Plan for Needy Students (HELP) by also meeting certain academic requirements. The HELP program provides full tuition scholarships to students with demonstrated financial need who are college ready upon graduating from high school. The program grew rapidly in recent years, but the rapid annual growth has stabilized as expected. A modest growth rate of 1% is anticipated in the number of recipients for HELP through FY 2027. The HELP Grant program budget also anticipates tuition increases of 3% every year.

The Office will administer the state's forgivable loan programs according to law to help the state achieve the goal of a more educated citizenry while alleviating critical workforce needs in specific service areas. As a part of these efforts, the Office will work with the State Department of Education to monitor the teacher shortage issue to effectively project needed resources and to propose necessary program enhancements which promote teacher education, specifically at the undergraduate level. Data show forgivable loan programs to be ineffective and inefficient. The Office will continue to work with the Postsecondary Board and legislators to make data-driven recommendations for the elimination, consolidation, and/or conversion to loan repayment programs of the state's many forgivable loan programs.

The Office will administer the Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Scholarship Program according to law to help the state achieve the goal of a more educated citizenry by encouraging more high school students to get a head start on college level coursework. The DEDC Scholarship Program will currently cover the tuition for only six credit hours (typically two courses, either academic or CTE) at a participating Mississippi college or university. However, a joint coalition representing K-12, the community colleges, and the universities requested the program cover up to 15 hours per student. The FY 2025 request will provide adequate funding to cover up to 9 hours per student. Additional funding will then be requested in FY 2026 and FY 2027 to gradually expand the program to cover up to 15 hours.

5. Agency's External/Internal Assessment:

External Assessment:

- a) Funding - Funding instability is an ongoing threat to the effective and efficient administration of student financial aid. Annually, the Office requests the funds needed to fully award all students who demonstrate eligibility for the programs as established by state law. When the amount appropriated is less than the amount needed, the Office must work with the Postsecondary Board to make difficult decisions regarding who will be awarded and who will not in order to balance the budget as required by law. Mississippi law requires that awards be made first to all undergraduate grant applicants, then to loan applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. If funds are still inadequate, then grant funds must be pro-rated. In recent years, the uncertainty of receiving a deficit appropriation resulted in late awards and student frustration and fear.
- b) Timing – The timing of the budget process coupled with the uncertainty of full funding results in SFA making award offers to students in July before the plan to start college in August. Ideally, a mechanism to “forward fund” financial aid would be created so that the appropriation received in one year would actually fund the awards made in the next aid year. This would require two years worth of funding in the initial year but would allow the Office to make award offers to students as they apply and become eligible rather than waiting until a month before school starts in August to make awards.

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- c) Newly Created Programs - The creation of new state student financial aid programs places an increased administrative burden on the Office. Although funding is often appropriated for the purpose of making awards through newly created programs, additional funding for administration is typically not provided. Adequate time for implementation often is not allowed. The Office cannot implement a grant or loan program in three to five months. A full aid year is needed between the creation of a program and the anticipated implementation.
- d) Need-Based Aid – Despite the growth of the HELP grant, additional need-based aid is needed to improve college access and affordability to help the state meet its education attainment goal, Ascent to 55%.
- e) Program Changes - Legislative changes to existing programs will impact student eligibility rates, award rates, and the amount of money needed to award eligible students.
- f) Student Choice - Student choice and performance continuously impact award rates and award amounts. College of enrollment and major can impact whether or not a student is eligible for some state aid as well as the amount of aid for which the student is eligible. Academic performance, such as hours completed and GPA, can also impact whether or not a student establishes and/or maintains aid eligibility.
- g) Federal Expected Family Contribution (EFC) - Changes to the auto-zero EFC income threshold for federal aid eligibility impacts eligibility for the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant. An increase to the threshold will decrease eligibility for MTAG. A decrease to the threshold will increase eligibility for MTAG. The federal EFC is changing to the Student Aid Index (SAI) in 2024-25 and will include negative figures. Projections from national organizations indicate that more students nationally will be eligible for maximum Pell grants. However, lack of information from Federal Student Aid has prevented SFA from modeling this change to determine its impact on projected program costs.
- h) FAFSA Simplification – Congress recently passed legislation to simplify the FAFSA form and to change other rules related to the premier federal aid programs. SFA is working with a task force of other states to create models to understand how the federal aid changes will impact state aid.
- i) Federal Rules - Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act is overdue. It is believed that the reauthorization legislation will likely provide for a new Federal-State Partnership program to provide additional need-based financial aid in the states. In order for the state to participate, such a program would require an increased investment in need-based aid to meet the matching requirements for the state to participate.
- j) Interest Rate - The interest rate charged on state forgivable loans is equal to the unsubsidized federal student loan rate at the time a student enters repayment. As the federal rate increases and decreases, so does the state rate. The federal rate changes annually with the 10-Year Treasury Note. Due to the future variability of federal student loan interest rates, it is difficult to estimate the future revenue stream from interest income collected on the repayment of state forgivable loans.
- k) Collections - As a result of past efforts to improve default prevention practices, more students are completing the service obligation and fewer are defaulting or entering repayment. Also, fewer loans have been issued in recent years due to the budget shortfalls. Therefore, the revenue collected on the repayment of loans declined significantly in FY 2023 and is expected to remain depressed in future years as fewer students enter monetary repayment, leaving the Office more dependent upon General Fund appropriations to meet budgetary demands.
- l) Administrative Burden - Federal regulations can impact the administration of state financial aid, particularly the administration of loans. In recent years, the Office has responded to new regulations requiring multiple disclosures on all non-federal loans (even state loans); intensified identity theft protection rules; changes to allowable collection costs; and restrictions on the use of telephone technology to contact borrowers. The Office incurs costs to comply with new federal and state regulations.

Internal Assessment:

- a) All funds administered by the Board shall be accounted for in an annual report that shall be submitted to the Legislature within ten (10) days after the convening of each new legislative session. The report should detail for each grant, scholarship, or forgivable loan program the

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number of recipients, the total amount of awards made, and the average award amount. The report shall include the number of students at each institution receiving financial assistance and the amount of such assistance. For forgivable loan programs, the report shall also include a summary of the repayment status and method of repayment for student cohorts as well as an accounting of the receipt of funds in repayment. Furthermore, all funds received and expended shall be reported and otherwise accounted for in accordance with the provisions of Section 37-106-11, Mississippi Code of 1972, except where individual identifying information must be withheld pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99.

- b) The Office continuously assesses the state's financial aid programs.
1. The Office worked with the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government on a project using Regression Discontinuity Design Method to evaluate the Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant (MESG) and the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant (MTAG) on their impact on in-state enrollment and degree completion.
 2. The Office applied for and received "Technical Assistance" from the Education Commission of the States as part of its Redesigning State Financial Aid project. ECS reviewed Mississippi's state aid programs through the lens of four principles of redesign. These four principles maintain that 1) aid programs should be student centered; 2) aid programs should be goal driven and data informed; 3) aid programs should be timely and flexible; and 4) aid programs should be broadly inclusive.
 3. Lifetracks has been expanded to include data from Student Financial Aid. NSPARC published a report regarding the effectiveness of state aid programs. The report found:
 - a. First-year retention rates and six-year graduation rates are higher for state aid recipients in every program (MTAG, MESG, and HELP) than for similar (racially, socio-economically, academically, etc.) non-recipients. The study addresses questions of academic success and suggests that each program promotes improved outcomes for enrolled students.
 - b. The study does not address questions related to access for MTAG and HELP. For example, the study cannot tell us whether low-income students are more likely to pursue a college degree because of state grant availability.
 - c. The study indicates that MESG does not increase or impact in-state enrollment rates but does increase enrollment in four-year colleges over two-year colleges.
 4. The Office continues to work with the Postsecondary Board to develop recommendations to be presented to the Mississippi Legislature for redesigning the state student financial aid programs to be more effective and efficient.

Internal Management System

The Office operates under the auspices of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, which oversees the daily administration of state student financial aid. The Office works closely with the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board, which bears authority for all aspects of the state financial aid programs and the administrative rules governing those programs. The Postsecondary Board meets about four or five times a year to address program and budget-related issues.

6. Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures for FY 2025 through FY 2029:

BUDGET PROGRAM 1: Administration

GOAL A: Effectively and efficiently administer the state's many, diverse financial assistance programs.

OBJECTIVE A.1.: Assess the availability of resources and budget available resources in a responsible manner.

Outcome: Percentage of eligible applicants receiving state financial aid.

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STRATEGY A.1.1.: Use applicable trend data (related to high school graduation, college-going, out-migration/in-migration, tuition/Cost of Attendance, etc.) to predict future take-up rates for various financial aid programs.

Output: Accurate projection model to determine future budget needs as indicated by minimal difference between projected award amounts on the MBR (budget request) and actual expenditures on awards.

Explanatory: The accuracy of the projection model is greatly impacted by the factors identified in the external assessment in section 5, particularly the creation of new programs and changes to existing programs.

STRATEGY A.1.2.: Allocate appropriated funds in compliance with statute.

Output: Total amount of Annual Operating Budget

Output: Number of Financial Aid Programs administered

Output: Eligible applicants receiving student financial aid through programs administered by the Office

Output: Total amount of aid awarded to students through programs administered by the Office

Efficiency: Annual cost to administer the state's financial aid programs.

Efficiency: Administrative cost per eligible financial aid recipient.

Efficiency: Administrative cost as a percentage of the Annual Operating Budget.

OBJECTIVE A.2.: Provide support and guidance to the Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board.

Outcome: The Postsecondary Board responds in a timely manner to questions related to the administration of state financial aid programs as indicated by the average response time in days.

Outcome: Compliance with all statutes, policies, and rules governing the state's student financial aid programs.

Outcome: Compliance with the APA guidelines for changing program Rules and Regulations.

Outcome: Compliance with all federal laws related to financial aid, privacy, lending, collection of debt, etc.

STRATEGY A.2.1.: Annually review the Board-approved Rules and Regulations for each program and the General Administration Rules and Regulations

Output: Agenda items to address issues and concerns related to program and administration rules

Output: Number of Postsecondary Board meetings

OBJECTIVE A.3.: Effectively and efficiently manage the annual State Aid application, award, and disbursement process.

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Outcome: Provide access to all State Aid related information online.

Outcome: Limit the wait time for receipt of government services by communicating electronically, as evidenced by the availability of all communication in electronic format.

Outcome: Minimize the cost of human capital required to process the ever-increasing number of applications by utilizing technology, as evidenced by the number of full-time employees.

Outcome: Effective and efficient delivery of student financial aid dollars to the colleges and universities for distribution to students

STRATEGY A.3.1.: Annually update the online application for State Aid.

Output: Number of applications processed annually.

Output: Number of documents processed annually.

GOAL B: Maximize the role State Aid plays in recruiting and retaining students in higher education.

OBJECTIVE B.1.: Promote awareness of the available state-supported financial aid programs among students, parents, and school counselors.

Outcome: Increase the number of state applications completed, as evidenced by the percent increase over the previous year.

Outcome: Increase the number of students receiving aid, as evidenced by the percent increase over the previous year.

Outcome: Effective and efficient communication with counselors, students, and parents regarding financial aid opportunities

STRATEGY B.1.1.: Conduct workshops for high school counselors, attend college fairs, and present at college nights/parent nights.

Output: Number of workshops conducted, college fairs attended, and/or presentations at college nights/parents nights

STRATEGY B.1.2.: Contribute to student-focused publications.

Output: Number of ads and/or articles in publications.

STRATEGY B.1.3.: Utilize technology and social media to meet students where they are.

Output: Number of unique pageviews for www.mississippi.edu/financialaid and www.msfinancialaid.org

Output: Bounce rate for www.mississippi.edu/financialaid and www.msfinancialaid.org

Output: Number of Facebook followers

Output: Number of Twitter followers

OBJECTIVE B.2.: Communicate the accomplishments, needs, and value of the state's financial assistance programs to various constituency groups.

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Outcome: Public high school counselors are knowledgeable of state aid programs and capable of helping students, as evidenced by the rate of participation in the counselor web portal.

Outcome: Private high school counselors are knowledgeable of state aid programs and capable of helping students, as evidenced by the rate of participation in the counselor web portal.

Outcome: Legislators continue to invest in state aid programs to make college more accessible and affordable for Mississippi students, as evidenced by the percent of need met by appropriations.

STRATEGY B.2.1.: Develop an understanding of program rules, general administration policies, and procedures among institutional financial aid administrators, college access organizations, and aid recipients.

Output: Updates delivered at MASFAA, Counselor workshops (MCA, MDE Counselor Institute, SACAC Drive-in, ESF New Counselor Workshops, etc.)

Output: Emails delivered to State Aid recipients.

Output: Letters delivered to State Aid recipients.

STRATEGY B.2.2.: Promote program values and needs to policymakers and other change agents.

Output: Updates to the Education Achievement Council, education leaders, and State Legislators at JLBC Hearings, etc.

GOAL C: To reduce the rate of default on the state's forgivable loan programs and increase the percentage of forgivable loan recipients who repay with service rather than money.

OBJECTIVE C.1.: Implement default prevention programs for all forgivable loans.

Outcome: Anticipated overall rate of default on all state forgivable loan programs for all cohorts.

Outcome: Anticipated rate of on-time repayment through service on all state forgivable loan programs for all cohorts.

STRATEGY C.1.1.: Maintain a Loan Repayment Specialist on staff to address all issues related to loan repayment or forgiveness.

Output: Separation, grace-ending, service deferment/cancellation, and past due notices mailed/emailed

Output: Funds collected in repayment of forgivable loans

Output: Tax offset funds collected

BUDGET PROGRAM 2: MTAG/MESG and HELP

GOAL A: To increase college access and improve affordability for Mississippi families.

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OBJECTIVE A.1.: Make financial aid awards to Mississippi residents who qualify for one or more of the state's primary undergraduate grant programs (MTAG, MESH, and HELP) in compliance with appropriate state laws and rules.

Outcome: Mississippi residents receive financial aid to attend college in Mississippi, making college more accessible and affordable.

STRATEGY A.1.1.: Administer the primary undergraduate grant programs.

Output: Total number of students receiving financial aid through the primary undergraduate grant programs (MTAG, MESH, and HELP)

Output: Total amount of funds awarded through the primary undergraduate grant programs (MTAG, MESH, and HELP)

Output: Total number of primary undergraduate grant programs

Efficiency: Average student award through the primary undergraduate grant programs

STRATEGY A.1.2.: Administer the Mississippi Resident Tuition Grant Program (MTAG), created in 1995 to assist with the cost of tuition for Mississippi students with a 15 ACT and/or 2.5 GPA who are not eligible for a full federal Pell grant.

Output: Number of MTAG recipients

Output: Amount of MTAG awarded

Efficiency: Average student award through the MTAG program

STRATEGY A.1.3.: Administer the Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant Program (MESH), created in 1995 to reward Mississippi students for excellent academic achievement (29 ACT and 3.5 GPA) in high school and to encourage high achieving students to stay in-state for college.

Output: Number of MESH recipients

Output: Amount of MESH awarded

Efficiency: Average student award through the MESH program

STRATEGY A.1.4.: Administer the Higher Education Legislative Plan for Needy Students (HELP) scholarship, created in 1997 to provide financial assistance for needy students who demonstrate college readiness with a 20 ACT, 2.5 GPA, and completion of a rigorous high school curriculum.

Output: Number of HELP recipients

Output: Amount of HELP awarded

Efficiency: Average student award through the HELP program

BUDGET PROGRAM 3: Forgivable Loan Programs

GOAL A: To help the state achieve the goal of a more educated citizenry while alleviating critical workforce needs in specific service areas.

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OBJECTIVE A.1.: Make financial aid awards to students who qualify for one of the state's forgivable loan or repayment programs.

Outcome: Meet demonstrated critical shortages in the fields of medicine, nursing, nursing education, physical and natural sciences, and teacher education.

Outcome: Attract, educate and retain qualified teachers and medical personnel to serve the people of Mississippi.

Outcome: Ensure that the best interest of Mississippi is served by providing students with financial assistance for programs of study not offered in regularly supported Mississippi institutions.

Outcome: To manifest the belief that the continued growth and development of Mississippi requires improved levels of postsecondary educational attainment.

STRATEGY A.1.1.: Administer the state forgivable loan programs.

Output: Total number of students receiving financial aid through the forgivable loan programs

Output: Total amount of funds expended on the forgivable loan programs

Output: Total number of forgivable loan and repayment programs

Efficiency: Average student award through the state forgivable loan and repayment programs

STRATEGY A.1.2.: Administer forgivable loan programs for graduate teacher education, including the Critical Needs Dyslexia Therapy Teacher Forgivable Loan (CNDT), which is available to Mississippi teachers who are seeking a Class AA Educator's License with a 203 Endorsement for Dyslexia Therapy.

Output: Number of CNDT awards

Output: Amount of CNDT awards

Efficiency: Average student award through the CNDT program

Explanatory Note: Due to budget constraints, full funding wasn't available from FY17 through FY22. Although funding was available, no awards were made in FY23, so no renewal funds were budgeted for FY24 and no funds are requested for FY25. SFA, under advisement from the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board (Postsecondary Board or Board), requests the Legislature target available funds to ensure full funding of the undergraduate grant programs and for loan repayment programs. *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-14 (2)* requires the Board to award grants first and limit loans to renewal applicants only on a first-come, first-served basis with preference for renewals. Therefore, funds are not requested for future years.

STRATEGY A.1.3.: Administer forgivable loan programs for graduate health-related education, including the Speech-Language Pathologist Forgivable Loan Program (SLPL), which awards master's degree students in Speech-Language Pathology, Communicative Disorders, or Communication Sciences and Disorders who plan to serve as licensed speech-language pathologists in a Mississippi public or charter school.

Output: Number of SLPL awards

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Output: Amount of SLPL awards

Efficiency: Average student award through the SLPL program

Explanatory Note: Due to budget constraints, full funding wasn't available from FY17 through FY22. Awards were made in FY23 and funds for renewal awards are budgeted for FY24. SFA, under advisement from the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board (Postsecondary Board or Board), requests the Legislature target available funds to ensure full funding of the undergraduate grant programs. *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-14 (2)* requires the Board to award grants first and limit loans to renewal applicants only on a first-come, first-served basis with preference for renewals. Therefore, funds are not requested for future years.

STRATEGY A.1.4.: Administer forgivable loan programs for graduate health-related education, including the Southern Regional Education Board Forgivable Loan Program (SREB), which awards Mississippi students in out-of-state optometry programs contracted through the SREB Regional Contract Program.

Output: Number of SREB awards

Output: Amount of SREB awards

Efficiency: Average student award through the SREB program

Explanatory Note: Mississippi currently contracts 9 seats per entering class, for a total of 36 contract seats each year. The cost of each contract seat increases annually. *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-14 (2)* requires the Board to award grants first and limit loans to renewal applicants only on a first-come, first-served basis with preference for renewals. SFA, under direction of the Postsecondary Board, requests the Legislature phase out the SREB program in order to target all available funds for the undergraduate grant programs or loan repayment programs. To phase out the program, SFA would award renewal students only. Therefore, the annual request for funds will decrease each year until funds are no longer requested after FY28.

BUDGET PROGRAM 4: Other Programs

GOAL A: To improve college access and affordability for students with special circumstances and interests.

OBJECTIVE A.1.: Make financial aid awards to students who qualify for one of the state's other programs.

Outcome: To manifest the belief that the continued growth and development of Mississippi requires improved levels of postsecondary educational attainment.

STRATEGY A.1.1.: Administer the state's other programs.

Output: Total number of students receiving financial aid through other programs

Output: Total amount of funds expended on the other programs

Output: Total number of programs

Efficiency: Average student award through the other state programs

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STRATEGY A.1.2.: Administer a loan repayment program for teacher education, called the William F. Winter – Jack Reed, Sr. Teacher Loan Repayment Program (WRTR), which provides funds to repay a portion of the undergraduate loans of eligible Mississippi teachers in exchange for their service or continued teaching service in Mississippi's public schools. The program was established by the 2021 Legislature; 150 teachers were funded in FY22; 300 teachers were funded in FY23, and 450 teachers were funded in FY24. Funds are requested for FY25 and beyond to maintain 450 teachers in the program at all times.

Output: Number of WRTR awards

Output: Amount of WRTR awards

Efficiency: Average award through the WRTR program

STRATEGY A.1.3.: Administer other programs for undergraduate education, including the Law Enforcement Officers and Firemen Scholarship Program (LAW), which provides education to the dependents of deceased or disabled service men and women.

Output: Number of LAW awards

Output: Amount of LAW awards

Efficiency: Average student award through the LAW program

Explanatory Note: A slight increase in award cost is anticipated in future years as tuition costs increase.

STRATEGY A.1.4.: Administer other programs for undergraduate education, including the Nissan Scholarship Program (NISS), which provides aid to students at public institutions who major in a field that will advance the automotive industry in Mississippi.

Output: Number of NISS awards

Output: Amount of NISS awards

Efficiency: Average student award through the NISS program

Explanatory Note: Awards are made from investment dollars set aside for this purpose. Costs are expected to remain around the same amount each year.

STRATEGY A.1.5.: Administer other programs for undergraduate education, including the Rep. Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship Program. The FAITH Scholarship was created by the 2022 Legislature to provide up to full cost of attendance awards to students who have interacted with the state's foster care system. The first awards will be made in FY24.

Output: Number of FAITH awards

Output: Amount of FAITH awards

Efficiency: Average student award through the FAITH program

Explanatory Note: Awards are made from EEF dollars appropriated for this program. Costs are expected to escalate as the program grows.

BUDGET PROGRAM 5: Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Scholarship Program

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GOAL A: To improve college access and affordability for high school students.

OBJECTIVE A.1.: Make financial aid awards to dual enrolled or dual credit high school students.

Outcome: To manifest the belief that the continued growth and development of Mississippi requires improved levels of postsecondary educational attainment.

STRATEGY A.1.1.: Administer the DEDC Scholarship established by the 2023 Legislature to help high school students get an affordable head start on college by taking college-level courses in high school. The scholarship will currently cover the tuition for only six credit hours (typically two courses, either academic or CTE) at a participating Mississippi college or university. However, a joint coalition representing K-12, the community colleges, and the universities requested the program cover up to 15 hours per student. Additional funding will be requested in FY 2026 and FY 2027 to gradually expand the program to cover up to 15 hours.

Output: Number of DEDC awards

Output: Amount of DEDC awards

Efficiency: Average award through the DEDC program

Item 4: Dr. Rogers requested initial approval of APA Part 691: Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Rules and Regulations. On motion by Dr. Watson, seconded by Dr. Keenum, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the request.

4. Approve APA Part 691: Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Rules and Regulations:

Request

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial aid requests approval of APA Part 691 Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit (DEDC) Rules and Regulations.

Summary:

The Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Scholarship program was created by the 2023 Mississippi Legislature to provide funds for Mississippi students to earn college credit while still in high school. The promulgation of Rules and Regulations to guide the administration of the program is required of the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board. The proposed rules have been circulated among all stakeholder groups to review and provide feedback.

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 691: Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Scholarship Rules and Regulations

Part 691 Chapter 1: Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit (DEDC) Scholarship Rules and Regulations

Rule 1.1 Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit (DEDC) Scholarship Rules and Regulations. The Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Scholarship program was created by the 2023 Mississippi Legislature to provide funds for Mississippi students to earn college credit while still in high school. These Rules and Regulations serve to guide the administration of the program and are subject to change by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board.

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I. GENERAL STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

- A. The applicant must be a current legal resident of Mississippi. Resident status for purposes of receiving DEDC shall be determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition purposes as set forth in Sections 37-103-1 through 37-103-29 of Ms. Code Ann., except for Section 37-103-17.
- B. The applicant must be classified as a junior or senior and enrolled in a Mississippi public high school or charter high school.
- C. The applicant must be a dual enrolled student as defined in Section 37-15-38(1)(a) or a dual credit student as defined in Section 37-15-38(1)(b) who is enrolled in an eligible course in an eligible, participating public or not-for-profit postsecondary institution in Mississippi.
- D. The applicant must meet the criteria outlined in the published *Procedures Manual for the State of Mississippi Dual Enrollment and Accelerated Programs*.
- E. The applicant must not be considered an “early college” student.
- F. The applicant must submit the Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit application online at www.msfinancialaid.org by the deadline date.

II. STUDENT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. Complete the application for the Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Scholarship program online at www.msfinancialaid.org on or before March 15 during the spring of the academic year for which the student is seeking assistance. After the inaugural year, the application will open for all terms on April 1 each year.
- B. Be classified as eligible by an authorized official at the high school. To be classified as eligible by the high school, an applicant must:
 - a. Be a Mississippi resident.
 - b. Be classified as a junior or senior in a Mississippi public high school or charter high school. Applicants cannot be high school graduates.
 - c. Meet the criteria outlined in the published *Procedures Manual for the State of Mississippi Dual Enrollment and Accelerated Programs*.
- C. Be verified by an eligible, participating public or not-for-profit postsecondary institution in Mississippi as a dual enrolled student as defined in Section 37-15-38(1)(a) or a dual credit student as defined in Section 37-15-38(1)(b) who is enrolled in an eligible course listed in the *Procedures Manual for the State of Mississippi Dual Enrollment and Accelerated Programs*.

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- D. Participate in an advising component related to the Mississippi Articulation and Transfer Tool (MATT) to understand how postsecondary course credits transfer.

III. LENGTH AND AMOUNT OF AWARD

- A. Scholarship recipients may enroll in up to six (6) credit hours in an eligible, participating postsecondary institution at no cost for tuition.
- B. Scholarship recipients may use the award during a single term or spread the award over multiple terms.
- C. Scholarship recipients may use the award at a single institution during any given term.
- D. Eligible participating institutions will be reimbursed at the rate of forty percent (40%) of the average community college credit hour tuition for the current academic year for each DEDC scholarship recipient.
- E. Books, course materials, tools, supplies, lab fees, transportation costs and other applicable course fees are not included in the amount to be reimbursed and are ultimately the responsibility of the student.
- F. All awards are dependent upon the availability of funds. Selection of recipients shall be based on a first-come, first-served basis of all eligible applicants.
- G. Payment of DEDC awards shall be disbursed directly to the educational institutions.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL AND HIGH SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Institutional participation is optional.
- B. Any public state-supported two-year or four-year institution or any eligible not-for-profit private institution in Mississippi may choose to participate in the DEDC program.
- C. Participating institutions may choose to exclude specific centers, branch campuses, collegiate academies, and middle colleges within their governance from participating in the DEDC program.
- D. To participate in the DEDC program, institutions and high schools must adhere to all guidelines prescribed in the *Procedures Manual for the State of Mississippi Dual Enrollment and Accelerated Programs*.
- E. To participate in the DEDC program, institutions must agree to charge DEDC scholarship recipients a tuition rate equal to forty percent (40%) of the average community college credit hour tuition for the current academic year.
- F. To participate in the DEDC program, institutions must work with high schools to verify that all DEDC scholarship recipients meet the academic or other requirements prescribed in the *Procedures Manual for the State of Mississippi Dual Enrollment and Accelerated Programs*.

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and are enrolled in eligible courses. Institutions will verify student eligibility by including the student on the enrollment verification report that is submitted each term to the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid.

- G. The Board may conduct annual audits of any participating high school, student, and/or institution to ensure compliance with these Rules and Regulations and the authorizing statute.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-106-85 through § 37-106-93.

Recommendation:

Board approval is recommended, contingent upon completion of the Administrative Procedures Act process.

Item 5: Dr. Rogers requested approval of an update to APA Part 687 Nurse Retention Loan Repayment (NULR) Rules and Regulations to add proof of Mississippi residency as an application requirement. On motion by Ms. Ross, seconded by Dr. Watson, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the request.

5. Approve Updates to APA Part 687: Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Rules and Regulations

Request

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial aid requests approval of updates to APA Part 687 Nurse Retention Loan Repayment (NULR) Rules and Regulations.

Summary

The 2023 Mississippi Legislature created the Nurse Retention Loan Repayment program to provide up to \$6,000 per year in loan repayment for up to three (3) years for recent LPN and RN graduates who have gained employment for the first time as full-time nurse in a general acute care hospital or skilled nursing facility. The Board approved the rules in April 2023. The Office requests the Board update the rules to require one proof of Mississippi residency. The requirement was inadvertently omitted from the original rules.

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 687: Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program (NULR) Rules and Regulations

Part 687 Chapter 1: Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program (NULR) Rules and Regulations

Rule 1.1 Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program (NULR) Rules and Regulations. The Skilled Nursing Home and Hospital Nurses Retention Loan Repayment Program was established by the 2023 Legislature. These Rules and Regulations are promulgated to govern the program and are subject to change by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board (hereinafter referred to as the "Board").

I. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

- A. The applicant must be a U.S. citizen and current legal resident of Mississippi. Resident status for purposes of receiving NULR under this act shall be determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition

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purposes as set forth in Sections 37-103-1 through 37-103-29 of Ms. Code Ann., with the exception of Section 37-103-17.

- B. The applicant must have obtained a current relevant Mississippi professional license.
- C. First-time applicants must have gained employment within the preceding year for the first time as a full-time licensed practical nurse or licensed registered nurse at a skilled nursing home in the State of Mississippi or a general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi that is licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health.
- D. Renewal applicants must be employed as a full-time licensed practical nurse or licensed registered nurse at a skilled nursing home in the State of Mississippi or a general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi that is licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health.
- E. The applicant must work full-time as a licensed practical nurse or licensed registered nurse at a single qualified skilled nursing home or general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year.
- F. The applicant must have outstanding qualifying educational loans. Qualifying educational loans include the principal, interest, and related expenses such as the required interest premium on the unpaid balances of government (federal, state or local) and commercial loans obtained by the recipient for postsecondary educational expenses. *Perkins loans do not qualify for repayment under NULR.*
- G. The applicant must not have received funds from the Nursing Education Forgivable Loan Program – BSN (NELB), Nursing Education Forgivable Loan Program – RN to BSN (NELR), Nursing Education Forgivable Loan Program – MSN (NELM), Nursing Education Forgivable Loan Program – RN to MSN (NERM), Nursing Education Forgivable Loan Program – PHD/DNP (NELP), Nursing Teacher Stipend Forgivable Loan Program (NTSP) or any other state forgivable loan.
- H. The applicant must not presently be in default or delinquent on any federal, state, local or commercial qualifying educational loan.

II. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR LOAN REPAYMENT APPLICANT

- A. First time applicants must:
 - 1. Complete the Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP) online at www.msfinancialaid.org by the deadline date of June 30 of the nurse's first year of nursing. The deadline for applications submitted the inaugural year will be extended to September 15, 2023.

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2. Submit the following documents to the Board by July 31. The deadline for the following documents to be submitted for the inaugural year will be extended to October 15, 2023.
 - a) One form of proof of Mississippi residency. A valid Mississippi Driver's License or Identification number submitted during the online application process will fulfill this requirement.
 - a)b) Proof of the applicant's current practical nursing license or registered nursing license.
 - b)c) A complete, executed employment verification form documenting dates of full-time employment in a qualified skilled nursing home or general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi.
 - e)d) A completed Loan Data Verification form. (This form is completed as part of the online application process.)
 - d)e) Documentation from the lender or loan servicer for state, local, or commercial loans that shows the loan's current balance, status (deferred, repayment, etc.), type, and date of disbursement. (Additional documentation will be collected only for private loans for which information is unavailable on the National Student Loan Data System, NSLDS.)

B. Renewal applicants must:

1. Complete the Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP) online at www.msfinancialaid.org by the deadline date of June 30.
2. Submit the following documents to the Board by July 31.
 - a) One form of proof of continued Mississippi residency. A valid Mississippi Driver's License or Identification number submitted during the online application process will fulfill this requirement.
 - a)b) A complete and properly executed employment verification form documenting dates of full-time employment in a qualified skilled nursing home or general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi.
 - b)c) A completed Loan Data Verification form. (This form is completed as part of the online application process.)
 - e)d) Documentation from the lender or loan servicer for state, local, or commercial loans that shows the loan's current balance, status (deferred, repayment, etc.), type, and date of disbursement. (Additional

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documentation will be collected only for private loans for which information is unavailable on the National Student Loan Data System, NSLDS.)

III. AWARD RECIPIENTS

- A. Awards will be made to applicants with outstanding postsecondary educational loans. Qualifying educational loans include the principal, interest, and related expenses such as the required interest premium on the unpaid balances of government (federal, state, or local) and commercial loans obtained by the recipient for postsecondary educational expenses. *Perkins loans do not qualify for repayment under NULR.*
- B. Recipients shall be selected on a first-come, first-served basis of all eligible applicants and shall be limited by available funding.
- C. In the second and subsequent years of the program, priority consideration shall first be given to renewal applicants.

IV. AMOUNT AND LENGTH OF LOAN REPAYMENT

- A. Awards shall be up to six thousand dollars (\$6,000) per year for a maximum of three (3) years.
- B. The annual award amount shall never exceed the outstanding balance of the qualifying educational loan.
- C. Awards shall be granted annually, and recipients shall have no obligation to seek a future award.
- D. Awards shall be paid annually to the recipient's lender/loan servicer and applied to the outstanding balance. Monies paid on the recipient's behalf toward qualifying educational loans prior to receiving a NULR award will not be eligible for repayment through the NULR program.
- E. Funds are provided for the repayment of postsecondary education loans only. Funds are not provided for the repayment of personal loans, even if the personal loan was used to pay for postsecondary education.

V. RECIPIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The recipient must maintain a current relevant Mississippi professional license while participating in the program.
- B. The recipient must be employed full-time as a licensed practical nurse or licensed registered nurse at a skilled nursing home in the State of Mississippi or a general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi that is licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health.
- C. By July 31 at the conclusion of the recipient's employment year, the recipient must submit to the Board an annual Employment Verification

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Form. The form must be received for the Board to disburse the offered award amount to the loan servicer.

- D. While receiving funds, the NULR recipient must at all times keep the Board informed of the recipient's current, correct, and complete contact information. This information may be updated via the NULR recipient's MAAPP account online.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-106-XX.

Recommendation:

Board approval is recommended, contingent upon completion of the Administrative Procedures Act process.

Item 6: Dr. Rogers requested approval of updates to APA Part 601, Rule 8.3 to clarify the institution's responsibilities and create a new process to ensure that refunds are properly administered. On motion by Ms. Ross, seconded by Dr. Watson, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the request.

6. Approve Update to APA Part 601: Authority and Responsibilities Rules and Regulations, Rule 8.3: Institutional Responsibilities

Request

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial aid requests approval of updates to APA Part 601: Authority and Responsibilities Rules and Regulations, Rule 8.3: Institutional Responsibilities.

Summary:

The public and private postsecondary institutions in Mississippi have certain institutional responsibilities as eligible institutions for the use of state-supported student financial aid. The responsibilities include returning funds to the State on behalf of students who are found to be ineligible and balancing with the State to ensure proper accounting. The updates proposed below clarify the institution's responsibilities and create a new process to ensure that refunds are properly credited to the correct student and fund in a timely manner.

The proposed changes accomplish the following:

- Eliminate repetition by combining I with VI and II with VII.
- Reduce confusion by using formal report names and defining the students to be included in each report.
- Facilitate the timely return of funds by requiring the Balancing Certification Statement to be accompanied by any outstanding refunds. Currently, institutions may acknowledge a refund is owed during the balancing process but might wait months to return the funds.
- Eliminate confusion related to refunds by requiring refunds to be accompanied by a Refund Roster. Some institutions already submit a roster with refunds, while others simply return funds with no documentation regarding where the funds should be credited.

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 601: Authority and Responsibilities Rules and Regulations

Chapter 8: Rights and Responsibilities

Rule 8.3 Institutional Responsibilities. It is the responsibility of each institution eligible for state student financial aid to:

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- I. Submit ~~a grade files~~Grade Report by the ~~deadline-fifth (5th) working day after the conclusion of each term for which aid is awarded.~~ The Grade Report is a complete and accurate report of each Mississippi resident student's cumulative grade point average on all college course work attempted as of the end of the previous term.
- II. Submit ~~an enrollment files~~Enrollment Verification Report by ~~immediately following the deadline-final add/drop date of each term for which aid is awarded.~~ The Enrollment Verification Report is a complete and accurate roster of the enrollment status of each Mississippi resident student.
- III. Review ~~award~~Award, ~~disbursement~~Disbursement, and ~~balance~~Balance reports Reports published by the Office each term.
- IV. Notify the Office of any discrepancies related to residency, citizenship, or financial need.
- V. Ensure that no state financial aid recipient receives an aid package that exceeds ~~cost~~Cost of ~~attendance~~Attendance.
- ~~VI. For all returning students, a complete and accurate report of the student's cumulative grade point average on all college course work attempted as of the end of the previous semester or trimester should be submitted to the Board within five (5) days of beginning of any given semester or trimester.~~
- ~~VII. For all students, a complete and accurate roster of the eligibility status of each recipient shall be submitted to the Board by the final add/drop date of each semester or trimester of the academic year the student receives a grant.~~
- ~~VIII.~~VI. A ~~balancing~~Balancing statement and certification Certification statementStatement, verifying monies ~~disbursed due from and owed to the Office on behalf of~~ to all students, must be submitted at the end of the semester or trimester to the Boardeach term for which aid is awarded. Any outstanding refunds owed to the Office must accompany the Balancing Certification Statement. Funds for a given term will not be disbursed until the balancing process for the previous term is complete.
- ~~VII.~~ All refunds due to the Office must be accompanied by a Refund Roster that details the student and program to which the funds should be credited.
- ~~IX.~~VIII. All rRefunds due to the Board-Office must be received and processed within thirty (30) days of the end of each aid year. Funds for the subsequent aid year will not be disbursed until all refunds have been received and processed for the preceding aid year.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-106-21; *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-106-29; and *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-106-31.

Recommendation:

Board approval is recommended, contingent upon completion of the Administrative Procedures Act process.

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Item 7: Dr. Rogers requested approval of an update to APA Part 605: General Administration Rules and Regulations, Section I.C.4. to clarify the documents the Office will accept as verification of marital separation. On motion by Dr. Jackson, seconded by Dr. Watson, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the requested update.

7. Approve Updates to APA Part 605: General Administration Rules and Regulations

Request

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid requests approval of updates to APA Part 605: General Administration Rules and Regulations, Section I.C.4. to clarify the documents the Office will accept as verification of marital separation.

Summary:

If the Office receives conflicting information from the FAFSA and the MAAPP, the Office must resolve the conflict. When the conflict involves a marital separation, the Office must document separate residences for the separated couple. The proposed update clarifies the Office will require two forms of documentation, and a cell phone statement will only be accepted as one form if the other form is a mortgage, lease, or rental agreement.

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 605: General Administration Rules and Regulations

Part 605 Chapter 1: General Administration Rules and Regulations

Rule 1.1 General Administration Rules and Regulations.

I. APPLICATION PROCESS

- C. The following supporting documents may be requested to complete an application for state student financial aid. The documents are grouped according to the purpose for which they are requested.
 4. Documentation of Financial Need - For some programs, the Office will collect documents to determine a student's financial need.
 - a) Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) - The FAFSA is the application for federal student aid. It is available online at www.fafsa.gov. The student must complete the FAFSA by the document deadline specified by the program. The Office will automatically receive the applicant's FAFSA results.
 - b) Household Verification Worksheet (HELP Worksheet) - The household verification worksheet is used to determine the number of dependents who live in the home with the applicant.
 - (1) HELP Worksheet/FAFSA Conflict – Additional information will be required if conflicting information is reported from the applicant's FAFSA and household verification worksheet. The student is

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required to contact the Office to receive instructions to resolve the conflicting information.

- (2) Marital Separation – The student must provide two forms of proof of separate addresses of each parent if a parent’s residency was incorrectly reported on the household verification worksheet. Current year state tax returns, current rental/purchase agreements, or utility bills ~~may will~~ be ~~requested~~ accepted for documentation. A cell phone bill will only be accepted as a second form of documentation if the other form is a rental/purchase agreement.

Recommendation:

Board approval is recommended, contingent upon completion of the Administrative Procedures Act process.

Item 8. Dr. Rogers presented updates and announcements. She introduced two new SFA staff members. Tiffany Barner is the new Program and Office Assistant. Adele Russel is the new Student Service Representative. Dr. Rogers also announced that Dr. Jason Dean would be the new independent college representative on the Board beginning July 1, as the term ends for Isabelle Higbee. Governor Reeves has not yet made an appointment for the position currently held by Sharon Ross, which ends June 30, 2023. A new appointment has been requested. Dr. Rogers thanked Ms. Ross for her 8 years of service to the Board and her active engagement and participation.

8. Updates and Announcements

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS IF NECESSARY

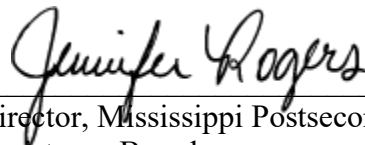
The Board did not consider any additional agenda items.

EXECUTIVE SESSION IF DETERMINED NECESSARY

The Board did not consider the need to enter Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Turcotte called the meeting adjourned.



Director, Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. **Approve Updates to APA Part 623: FAITH Scholarship Rules and Regulations to Clarify Initial Requirements for Continuing College Students**

Summary:

The 2022 Legislature created the State Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship to provide scholarships up to the full Cost of Attendance for students who have interacted with the state's foster care system. The Board approved the Rules for the FAITH Scholarship in September 2022. SFA is making awards for the first time for the 2023-24 aid year.

The approved rules address the renewal academic eligibility requirements of continuing college students but not the initial academic eligibility requirements of continuing students. This first year, many first-time FAITH applicants and recipients are continuing college students.

Renewal recipients must maintain a 2.0 GPA and meet the institution's satisfactory academic progress (SAP) requirements. The proposed amendment clarifies that initial recipients who are continuing college students must not be on financial aid suspension for failure to meet the institution's SAP requirements. The amendments further clarify the student should complete the institution's SAP appeal process if necessary.

Request:

SFA requests approval of the following updates to APA Part 623: State Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship Rules and Regulations.

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies
Part 623: State Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship Rules and Regulations

II. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. First-time applicants must:

~~4.6.~~ If a continuing college student, the recipient must not be on financial aid suspension for failure to meet the attending institution's satisfactory academic progress (SAP) requirements.

B. Renewal Applicants Must:

5. Make satisfactory academic progress toward the completion of a certificate or degree with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, as certified by the registrar, based on ~~that~~ the attending institution's

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

calculation at the end of each semester, trimester, or term for which the applicant is enrolled.

IV. LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY

- B. ~~Placement on financial aid suspension due to failure to meet the attending institution's SAP requirements. make Satisfactory Academic Progress toward a certificate or degree~~ will result in cancellation of the recipient's eligibility for the FAITH Scholarship. ~~however, the student may file an appeal for reconsideration with the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid and may be granted an exception for cause~~ Students should follow the attending institution's SAP appeal process to re-establish eligibility.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-75.*

The full rules are included as Exhibit 1 on page 49.

Recommendation:

Board staff recommends approval of this item, contingent upon completion of the Administrative Procedures Act process.

2. **Approve Updates to APA Part 674: SREB Regional Contract Forgivable Loan Rules and Regulations to Change the Application Deadlines**

Summary:

Mississippi has participated in the SREB Regional Contract Program for Optometry for many years. The annual SFA appropriation bill includes a line-item appropriation for nine new students and all eligible renewal students each year. Students receive the loan while in school and may repay the loan by working in Mississippi after their residency and licensure for one year for each year of loan.

The program rules require students to complete the online application by March 30 each year and submit supporting documents by June 30 each year. These application dates are not practical. Program participants are selected by the out-of-state institution, and sometimes the institution does not notify the participant of their selection status in time for the student to meet the deadline.

The proposed update extends the application deadline to September 15 and the document deadline to October 15.

Request:

SFA requests approval of the following updates to APA Part 674: SREB Regional Contract Forgivable Loan Rules and Regulations.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies
Part 674: SREB Regional Contract Forgivable Loan Program (SREB) Rules and Regulations

II. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FORGIVABLE LOAN APPLICANT

A. First time applicants must:

1. Complete an application online at www.msfinancialaid.org by the deadline date of ~~March 31~~September 15.
2. If residency has not been established, submit two forms of documentation of current legal residency by the document deadline of ~~April June 30~~October 15. Acceptable forms of residency documentation are listed in the General Administration Rules and Regulations and published online at www.msfinancialaid.org.
3. Submit an official academic transcript or electronic grade verification from the school/college/university last attended by the document deadline of ~~June 30~~October 15. The transcript or grade verification must report grades from all postsecondary institutions attended.
4. Submit to the Board an official letter of acceptance from the accredited school of optometry, showing date admitted and entering classification by the document deadline of ~~June 30~~October 15.

B. Renewal applicants must:

1. Complete an application online at www.msfinancialaid.org by the deadline date of ~~March 31~~September 15.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-106-47.

The full rules are included in Exhibit 2 on page 53.

Recommendation:

Board staff recommends approval of this item, contingent upon completion of the Administrative Procedures Act process.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

3. **Approve Updates to APA Part 687: Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program Rules and Regulations to Change the Application Cycles and Deadlines**

Summary:

The Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program (NULR) was created by the 2023 Legislature to provide loan repayment for early career nurses who work in a Mississippi hospital or skilled nursing home. The Board approved the rules for the program in June 2023. Shortly after obtaining Board approval for the rules, SFA learned that all program activities must first be authorized by HORNE, the agent hired by the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration to manage the state's administration of all federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, including the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Relief Funds, which the Legislature used to fund NULR.

SFA was required to meet with HORNE weekly over the summer, submit an Initiative Overview, draft Standard Operating Procedures, and receive additional approval of the NULR Rules and Regulations. After obtaining approval from HORNE, SFA entered a subrecipient agreement with DFA to obtain the funds. The program rules are incorporated into the Subrecipient Agreement as an exhibit. Therefore, any changes to the program must first be approved by DFA by amendment to the Subrecipient Agreement.

The following change was presented to DFA and accepted. Nurses must be licensed and working for a full year before they can qualify for a year of loan repayment. Considering that, we originally set up the application periods to align with the fiscal years, so the deadline for each application cycle would be on June 30 for any nurse applicant who started working on or after the previous July 1. When we launched the program and started hearing from applicants, we realized that most nurses who graduate in May obtain licensure in July. According to the original application cycle dates, nearly all May 2023 nursing graduates would need to wait until October 1, 2024 to apply and would only be eligible to apply for a max of two years of funding. DFA approved our request to extend the application cycles beginning with the second cycle that opens October 1, 2023 to allow for nurses who started working through September 30 of a given year. By making this change, May 2023 graduates who earned licensure and started working this summer will be able to complete the application that opens October 1 and potentially receive the maximum three awards.

Request:

SFA requests approval of the following updates to APA Part 687: Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Rules and Regulations.

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies
Part 687: Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program (NULR) Rules and Regulations

II. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR LOAN REPAYMENT APPLICANT

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

A. First time applicants must:

1. Complete the Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP) online at www.msfinancialaid.org by the deadline date of ~~June 30~~September 15 of the nurse's first year of nursing. ~~The deadline for applications submitted the inaugural year will be extended to September 15, 2023.~~
2. Submit the following documents to the Board by ~~July 31~~October 15 of the nurse's first year of nursing. ~~The deadline for the following documents to be submitted for the inaugural year will be extended to October 15, 2023.~~

B. Renewal applicants must:

1. Complete the Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP) online at www.msfinancialaid.org by the deadline date of ~~June 30~~September 15.
2. Submit the following documents to the Board by ~~July 31~~October 15.

Source: ~~Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-XX~~SB 2373, 2023 Legislative Session.

The full rules are included in Exhibit 3 on page 63.

Recommendation:

Board staff recommends approval of this item, contingent upon completion of the Administrative Procedures Act process.

4. Approve Legislative Requests for 2024 Legislative Session

A. Amend HELP Grant to Remove the Curriculum Requirement; Align Grant Requirements with Federal Rules Related to Family Size and Determination of Need; and Remove Outdated Language

Purpose:

Remove the HELP core curriculum requirement, align the requirements related to the definition of family and determination of need with the federal rules, and remove outdated language.

Reason for Request:

1. Remove the curriculum requirement that appears in Section 1(3)(c). The HELP Grant requires students to complete a high school curriculum that is equal to the IHL Required College Prep Curriculum. Students must also have a minimum score of 20 on the ACT and a 2.5 or higher high school GPA. For the 23-24 aid year, 98.1% of

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

HELP Grant applicants were certified by their counselors as having completed the HELP Core Curriculum. The curriculum is a requirement for graduation at many high schools. It is also required for admission to all IHL institutions. Therefore, the curriculum requirement does not serve as a meaningful indicator of merit to separate students who are “college-ready” and therefore worthy of receiving the HELP Grant from those who are not. Under the current rules, a high school counselor must certify completion of the HELP curriculum for each HELP Grant applicant. The student information systems used by the schools do not have the capacity to evaluate a student’s transcript and determine whether the curriculum meets the requirements or not. Therefore, the high school counselors must complete the transcript review and curriculum certification process for each student individually and manually. This places a heavy administrative burden on counselors, many of whom are already serving far more students than is recommended and have many other responsibilities beyond college advising. Although it does not happen frequently, some students miss out on the HELP Grant because their high school counselor does not provide the required curriculum certification.

2. Align the requirements related to the definition of family and determination of need with the federal rules in Section 1(7). Currently, the law defines financial need as having an adjusted gross income below a given threshold, but the income can be higher if the family has more children. The income is derived from the FAFSA, but the family size is defined by the number of children under 21, which is not the same definition for determining the family size that appears on the FAFSA. Therefore, SFA must ask each applicant to complete a Household Size Verification Worksheet as part of the application and we must derive the family size from that form and our own calculations. SFA often discovers discrepancies between what is submitted on the FAFSA and what is submitted on the form. When discrepancies occur, the student is required to submit additional documentation to resolve the discrepancy. This causes delays in the awarding process and places an additional application burden on the student. SFA also experiences a heightened administrative burden.
3. Remove outdated language in Section 1(4) and (6)(c). The ability to award the grant to an applicant who fails to meet the requirements by an amount of 10% or less has never been utilized and should be removed. There is no need for the language to establish a waiver of the curriculum requirement through the 1996-1997 academic year.

Suggested Legislation:

Suggested legislation is included in *Exhibit 4 on page 67*.

Fiscal Note:

The proposed changes could result in a modest increase in the cost of making awards. More students may be able to complete the application process because they are no longer dependent upon a counselor to submit curriculum information. The proposed changes will also result in a reduction of administrative costs at the school level and in SFA.

Recommendation:

Board staff recommends approval.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

B. Amend Winter-Reed Teacher Loan Repayment Program to Expand Eligibility; Remove Cap on Annual Awards; and Continue Program

Purpose:

Expand eligibility to all teachers with loans and remove the cap on the number of annual awards allowed under the Winter-Reed Teacher Loan Repayment Program.

Reason for Request:

1. Expand eligibility beyond first-year teachers to all teachers. June marked the end of the second year of administration of Winter-Reed. Over the first two years, SFA has heard from many teachers with student loans who feel slighted, overlooked, or unappreciated because they cannot benefit from the program simply because they are no longer in their first year of teaching. The program should be expanded to serve all teachers, not just new teachers.
2. Remove the cap on the number of new awards. SFA has learned that limiting the number of recipients may result in money being forfeited. The current law states that a maximum of 150 new teachers may be awarded each year. SFA awarded all 150 potential recipients at the beginning of the first year, but not everyone submitted their completion paperwork at the end of the year. So, SFA ultimately paid only 136 new teachers. Also, some of the teachers were teaching in non-shortage areas and therefore received smaller awards. SFA could have awarded more than 150 teachers and still stayed within the established budget. Rather than controlling the program size with a quota of awards, the Legislature can control the program size with the annual appropriation.
3. Continue the program by removing the repeal date of July 1, 2024.

Suggested Legislation:

Suggested legislation is included in *Exhibit 5 on page 70*.

Fiscal Note:

The proposed change will not carry any additional cost. As written, the maximum annual cost of the program would be \$2.25 million. If the Legislature removes the quota and continues to fund the program at that level, SFA will adjust the annual number of new awards to ensure awards do not exceed available funds.

Recommendation:

Board staff recommends approval.

5. Discuss Revised State Aid Redesign Proposal

Summary:

The Woodward-Hines Education Foundation convened a State Aid Redesign Task Force in the summer of 2022. The task force proposed legislation to expand MTAG and change the award structure of HELP. The legislation did not pass in the 2023 Session. Conversations about state aid redesign have continued since the legislative session ended. A revised proposal has been crafted to address the objections raised last year.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

6. Selection of Chairperson for 2023-24

Summary:

According to APA Part 601, Chapter 2, Rule 2.1, Section III, the board shall elect from its membership a chairman. Dr. Jim Turcotte was elected as chairman in September 2022. The Board should elect a chairperson to serve during 2023-2024 academic/aid year. The rules allow a chairperson to serve consecutive terms.

7. Updates and Announcements

Exhibit 1

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 623: State Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship Rules and Regulations

Part 623 Chapter 1: State Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship Rules and Regulations

Rule 1.1 State Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship Rules and Regulations. These Rules and Regulations are subject to change by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board.

V. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

- A. The applicant must be a current legal resident of Mississippi. Resident status for purposes of receiving FAITH under this act shall be determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition purposes as set forth in Sections 37-103-1 through 37-103-29, of Ms. Code Ann., with the exception of Section 37-103-17.
- B. The applicant must complete the required applications for state and federal financial aid by the established deadlines.
- C. The applicant must meet the established age requirement and meet at least one of the qualifying foster care criteria.
- D. The applicant must enroll at least part-time (minimum of 6 hours unless excepted by the institution) at an eligible Mississippi postsecondary institution and pursue an undergraduate certificate or degree within the allowable time period.

VI. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- C. First-time applicants must:
 - ~~6.7.~~ Complete an initial application for state student financial aid online at www.msfinancialaid.org on or before September 15 during the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance.
 - ~~7.8.~~ File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and accept all available federal grant aid. The state of residency indicated on the FAFSA will be used to verify the applicant's residency status.
 - ~~8.9.~~ Apply through the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services for an Educational and Training Voucher if eligible to apply.
 - ~~9.10.~~ Be younger than twenty-five (25) years of age by October 1 of the aid year for which the applicant makes application for the FAITH Scholarship,

Exhibit 1

unless the applicant was on active-duty status in the United States Armed Forces for any time before the applicant reached twenty-five (25) years of age. The number of months served on active-duty status in the United States Armed Forces shall be rounded up to the next higher year to determine the maximum extension of age eligibility allowed.

~~10.11.~~ Meet at least one of the following criteria as certified by the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services or the qualified residential childcare facility:

- a. Was placed in the legal custody of the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services by a youth court or through other legal means and who was in the legal custody of the department at any time on or after attaining thirteen (13) years of age.
- b. Was placed in a qualified residential childcare facility by a parent, legal guardian, court of competent jurisdiction, or other person or entity acting in the best interest of the individual and who did reside in a qualified residential childcare facility at any time on or after attaining thirteen (13) years of age. A qualified residential childcare facility is an entity that provides a home for children and was licensed by the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services at the time the applicant was housed by the agency.
- c. Was adopted from the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services' legal custody or adopted while residing at a qualified residential childcare facility at any time on or after attaining thirteen (13) years of age.

12. Enroll at least part-time (minimum 6 hours unless excepted by the institution) at one (1) eligible Mississippi postsecondary institution and pursue an undergraduate credential or degree. Evidence of enrollment will be automatically provided to the Board by the attending institution.

2.13. If a continuing college student, the recipient must not be on financial aid suspension for failure to meet the attending institution's satisfactory academic progress (SAP) requirements.

D. Renewal Applicants Must:

6. Complete a renewal application online at www.msfinancialaid.org on or before September 15 during the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance.
7. File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually and continue to accept all available federal grant aid.

Exhibit 1

8. Apply through the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services annually for an Educational and Training Voucher if eligible to apply.
9. Be younger than thirty (30) years of age by October 1 of the aid year for which the applicant makes application for the FAITH Scholarship, unless the applicant was on active-duty status in the United States Armed Forces for any time before the applicant reached twenty-five (25) years of age. The number of months served on active-duty status in the United States Armed Forces shall be rounded up to the next higher year to determine the maximum extension of age eligibility allowed.
10. Make satisfactory academic progress toward the completion of a certificate or degree with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, as certified by the registrar, based on ~~that~~ the attending institution's calculation at the end of each semester, trimester, or term for which the applicant is enrolled.
11. Enroll at least part-time (minimum of 6 hours unless excepted by the institution) at one (1) eligible postsecondary institution in the State of Mississippi as an undergraduate student in pursuit of a certificate or degree. Evidence of enrollment will be automatically provided to the Board by the attending institution.

VII. LENGTH AND AMOUNT OF AWARD

- A. For students attending a Mississippi public institution, the annual award amount of the FAITH Scholarship will be equal to the student's total Cost of Attendance less all other grant aid. For students attending a Mississippi non-public four-year institution, the annual award amount of the FAITH Scholarship will be equal to the average of the prior year's published undergraduate COA of all public institutions less all other grant aid.
- B. The FAITH Scholarship can be combined with any other state, federal, institutional, or private grant aid. No other grant aid should be reduced or supplanted by the FAITH scholarship. However, in no case shall the FAITH scholarship be combined with other grant aid to exceed the student's allowable COA. If an overaward occurs, the FAITH Scholarship will be reduced.
- C. The FAITH scholarship will also include any costs associated with room and board during institutional holidays at the student's institution if such accommodations are available.
- D. A maximum cumulative award amount is not established; however, a recipient may receive the FAITH scholarship for a maximum of five (5) calendar years, unless the applicant experiences a break in enrollment to serve on active-duty status in the United States Armed Forces. The number of months served on

Exhibit 1

active-duty status in the United States Armed Forces shall be rounded up to the next higher year to determine the maximum length of eligibility extension allowed.

- E. FAITH Scholarships will be paid for no more than seventy-two (72) credit hours at a community college or one hundred forty-four (144) credit hours at a four-year college.
- F. All awards are dependent upon the availability of funds. Selection of recipients shall be based on a first-come, first-served basis of all eligible applicants; however, priority consideration shall be given to persons previously receiving awards under the FAITH Scholarship program.
- G. Payment of FAITH awards shall be disbursed directly to the educational institutions.
- H. If a recipient transfers from one eligible Mississippi institution to another, the award will be transferable, provided the student meets all continuing eligibility requirements.

VIII. LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY

- C. Failure to maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale will result in cancellation of the recipient's eligibility for the FAITH Scholarship until academic eligibility can be reestablished. Exception for cause will not be considered.
- D. Placement on financial aid suspension due to failure to meet the attending institution's SAP requirements ~~make Satisfactory Academic Progress toward a certificate or degree~~ will result in cancellation of the recipient's eligibility for the FAITH Scholarship ~~;~~ however, the student may file an appeal for reconsideration with the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid and may be granted an exception for cause ~~Students should follow the attending institution's SAP appeal process to re-establish eligibility.~~

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-106-75.

Exhibit 2

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 674: SREB Regional Contract Forgivable Loan Program (SREB) Rules and Regulations

Part 674 Chapter 1: SREB Regional Contract Forgivable Loan Program (SREB) Rules and Regulations

Rule 1.1 SREB Regional Contract Forgivable Loan Program (SREB) Rules and Regulations.

These Rules and Regulations are subject to change by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board (hereinafter referred to as the "Board"). The number of awards and recipients are dependent upon availability of funds and selection shall be based on a first-come, first-served basis of all eligible applicants; however, priority consideration shall be given to persons previously receiving awards under the Southern Regional Education Board Regional Contract Forgivable Loan program (SREB).

III. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

- A. The applicant must be a current legal resident of Mississippi. Resident status for purposes of receiving SREB shall be determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition purposes as set forth in Sections 37-103-1 through 37-103-29 of Ms. Code Ann., with the exception of Section 37-103-17.
- B. The applicant must be fully admitted and enrolled full-time at an accredited School of Optometry approved by the Board.
- C. The applicant must have expressed in writing a present intention to practice Optometry in the State of Mississippi. The applicant must also diligently pursue the course of study and requirements for the required license to practice in Mississippi.
- D. The recipient must remain in good standing with the attending institution and must maintain satisfactory academic progress in the approved program of study in accordance with the attending institution's policy.
- E. The applicant must not presently or previously have defaulted on an educational loan.

IV. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FORGIVABLE LOAN APPLICANT

- A. First time applicants must:
 - 1. Complete an application online at www.msfinancialaid.org by the deadline date of ~~March 31~~ September 15.

Exhibit 2

2. If residency has not been established, submit two forms of documentation of current legal residency by the document deadline of ~~April~~ ~~June~~ ~~30~~ October 15. Acceptable forms of residency documentation are listed in the General Administration Rules and Regulations and published online at www.msfinancialaid.org.
3. Submit an official academic transcript or electronic grade verification from the school/college/university last attended by the document deadline of ~~June~~ ~~30~~ October 15. The transcript or grade verification must report grades from all postsecondary institutions attended.
4. Submit to the Board an official letter of acceptance from the accredited school of optometry, showing date admitted and entering classification by the document deadline of ~~June~~ ~~30~~ October 15.
5. Signify understanding of the SREB Rules and Regulations, enter into a Contract and Note with the Board pursuant to the applicable Rules and Regulations and all applicable State laws, and complete, sign and return the Self Certification of a Private Loan form prior to the disbursement of funds. *Note: The Contract and Note will be issued once the applicant has been awarded. Funds will not be disbursed until the Contract and Note has been signed.*
6. Maintain good standing in the attending institution at all times, be enrolled full-time in the approved program, and be making satisfactory academic progress in accordance with the attending institution's policy. Evidence of academic eligibility will be automatically provided to the Board by the attending institution, unless specifically requested from the applicant.

B. Renewal applicants must:

1. Complete an application online at www.msfinancialaid.org by the deadline date of ~~March 31~~ September 15.
2. Maintain good standing in the attending institution at all times, be enrolled full-time in the approved program, and be making satisfactory academic progress in accordance with the attending institution's policy. Evidence of academic eligibility will be automatically provided to the Board by the attending institution, unless specifically requested from the applicant.
3. Complete, sign and return the Self Certification of a Private Loan form.

Exhibit 2

V. AMOUNT AND LENGTH OF FORGIVABLE LOAN

- A. The maximum annual award amount shall be made in an amount to be agreed upon by the Southern Regional Education Board, the attending institution, and the State of Mississippi.
- B. Students may receive a lifetime maximum of four (4) annual awards or eight (8) semesters.
- C. Awards shall be disbursed directly to the Southern Regional Education Board.
- D. Awards are not provided for summer school.

VI. RECIPIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. An SREB recipient must maintain good standing at the attending institution at all times.
- B. An SREB recipient who fails, temporarily withdraws, or is required to repeat any year, will be suspended from participation in the program and his/her awards will be stopped until such time as the proper official at the attending institution informs the Board that he/she is ready to advance.
- C. An SREB recipient must remain in school full-time, complete the approved program of study, and obtain the appropriate license. An SREB recipient who withdraws from school, fails to complete the approved program of study, or fails to obtain the appropriate license, shall immediately become liable to the Board for the sum of all outstanding SREB awards, plus a penalty of 5% of the outstanding principal, and interest on the combined outstanding principal and penalty.
- D. While receiving funds, the SREB recipient must at all times keep the Board informed of the recipient's current, correct, and complete contact information. This information may be updated via the SREB recipient's student account online at www.msfinancialaid.org. Once in repayment, the SREB recipient must at all times keep the Board or its loan servicer informed of the recipient's current, correct, and complete contact information until the debt is completely satisfied.
- E. An SREB recipient should address in writing to the Board or its loan servicer any special circumstances regarding enrollment status, withdrawal from school, or failure to complete the approved program of study.

VII. REPAYMENT

- A. An SREB forgivable loan recipient enters repayment when the recipient completes the approved program of study, withdraws from school, or fails to

Exhibit 2

complete the approved program of study. The recipient may satisfy his/her forgivable loan debt either by cancellation through service or by loan repayment.

B. Cancellation through Service

1. An SREB forgivable loan recipient must meet all of the following criteria to qualify for debt cancellation through service:
 - a) Obtain the appropriate license to practice optometry in Mississippi.
 - b) Practice optometry full-time. "Full-time" is understood to mean that the recipient shall maintain the normal full-time work schedule where the recipient is employed.
 - c) Practice optometry in the State of Mississippi. *NOTE: It is fully understood that it is the responsibility of the forgivable loan recipient to seek and secure appropriate employment. The Board assumes no obligation to perform that function.*
2. An SREB forgivable loan debt shall be cancelled on the basis of one year's service for one year of forgivable loan received. For all SREB recipients, such service shall never be less than one (1) year regardless of the length of study provided under this forgivable loan.
3. At the time of separation from the approved program of study, unless granted a grace period or other type of deferment, the SREB forgivable loan recipient must request in writing a deferment of the accrual of interest and repayment of principal and penalty for purposes of completing the service option. The service deferment request must be accompanied by evidence of appropriate employment as defined in Section V.B.1.
4. At the end of each service deferment period, the SREB forgivable loan recipient must request in writing a cancellation of the equivalent of one annual award.
5. The service deferment and cancellation must be requested in writing and approved each year until the debt is fully satisfied.

C. Loan Repayment

1. Unless granted a grace period or other deferment, an SREB forgivable loan recipient shall become liable to the Board for the sum of all SREB forgivable loan awards made to that person less the corresponding amount of debt previously cancelled through service, plus a penalty of 5% of the outstanding principal, and interest on the combined outstanding principal and penalty, immediately at the time of occurrence of one of the following

Exhibit 2

events:

- a) The recipient withdraws from school;
 - b) The recipient fails to complete the approved program of study;
 - c) The recipient fails to obtain the appropriate license; or
 - d) The recipient fails to complete the service option defined in Section V.B.
2. At the time of the occurrence of one of the events outlined in Section V.C.I. or upon termination of a grace period or other deferment, a 5% penalty will be applied to the sum of all SREB forgivable loan awards made to the recipient less any amount previously cancelled through service.
 3. The rate of interest charged an SREB forgivable loan recipient on the unsatisfied balance shall be the current unsubsidized Federal Direct Loan rate at the time of occurrence of one of the events outlined in Section V.C.1. or upon termination of a grace period or other deferment.
 4. Interest begins accruing at the time of occurrence of one of the events outlined in Section V.C.1. or upon termination of a grace period or other deferment, and repayment commences one (1) month after the occurrence of the event.
 5. Forgivable loan recipients must repay the loan (principal, penalty, and interest thereon) in 60 or less equal consecutive monthly installments. If the recipient fails to repay his/her loan (principal, penalty, and interest thereon) in 60 or less equal consecutive monthly installments, all principal, penalty, and interest outstanding, together with costs of collection, shall become immediately due and payable and, demand shall be made by mailing the same to the obligor at the last address furnished by said obligor. Should payment of the sum due not be made in full within thirty (30) days, from the date demand was made, the Contract and Note executed by the obligor shall be placed with a collection agency or an attorney for collection, at which point the obligor shall become liable for reasonable collection or attorneys' fees, which may be based on a percentage of the amount of the debt, and court costs, in addition to the other sums due and owing.
- D. The obligations made by the recipient of this forgivable loan shall not be voidable by reason of the age of the student at the time of receiving the forgivable loan.

Exhibit 2

- E. Special circumstances regarding a recipient's failure to complete the service option and/or fulfill the loan obligation should be addressed in writing to the Board or its loan servicer.

VIII. GRACE PERIOD AND OTHER DEFERMENTS

A. Grace Period

1. Upon completion of the approved program of study, the SREB forgivable loan recipient will be granted a 12-month grace period, during which the recipient should obtain the appropriate license and/or secure appropriate employment as defined in Section V.B.1.
2. An SREB forgivable loan recipient who does not complete the approved program of study will not be granted a 12-month grace period and will enter repayment immediately upon separation from the approved program of study. Such a recipient may be eligible for an in-school deferment as defined in Section VI.B.

B. In-School Deferment

1. An SREB forgivable loan recipient who does not complete the approved program of study but remains enrolled at least part-time in a doctoral level program may request deferment of the accrual of interest and the repayment of principal and penalty for purposes of remaining in school.
2. The in-school deferment must be requested in writing to the Board or its loan servicer and must be accompanied by verification of at least part-time enrollment from the attending institution.
3. The in-school deferment must be requested by the recipient and approved every term (except Summer) throughout the duration of the deferment.

C. Post-Graduate Training/Residency Deferment

1. An SREB forgivable loan recipient may request deferment of the accrual of interest and the repayment of principal and penalty for the purpose of pursuing post-graduate training or residency at an accredited hospital in optometry for a period not to exceed one (1) year.
2. The residency deferment must be requested in writing to the Board or its loan servicer, stating the location and starting and ending dates of the post-graduate training/residency, and must be accompanied by verification from the institution providing the post-graduate training/residency.

Exhibit 2

3. The residency deferment must be requested by the recipient and approved at the beginning of each year of post-graduate training/residency.

D. Temporary Disability Deferment

1. An SREB forgivable loan recipient in repayment who is unable to secure or continue employment because of temporary total disability may request deferment of the accrual of interest and the repayment of principal and penalty. To qualify, a recipient must be unable to work and earn money due to the disability for at least sixty (60) days or be providing continuous care for a dependent or spouse during a period of at least (90) consecutive days.
2. The temporary disability deferment must be requested in writing to the Board or its loan servicer and must be accompanied by certification from a doctor of medicine or osteopathy who is legally authorized to practice medicine.
3. The temporary disability deferment must be requested by the recipient and approved every six (6) months throughout the duration of the deferment and condition for a total period of time not to exceed three (3) years.

E. Military Service Deferment

1. In terms of military service the following definitions shall apply:
 - a) **REQUIRED** military service is that service which is required of an individual in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States; it does not include a military service obligation incurred to repay a grant, stipend or scholarship granted the individual prior to, during, or after the award under the Southern Regional Education Board Regional Contract Forgivable loan program.
 - b) **OBLIGATED** or **VOLUNTARY** military service is that service which is performed by the individual in repayment of a debt owed the United States government as a result of military scholarships, ROTC scholarships, etc. received by the individual. Service is **VOLUNTARY** if the individual is not obligated to incur a period of military service but chooses to incur the service obligation.
2. An SREB forgivable loan recipient shall be eligible for deferment of the accrual of interest and the repayment of principal and penalty during the time of required military service.

Exhibit 2

3. The military deferment must be requested in writing to the Board or its loan servicer, stating beginning and ending dates of such required military service, and must be accompanied by a copy of the military orders.
4. The military deferment must be requested by the recipient and approved on a year-to-year basis (annually).
5. If a recipient continues military service for any reason beyond the REQUIRED time, then that person shall be declared ineligible for military deferment and the remaining unsatisfied principal, penalty, and interest shall become due and payable to the Board according to the terms outlined in Section V.C.
6. If a recipient obligates himself/herself to VOLUNTARY military service prior to, during, or after the SREB award, then that person shall be declared ineligible for military deferment and the remaining unsatisfied principal, penalty, and interest shall become due and payable to the Board according to the terms outlined in Section V.C.

IX. CANCELLATION OF DEBT

A. Death

1. If an individual recipient dies, then the recipient's obligation to repay the loan or render service is canceled.
2. The Board shall require a copy of the death certificate or other proof of death that is acceptable under applicable State Law. If a death certificate or other acceptable proof of death is not available, the recipient's obligation for service or repayment on the loan is canceled only upon a determination by the Board on the basis of other evidence that the Board finds conclusive.
3. The Board may not attempt to collect on the loan from the deceased recipient's estate.

B. Total and Permanent Disability

1. If the Board determines that an individual recipient is totally and permanently disabled, the recipient's obligation to make any further payments of principal, penalty, and interest on the loan is canceled. A recipient is not considered totally and permanently disabled on the basis of a condition that existed before he/she applied for the forgivable loan, unless the recipient's condition has substantially deteriorated since he/she submitted the forgivable loan application, so as to render the recipient totally and permanently disabled.

Exhibit 2

2. After being notified by the recipient or the recipient's representative that the recipient claims to be totally and permanently disabled, the Board shall promptly request that the recipient or the recipient's representative obtain a certification from a physician, who is a doctor of medicine or osteopathy and legally authorized to practice, on a form provided or approved by the Board and other necessary documents as requested, that the recipient is totally and permanently disabled. The Board shall continue collection until it receives the certification or receives a letter from a physician stating that the certification has been requested and that additional time is needed to determine if the recipient is totally and permanently disabled. After receiving the physician's certification or letter and other necessary documents as requested and the student is found to be totally and permanently disabled, the Board may not attempt to collect from the recipient.
3. If the Board determines that a loan owed by a recipient, who claims to be totally and permanently disabled, is not eligible for cancellation for that reason, or if the Board has not received the physician's certification and other requested documents, as described in Section VII.B.2., within 60 days of the receipt of the documents as described in Section VII.B.2., the Board shall resume collection and shall be deemed to have exercised forbearance of payment of principal, penalty, and interest from the date the Board received the documents described in Section VII.B.2. until such a determination of ineligibility is made by the Board.

C. Bankruptcy

SREB forgivable loans are nondischargeable in bankruptcy.

X. **WARRANTY**

The acceptance of the SREB forgivable loan shall serve to appoint the Secretary of State of the State of Mississippi by each recipient as his/her designated agent for service of process, upon whom may be served all lawful processes and summons in any action or proceeding against him/her in the event he/she removes himself/herself from this State and the processes of its courts, growing out of any breach of Contract and Note by the recipient for failure to fulfill his/her Contract and Note with the Board or, to repay the SREB forgivable loan, including penalty and interest pursuant to the law and Contract and Note, and, said acceptance of the loan rights and privileges shall be a signification of the applicant's agreement that any such process or summons against him/her, which is so served upon the Secretary of State, shall be of the same legal force and validity as if served on him/her personally. The venue of all causes of action against such nonresidents shall be Hinds County, Mississippi.

Exhibit 2

XI. AUTHORIZATION

The acceptance of the SREB forgivable loan shall serve to authorize the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid, the Board, and their respective agents and contractors to contact the recipient regarding the recipient's loan request or loan(s), including repayment of loan(s), at the current or any future number the recipient provides for the recipient's cellular phone or other wireless device using automated telephone dialing equipment or artificial or pre-recorded voice or text messages.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-106-47.

Exhibit 3

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 687: Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program (NULR) Rules and Regulations

Part 687 Chapter 1: Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program (NULR) Rules and Regulations

Rule 1.1 Nurse Retention Loan Repayment Program (NULR) Rules and Regulations. The Skilled Nursing Home and Hospital Nurses Retention Loan Repayment Program was established by the 2023 Legislature. These Rules and Regulations are promulgated to govern the program and are subject to change by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board (hereinafter referred to as the "Board").

III. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

- A. The applicant must be a U.S. citizen and current legal resident of Mississippi. Resident status for purposes of receiving NULR under this act shall be determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition purposes as set forth in Sections 37-103-1 through 37-103-29 of Ms. Code Ann., with the exception of Section 37-103-17.
- B. The applicant must have obtained a current relevant Mississippi professional license.
- C. First-time applicants must have gained employment within the preceding year for the first time as a full-time licensed practical nurse or licensed registered nurse at a skilled nursing home in the State of Mississippi or a general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi that is licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health.
- D. Renewal applicants must be employed as a full-time licensed practical nurse or licensed registered nurse at a skilled nursing home in the State of Mississippi or a general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi that is licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health.
- E. The applicant must work full-time as a licensed practical nurse or licensed registered nurse at a single qualified skilled nursing home or general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year.
- F. The applicant must have outstanding qualifying educational loans. Qualifying educational loans include the principal, interest, and related expenses such as the required interest premium on the unpaid balances of government (federal, state or local) and commercial loans obtained by the recipient for postsecondary educational expenses. *Perkins loans do not qualify for repayment under NULR.*

Exhibit 3

- G. The applicant must not have received funds from the Nursing Education Forgivable Loan Program – BSN (NELB), Nursing Education Forgivable Loan Program – RN to BSN (NELR), Nursing Education Forgivable Loan Program – MSN (NELM), Nursing Education Forgivable Loan Program – RN to MSN (NERM), Nursing Education Forgivable Loan Program – PHD/DNP (NELP), Nursing Teacher Stipend Forgivable Loan Program (NTSP) or any other state forgivable loan.
- H. The applicant must not presently be in default or delinquent on any federal, state, local or commercial qualifying educational loan.

IV. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR LOAN REPAYMENT APPLICANT

A. First time applicants must:

1. Complete the Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP) online at www.msfinancialaid.org by the deadline date of ~~June 30~~ September 15 of the nurse's first year of nursing. ~~The deadline for applications submitted the inaugural year will be extended to September 15, 2023.~~
2. Submit the following documents to the Board by ~~July 31~~ October 15 of the nurse's first year of nursing. ~~The deadline for the following documents to be submitted for the inaugural year will be extended to October 15, 2023.~~
 - a) One form of proof of Mississippi residency. A valid Mississippi Driver's License or Identification number submitted during the online application process will fulfill this requirement.
 - b) Proof of the applicant's current practical nursing license or registered nursing license.
 - c) A complete, executed employment verification form documenting dates of full-time employment in a qualified skilled nursing home or general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi.
 - d) A completed Loan Data Verification form. (This form is completed as part of the online application process.)
 - e) Documentation from the lender or loan servicer for state, local, or commercial loans that shows the loan's current balance, status (deferred, repayment, etc.), type, and date of disbursement. (Additional documentation will be collected only for private loans for which information is unavailable on the National Student Loan Data System, NSLDS.)

B. Renewal applicants must:

Exhibit 3

1. Complete the Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP) online at www.msfinancialaid.org by the deadline date of ~~June 30~~September 15.
2. Submit the following documents to the Board by ~~July 31~~October 15.
 - a) One form of proof of continued Mississippi residency. A valid Mississippi Driver's License or Identification number submitted during the online application process will fulfill this requirement.
 - b) A complete and properly executed employment verification form documenting dates of full-time employment in a qualified skilled nursing home or general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi.
 - c) A completed Loan Data Verification form. (This form is completed as part of the online application process.)
 - d) Documentation from the lender or loan servicer for state, local, or commercial loans that shows the loan's current balance, status (deferred, repayment, etc.), type, and date of disbursement. (Additional documentation will be collected only for private loans for which information is unavailable on the National Student Loan Data System, NSLDS.)

V. AWARD RECIPIENTS

- A. Awards will be made to applicants with outstanding postsecondary educational loans. Qualifying educational loans include the principal, interest, and related expenses such as the required interest premium on the unpaid balances of government (federal, state, or local) and commercial loans obtained by the recipient for postsecondary educational expenses. *Perkins loans do not qualify for repayment under NULR.*
- B. Recipients shall be selected on a first-come, first-served basis of all eligible applicants and shall be limited by available funding.
- C. In the second and subsequent years of the program, priority consideration shall first be given to renewal applicants.

VI. AMOUNT AND LENGTH OF LOAN REPAYMENT

- A. Awards shall be up to six thousand dollars (\$6,000) per year for a maximum of three (3) years.

Exhibit 3

- B. The annual award amount shall never exceed the outstanding balance of the qualifying educational loan.
- C. Awards shall be granted annually, and recipients shall have no obligation to seek a future award.
- D. Awards shall be paid annually to the recipient's lender/loan servicer and applied to the outstanding balance. Monies paid on the recipient's behalf toward qualifying educational loans prior to receiving a NULR award will not be eligible for repayment through the NULR program.
- E. Funds are provided for the repayment of postsecondary education loans only. Funds are not provided for the repayment of personal loans, even if the personal loan was used to pay for postsecondary education.

VII. RECIPIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The recipient must maintain a current relevant Mississippi professional license while participating in the program.
- B. The recipient must be employed full-time as a licensed practical nurse or licensed registered nurse at a skilled nursing home in the State of Mississippi or a general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi that is licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health.
- C. By July 31 at the conclusion of the recipient's employment year, the recipient must submit to the Board an annual Employment Verification Form. The form must be received for the Board to disburse the offered award amount to the loan servicer.
- D. While receiving funds, the NULR recipient must at all times keep the Board informed of the recipient's current, correct, and complete contact information. This information may be updated via the NULR recipient's MAAPP account online.

Source: ~~*Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-XXSB 2373, 2023 Legislative Session-*~~

Exhibit 4

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-75, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REVISE THE AWARD CRITERIA OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE PLAN GRANT PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. Section 37-106-75, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-106-75. Higher Education Legislative Plan Grant Program.

(1) The Legislature hereby establishes the Higher Education Legislative Plan Grant Program.

(2) For purposes of this section:

(a) "Institution of higher education" shall mean any state institution of higher learning or public community or junior college, or any regionally accredited, state-approved, nonprofit two-year or four-year college or university located in the State of Mississippi approved by the board.

(b) "Tuition" shall mean the semester or trimester or term charges and all required fees imposed by an institution of higher education as a condition of enrollment by all students. However, for a two-year nonpublic institution of higher education defined in paragraph (a), the tuition payments shall not exceed the average charges and fees required by all of the two-year public institutions of higher education defined in paragraph (a), and for a four-year nonpublic institution of higher education defined in paragraph (a), the tuition payments shall not exceed the average charges and fees required by all of the four-year public institutions of higher education defined in paragraph (a).

(3) Subject to the availability of funds, the state may pay the tuition of students who enroll at any state institution of higher education to pursue an academic undergraduate degree who apply for the assistance under the program and who meet all of the following qualifications:

(a) Resident of the State of Mississippi. Resident status for the purpose of receiving assistance under this chapter shall be determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition purposes in Sections 37-103-1 through 37-103-29, with the exception of Section 37-103-17;

(b) Graduate from high school within the two (2) years preceding the application with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 calculated on a 4.0 scale;

~~(c) Successfully complete, as certified by the high school counselor or other school official, high school course work which includes the College Preparatory Curriculum (CPC) approved by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning and required for admission into a state university;~~

(d) Have a composite score on the American College Test of at least twenty (20) on the 1989 version or an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced version of such test;

Exhibit 4

(e) Have no criminal record, except for misdemeanor traffic violations; and

(f) Be in financial need.

(4) ~~Subject to the availability of funds, t~~The state ~~may shall pay the tuition of~~make awards to students who enroll at any state institution of higher education to pursue an academic undergraduate degree or associate degree who apply for assistance under the program and who meet the qualifications in ~~paragraphs (a), (e) and (f) of subsection (3) but who fail to meet one (1) of the particular requirements established by paragraph (b), (c) or (d) of subsection (3) by an amount of ten percent (10%) or less.~~

(5) To maintain continued state payment of tuition, once enrolled in an institution of higher education, a student shall meet all of the following requirements:

(a) Make steady academic progress toward a degree, earning not less than the minimum number of hours of credit required for full-time standing in each academic period requiring such enrollment;

(b) Maintain continuous enrollment for not less than two (2) semesters or three (3) quarters in each successive academic year, unless granted an exception for cause by the board;

(c) Have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 calculated on a 4.0 scale at the end of the first academic year and thereafter maintain such a cumulative grade point average as evaluated at the end of each academic year;

(d) Have no criminal record, except for misdemeanor traffic violations; and

(e) Be in financial need.

(6) The provisions of this section shall be administered by the board. The board may promulgate rules for all matters necessary for the implementation of this section. By rule, the board shall provide for:

(a) A mechanism for informing all students of the availability of the assistance provided under this section early enough in their schooling that a salutary motivational effect is possible;

(b) Applications, forms, financial audit procedures, eligibility and other program audit procedures and other matters related to efficient operation;

~~(c) A procedure for waiver through the 1996-1997 academic year of the program eligibility requirement for successful completion of a specified core curriculum upon proper documentation by the applicant that failure to comply with the requirement is due solely to the fact that the required course or courses were not available to the applicant at the school attended.~~

(7) An applicant shall be found to be in financial need if:

Exhibit 4

(a) The family ~~has one (1) child under the age of twenty-one (21), and the size is three (3) or less~~ and the annual adjusted gross income of the family is less than Forty-two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$42,500.00); or

(b) The family has an annual adjusted gross income of less than Forty-two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$42,500.00) plus Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for each additional family member~~child under the age of twenty-one (21)~~. The annual adjusted gross income of the family and the family size/number in family shall be verified by completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the completion of the verification process if the applicant is selected for it.

~~As used in this subsection, the term “family” for an unemancipated applicant means the applicant, the applicant’s parents and other children under age twenty-one (21) of the applicant’s parents. The term “family” for an emancipated applicant means the applicant, an applicant’s spouse, and any children under age twenty-one (21) of the applicant and spouse.~~

(8) No student shall receive a grant under this section in an amount greater than the tuition charged by the school. The student must apply be deemed eligible for a federal Pell grant prior to receiving state funds.

Exhibit 5

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-36, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REVISE THE AWARD CRITERIA OF THE WILLIAM F. WINTER AND JACK REED, SR., TEACHER LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE THAT THE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BOARD SHALL DEVELOP RULES FOR ENSURING THAT EXPENSES OF THE PROGRAM IN A FISCAL YEAR DO NOT EXCEED FUNDING FOR THE PROGRAM IN THAT FISCAL YEAR; TO PROVIDE THAT THE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BOARD MAY LIMIT THE ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATIONS AND MAY LIMIT THE NUMBER OF AWARDS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. Section 37-106-36, Mississippi Code of 1972, is 10 amended as follows:

37-106-36. (1) There is established the “William F. Winter and Jack Reed, Sr., Teacher Loan Repayment Program.”

(2) Subject to the availability of funds, an eligible applicant for an initial award must have:

(a) Graduated from a baccalaureate degree-granting institution of higher learning which is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) or a comparable accreditation body;

(b) Signed a contract as a full-time ~~first year~~ teacher in a public school district in Mississippi;

(c) Obtained a standard five-year license or a nontraditional five-year alternate route license. Persons with provisional emergency licenses shall not be eligible applicants; and

(d) Outstanding qualifying undergraduate or graduate educational loans, which may include the principal, interest and related expenses such as the required interest premium on the unpaid balances of government and commercial loans obtained by the recipient for undergraduate educational expense.

(3) Persons who have received funds from other forgivable loan programs established for teachers under Mississippi law, or who are presently in default or delinquent on any federal, state, local or commercial qualifying educational loan, shall not be eligible for this program.

(4) Provided that initial recipients remain eligible under the provisions of subsection (2) of this section, they may retain eligibility for two (2) additional awards, subject to the availability of funds.

(5) Initial recipients shall be selected on a first-come, first-served basis of all eligible applicants; ~~which shall be limited to only one hundred fifty (150) individuals receiving scholarship funds~~. In the second and subsequent third years of an applicant’s continued eligibility, priority consideration shall first be given to renewal applicants. ~~In any given year only one hundred fifty (150) new applicants shall be eligible to receive funds under the program~~The Postsecondary

Exhibit 5

Education Financial Assistance Board shall develop rules for ensuring that expenses of the program in a fiscal year do not exceed funding for the program in that fiscal year. For that purpose, and any other provision of this section to the contrary notwithstanding, the Postsecondary Board may limit the acceptance of applications and may limit the number of awards.

~~(56)~~ Among ~~first-time, first-year~~ teacher recipients, priority consideration shall be given to persons who are teaching in a public school district designated as a geographical critical teacher shortage area by the State Board of Education.

~~(67)~~ Awards for recipients who have signed a contract to teach in a public school district that is not designated as a geographical critical teacher shortage area shall be as follows:

(a) One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00) for the ~~first-year-of-teaching~~initial award;

(b) Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) for the second ~~year-of-teaching~~award; and

(c) Three Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$3,500.00) for the third ~~year-of-teaching~~award.

~~(78)~~ Awards for recipients who have signed a contract to teach in a public school district that is designated as a geographical critical teacher shortage area shall be as follows:

(a) Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000.00) for the ~~first-year-of-teaching~~initial award;

(b) Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for the second ~~year-of-teaching~~award, provided the recipient continues to teach in the same public school district or another public school district designated a geographical shortage area by the State Board of Education; and

(c) Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000.00) for the third ~~year-of-teaching~~award, provided the recipient continues to teach in the same public school district or another public school district designated a geographical shortage area by the State Board of Education.

~~(89)~~ An ~~first-year~~initial recipient who moves to another public school district shall be eligible to receive an award based on the amount allowed under the program in the new district where the teacher is employed.

~~(910)~~ Awards shall be granted on a year-to-year basis, and recipients shall have no obligation to seek a future award.

~~(1011)~~ Awards shall be paid annually, after the expiration of the one-year teaching contract for which the award was granted, to the recipient's lender or loan service provider, and shall be applied to the outstanding balance. Monies paid on the recipient's behalf toward qualifying undergraduate ~~or graduate~~ educational loans prior to receiving payment of the award shall not be eligible for repayment through the program.

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~~(112)~~ During the teaching year for which the award is granted, a recipient must at all times keep the ~~Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board~~~~State Financial Aid Board~~ informed of any changes to the recipient's current contact information and employment status.

~~(1213)~~ Recipients who fail to maintain a standard or nontraditional license or fail to fulfill the one-year teaching contract on which the award was based shall forfeit any right to the award.

~~(1314)~~ The ~~Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board~~~~State Financial Aid Board~~, in collaboration with the State Board of Education, shall track recipients of an award under this program through ~~their fifth teaching year~~the fourth year after receiving their initial award, unless the recipient shall leave teaching in a public school district at an earlier date. Data collected shall include recipients' ~~undergraduate institution~~, school district, subject area/grade level in teaching and any other pertinent information necessary to determine the efficacy of the program in retaining teachers ~~in their first three (3) years of teaching~~.

~~(1415)~~ The ~~Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board~~~~State Financial Aid Board~~ shall promulgate regulations necessary for the proper administration of this section, including rules for ensuring that expenses of the program in a fiscal year do not exceed funding for the program in that fiscal year.

~~(1516)~~ There is established in the State Treasury a special fund to be designated the "William F. Winter and Jack Reed, Sr., Loan Repayment Program Fund," into which shall be deposited those funds appropriated by the Legislature, and any other funds that may be made available, for the purpose of implementing the loan repayment program established herein. Money in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not lapse into the General Fund, and interest earned on any amounts deposited into the fund shall be credited to the special fund.

~~(16) This section shall stand repealed on July 1, 2024.~~

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2024.