MISSISSIPPI POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BOARD

IHL Executive Offices
3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, MS 39211

June 24, 2026, 10:30 a.m.

Teleconference: 1-888-822-7517, Access code: 2791682#
Zoom: https://itsmsgov.zoom.us/j/82358308696?pwd=XbDUuYhBlgkK4yTUCYm0pm913DowCH.1

MINUTES

BE IT REMEMBERED, that the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board held a regular meeting on Wednesday, June 24, 2026 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:

- Barney Daly, Lt. Governor's appointee (remote)
- Jason Dean, MAICU association appointee (remote)
- Mark Keenum, IHL institutional appointee (remote)
- Dewayne Middleton, MCCB institutional appointee (remote)
- Sue Stedman, Governor's appointee (remote)
- Jim Turcotte, Governor's appointee and Chairman
- Dianne Watson, MCCB Board appointee (remote)

The following member(s) did not participate:

- Ben Burnett, MAICU institutional appointee
- Teresa Hubbard, IHL Board appointee (remote)

The following Advisory Board member(s) did not participate:

- Representative Donnie Scoggin, Universities and Colleges Committee Chair
- Senator Nicole Boyd, Universities and Colleges Committee Chair

Also in attendance either in person or remotely were:

- Meg Harris, Assistant Director of Operations, Student Financial Aid (remote)
- Shirley Mitchell, Program Administrator, Student Financial Aid
- Jennifer Rogers, Executive Director, Student Financial Aid and Postsecondary Board
- Adele Russell, Program and Office Administrator, Student Financial Aid
- Apryll Washington, Deputy Director, Student Financial Aid

- Frances West, Program Administrator, Student Financial Aid
- Heather Dearman, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (remote)
- Kari Dedwylder, Jones College (remote)
- Laura Diven-Brown, University of Mississippi (remote)
- Jaime Missimer, Pearl River Community College (remote)
- Melissa Temple, IHL (remote)
- Greg Windham, Northeast Mississippi Community College (remote)
- Tina Carter, Legislative Budget Office

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Chairman Turcotte.

MINUTES

On motion by Jason Dean and second by Barney Daly, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the board meeting held on May 13, 2026, as originally drafted.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Item 1: Jennifer Rogers presented a request for the Board to approve the FY 2028 Budget Request (MBR). The request included approval of the proposed program allocation, the proposed funding by source, and the narrative. On motion by Mark Keenum and second by Barney Daly, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the FY 2028 MBR.

1. Approve the FY 2028 Budget Request (MBR)

Request:
The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid requests approval of the FY 2028 MBR.

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."

Exhibit 1 is the 2027-28 Program Allocation for the Budget Request. The chart includes the FY27 Allocation based on the original appropriation (light blue), the FY27 Allocation based on the budget with anticipated deficit (blue; approved May 2026), the FY28 MBR (orange), the difference between the FY28 MBR and the FY27 Allocation based on the original appropriation (no color), and the difference between the FY28 MBR and the FY27 Allocation based on the budget with deficit (no color). Highlights include:

- 1-Administration: Request 3% cost of living salary increases and an additional full-time position to assist with program administration due to the creation of the UPSKILL Grant program; 5% increase to travel budget; and 2% increase to contractual services budget.
- 2-MTAG, MESG and HELP: Anticipates slight increase (1%) to the number of awards for MTAG, MESG, and HELP due to FY28 being the third year since the definition of full-time changed and the HELP income threshold increased; and 2.5% increase for HELP award amounts due to tuition increases.
- 3-Forgivable Loan and Repayment Programs:

  - Request repeal of Critical Needs Dyslexia Therapy Forgivable Loan.
  - Request full funding of Winter-Reed Teacher Loan Repayment at $2M annually.
  - Request repeal of Speech Language Pathology Forgivable Loan.
  - Request full funding of SREB Regional Contract Forgivable Loan for optometrists, since the program has been a legislative priority.
- 4-Other:
  - Request full funding of LAW; anticipate 2.5% tuition increase.
  - Request spending authority for 2 Nissan Scholarships to be paid out of the Nissan trust.
  - Request full funding for FAITH; anticipate 2.5% tuition increase.
  - Request initial legislative funding for the UPSKILL Grant program, which was authorized during the 2026 Legislative Session but was not funded for FY27.

Exhibit 2 is the FY 2028 Budget Request with Funding by Source. The chart shows the FY27 Original Appropriation, the FY27 Appropriation with the deficit we will be requesting, the FY28 MBR, the difference between the FY28 request and the FY27 original appropriation and the difference between the FY28 request and the FY27appropriation with the deficit.

Exhibit 3 is the FY 2028 SFA Budget Narrative, which corresponds to the SFA budget.

Recommendation:
Board staff recommends approval of the FY 2028 Budget Request.

Exhibit 1

FY 2028 (2027-28) MBR												
Expenditures by Program	**FY27 Allocation (Original Budget)**		**FY27 Allocation (Budget w/Deficit)**		**FY28 MBR**		**(+/-) FY27 Allocation (Original Budget)**			**(+/-) FY27 Allocation (Budget w/Deficit)**		
	Awards	**Amounts**	**Awards**	**Amounts**	**Awards**	**Amounts**	**Awards**	**Amounts**	**%**	**Awards**	**Amounts**	**%**
1- Administration												
Salaries, Wages and Fringes		$ 1,028,702		$ 1,028,702		$ 1,147,673		$ 118,971			$ 118,971	
Travel		$ 10,000		$ 10,000		$ 10,500		$ 500			$ 500	
Contractual Service		$ 550,000		$ 550,000		$ 561,000		$ 11,000			$ 11,000	
Commodities		$ 10,000		$ 10,000		$ 10,000		$ -			$ -	
Equipment		$ 10,000		$ 10,000		$ 10,000		$ -			$ -	
Total Administration		**$ 1,608,702**		**$ 1,608,702**		**$ 1,739,173**		**$ 130,471**	**8.1%**		**$ 130,471**	**8.1%**
2- MTAG/MESG and HELP												
MTAG	18,064	$ 9,498,239	18,064	$ 10,855,131	18,244	$ 10,963,389	180	$ 1,465,150		180	$ 108,258	
MESG	3,921	$ 7,953,964	3,921	$ 9,090,244	3,960	$ 9,181,081	39	$ 1,227,117		39	$ 90,837	
HELP	4,988	$ 33,938,995	4,988	$ 38,754,846	5,038	$ 40,119,577	50	$ 6,180,582		50	$ 1,364,731	
Total MTAG/MESG/HELP	**26,973**	**$51,391,198**	**26,973**	**$58,700,221**	**27,242**	**$60,264,047**	**269**	**$ 8,872,849**	**17.3%**	**269**	**$ 1,563,826**	**2.7%**
3 - Forgivable Loan & Repayment Prgs												
Teacher Programs:												
CNDT (Graduate)	0	$ -	0	$ -	0	$ -	0	$ -		0	$ -	
Winter-Reed Loan Repay	0	$ -	0	$ -	470	$ 2,000,000	470	$ 2,000,000		470	$ 2,000,000	
Health/Science Programs:												
SLPL (Graduate)	1	$ 10,000	1	$ 10,000	0	$ -	-1	$ (10,000)		-1	$ (10,000)	
SREB (Graduate)	36	$ 762,624	36	$ 762,624	36	$ 781,704	0	$ 19,080		0	$ 19,080	
Total Forgivable Loan Programs	**37**	**$ 772,624**	**37**	**$ 772,624**	**506**	**$ 2,781,704**	**469**	**$ 2,009,080**	**260.0%**	**469**	**$ 2,009,080**	**260.0%**
4 - Other												
LAW	10	$ 120,000	10	$ 120,000	10	$ 123,000	0	$ 3,000		0	$ 3,000	
Nissan	1	$ 11,500	1	$ 11,500	2	$ 23,575	1	$ 12,075		1	$ 12,075	
FAITH Scholarship	228	$ 3,000,000	228	$ 3,000,000	350	$ 4,720,395	122	$ 1,720,395		122	$ 1,720,395	
UPSKILL	0	$ -	0	$ -	1,000	$ 1,500,000	1,000	$ 1,500,000		1,000	$ 1,500,000	
Total Other	**239**	**$ 3,131,500**	**239**	**$ 3,131,500**	**1,362**	**$ 6,366,970**	**1,123**	**$ 3,235,470**	**103.3%**	**1,123**	**$ 3,235,470**	**103.3%**
TOTAL Loans, Schols, Grants	**27,249**	**$55,295,322**	**27,249**	**$62,604,345**	**29,110**	**$69,412,721**	**1,861**	**$14,117,399**	**25.5%**	**1,861**	**$ 6,808,376**	**10.9%**
TOTAL SFA BUDGET	**27,249**	**$56,904,024**	**27,249**	**$64,213,047**	**29,110**	**$71,151,894**	**1,861**	**$14,247,870**	**25.0%**	**1,861**	**$ 6,938,847**	**10.8%**

Exhibit 2

FY 2028 Budget Request (MBR)							
SFA BUDGET Funding Sources	**FY 27 Appropriation (Original)**	**FY27 Appropriation (w/Deficit)**	**FY28 MBR**	**(+/-) FY27 (Original)**		**(+/-) FY27 (w/Deficit)**	
				Amounts	**%**	**Amounts**	**%**
SFA APPROPRIATION							
GOV. APPROPRIATIONS							
General Support	$ 47,261,364	$ 47,261,364	$ 64,087,924	$ 16,826,560	35.6%	$ 16,826,560	35.6%
General Support Re-appropriated	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	-	$ -	-
General Support - Deficit	*$ -*	*$ 7,309,023*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*-*	*$ (7,309,023)*	*-100.0%*
EEF - New							
FAITH & Winter-Reed	$ 3,000,000	$ 3,000,000	$ 6,720,395	$ 3,720,395	124.0%	$ 3,720,395	124.0%
MTAG, MESG & HELP	$ 5,100,000	$ 5,100,000	$ -	$ (5,100,000)	-100.0%	$ (5,100,000)	-100.0%
EEF - Reappropriated							
FAITH & Winter-Reed	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	-	$ -	-
FAITH	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	-	$ -	-
Winter-Reed	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	-	$ -	-
Total Gov. Appropriations	**$55,361,364**	**$62,670,387**	**$70,808,319**	**$15,446,955**	**27.9%**	**$ 8,137,932**	**13.0%**
OTHER SPECIAL FUNDS							
GRANTS AND CONTRACTS							
Federal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	-	$ -	-
State	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	-	$ -	-
Total Grants and Contracts	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**-**	**$ -**	**-**
INTEREST INCOME							
Nissan	$ 11,500	$ 11,500	$ 23,575	$ 12,075	105.0%	$ 12,075	105.0%
Total Interest Income	**$ 11,500**	**$ 11,500**	**$ 23,575**	**$ 12,075**	**105.0%**	**$ 12,075**	**105.0%**
OTHER SOURCES							
Law Fund	$ 20,000	$ 20,000	$ 20,000	$ -	0.0%	$ -	0.0%
Total Other Sources	**$ 20,000**	**$ 20,000**	**$ 20,000**	**$ -**	**0.0%**	**$ -**	**0.0%**
CASH ON HAND							
Estimated Collections	$ 1,511,160	$ 1,511,160	$ 300,000	$ (1,211,160)	-80.1%	$ (1,211,160)	-80.1%
Deficit Spending Authority	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*$ -*	*-*	*$ -*	*-*
Total Cash on Hand	**$ 1,511,160**	**$ 1,511,160**	**$ 300,000**	**$ (1,211,160)**	**-80.1%**	**$ (1,211,160)**	**-80.1%**
Total Other Special Funds	**$ 1,542,660**	**$ 1,542,660**	**$ 343,575**	**$ (1,199,085)**	**-77.7%**	**$ (1,199,085)**	**-77.7%**
Total SFA Appropriation	**$56,904,024**	**$64,213,047**	**$71,151,894**	**$14,247,870**	**25.0%**	**$ 6,938,847**	**10.8%**

Exhibit 3

NARRATIVE
FY 2028 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 2027 Appropriation Request

On behalf of the students and the state of Mississippi, SFA requests **$71,151,894 for FY28**, which represents **an increase of $14,247,870 or 25.0%** over FY27. The large increase is due primarily to the fact that SFA received $10 million less than what was requested in FY27. The FY28 request includes:

Governmental Appropriations:

- **$64,087,924 in General Funds**, which represents **an increase of $16,826,560 or 35.6%** over FY27;
- **$0 in spending authority for carryover General Funds,** which represents **no change** from FY27. No carryover funds from FY27 are expected to be available for use in FY28;
- **$6,720,395 in Education Enhancement Funds earmarked for FAITH and WRTR** ($4,720,395 for FAITH and $2,000,000 for WRTR), which represents **an increase of $3,720,395 or 124.0%** over FY27;
- **$0 in Education Enhancement Funds earmarked for MTAG, MESG and HELP**, which represents a **decrease of $5,100,000 or 100%** from FY27; SFA requests that all funds for MTAG, MESG, and FAITH come in the form of General Support instead of EEF.
- **$0 in re-appropriated Education Enhancement Funds** for FAITH and WRTR, which represents **no change** from FY27;

Other Special Funds:

- **$343,575 in Other Special Funds** (includes Federal and State Grants and Contracts, Interest Income, Cash on Hand and Other Sources), which represents **a decrease of $1,199,085 or 77.7%** from FY27.

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 administer the legislatively authorized state student financial aid programs; 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 (FY27 Estimated and FY28 Increase/Decrease for continuations) of MBR-1-03 and designated Budget Unit Decisions columns of MBR-1-03-A:
(D) Additional Needs – **$130,471 or 8.1%**: Funds are requested to provide 3% cost of living salary increases for all current employees and a new full-time employee to assist with program administration. Funds are also requested for a 5% increase to the travel budget and a 2% increase to the contractual services budget.

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 (FY27 Estimated and FY28 Increase/Decrease for continuations) of MBR-1-03 and designated Budget Unit Decisions columns of MBR-1-03-A:
(D) Additional Needs – **$8,872,849 or 17.3%**: The budget request anticipates a slight increase (1%) to the number of awards for MTAG, MESG, and HELP due to FY28 being the third year since the definition of full-time changed and the HELP income threshold increased. The budget also anticipates a 2.5% increase for HELP award amounts due to tuition increases. The primary cause for the increase is the underfunding of MTAG, MESG, and HELP in FY27 by approximately $7.3 million. The MTAG/MESG and HELP request includes:

- **$10,963,389 for MTAG**, which represents **an increase of $1,465,150** over FY27;
- **$9,181,081 for MESG**, which represents an **increase of $1,227,117** over FY27;
- **$40,119,577 for HELP**, which represents **an increase of $6,180,582** over FY27.

3-FORGIVABLE LOAN AND REPAYMENT PROGRAMS

I. Program Description: SFA operates one forgivable loan program, the Critical Needs Dyslexia Therapy Forgivable Loan Program (CNDT), and one loan repayment program, the Winter-Reed Teacher Loan Repayment Program (WRTR), to support teachers and education. SFA also administers two health/science related programs, the 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 authorized by the Legislature:
   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; and
   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.

III. Current program activities as supported by the funding in Columns 5-12 (FY27 Estimated and FY28 Increase/Decrease for continuations) of MBR-1-03 and designated Budget Unit Decisions columns of MBR-1-03-A:
(D) Additional Needs – **$2,009,080 or 260.0%**: An increase in expenditures for the Forgivable Loan and Loan Repayment Programs is requested to fully fund the Winter-Reed Teacher Loan Repayment Program at $2,000,000 as it has been for every year prior to FY26 and to award all SREB Regional Contract Program seats at the projected rate for 2027-28.

TEACHER PROGRAMS:

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 loan will be forgiven for recipients who serve as licensed dyslexia therapist in a Mississippi public or charter school for one year for each year of funding received. The Postsecondary Board recommends repealing the CNDT program as part of a continued effort to phase out all forgivable loan programs. The **CNDT request is $0**, which represents **no change from FY27**.

The William F. Winter – Jack Reed, Sr. Teacher Loan Repayment Program (WRTR) helps teachers repay their student loans. The **WRTR request is $2,000,000,** which represents an **increase of $2,000,000 from FY27**. WRTR has historically been funded with EEF funds.

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 Postsecondary Board recommends repealing the SLPL program as part of a continued effort to phase out all forgivable loan programs. The **SLPL request is $0**. The request represents **a decrease of $10,000 from FY27**.

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 10 seats per entering class, for a total of 40 contract seats each year. The cost of each contract seat typically increases annually. The rate for each seat in FY28 will be $21,714. The **SREB request is $781,704 for 36 seats**, which represents an **increase of $19,080 over FY27**.

4. OTHER

I. Program Description: SFA operates the Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters Scholarship Program (LAW), which is funded by the Mississippi Legislature and partially through a special fund; the Nissan Scholarship (NISS), which is funded through the Nissan Trust; the Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope Scholarship (FAITH), which is funded through EEF funds deposited in the FAITH Scholarship Trust; and the UPSKILL Mississippi Grant program, which was authorized in FY27 but not funded.

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.

III. Current program activities as supported by the funding in Columns 5-12 (FY27 Estimated and FY28 Increase/Decrease for continuations) of MBR-1-03 and designated Budget Unit Decisions columns of MBR-1-03-A: (D) Additional Needs – **$3,235,470 or 103.3%:** An overall increase in expenditures for the Other programs is expected as follows:

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 **LAW request is $123,000**, which represents an **increase of $3,000 over FY27**.

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 $23,575**, which represents an **increase of $12,075 over FY27**. NISS is funded with interest earned on the Nissan Trust.

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 started making awards in 2023-24. The **FAITH request is $4,720,395**, which represents **an increase of $1,720,395 over FY27**. FAITH has historically been funded with EEF funds.

The UPSKILL Mississippi Grant Program was created during the 2026 Legislative Session to provide a last-dollar tuition only scholarship for adults pursing a community college credential that leads to work in a priority sector. The program was not funded in FY27. The **UPSKILL request is $1,500,000**, which represents an **increase of $1,500,000 over FY27**.

Funding Request Explanation:

SFA requests a total of $71,151,894 for FY28.

The request includes $70,808,319 in General Support and $343,575 in Special Funds.

The General Support request includes $6,720,395 in EEF Funds ($4,720,395 for FAITH and $2,000,000 for WRTR).

The Special Funds request includes $343,575 in spending authority for investments ($23,575 for NISS and $20,000 for LAW) and cash on hand from collections ($300,000).

No prior-year General Funds or EEF funds are expected to be available for carryover or reappropriation in FY28.

Item 2: Jennifer Rogers presented a request to approve the FY 2028-32 Five-Year Strategic Plan. On motion by Dwayne Middleton and second by Sue Stedman, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the plan.

2. Approve the FY 2028-32 Five-Year Strategic Plan

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid requests approval of the FY 2028-32 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.

Exhibit 4 is the FY 2028-32 Five-Year Strategic Plan with Expenditures by Program. Beyond the FY 2028 request noted above, the plan anticipates the following changes:

- 1-Administration: Requests 3% cost of living salary increases for all employees each year, an increase of 5% to the travel budget each year, and a 2% increase to the contractual services budget each year.

- 2-MTAG/MESG and HELP: Anticipates modest growth of 1% in the number of recipients for MTAG, MESG, and HELP through FY29 to account for four years of students since the HELP income threshold increased and the definition of full-time changed. The HELP Grant budget anticipates tuition increases of 2.5% each year.

- 3-Forgivable Loan and Repayment Programs: Anticipates repeal of the Critical Needs Dyslexia Therapy Forgivable Loan and Speech Language Pathology Forgivable Loan Programs as part of a continued effort to phase out all forgivable loan programs. Requests continued funding of the Winter-Reed Teacher Loan Repayment Program at $2,000,000 each year and continued funding of the SREB Regional Contract Forgivable Loan Program for Optometrists.

- 4-Other: Anticipates growth of the FAITH Scholarship program through FY30. The LAW, NISS, and FAITH program budgets anticipate tuition increases of 2.5% each year. Anticipates increased funding for UPSKILL, maxing out at $3,000,000 for 2,000 students by FY30.

Exhibit 5 is the FY 2028-32 Five-Year Strategic Plan with Funding by Source.

Exhibit 6 is the FY 2028-32 SFA Five-Year Strategic Plan Narrative.

Recommendation:
Board staff recommends approval of the FY 2027-31 Five-Year Strategic Plan.

Exhibit 4

5-Year Strategic Plan with Expenditures by Program (FY 2028 - FY 2032)															
Expenditures by Program	**FY 2028**		**FY 2029**			**FY 2030**			**FY 2031**			**FY 2032**			
	Awards	**Amounts**	**Awards**	**Amounts**	**Additional Over Prior Year**	**Awards**	**Amounts**	**Additional Over Prior Year**	**Awards**	**Amounts**	**Additional Over Prior Year**	**Awards**	**Amounts**	**Additional Over Prior Year**
1- Administration														
Salaries, Wages and Fringes		$ 1,147,673		$ 1,182,103	$ 34,430		$ 1,217,566	$ 35,463		$ 1,254,093	$ 36,527		$ 1,291,716	$ 37,623
Travel		$ 10,500		$ 11,025	$ 525		$ 11,576	$ 551		$ 12,155	$ 579		$ 12,763	$ 608
Contractual Service		$ 561,000		$ 572,220	$ 11,220		$ 583,664	$ 11,444		$ 595,338	$ 11,673		$ 607,244	$ 11,907
Commodities		$ 10,000		$ 10,000	$ -		$ 10,000	$ -		$ 10,000	$ -		$ 10,000	$ -
Equipment		$ 10,000		$ 10,000	$ -		$ 10,000	$ -		$ 10,000	$ -		$ 10,000	$ -
Total Administration		**$ 1,739,173**		**$ 1,785,348**	**$ 46,175**		**$ 1,832,807**	**$ 47,459**		**$ 1,881,586**	**$ 48,779**		**$ 1,931,723**	**$ 50,137**
2- MTAG/MESG and HELP														
MTAG	18,244	$ 10,963,389	18,426	$ 11,073,023	$ 109,634	18,426	$ 11,073,023	$ -	18,426	$ 11,073,023	$ -	18,426	$ 11,073,023	$ -
MESG	3,960	$ 9,181,081	4,000	$ 9,272,892	$ 91,811	4,000	$ 9,272,892	$ -	4,000	$ 9,272,892	$ -	4,000	$ 9,272,892	$ -
HELP	5,038	$ 40,119,577	5,088	$ 41,533,792	$ 1,414,215	5,088	$ 42,572,137	$ 1,038,345	5,088	$ 43,636,440	$ 1,064,303	5,088	$ 44,727,351	$ 1,090,911
Total MTAG/MESG and HELP	**27,242**	**$60,264,047**	**27,514**	**$61,879,707**	**$1,615,660**	**27,514**	**$62,918,052**	**$1,038,345**	**27,514**	**$63,982,355**	**$1,064,303**	**27,514**	**$65,073,266**	**$1,090,911**
3 - Forgivable Loan & Repayment Prgs														
Teacher Programs:														
CNDT (Graduate)	0	$ -	0	$ -	$ -	0	$ -	$ -	0	$ -	$ -	0	$ -	$ -
Winter-Reed Loan Repay	470	$ 2,000,000	470	$ 2,000,000	$ -	470	$ 2,000,000	$ -	470	$ 2,000,000	$ -	470	$ 2,000,000	$ -
Health/Science Related Programs:														
SLPL	0	$ -	0	$ -	$ -	0	$ -	$ -	0	$ -	$ -	0	$ -	$ -
SREB	36	$ 781,704	38	$ 845,766	$ 64,062	40	$ 912,560	$ 66,794	40	$ 935,400	$ 22,840	40	$ 958,800	$ 23,400
Total Forgive Ln/Repay Programs	**506**	**$ 2,781,704**	**508**	**$ 2,845,766**	**$ 64,062**	**510**	**$ 2,912,560**	**$ 66,794**	**510**	**$ 2,935,400**	**$ 22,840**	**510**	**$ 2,958,800**	**$ 23,400**
4 - Other														
LAW	10	$ 123,000	12	$ 151,290	$ 28,290	12	$ 155,072	$ 3,782	12	$ 158,949	$ 3,877	12	$ 162,923	$ 3,974
Nissan	2	$ 23,575	2	$ 24,164	$ 589	2	$ 24,768	$ 604	2	$ 25,388	$ 619	2	$ 26,022	$ 635
FAITH Scholarship	350	$ 4,720,395	368	$ 5,087,237	$ 366,842	400	$ 5,667,846	$ 580,609	400	$ 5,809,542	$ 141,696	400	$ 5,954,780	$ 145,239
UPSKILL	1,000	$ 1,500,000	1,500	$ 2,250,000	$ 750,000	2,000	$ 3,000,000	$ 750,000	2,000	$ 3,000,000	$ -	2,000	$ 3,000,000	$ -
Total Other	**1,362**	**$ 6,366,970**	**1,882**	**$ 7,512,692**	**$ 395,722**	**2,414**	**$ 8,847,686**	**$ 584,995**	**2,414**	**$ 8,993,879**	**$ 146,192**	**2,414**	**$ 9,143,726**	**$ 149,847**
TOTAL Lns, Schols, Grants	**29,110**	**$69,412,721**	**29,904**	**$72,238,164**	**$2,075,443**	**30,438**	**$74,678,298**	**$1,690,134**	**30,438**	**$75,911,634**	**$1,233,336**	**30,438**	**$77,175,792**	**$1,264,158**
TOTAL SFA BUDGET	**29,110**	**$71,151,894**	**29,904**	**$74,023,512**	**$2,121,618**	**30,438**	**$76,511,105**	**$1,737,592**	**30,438**	**$77,793,220**	**$1,282,115**	**30,438**	**$79,107,515**	**$1,314,295**

Exhibit 5

5-Year Strategic Plan with Funding by Source (FY 2028 - FY 2032)									
SFA BUDGET FY 28-32 Funding Sources	**FY 2028**	**FY 2029**		**FY 2030**		**FY 2031**		**FY 2032**	
	Total Needed	**Total Needed**	**Additional Over Prior Year**	**Total Needed**	**Additional Over Prior Year**	**Total Needed**	**Additional Over Prior Year**	**Total Needed**	**Additional Over Prior Year**
SFA APPROPRIATION									
GOV. APPROPRIATIONS									
General Support	$ 64,087,924	$ 66,592,111	$ 2,504,187	$ 68,498,491	$ 1,906,380	$ 69,638,290	$ 1,139,799	$ 70,806,712	$ 1,168,422
General Support Re-appropriated	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
General Support - Deficit	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
EEF - New									
FAITH & Winter-Reed	$ 6,720,395	$ 7,087,237	$ 366,842	$ 7,667,846	$ 580,609	$ 7,809,542	$ 141,696	$ 7,954,780	$ 145,239
MTAG, MESG & HELP	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
EEF - Reappropriated									
FAITH & Winter-Reed	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
FAITH	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Winter-Reed	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Gov. Appropriations	**$70,808,319**	**$73,679,348**	**$2,871,029**	**$76,166,336**	**$2,486,988**	**$77,447,832**	**$1,281,495**	**$78,761,492**	**$1,313,661**
OTHER SPECIAL FUNDS									
GRANTS AND CONTRACTS									
Federal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
State	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Grants and Contracts	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**
INTEREST INCOME									
Nissan	$ 23,575	$ 24,164	$ 589	$ 24,768	$ 604	$ 25,388	$ 619	$ 26,022	$ 635
Total Interest Income	**$ 23,575**	**$ 24,164**	**$ 589**	**$ 24,768**	**$ 604**	**$ 25,388**	**$ 619**	**$ 26,022**	**$ 635**
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	$ 300,000	$ 300,000	$ -	$ 300,000	$ -	$ 300,000	$ -	$ 300,000	$ -
Deficit Spending Authority	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Cash on Hand	**$ 300,000**	**$ 300,000**	**$ -**	**$ 300,000**	**$ -**	**$ 300,000**	**$ -**	**$ 300,000**	**$ -**
Total Other Special Funds	**$ 343,575**	**$ 344,164**	**$ 589**	**$ 344,768**	**$ 604**	**$ 345,388**	**$ 619**	**$ 346,022**	**$ 635**
Total SFA Appropriation	**$71,151,894**	**$74,023,512**	**$2,871,618**	**$76,511,105**	**$2,487,592**	**$77,793,220**	**$1,282,115**	**$79,107,515**	**$1,314,295**

Exhibit 6

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid
157-00

2028-2032
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 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 timeframe
- 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 # 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
- 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 office supports expanding access to MTAG to max Pell Grant recipients, part-time students, and adult learners. The office supports full funding of the legislatively authorized FAITH Scholarship for foster youth and the UPSKILL Mississippi Grant program for adults pursuing credentials in programs that lead to work in priority sectors.

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 (maximum 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 HELP Grant program budget anticipates tuition increases of 2.5%.

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. Nevertheless, 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 remaining forgivable loan programs.

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 and will not be awarded 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 they 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 could fund the awards made in the next aid year. This would require two years 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 to make awards.

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 of said program.

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. The student's institution 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) Student Aid Index (SAI, formerly known as Expected Family Contribution or EFC) - Changes to the SAI formula for federal aid eligibility impact eligibility for the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant. There is an inverse relationship between SAI and MTAG eligibility. If more students qualify for a zero SAI (and maximum Pell grant), fewer students will qualify for MTAG. If fewer students qualify for a zero SAI, more students will qualify for MTAG.

h) 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.

i) Collections - Far fewer loans have been issued in recent years due to budget shortfalls and the elimination of forgivable loan programs. 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.

j) 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 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. The State Longitudinal Data System should be expanded to include data from Student Financial Aid. NSPARC published a report in 2018 regarding the effectiveness of state aid programs; however, the report should be completed annually.
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 2026 through FY 2030:

Budget Program 1: Administration

Goal: Effectively and efficiently administer the state's many diverse financial assistance programs.

Objective: Manage the application and award process for all programs as the primary function of the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid.

Outcome: Number of new applicants supported as evidenced by the number of new applications received

Outcome: Number of renewal applicants supported as evidenced by the number of renewal applications received

Outcome: Number of applicants supported throughout the application process as evidenced by the number of applicants who receive awards

Strategy: Administer all Student Financial Aid programs and carry out the functions of the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board.

Output: Total cost of Administration program

Output: Total amount of SFA annual operating budget

Output: Number of full-time employees

Efficiency: Administrative cost as a percentage of the total budget

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

Output: Number of outreach events for students, parents, and counselors

Output: Number of ads and/or articles in publications

Output: Number of social media followers

Output: Number of school districts and private high schools with an active data-sharing agreement in MAAPP

Output: Number of high school counselors with an active account in MAAPP

Efficiency: Administrative cost per applicant

Efficiency: Administrative cost per award recipient

Objective: Manage the servicing of the state forgivable loans programs.

Outcome: Minimized percentage of defaults on all state forgivable loan programs for all cohorts

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

Strategy: Conduct default prevention activities and exercise due diligence in collection practices.

Output: Number of 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

Efficiency: Average collections per repayment account

Budget Program 2: MTAG/MESG and HELP

Goal: Effectively and efficiently administer the state's undergraduate grant programs.

Objective: Make financial aid awards to Mississippi residents who qualify for one of the state's primary undergraduate grant programs (MTAG, MESG, and HELP).

Outcome: Percentage of eligible applicants who receive an undergraduate grant award

Strategy: Administer the primary undergraduate grant programs.

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

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

Output: Total number of primary undergraduate grant programs

Efficiency: Average student award through the primary undergraduate grant programs

Strategy: Administer the Mississippi Resident Tuition Grant Program (MTAG) to assist with the cost of tuition for full-time Mississippi students with a 15 ACT and/or 2.5 GPA who are not eligible for a maximum federal Pell grant.

Output: Number of MTAG recipients

Output: Amount of MTAG awarded

Efficiency: Average student award through the MTAG program

Strategy: Administer the Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant Program (MESG) to reward full-time 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 MESG recipients

Output: Amount of MESG awarded

Efficiency: Average student award through the MESG program

Strategy: Administer the Higher Education Legislative Plan for Needy Students (HELP) scholarship to provide financial assistance for full-time Mississippi students with financial need who demonstrate college readiness with a 20 ACT, 2.5 GPA, and completion of a college prep curriculum.

Output: Number of HELP recipients

Output: Amount of HELP awarded

Efficiency: Average student award through the HELP program

Budget Program 3: Forgivable Loan and Repayment Programs

Goal: Effectively and efficiently administer the state's forgivable loan and loan repayment programs.

Objective: Make financial aid awards to Mississippi residents who qualify for one of the state's forgivable loan or loan repayment programs (CNDT, SLPL, SREB, or WRTR).

Outcome: Percentage of eligible applicants who receive a forgivable loan or loan repayment award

Strategy: Administer the state forgivable loan programs.

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

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

Output: Total number of forgivable loan and repayment programs

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

Strategy: Administer 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: SFA requests the Legislature phase out remaining forgivable loan funds and target available funds to the undergraduate grant programs and loan repayment programs.

Strategy: Administer 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

Output: Amount of SLPL awards

Efficiency: Average student award through the SLPL program

Explanatory Note: SFA requests the Legislature phase out remaining forgivable loan funds and target available funds to the undergraduate grant programs and loan repayment programs.

Strategy: Administer 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 previously contracted for 9 seats per entering class, for a total of 36 contract seats each year. The 2025 Legislature increased the number of new contract seats to 10 each year. The cost of each

contract seat increases annually. Therefore, the annual request for funds will increase each year.

Strategy: Administer the William F. Winter – Jack Reed, Sr. Teacher Loan Repayment Program (WRTR), which provides funds to repay a portion of the student loans of eligible Mississippi teachers in exchange for their service in a Mississippi public or charter school.

Output: Number of WRTR awards

Output: Amount of WRTR awards

Efficiency: Average award through the WRTR program

Budget Program 4: Other

Goal: Effectively and efficiently administer the state's other financial assistance programs.

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

Outcome: Percentage of eligible applicants who receive an award through one of the state's other programs

Strategy: 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

Strategy: Administer the Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters 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

Strategy: Administer 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. Nissan determines annually how many students will be awarded.

Strategy: Administer 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.

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 for the first five to six years as the program grows and then stabilize at around $5,000,000 annually with increases due to increases in the annual Cost of Attendance.

Item 3: Jennifer Rogers presented a request for the Board to update the Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope Scholarship (FAITH) Rules and Regulations to limit the housing component of the FAITH award to the lesser of the student's actual housing cost and the institution's COA housing allowance. On motion by Barney Daly and second by Dianne Watson, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the changes to the FAITH Rules and Regulations.

3. Update APA Part 623 Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope Scholarship (FAITH) Rules and Regulations to Limit Housing Costs

Request

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid requests approval to update APA Part 623 Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope Scholarship (FAITH) Rules and Regulations to clarify the treatment of housing costs in the FAITH award calculation and to ensure that FAITH does not cover premium housing choices beyond a standard, double-occupancy assignment.

Summary

Under current rules, the FAITH Scholarship for students attending Mississippi public institutions is calculated as the student's total Cost of Attendance (COA) less all other grant aid, and FAITH may also include costs associated with room and board during institutional holidays when such accommodations are available. However, the rules do not specify how the housing component of COA should be treated when students

select higher-cost housing options, which can lead to FAITH subsidizing more expensive housing choices.

The proposed changes codify a housing allowance that is the lesser of the student's actual housing cost and the institution's COA housing allowance. The proposed language preserves the Board's ability to address situations in which more expensive housing is required because housing is not reasonably available or is needed as a documented accommodation.

The recommended changes are as follows:

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

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.

…

II. 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 (COA) less all other grant aid. FAITH awards will not be increased to cover unusual or unnecessary costs of attendance, such as those associated with study abroad or other programs outside the scope of a student's usual course of study. The housing amount recognized shall be the lesser of the student's actual housing cost or the applicable housing allowance included in the institution's published COA for the student's housing status for the applicable term. If the student's actual housing cost exceeds the applicable COA housing allowance, the institution may submit a written request for the Board to recognize a higher housing amount. The request must explain the circumstances supporting the higher cost, including lack of available campus housing, documented disability, medical, or mental health accommodations, or other unusual circumstances beyond the student's control. The Board may approve a higher housing amount if it determines the cost is reasonable and necessary based on the circumstances provided by the institution 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.

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Source: Miss. Code Ann. § 37-106-81.

Recommendation

Board staff recommends approval, pending completion of the APA Process.

Item 4: Jennifer Rogers presented a request to update the General Administration Rules and Regulations to change the name of Mississippi College to Mississippi Christian University. On motion by Barney Daly and second by Sue Stedman, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to approve the proposed changes.

4. Change Institutional Name in APA Part 605 General Administration Rules and Regulations

Request
The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid requests approval to update APA Part 605 General Administration Rules and Regulations to change the name of Mississippi College to Mississippi Christian University.

The recommended change is as follows:

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 605 Chapter 1: General Administration Rules and Regulations

Rule 1.1 General Administration Rules and Regulations. These Rules and Regulations apply to the general administration of all student financial assistance programs administered by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (hereafter referred to as the "Agency") or the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board (hereafter referred to as the "Board" or "Postsecondary Board") and are subject to suspension or change by the Board. These Rules and Regulations are meant to provide additional guidance for, not supplant the approved Rules and Regulations for each student financial assistance program. The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid (hereinafter referred to as the "Office") will act on behalf of the Board and/or Agency to administer the student financial assistance programs.

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II. DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

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D. Special Issues Related to Determining Eligibility

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10. Eligible Institutions - All state financial aid programs require recipients to attend an eligible institution. Some state financial aid programs are not available to students at all "eligible" institutions. An eligible institution for state aid purposes is an institution of higher learning, public or private, located in Mississippi, which is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, or its equivalent, or a business, vocational, technical or other specialized school recognized and approved by the Board. In keeping with the Legislative intent

established in Miss. Code Ann. § 37-101-241, the Board hereby approves any community, junior, or senior college or university with the main campus in Mississippi that was chartered, authorized, or approved by the Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation prior to July 1, 1988. Eligible institutions for the SREB Regional Contract Program are not in Mississippi.

a) Eligible In-State Institutions:

Alcorn State University
Delta State University
Jackson State University
Mississippi State University
Mississippi University for Women
Mississippi Valley State University
University of Mississippi
University of Mississippi Medical Center
University of Southern Mississippi
Coahoma Community College
Copiah-Lincoln Community College
East Central Community College
East Mississippi Community College
Hinds Community College
Holmes Community College
Itawamba Community College
Jones County Junior College
Meridian Community College
Mississippi Delta Community College
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
Northeast Mississippi Community College
Northwest Mississippi Community College
Pearl River Community College
Southwest Mississippi Community College
Belhaven University
Blue Mountain Christian University
Millsaps College
Mississippi ~~College~~ Christian University
Rust College
Southeastern Baptist College
Tougaloo College
William Carey University

Recommendation
Board staff recommends approval, pending completion of the APA Process.

Item 5: Upon nomination by Mark Keenum and second by Barney Daly, all Board Members legally present and participating voted unanimously to select Dr. Jim Turcotte to continue as Chairperson for 2026-2027.

5. Selection of Chairperson for 2026-27

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 June 2025. The Board should elect a chairperson to serve during 2026-2027 academic/aid year. The rules allow a chairperson to serve consecutive terms.

Item 6: Jennifer Rogers presented updates and announcements. The Board took no action.

Board Member Appointments:

- Barney Dalay has been reappointed to serve another four-year term as the Lt. Governor's representative, beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2030.
- Teresa Hubbard has been reappointed by the IHL Board to serve a full four-year term, beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2030.

Redesigned Website:

- MSU's Research and Curriculum Unit included a redesign of the SFA website in their GEAR UP Grant.
- The new website should launch in early July. Rogers shared a preview of the site.

Videos:

- As part of the new site, SFA is working with a video producer to create 15 short, "how-to" style videos to include on the site.
- Most of the videos are targeted at students and parents, but several will speak to high school counselors and financial aid administrators.
- The goal of the videos is to communicate the answers to frequently asked questions in a fun way, reminiscent of TikTok or other short reels.
- The launch of the new website has been slightly delayed to include the videos upon launch.

Called Board Meeting:

- A meeting may be called in the next month or so for the Board to approve rules for UPSKILL.
- The meeting would be remote and very brief (30 minutes or less).

September Board Meeting:

- A regular meeting of the Board will be held in September.

6. Updates and Announcements

Board Member Appointments

Redesigned Website

Website "How-To" Videos

Called Meeting to Approve Rules for UPSKILL

September Meeting

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS IF NECESSARY

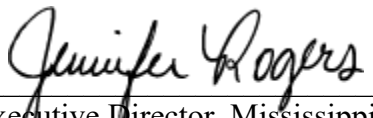
The Board did not consider any additional agenda items.

EXECUTIVE SESSION IF DETERMINED NECESSARY

The Board did not determine the need for an Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Turcotte entertained a motion by Barney Daly and second by Dwayne Middleton to adjourn the meeting at 11:39 a.m.



Executive Director, Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board