



STRATEGIC PLAN

FY2018

MISSISSIPPI
FIRST

MISSION

Mississippi First champions transformative policy solutions ensuring educational excellence for every Mississippi child.

VISION

Mississippi is last when we should be first and first when we should be last. **We envision a Mississippi first in prosperity, quality of life, and innovation.**

VALUES

Results: We only support policies which are backed by high-quality research and have the potential to solve or alleviate entrenched problems.

Accountability: We hold ourselves and others, especially those who influence education, accountable for truth and transparency.

Transparency: We foster honest dialogue about policy research, options, and challenges of different solutions, and willingly communicate our priorities, goals, and strategies to the public and policymakers.

Engagement: We build relationships within and among local communities to increase citizen voice and engagement about important education issues facing Mississippi.

Equity: We believe all children in Mississippi deserve educational excellence and prioritize those who are or have been underserved.

Non-Partisanship: We work with policymakers, politicians, and members of the public who share our goals, regardless of ideology or political party.

Collaboration: We form partnerships with organizations and youth with similar goals in order to amplify our collective efforts to better Mississippi.

IDENTIFYING STRATEGIC GOALS

Mississippi First is dedicated to advancing the best ideas through research and analysis, public awareness and issue education, advocacy, implementation, and evaluation. To ensure all of the policies we champion are mission aligned, we ask ourselves...

QUESTION 1 — Is it a policy solution?

- Will it have a systematic impact?
- What is the problem the solution attempts to solve? Do we care about the problem?
- How does the problem impact Mississippi?

QUESTION 3 — Will it ensure educational excellence?

- What is the evidence supporting the solution?

QUESTION 2 — Is it transformative?

- What is the size and significance of the change?
- Do the benefits outweigh the challenges?

QUESTION 4 — Will it contribute to every child accessing educational excellence?

- Who does the solution impact?
- Does it impact all children?
- Particular subgroups?

FY18 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Mississippi First is a leading voice for state-funded pre-K, high-quality public charter schools, and rigorous state learning standards.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME — Early Education

By FY21, at least 25% of children will be in full-time, no-cost, high-quality pre-K seats.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME — Charter Schools

By FY21, Mississippi will have at least eight charter schools in three low-performing areas, with the capacity to serve 4,500 students, and no charter schools will be below a “C” after three years.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME — Standards, Testing, & Accountability

By FY18, MDE will adopt a testing audit process and plan.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME — Engagement

By FY18, MSF supporters will gain knowledge of current education news and trends in Mississippi.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME—Early Education

By FY21, at least 25% of children will be in full-time, no-cost, high-quality pre-K seats.

Mississippi First (MSF) believes pre-K can play a critical role in closing the achievement gap while raising achievement for all learners. Research supporting the positive impact of pre-K has fueled the proliferation of state-funded pre-K programs across the country. Mississippi First is an active advocate for pre-K in the state of Mississippi and has worked hard over the years to pass legislation that supports early childhood education and promotes state-funded pre-K.

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

- Pursue a pre-Kindergarten research agenda, focusing on access, quality, and implementation of state-funded pre-K
 - Getting to 10 of 10 NIEER benchmarks
 - NIEER pre-K elements improvements

ENGAGEMENT

- Provide 5 pre-K advocacy trainings
 - How to Start a Collaborative

ADVOCACY

- Lobby for quality pre-K legislation during the legislative session

IMPLEMENTATION

- Provide technical assistance to MDE to strengthen pre-K policy and infrastructure
 - OEC Strategic Plan
- Work with MDE to provide technical support to the 11 collaboratives
 - Give tax credit informational presentations to pre-K collaborative communities

STRATEGIC OUTCOME—Charter Schools

By FY21, Mississippi will have at least eight charter schools in three low-performing areas, with the capacity to serve 4,500 students, and no charter schools will be below a “C” after three years.

Mississippi First believes that high-quality public charter schools should be a part of our state’s public education reform strategy. National studies have clearly identified certain districts, states, and charter managers that have produced remarkable results in some of the nation’s lowest-performing areas with the least-advantaged children. We want Mississippi to pull from the best practices of other states in order to build a high-quality public charter school sector.

ENGAGEMENT

- In conjunction with Clarksdale Collegiate, facilitate, arrange, or host meetings with at least 25 key community leaders about the school
- In conjunction with Clarksdale Collegiate, facilitate, arrange, or host meetings with at least 100 community members to learn about the proposed school
- Hold recruitment meetings for at least 5 high-potential possible charter applicants to explain the process, the technical assistance available, and opportunity for charter schools in Mississippi

ADVOCACY

- Lobby for quality charter school legislation during the legislative session

IMPLEMENTATION

- Provide technical assistance at least three times during the application process to Clarksdale Collegiate
- In conjunction with Clarksdale Collegiate, facilitate at least 2 teacher recruitment drives resulting in 100 applications for 10 openings and facilitate or host at least 3 enrollment drives with 50 families per drive
- Assist the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board in applying for Charter School Program money by providing written feedback on the draft and drafting assistance
- Secure a minimum of two new charter leaders from an education leadership training or fellowship program, with at least one placed in the Delta region

STRATEGIC OUTCOME—Standards, Testing, & Accountability

By FY18, MDE will adopt a testing audit process and plan.

MSF launched this program area in 2014 as part of an effort to support the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards, which the State Board of Education adopted for Mississippi in 2010. Having high standards and meaningful testing and accountability policies are important to every child but especially vulnerable children who benefit greatly from high expectations and increased learning—not testing—time. The FY18 focus for this area is testing policy.

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

- Publish a testing research report with recommendations for state testing policy, including for an ESSA-aligned statewide audit

ENGAGEMENT

- Create messages to explain testing and solutions using MSF research findings

ADVOCACY

- Track standards and testing legislation during the legislative session

STRATEGIC OUTCOME—Engagement

By FY18, Mississippi First supporters will gain knowledge of current education news and trends in Mississippi.

Mississippi First is a leading voice in education reform in Mississippi. We will continue to educate the community, stakeholders, and supporters about education news and trends in Mississippi. This will be done through communication and engagement strategies.

ENGAGEMENT

- Give at least 3 presentations at state colleges or universities to reach a total of 150 college students
- Give at least 6 presentations at community organizations or Parent-Teacher Associations to reach a total of 350 people
- Fundraise to re-launch the Educator Leadership Council in 2018

Support Us!

Our organization's foundational belief is that broken public policy has historically impeded progress in Mississippi. Your support helps us serve Mississippi's children and families through our work with communities and policymakers. Our current issues include charter schools, pre-K, teen health, and the support of high educational standards. Please partner with us to advance transformative policy solutions that ensure educational excellence for every Mississippi child.

Donate Today!

You can donate today at mississippifirst.org; mail your gift to 125 S. Congress Street, Suite 1510, Jackson, MS 39201; or call our Executive Director at 601.398.9008 for more information on how you can make a difference at Mississippi First.



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