Section I: ALL PERSONNEL

The school district is an equal opportunity employer. The school district shall employ licensed staff on a professional basis without regard to age, race, color, gender, disability, or national origin.

This school board shall select all school district personnel in the manner provided by law and provide for such employee fringe benefit programs including accident reimbursement plans, as may be deemed necessary and appropriate by the board.

Candidates for all positions shall submit an online application to the Jackson Public School District through the APPLY NOW ONLINE website, www.jackson.k12.ms.us. Recruitment for a specific vacancy shall not be undertaken until the need for the position and its qualifications have been established and proper authorization obtained.

Vacancy information will be posted in all district facilities and will be available in the Office of Human Resources. Where feasible, vacancies will be posted on the Internet.

All applications of candidates who have submitted a letter of interest by the announced deadline will be reviewed. It shall be the policy of the Jackson Public School District to actively recruit and select for employment the best qualified applicant for each position without regard to race, sex, color, creed, national origin, age or religion.

All successful candidates must undergo a background investigation for criminal history. The school district reserves the right to refuse to hire any candidate or to dismiss any employee who has a criminal history, refuses to consent to a criminal background check, misrepresents material information, or who omits information on the employment application form. Successful candidates for safety-sensitive positions will also be required to undergo drug screening prior to hire. The background procedure is described in greater detail in Section II.

All personnel selected for employment must be recommended by the superintendent and approved by the board of trustees of the Jackson Public School District.

The superintendent shall have the authority to fulfill vacancies by temporarily employing licensed and non-licensed employees without the Board of Trustees’ prior approval. The superintendent must immediately notify the Board of such employment. Within thirty (30) days of such employment, the Board must either
ratify or disapprove the employment at the next regular meeting of the Board. The temporary employment shall automatically terminate at the end of the business day on the thirtieth (30th) day of employment if the Board fails to ratify or disapprove the employment within thirty (30) days. This policy does not apply to the hiring of licensed and non-licensed administrators.

The temporary employee may be paid on the same salary schedule as the district’s other employees until the board acts. If the Board disapproves such employment, the employment shall immediately terminate and no further compensation, notice, nor other employment rights shall be had. The district is required to pay the terminated employee his salary and fringe benefits for days worked.

In carrying out these duties, the Superintendent will ensure that the position being filled is one that has been budgeted for; the prospective employee has completed the employment background screening with no disqualifying results except for the child abuse registry check results which may be obtained once the employee has been hired; and if required, the prospective employee has submitted the appropriate licensures and/or certifications.

The superintendent will ensure that all employee manuals and handbooks, if any, are in compliance with state and federal law. All employees are to be advised of the revisions of the handbooks or manuals and of any implications for existing personnel.

Section II: EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND SCREENING

The board of trustees is committed to the use of all reasonable means to ensure the safety of its students and employees. The employment background screening process is designed to make the school environment safe and to screen out those persons who could be harmful to students or staff. The employment background screening process in the Jackson Public School District will include:

- Reference checks made with the applicant’s most recent supervisors.
- A child abuse check with the child abuse registry which may be obtained once the employee has been hired.
- Fingerprinting with checks made at the state level and the national criminal history level. In some instances, a criminal records background check for felony convictions will be utilized.

Beginning July 1, 2000, current criminal records background checks and current child abuse registry checks must be obtained and remain on file for any new hires applying for employment as a certified or classified employee including substitute employees and those former employees who have had a break in
service with the school district. In order to determine the applicant’s suitability for employment, the applicant shall be fingerprinted and the Department of Public Safety will forward those fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The applicant shall pay the fee for such fingerprinting and criminal history record check, not to exceed fifty dollars ($50.00).

Under no circumstances shall the superintendent, school board member or any individual other than the subject of the criminal history record checks disseminate information received through such checks except insofar as required to fulfill the purposes of the employment background screening policy.

If the background screening process discloses a felony conviction, guilty plea or plea of nolo contendere to a felony of possession or sale of drugs, murder, manslaughter, armed robbery, rape, sexual battery or sex offense listed in Miss. Code Ann. Section 45-31-3(l), child abuse, arson, grand larceny, burglary, gratification of lust or aggravated assault which has not been reversed on appeal or for which a pardon has not been granted, the new hire shall not be eligible to be employed in the district. Any employment contract or notification letter for a new hire executed by the superintendent of the Jackson Public School District shall be voidable if the new hire receives a disqualifying criminal record check.

The board of trustees or its designee may, in its discretion, allow any applicant aggrieved by the employment decision under this policy to appear before the board, or before a hearing officer designated for such purpose, to show mitigating circumstances which may exist and which may allow the new hire to be employed in the district. The school board or its designee may grant waivers for such mitigating circumstances, which shall include, but not be limited to: (a) age at which the crime was committed, (b) circumstances surrounding the crime; (c) length of time since the conviction and criminal history since the conviction; (d) work history; (e) current employment and character references; and (f) other evidence demonstrating the ability of the person to perform the employment responsibilities competently and that the person does not pose a threat to the health or safety of the children in the school district.

Section III: CERTIFIED STAFF

The nominee for a contracted position shall hold an appropriate, valid, Mississippi certificate for the position for which they are nominated, and shall be a graduate of an accredited institution of higher learning and shall have a Bachelor’s degree. Nominees for certain vocational positions may not be required to be a graduate of an accredited institution of higher learning or have a Bachelor’s degree, provided their work experience qualifies them for proper certification by the State Department of Education.

Beginning in the 2002-03 school year, the school district is committed to hiring only highly qualified teachers for Title I support programs in accordance with regulations of the Mississippi Department of Education and provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The school district administration shall develop a plan to have all teachers highly qualified by the end of the 2005-06 school year.
Staffing patterns will be reviewed annually to ensure that poor and minority students are not, at rates higher than are other children in the district, taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out of field teachers. When such patterns are noted, strategies will be developed to correct the problem.

The administration will ensure that parents or guardians of students in Title I schools are informed of their right to know the professional qualifications of their child’s teacher and will describe where and how this information may be obtained. The administration will monitor the schools to ensure that parents and guardians of all students are notified when those students are taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified as defined by law in accordance with the applicable provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

In considering the educational qualifications of a candidate, standards of the Mississippi Accrediting Commission and of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools shall be used by principals along with the findings of the professional screening committee regarding the candidate’s potential for teaching in the district.

SOURCE: Mississippi School Boards Association

LEGAL REF.: Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-9-17 and 37-7-301; Public Law 107-110; Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard 1

DATE: August 20, 1979
AMENDED: November 16, 1987
August 24, 1988
July 16, 1990
November 16, 1998
September 18, 2000
March 27, 2006; April 21, 2009
July 27, 2009
December 20, 2016