



MISSISSIPPI OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR
STACEY E. PICKERING, AUDITOR

PERFORMANCE AUDIT DIVISION
DISTRICT EXIT CONFERENCE

November 20, 2008

Hattiesburg Public School District

Beginning on Tuesday, November 18, 2008, the Office of the State Auditor's Performance Audit Division (PAD) performed a limited review of the accuracy and reliability of student data transmitted to the Mississippi Department of Education for the purpose of determining funding for local school districts. OSA reviewed the following:

Student Enrollment

1. I determined whether there is a written policy on enrollment requirements and procedures at each school. As a result, I found the following:

Lillie Burney Elementary School does have a written policy on enrollment requirements and procedures.

Grace Christian Elementary School does have a written policy on enrollment requirements and procedures.

Hattiesburg High School does have a written policy on enrollment requirements and procedures.

2. I determined whether the number of students enrolled in school is being accurately reported. As a result, I found the following:

Lillie Burney Elementary School is reporting the number of students enrolled accurately.

Grace Christian Elementary School is reporting the number of students enrolled accurately.

Hattiesburg High School is reporting the number of students enrolled accurately.



3. I determined whether the school is following policy regarding student enrollment records. As a result, I found the following:

Lillie Burney Elementary School is not following policy regarding student enrollment. 3 out of 19 records were missing, had incomplete, or invalid proof of residency.

Grace Christian Elementary School is not following policy regarding student enrollment. 1 out of 21 records were missing, had incomplete, or invalid proof of residency.

Hattiesburg High School is following policy regarding student enrollment requirements for proof of immunization and proof of age. However, at this time, we were not able to determine compliance with proof of residency policies.

4. I determined whether the selected student's information is in the student package and is the same as the information kept in the student's record. As a result, I found the following:

At Lillie Burney Elementary School, the selected student's information in the student package is not the same as the information kept in the student's record. 7 out of 19 student's information in the student package did not match the student's record.

At Grace Christian Elementary School, the selected student's information is not in the student package and is not the same as the information kept in the student's record. 8 out of 21 student's information in the student package did not match the student's record.

At Hattiesburg High School, the selected student's information in the student package is not the same as the information kept in the student's record. 8 out of 27 student's information in the student package did not match the student's record.

5. I determined whether the total number of students enrolled on the enrollment report from the student package matches the total number of students on the Student Roster Holding Area Report from MSIS. As a result, I found the following:

At Lillie Burney Elementary, the total number of students enrolled on the enrollment report from the student package matches the total number of students on the Student Roster Holding Area Report from MSIS.

At Grace Christian Elementary School, the total number of students enrolled on the enrollment report from the student package matches the total number of students on the Student Roster Holding Area Report from MSIS.

At Hattiesburg High School, the total number of students enrolled on the enrollment report from the student package matches the total number of students on the Student Roster Holding Area Report from MSIS.



Student Attendance/Absenteeism

1. I determined whether there is a written policy on monitoring and reporting student absences. As a result, I found the following:

Lillie Burney Elementary School does have a written policy on monitoring and reporting student absences.

Grace Christian Elementary School does have a written policy on monitoring and reporting student absences.

Hattiesburg High School does have a written policy on monitoring and reporting student absences.

2. I determined whether the school is following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism. As a result, I found the following:

Lillie Burney Elementary School is following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism.

Grace Christian Elementary School is following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism.

Hattiesburg High School is following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism.

3. I determined whether the total number of excused, unexcused, and total absent students on the student attendance or absentee report from the student package matches the total number of excused, unexcused, and total absent students on the Holding Area Student Absences Report from MSIS. As a result, I found the following:

At Lillie Burney Elementary School, the total number of excused, unexcused, and total absent students on the student attendance or absentee report from the student package matches the total number of excused, unexcused, and total absent students on the Holding Area Student Absences Report from MSIS.

At Grace Christian Elementary School, the total number of excused, unexcused, and total absent students on the student attendance or absentee report from the student package matches the total number of excused, unexcused, and total absent students on the Holding Area Student Absences Report from MSIS.

At Hattiesburg High School, the total number of excused, unexcused, and total absent students on the student attendance or absentee report from the student package matches the total number of excused, unexcused, and total absent students on the Holding Area Student Absences Report from MSIS.



Graduation – THIS IS ONLY PERFORMED AT SCHOOLS WITH A 12TH GRADE

1. I determined whether graduation requirements are being met. As a result, I found the following:

At Hattiesburg High School, not all students selected met graduation requirements. 2 out of 20 did not pass, did not have documentation of passing, or did not have documentation of being exempt from the Subject Area Tests.

2. I determine whether all graduation forms were complete. As a result, I found the following:

At Hattiesburg High School, all graduation records were complete.

School Attendance Reporting

1. I determined whether the school superintendent is following policy regarding reporting of unexcused absences. As a result, I found the following:

At Lillie Burney Elementary, I determined that Hattiesburg Public School District's superintendent is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. 1 out of 1 student reviewed was not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences within 2 school days or 5 calendar days, as required by law.

At Grace Christian Elementary School, I determined that Hattiesburg School District superintendent is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. The students reviewed were not reported to the attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences.

I determined that Hattiesburg Public School District's superintendent is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. 31 out of 31 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer by the superintendent. 16 out of 31 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences. 4 out of 31 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer in 2 school days or 5 calendar days, whichever is less, as required by law.

2. I determined whether the school attendance officer is following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. As a result, I found the following:

At Lillie Burney Elementary, I determined that Lillie Burney Elementary School's attendance officer is following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences.

At Grace Christian Elementary School, I determined that Hattiesburg School District attendance officer is following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences.

I determined that Hattiesburg High School's attendance officer is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. 3 out of 4 students' files that were referred had no attempts made to secure enrollment and/or attendance in the student's file that had accumulated five (5) or more absences.



Report Submission

1. I determined whether all final student package reports are transmitted to MSIS by the deadline establish by the MS Department of Education. As a result, I found the following:

At Lillie Burney Elementary School, all final student package reports were submitted by the deadline established by the MS Department of Education.

At Grace Christian Elementary School, all final student package reports were submitted by the deadline established by the MS Department of Education.

At Hattiesburg High School, all final student package reports were submitted by the deadline established by the MS Department of Education.

Student Transfers

1. I determined whether the school is following policy regarding transfers. As a result, I found the following:

Lillie Burney Elementary School is following policy regarding transfers.

Grace Christian Elementary School is following policy regarding transfers.

Hattiesburg High School is following policy regarding transfers.

Student Withdrawals

1. I determined whether the school is following policy regarding withdrawals. As a result, I found the following:

Lillie Burney Elementary School is following policy regarding withdrawals.

Grace Christian Elementary School is following policy regarding withdrawals.

Hattiesburg High School is following policy regarding withdrawals.

Mississippi Employment Protection Act (E-Verify)

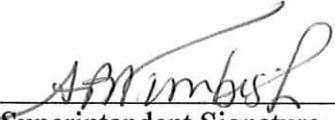
1. I determined whether the school district is following policy regarding the Mississippi Employment Protection Act. As a result, I found the following:

Hattiesburg Public School District is not following policy regarding the Mississippi Employment Protection Act.

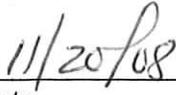


I would like to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to discuss the results of the review in your district. Copies of all audit exceptions are available upon your request. Please submit formal comments regarding the audit to me, at P.O. Box 956, Jackson, MS 39205, within one week from today. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact me, Keyla Bradford, at 601-576-2800.

By signing below you agree that you have received a copy of this report and a brief explanation of the exceptions.



Superintendent Signature



Date



December 1, 2008

Ms. Keyla Bradford
Office of the State Auditor
P O Box 956
Jackson MS 39205

Re: November Audit Findings

Dear Ms. Bradford:

This letter is in response to the audit findings listed in the Hattiesburg Public School District Exit Conference. We held a Principal's meeting this morning to discuss the audit finding with all of the Principals and to stress the necessity for following state law and MDE policies.

Specific corrective measures that will be put in place are:

Student Enrollment Item 3

The District will add the Address Verification Fields already in place on the new student enrollment forms to the Student Data Sheet for returning students. This will provide a place to record the verification of address changes for returning students on the Student Data Sheets. Principals were notified that they are to keep the verified data sheets on file for the entire school year.

Student Enrollment Item 4

Lists containing current student addresses and phone numbers will be printed from the student database and compared to the information on the student cumulative folders. Incorrect information on the student cumulative folders will be corrected.

Graduation Item 1

The Counselors and Records Clerk will double check and cross reference that all Subject Area Tests have been passed and posted to the Cumulative Record before a list of students who are eligible to graduate will be published.

School Attendance Reporting Item 1

The procedure to report unexcused absences to the school attendance officers will be changed beginning December 1. All reports for students who have accumulated five (5) and twelve (12) unexcused absences will be generated by the District Primary MSIS Contact. The Superintendent's signature will be obtained on the reports, and the reports will be forwarded to the school attendance officer. A copy of each report will be sent to the school for their records.

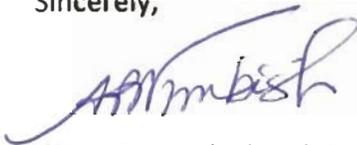
School Attendance Reporting Item 2

Mr. Robert Sanders, high school principal, had already contacted the District Representative from the Office of School Attendance about the performance of the School Attendance Officer, prior to the finding of this report. He is going to follow up with the District Representative with the concerns listed in the audit findings.

Mississippi Employment Protection Act (E-Verify)

The District is currently registered for E-verify and will follow the guidelines and procedures set forth in the Mississippi Employment Protection Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Annie P. Wimbish". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Annie P. Wimbish, Ed.D.
Superintendent