



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

PERFORMANCE AUDIT DIVISION
DISTRICT EXIT CONFERENCE

March 9, 2009

Meridian Public School District

Beginning on February 9, 2009, 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:

Kate Griffin Junior High School, Crestwood Elementary, George Washington Carver Middle School, and Magnolia Middle 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:

Kate Griffin Junior High School, Crestwood Elementary, George Washington Carver Middle School, and Magnolia Middle 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:

Kate Griffin Junior High School is not following policy regarding student enrollment. 5 out of 21 records were missing, had incomplete, or invalid proof of residency.

Crestwood Elementary is following policy regarding student enrollment.

George Washington Carver Middle School is not following policy regarding student enrollment. 1 out of 21 records was missing, had incomplete, or invalid proof of residency.

Magnolia Middle School is not following policy regarding student enrollment. 3 out of 26 records was missing, had incomplete, or invalid proof of residency.



4. 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 Kate Griffin Junior High School, the selected student's information in the student package is the same as the information kept in the student's record.

At Crestwood Elementary, the selected student's information in the student package is not the same as the information kept in the student's record. 1 out of 17 student's information in the student package did not match the student's record.

At George Washington Carver Middle School, the selected student's information in the student package is the same as the information kept in the student's record.

At Magnolia Middle School, the selected student's information in the student package is the same as the information kept in 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 Kate Griffin Junior High School, Crestwood Elementary, George Washington Carver Middle School, and Magnolia Middle 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:

Kate Griffin Junior High School, Crestwood Elementary, George Washington Carver Middle School, and Magnolia Middle 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:

*Kate Griffin Junior High School is not following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism. 31 out of 43 students with excused absence(s) on the student package report **did not have a valid excuse on file.** 1 out of 43 excuses **did not attain prior approval for a doctor or dental appointment.** 4 out of 43 excuses did not comply with district and/or school policies.*

Crestwood Elementary is following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism.



George Washington Carver Middle School is not following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism. 16 out of 28 students with excused absence(s) on the student package report **did not have a valid excuse on file.**

Magnolia Middle School is not following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism. 10 out of 33 students with excused absence(s) on the student package report **did not have a valid excuse on file.** 1 out of 33 excuses did not comply with district and/or school policies.

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 *Kate Griffin Junior High School, Crestwood Elementary, George Washington Carver Middle School, and Magnolia Middle 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.

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:

I determined that *Meridian Public School District* superintendent is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences.

I determined that *Kate Griffin Junior High School* is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. 16 out of 19 students' files reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer by the superintendent as specified by law. 16 out of 19 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences in a timely manner as specified by law. 1 out of 19 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences.

I determined that *Crestwood Elementary* is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. 8 out of 8 students' files reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer by the superintendent as specified by law. 4 out of 8 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences in a timely manner as specified by law. 4 out of 8 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences.

I determined that *George Washington Carver Middle School* is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. 6 out of 6 students' files reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer by the superintendent as specified by law. 4 out of 6 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences in a timely manner as specified by law.



I determined that *Magnolia Middle School* is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. 2 out of 2 students' files reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer by the superintendent as specified by law. 2 out of 2 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences in a timely manner as specified 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:

I determined that *Kate Griffin Junior High School, Crestwood Elementary, George Washington Carver Middle School, and Magnolia Middle School* attendance officer is following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences.

Student Transfers

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

I determined that *Kate Griffin Junior High School, Crestwood Elementary, George Washington Carver Middle School, and Magnolia Middle School* attendance officer is following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences.

Student Withdrawals

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

Kate Griffin Junior High School, Crestwood Elementary, George Washington Carver Middle School, and Magnolia Middle School is following policy regarding withdrawals.

Report Submission

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

At *Kate Griffin Junior High School, Crestwood Elementary, George Washington Carver Middle School, and Magnolia Middle School*, all final student package reports were submitted by the deadline established by MS Department of Education.

Mississippi Employment Protection Act (E-Verify)

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

I determine that *Meridian Public School District* was not in compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act as of July 1, 2008.



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, **Earlene Stewart at P.O. Box 956 Jackson, MS 39205**, within one week from today. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact myself or Keyla Bradford, Project Manager, 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.

Charlie T. Kent, Jr.
Superintendent Signature

12 Mar 09
Date



March 13, 2009

Meridian Public School District

Office of the Superintendent

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Meridian, MS 39301
601-483-6271
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Charlie T. Kent, Jr.
Superintendent of Education

Earlene Stewart
PO Box 956
Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Ms. Stewart:

Beginning on Monday, February 9, 2009, 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:

The audit for 2008-09 was for the following schools:

1. Carver Middle School
2. Crestwood Elem. School
3. Kate Griffin Jr. High
4. Magnolia Middle School

Student Enrollment

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

Kate Griffin Junior High School is not following policy regarding student enrollment. 5 out of 21 records were missing, had incomplete, or invalid proof of residency.

We have obtained a second proof of residency for each of the 5 records referenced. We will in the future verify that each student has two proofs of residency when enrolling.

Crestwood Elementary is following policy regarding student enrollment.

George Washington Carver Middle School is not following policy regarding student enrollment. 1 out of 21 records was missing, had incomplete, or invalid proof of residency.

We have obtained a second proof of residency for the record referenced. We will in the future verify that each student has two proofs of residency when enrolling.

Magnolia Middle School is not following policy regarding student enrollment. 3 out of 26 records was missing, had incomplete, or invalid proof of residency.

We have obtained a second proof of residency for each of the 3 records referenced. We will in the future verify that each student has two proofs of residency when enrolling.

Student Attendance/Absenteeism

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

*Kate Griffin Junior High School is not following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism. 31 out of 43 students with excused absence(s) on the student package report **did not have a valid excuse on file**. 1 out of 43 excuses **did not attain prior approval for a doctor or dental appointment**. 4 out of 43 excuses did not comply with district and/or school policies.*

In the future, we will encourage students to bring an excuse from home and will verify that all excuses have a phone number and parent signature. We will also make parents aware of the policy stating that they must attain prior approval for a doctor or dental appointment. MPSD has changed the Board policy to state “days missed for school due to disciplinary suspension shall be considered an ‘unexcused absence’.”

Crestwood Elementary is following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism.

*George Washington Carver Middle School is not following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism. 16 out of 28 students with excused absence(s) on the student package report **did not have a valid excuse on file**.*

In the future, we will encourage students to bring an excuse from home and will verify that all excuses have a phone number and parent signature. We will also make parents aware of the policy stating that they must attain prior approval for a doctor or dental appointment. MPSD has changed the Board policy to state “days missed for school due to disciplinary suspension shall be considered an ‘unexcused absence’.”

*Magnolia Middle School is not following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism. 10 out of 33 students with excused absence(s) on the student package report **did not have a valid excuse on file**. 1 out of 33 excuses did not comply with district and/or school policies.*

In the future, we will encourage students to bring an excuse from home and will verify that all excuses have a phone number and parent signature. We will also make parents aware of the policy stating that they must attain prior approval for a doctor or dental appointment. MPSD

has changed the Board policy to state “days missed for school due to disciplinary suspension shall be considered an ‘unexcused absence’.”

School Attendance Reporting

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

I determined that *Meridian Public School District* superintendent is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences.

I determined that *Kate Griffin Junior High School* is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. 16 out of 19 students’ files reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer by the superintendent as specified by law. 16 out of 19 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences in a timely manner as specified by law. 1 out of 19 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences.

In the future, the attendance clerk at each school in the Meridian Public School District will report to the superintendent five unlawful absences as they occur. The superintendent will report these absences to the attendance officer within two school days.

I determined that *Crestwood Elementary* is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. 8 out of 8 students’ files reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer by the superintendent as specified by law. 4 out of 8 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences in a timely manner as specified by law. 4 out of 8 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences.

In the future, the attendance clerk at each school in the Meridian Public School District will report to the superintendent five unlawful absences as they occur. The superintendent will report these absences to the attendance officer within two school days.

I determined that *George Washington Carver Middle School* is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. 6 out of 6 students’ files reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer by the superintendent as specified by law. 4 out of 6 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences in a timely manner as specified by law.

In the future, the attendance clerk at each school in the Meridian Public School District will report to the superintendent five unlawful absences as they occur. The superintendent will report these absences to the attendance officer within two school days.

I determined that *Magnolia Middle School* is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. 2 out of 2 students’ files reviewed were not reported to the school

attendance officer by the superintendent as specified by law. 2 out of 2 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences in a timely manner as specified by law.

In the future, the attendance clerk at each school in the Meridian Public School District will report to the superintendent five unlawful absences as they occur. The superintendent will report these absences to the attendance officer within two school days.

Mississippi Employment Protection Act (E-Verify)

I determined whether the school district is in compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act. As a result, I found the following:

I determined that *Meridian Public School District* was not in compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act as of July 1, 2008.

We were not notified of the Mississippi Employment Protection Act until October 2008. Therefore we could not have been in compliance with a July, 2008 deadline. As of February 8, 2009, we are in compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act.

Yours for Better Schools,


Charlie T. Kent, Jr.
Superintendent