

# Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP)

## **The History of MAEP**

In 1997, the Mississippi Legislature passed the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) in an attempt to address two primary problems: low student achievement and inequity among school districts.

In 1997, Mississippi school children were being outperformed by children in other states. Almost every other state was spending more per student than was Mississippi, though most of those states faced fewer challenges.

In addition, Mississippi school districts in communities with a low tax base were significantly worse off than those in more prosperous communities. More affluent communities were able to supplement their state funding, thus affording their children a better education than was offered children who happened to reside in poorer districts. This resulted in a system of education with great inequities and in which geography determined the level of education a Mississippi child received.

After two years of study by consultants, legislators, and other experts, the Legislature drafted and passed (over a governor's veto) two pieces of legislation: the Mississippi Accountability System and the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP).

The Mississippi Accountability System raised significantly the standards teachers and students were required to meet. The Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT), MCT2, and the current MCT3 were developed to measure student achievement, and schools are rated according to students' scores. The Children First Act of 2009 raised the stakes even higher, calling for the removal of superintendents and school boards in chronically low-performing schools.

The Mississippi Adequate Education Program is a promise by legislators to provide teachers and schools the resources necessary to bring students up to the standards required by the accountability system. The accountability system holds districts and individual schools accountable for their performance, and the MAEP provides a formula that determines the funding necessary for each district to provide an adequate education to children. This law also provides a ceiling on the portion of that funding a local school district is required to provide.

The MAEP is intended to erase earlier inequities by ensuring children in every region of Mississippi an adequate education – including those children who happen to reside in poor districts. The formula determines the per-student cost of a successful education, then subtracts the local district's responsibility. The difference is the level of funding the law requires the state to provide our public schools.

Accountability standards have been increased significantly, and students, principals, and teachers are held to those levels of achievement. It is important that the Legislature gives schools the resources necessary to provide students a successful level of education.

Passed by the Mississippi Legislature in 1997 (see history below), the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) is a law that provides a formula that is designed to ensure an adequate education for every Mississippi child — whether that child lives in a “wealthy”

community or a “poor” one. It is designed to provide schools the resources necessary for adequate student achievement.

### **Base Student Cost/Local Contribution**

The MAEP formula produces a base student cost, the amount that is required to provide each student an adequate education in a Mississippi school. Each district is required to provide up to 27% of the base student cost through a local contribution made up of local ad valorem taxes. The state funds the difference between what a local community is able to provide (up to a maximum of 27%) and the total base student cost, and that amount is multiplied by the school district’s average daily attendance to get the district’s MAEP allocation.

The formula is recalculated every four years and is adjusted for inflation in the intervening years by multiplying 40% of the base student cost by the current rate of inflation as computed by the State’s economist.

### **High Growth Formula**

Districts that have had a growth in enrollment in each of the three consecutive years prior to the appropriation are awarded additional “high growth” funding by adding the average growth for the three prior years to the district’s average daily attendance.

[Click here](#) to see a detailed description of how the MAEP formula is calculated and the formula components plus the add-on programs that make up the total MAEP funding to districts.

### **The MAEP provides funding for:**

- Teacher and other district employee salaries, retirement and insurance
- Textbooks and other instructional materials
- Basic operational costs (utilities, facility maintenance, etc.)
- Transportation (operation of buses)
- Special education
- Vocational education
- Gifted education
- Alternative education

**State MAEP funding is not intended to pay for administrator and superintendent salaries. That portion of the base student cost is paid out of each district’s local contribution thru tax mills.**

**State funding provided to school districts outside of the MAEP includes allocations for teacher supplies, the National Board Certification Program, early childhood education initiatives, and the operations of the Mississippi Department of Education.**