



MONTGOMERY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Montgomery Public Schools Intervention FAQs

On February 9, 2017, the Alabama State Board of Education approved State Superintendent Michael Sentance's recommendation to intervene into Montgomery Public Schools (MPS) and named Dr. Barbara Cooper as the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). This was determined based on deficiencies in finances, operations, transportation, and student performance. The intervention is a bifurcated school district approach. The Montgomery County Board of Education will retain control of the schools not identified as low performing. The schools identified as intervention will be under the authority of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). A Chief Education Officer, Dr. Reginald Eggleston, and Chief Financial Operations Officer, Jason Taylor, have been appointed to oversee the day-to-day operations. Financial, operational, and instructional reviews will be conducted to determine the support and resources needed to make the necessary improvements throughout the district. We are committed to ensuring MPS students receive an equitable education that allows them to pursue college and/or careers upon graduation.

GENERAL:

1. *What exactly is a state takeover?*

A state takeover or state intervention is when a state department of education assumes control or management of a school district and/or schools within a district.

2. *What criteria did you use to identify the schools for intervention?*

We took several factors into consideration when evaluating schools in need of support. We completed an evaluation of the following indicators:

- Student performance on state mandated assessments
- Rank among the bottom 25 percent of schools in the state
- Percentage of students scoring at the bottom two achievement levels
- Graduation Rate
- College-and Career-Readiness Rate
- Gap between Graduation Rate and College-and Career-Readiness Rate
- Chronic Absenteeism (15 days or more absent from school)

3. *What exactly does the state plan to do differently in the identified schools?*

The State Superintendent of Education will appoint a Chief Education Officer (CEO). The CEO will work with schools identified as being low performing based on criteria set forth by the State Superintendent of Education. Identified schools will report to the CEO.

The CEO will have the authority, but is not limited to:

- Review and make changes to the school budget
- Create and/or change school programs and curriculum
- Supersede a decision made by the local Board of Education
- Require all staff to reapply for their positions
- Hire and dismiss staff
- Determine contract requirements
- Implement professional development for staff
- Expand the school day or year
- Secure additional resources and funds

In addition, the State Superintendent of Education will assign a Chief Financial and Operations Officer (CFOO) to oversee the financial and operational aspects of the district. The CEO and CFOO shall report to the State Superintendent of Education.

4. How long will this intervention last?

There is no time limit to any intervention. Given the depth of the change that is required, it has been estimated that the intervention will continue for five years, or until satisfactory progress is made in all areas identified under the intervention.

5. Why is the intervention happening in Montgomery Public Schools only?

At this time, the only full state intervention is in MPS. The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is currently reviewing an intervention previously initiated in the Selma City School System.

6. What will need to happen for MPS to come out of intervention?

The ALSDE will evaluate MPS annually to determine whether the intervention should continue, or if adequate progress is evident, and we should move into the monitoring phase. In order for a district to move to a monitoring phase, the district must make significant and sustainable progress in meeting established performance goals. The State Superintendent will determine whether or not the district has demonstrated its capacity to assume responsibility for any of the established goals and take his recommendation before the Alabama State Board of Education. We will reinstitute local control for any area identified as meeting the goal. If there are goals unmet, the intervention would remain for the identified areas and assigned personnel would remain in place.

The intervention school district would move from an intervention phase to a monitoring phase when all goals are met at a satisfactory level. As part of the monitoring phase, the district would continue to provide quarterly updates and the annual evaluation would remain in place for a period of not less than two years. A staff member from the ALSDE would remain assigned in an advisory capacity.

7. If MPS does not make a significant increase in performance during the intervention, what will be the consequences?

As part of the intervention, we will implement an accountability plan to gauge progress relative to established goals and outcomes. This will allow opportunities to make adjustments throughout the intervention period. If a significant increase in performance does not occur during the intervention, the intervention will continue beyond the five years.

8. The ALSDE imposed an “interposition” on MPS a couple of years ago. How is this different?

The interposition was designed to assist the district with areas of concern identified during that time-period. The district continued to have complete authority over the day-to-day operations. The current intervention removes all authority from the board. The State Superintendent has delegated non-intervention schools to remain under the direction of the MPS Board and Superintendent.

9. Are the MPS schools identified the same schools labeled as “Failing” under the Alabama Accountability Act?

No. While some of the identified schools are also cited as failing schools under that law, the MPS schools fall within the criteria of priority schools.

10. Other schools may not be on the list but are still in need for improvement. What assistance will these schools receive?

There will be certain initiatives under this intervention that will assist all schools relative to student performance.

BOARD:

11. When will the change take place?

The intervention process began on February 9, 2017.

12. Will the intervention include all elements of the MPS board's operation or just the curriculum areas? What powers will the MPS board retain?

The intervention plan includes a bifurcated school district approach. The MPS board will retain control of the schools not identified as low performing. The schools identified as intervention will be under control of the ALSDE. The State Superintendent has appointed Dr. Reginald Eggleston as the Chief Education Officer.

13. Will there be a MPS board appointed superintendent along with an ALSDE appointed position?

Yes, the MPS board will maintain a superintendent and the ALSDE will appoint a Chief Education Officer.

14. Will the MPS board have to approve the state appointed director/superintendent's appointments/plans?

The school board will not have to approve the CEO or the developed plans.

PERSONNEL:

15. When will the changes take place?

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, changes will take place in personnel as needed throughout the intervention period.

16. What schools in MPS will receive state's intervention?

We have identified 27 schools for the ALSDE Intervention in MPS. These schools are:

- Bellingrath Middle School
- Brewbaker Intermediate School
- Brewbaker Middle School
- Capitol Heights Middle School
- G.W. Carver High School
- Chisholm Elementary School
- Dannelly Elementary School
- Davis Elementary School
- Dunbar-Ramer School
- Fewes Secondary Acceleration Academy
- Floyd Elementary School
- Georgia Washington Middle School
- Goodwyn Middle School
- Highland Avenue Elementary School
- Highland Gardens Elementary School
- Jefferson Davis High School
- Johnson Elementary School
- King Elementary School
- Sidney Lanier High School
- Robert E. Lee High School
- Fitzpatrick Elementary School
- McKee Middle School
- Morris Elementary School
- Nixon Elementary School
- Park Crossing High School
- Southlawn Elementary School
- Southlawn Middle School

17. What positions will be replaced, or will the entire school be vacated in the intervention schools?

There are currently no plans for any reconstruction efforts in any MPS schools. Decisions about personnel will be made on a case-by-case basis.

18. What criteria will be used to determine if a teacher/administrator keeps their position?

The CEO will look at a variety of factors to determine staffing needs for intervention schools. Some of the criteria includes: student performance data, student and teacher attendance, student discipline, chronic absenteeism, college-and career-readiness rate, and graduation rate.

19. What about tenured teachers – can they be terminated under this authority?

The State Department has the authority to terminate tenured teachers. See Ala. Code § 16-6E-4(5). As noted above, any such termination must be done in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Act, except to the extent that the tenured teacher is terminated pursuant to a RIF, in which case the Act does not apply.

20. Can dismissed employees apply for jobs in other MPS schools?

Teachers who hold a valid certification may apply for jobs in any school district in the state of Alabama.

21. Are there any central office positions that will be eliminated?

The review of district operations will be designed to “right-size” the operations and ensure that investments are made first in classrooms.

PARENTS:

22. If my child is in a school being taken over, can I transfer to another school?

Not at this time. Students will remain at their assigned school.

23. What new services will be available to students?

Part of the intervention is to conduct several audits. The audits will evaluate instruction, district/school programs, finances, and operations. The audit results will determine the need for new services and /or programs. Some new course offerings and new programs will be implemented as things progress.

24. Will there be any changes in the length of the school day, weekend schools, or calendar changes?

As plans evolve, there is a possibility the length of school day and or calendar will change.

25. Does the state takeover impact my child's transportation services in any way?

No, transportation services will remain intact.

26. What can I do as a parent to support the efforts of the state department?

Parents may assist by becoming involved in school activities and promoting efforts to improve student performance. There will be sessions held to identify the specific ways parents can get involved.

27. Will there be a website or an online presence where parents can read up on, understand, and keep up with the state's plan and any progress being made?

Yes, a website will be completed by the beginning of May to keep the community informed of the progress being made.

28. If my child attends one of the identified schools and I have a complaint, do I go to MPS or to the state department for resolution?

The classroom teacher and the building principal are the first people to contact. If matters cannot be resolved there, Chief Education Officer will be available to provide support for escalated concerns that have not been resolved by the school principal.

29. Was/is MPS opposed to this intervention or are the state and MPS working collaboratively?

MPS and the state are working collaboratively with this intervention.

30. What, if any, authority does the state department's leader of this effort have over MPS' board?

Under a state intervention, the State Superintendent has ultimate authority of the entire district. The MPS board has been delegated the responsibility to continue governance over the non-intervention schools. The CEO will have direct responsibility over the 27 schools.

31. What makes the state believe they can do better than the local board?

The ALSDE has the necessary resources to aid in improving finances, operations, and student performance.

32. What actions will the state take that the local board could not?

The State Department is unable to state what actions it will take in intervention, as the State Department is in the process of evaluating what steps are necessary to restore fiscal and administrative accountability and academic proficiency to the Montgomery County Public School System. However, the State Department has "plenary authority to make such decisions or take such actions as [it] deems necessary to correct the deficiencies that led to the request for approval of intervention or that may be discovered in the exercise of intervention authority," Ala. Code § 16-6E-4(5), and it should be expected that the State Department will make full use of its authority as needed to correct the deficiencies that caused intervention.

33. Will any of the schools become Charters?

Current plans do not include converting existing schools to charter schools.

The information contained herein is purely informational only. It is not designed to commit the Alabama State Department of Education to any affirmation, promise or legally binding representation on what has, or will occur during the intervention.



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ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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