STATE POLICY CASE STUDY

Mississippi

Analyzing the learner continuum in Mississippi.

Mississippi’s 2020 legislation, restructuring the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) suggests that the state is beginning to refocus its efforts on education to workforce pathways. Mississippi already has many building blocks in place, including college acceleration options, a process for awarding credit for military learning, reverse transfer and registered apprenticeships. Mississippi is well-positioned to build on this foundation and address critical gaps in policy and program. These include the need to develop a cross-agency shared definition of high-wage, high-skill, high-demand occupations and credentials with business and industry at the table and to provide funding for K-12 and postsecondary to strengthen and align their programs.

STRENGTHS

• Mississippi’s legislative requirement to conduct a return on investment analysis for K-12 and postsecondary CTE programs and to strengthen alignment
• Mississippi’s remediation courses in high school that help prepare learners for postsecondary credit bearing courses.
• Mississippi’s Innovative Apprenticeship Program that allows apprenticeships to receive both college credit hours and wages for their training.

OPPORTUNITIES

• Leverage the SWIB to launch a cross-agency council charged with developing shared education to workforce goals, priorities and metrics to drive decision making
• Implement a last dollar or last mile program for students attending public postsecondary institutions
• Enact policies to reduce legal barriers for employers engaging in K-12 and postsecondary work-based learning

Resources and additional information on the Learner Continuum can be found on the last page of this state case study. Please contact PathwaysMatter@ExcelinEd.org for questions about this state case study or about the policy continuum in your state.
**LEARNER PATHWAYS**

*Ensure vertical alignment to workforce needs, robust funding, collaboration across agencies and equitable access for all students.*

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<th>K-12</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HIGH-QUALITY CTE PROGRAMS</strong></td>
<td>Align all CTE programs with high-demand, high-skill and high-wage occupations that reflect the state’s economic and workforce priorities. Ensure that these programs feature the academic and technical skills and knowledge learners will need to be successful.</td>
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<td><strong>TARGETED CTE PROGRAM FUNDING</strong></td>
<td>Dedicate state funding for CTE programs—but only if they are aligned to high-demand, high-skill and high-wage occupations. Target specific funds for pathway completion and demonstrated learner outcomes.</td>
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<td><strong>RETURN ON INVESTMENT ANALYSIS</strong></td>
<td>Conduct a biennial return on investment (ROI) analysis of CTE programs to assess whether all learners have access to high-demand, high-skill and high-wage pathways. Collect school- and student-level data to evaluate outcomes of CTE programs against established shared metrics for quality and equity.</td>
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<td><strong>STATE CROSS-AGENCY SHARED PRIORITIES</strong></td>
<td>Establish shared priorities and collective accountability across state agencies and education systems for learner pathway development, supports and success. Ensure that business and industry have a seat at the table and can lead discussions related to demand and training requirements.</td>
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KEY POLICY

High-Quality CTE Programs

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
Mississippi K–12 does not align with the 16 nationally recognized career clusters, it offers only eight programs of study. Mississippi postsecondary offers 13 career pathways. CTE programs follow standardized statewide curriculum for secondary and postsecondary levels.

In 2022 Mississippi passed landmark legislation, Mississippi Comprehensive Career and Technical Education Reform Act to strengthen high-quality pathways across the state. This comprehensive legislation includes:
- Strengthening alignment across K-12 and postsecondary CTE programs and business/industry
- Conducting a return on investment analysis for K-12 and postsecondary CTE programs and implementing recommendations based on the needs identified
- Establishing a statewide career coaching initiative
- Developing a list of qualifying industry credentials and an incentive grant for students who earn the credentials
- Strengthening cross-sector partnerships across the state

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
The comprehensive career and technical education reform act has the potential to be transformational for the state. As part of the process Mississippi can continue to focus on the north star priorities for the state to drive the coordination and focus of the work.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Delaware – Career and Technical Education Programs
- Tennessee – Career and Technical Education Programs
- Texas – Program of Study Initiative

RESOURCES
- Mississippi Board of Education Strategic Plan
- Mississippi Perkins V State Plan
- Mississippi CTE

POLICIES
HB 1338 – Mississippi Comprehensive Career and Technical Education Reform Act
Targeted CTE Program Funding

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
Mississippi provides weighted funding for CTE teachers at one half teacher unit added for each CTE program approved by the Mississippi Department of Education. Mississippi’s CTE funding is currently provided equally to all programs and does not distinguish the fields or programs that are in demand, high skill and high wage.

Tech Prep funds were found in Mississippi Code Annotated, which stated that they are allocated to the school districts to provide funding for items such as middle school career discovery, occupational tests and CTE equipment and to develop and implement an integrated sequential CTE course of study plan for grades 7–12 and community colleges. However, very little could be found about the Tech Prep funds implementation.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Once the return on investment analysis has been completed, Mississippi can consider targeted K–12 funding to help incentivize local education agencies in their development and implementation of high-quality, aligned programs of study. This could include funds to support the startup and sustainment of high-quality, aligned programs and incentive funds for students who complete a high-quality, aligned program of study or obtain aligned industry credentials.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
• Indiana – Funding Methodology
• Ohio – Innovative Workforce Incentive Program
• Texas – House Bill 3

RESOURCES
• Mississippi CTE

POLICIES
• MS Code Ann. § 37-151-25. Tech Prep
• HB1600 2022-2023 funding for CTE
KEY POLICY

Return on Investment Analysis

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
As part of the 2022 Mississippi Comprehensive Career and Technical Education Reform Act, the Office of Workforce Development, Accelerate MS has been tasked with conducting a return on investment analysis for both K-12 and postsecondary CTE programs. The goals of the ROI analysis are to (1) ensure that existing CTE programs of study are aligned with workforce needs, informed by labor market demand, linked to occupations that are middle to high wage and vertically aligned to postsecondary programs; (2) know where H3 CTE programs are offered across all recognized local education agencies; and (3) understand student access, participation and completion data by student groups to determine potential inequities.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Mississippi’s return on investment analysis legislation is one of the most comprehensive in the nation. Due to the current state of early implementation no opportunity to strengthen is identified. AccelerateMS can continue to consider stakeholder engagement throughout the process to help ensure the robustness of the recommendations and ability to implement change once the first-year ROI has been completed.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
• Colorado – Return on Investment Reports
• Florida – Executive Order 19-31 and House Bill 7071
  (NOTE: While promising, both could be strengthened by more focused analyses on equity and quality of offerings.)

RESOURCES
N/A

POLICIES
HB 1338 – Mississippi Comprehensive Career and Technical Education Reform Act
KEY POLICY

State Cross-Agency Shared Priorities

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Historically, Mississippi’s cross-sector collaboration has occurred on an ad hoc basis as individual agencies convene the appropriate stakeholders. For example, the Perkins V state plan was developed in partnership with the community colleges, the state workforce development board and local regional workforce boards. In the Perkins V plan the Mississippi Department of Education has agreed, in collaboration with the Mississippi Community College Board and community colleges, to develop a statewide marketing and communications plan for CTE including career exploration, work-based learning opportunities, early college high schools, and dual or concurrent enrollment program opportunities.

In 2020 the Mississippi State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) was charged with developing the state’s integrated workforce development system. The SWIB has formed an Office of Workforce Development, known as AccelerateMS. The work of the SWIB, however, is not currently formally aligned with K–12 or postsecondary, but is working across sectors and trying to leverage funding to strengthen alignment.

Mississippi Comprehensive Career and Technical Education Reform Act of 2022 requires collaboration between the Mississippi Community College Board, the Mississippi Department of Education and the Mississippi State University Research and Curriculum Unit to develop goals, programs and ensure alignment of CTE programs across the state.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

AccelerateMS can consider taking charge in launching a cross-agency council charged with facilitating shared education to workforce priorities that include shared agency goals and metrics, as well as potentially bundled agency funding to drive state advances. ExcelinEd’s Building Cross-Sector Partnerships to Support Career and Technical Education Pathways resource provides a step-by-step process for building cross-agency shared priorities.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Delaware – Advisory Council on Career and Technical Education (DACCTE)
- Indiana – Governor’s Workforce Cabinet
- Washington – Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

RESOURCES

- MS Perkins V State Plan
- SWIB
- Accelerate MS

POLICIES

- SB 2564 § 37-153-7. SWIB
- HB 1338 – Mississippi Comprehensive Career and Technical Education Reform Act
Streamline postsecondary learning and empower high school students to earn credit to reduce the time required to earn postsecondary degrees.

### COLLEGE ACCELERATION
Provide and incentivize a range of options for learners to earn college credit while in high school. Ensure that all learners have access and financial support to accelerate their journey to a postsecondary credential.

### CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING AND CREDENTIALS
Implement a consistent state policy for awarding postsecondary program or elective credit for prior learning, work experience and earned industry credentials.

### COLLEGE ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS
Establish statewide articulation agreements to ensure college credits earned in K–12 or at one institution transfer and count toward a degree at another. Minimize or eliminate credit loss and misalignment for transitioning learners.

### REMEDIATION
Replace outdated developmental and remedial education with college credit bearing options paired with intensive supports. Adopt co-requisite remediation programs or offer remediation to learners before they graduate high school.
**STATE CASE STUDY**

**POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION**

**KEY POLICY**

**College Acceleration**

**STATE POLICY ANALYSIS**

Mississippi established dual enrollment and dual credit programs through legislation in 1972. The purpose of the dual enrollment and credit programs is to offer structured opportunities for qualified high school students to simultaneously enroll in college courses that provide pathways leading to academic or career technical postsecondary credit. Students are eligible to earn a semester’s worth of dual enrollment and an unlimited number of dual credit credits. In 2016 the Mississippi Dual Enrollment and Advanced Placement Task Force created a college and career access pathways partnership between K–12 districts and postsecondary and the policy to standardize the awarding of credit for an Advanced Placement (AP) score of 3 or higher.

Mississippi currently has six early college high schools. Students have the opportunity to earn both a high school diploma and an associate degree or up to two years of credit toward a bachelor’s degree.

Mississippi also has the Mississippi Works Dual Enrollment-Dual Credit Option whereby a local school board and the local community college board can establish a program in which potential or recent student dropouts may dually enroll in their home school and a local community college to complete both their high school diploma and a community college credential, certificate or degree program.

**OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN**

Mississippi can consider continuing the expansion of college acceleration opportunities for students by promoting a diverse portfolio of options for all learners. This approach could reflect the expansion of awarded credit for advanced coursework completion, AP exams and earned advanced-level industry certifications. Additionally, the state can consider requiring all high schools to offer a minimum number of advanced-level college acceleration courses and providing supplemental funding so all advanced-level offerings can be accessed and completed at no cost to the student. To support equitable access for all students, Mississippi could also consider implementing an automatic advanced-level course enrollment policy for students who score certain levels on their end-of-course assessments or ACTs that also includes additional measures of determining eligibility.

**PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES**

- Florida – High School Acceleration Programs and Statewide Agreements on Credit
- Idaho – Advanced Opportunities Funding
- Louisiana – TOPS-Tech Early Start Program
- North Carolina – Automatic Enrollment

**RESOURCES**

- Dual Enrollment-Dual Credit
- Procedures Manual for Dual Enrollment and Accelerated Programs
- East Mississippi Early College High School

**POLICIES**

- MS Code Ann. § 37-15-38. Dual Enrollment Programs for Dual High School and Postsecondary Credit
Mississippi can consider establishing policies for its public postsecondary systems that standardize the awarding of college credit for prior learning and earned credentials. These policies would help to accelerate student attainment of a postsecondary credential.

**PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES**
- Colorado – Prior Learning Assessment Credit Policy
- Kentucky – Prior Learning Initiative
- Ohio – Military Strategic Implementation Team

**RESOURCES**
- N/A

**POLICIES**
- SB 2053. Award of Educational Credits for Courses That Are Part of a Student’s Military Training or Service
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Mississippi Community College Board policy 520 states that State Institutes of Higher Learning universities will accept all transferrable courses with a grade of C or higher completed as part of an associate degree. Once transferred, students can begin taking courses within a declared major or to fulfill prerequisites for a major. The Mississippi MATT transfer tool helps students to navigate the transfer process. There is no comprehensive cross-institutions system.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Given that variations can still exist across public postsecondary institutions, Mississippi can consider revisiting its existing credit articulation policy to cover credit transfer across public institutions and degree programs to minimize student course credit loss and accelerate student completion.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Florida – Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements
- Indiana – Core Transfer Library
- Kentucky – Transfer Articulation Agreements

RESOURCES

- My Way Mississippi MATT Articulation and Transfer Tool

POLICIES

- Board Policy Section 520
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

In 2018–19 Mississippi State Board policy required that all high schools offer the Essentials for College Literacy and Essentials for College Math for seniors with an ACT subscore between 15 and 18 in English/reading and mathematics. Students who complete one or both of these courses with an 80 or above are not required to take the corresponding remedial courses for College Algebra or English Composition I.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Mississippi’s Essentials for College Literacy and Essentials for College Math are a notable first step to help reduce student remediation at the postsecondary level. However, the state can also consider implementing co-requisite remediation that allows students to concurrently enroll in remedial and credit bearing coursework. Mississippi can also consider developing a more robust remediation assessment approach that incorporates more than just ACT scores as measures of readiness.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Georgia – Complete College Georgia
- North Carolina – Multiple Measures of Placement Policy
- Tennessee – Co-Requisite Remediation and Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support (SAILS)

RESOURCES

- Approved Courses for Secondary Schools of Mississippi

POLICIES

- State Board Policy Chapter 28, Rule 28.6
- State Institutions of Higher Learning Policy 608
Reduce barriers—such as funding, lack of alignment and missed opportunities—to help more students attain postsecondary credentials.

**REVERSE TRANSFER CREDENTIALS**
Establish a statewide policy to allow students to earn an associate degree while continuing to work toward a bachelor’s degree. Ensure two-year and four-year college credits can be combined toward the credential.

**LAST DOLLAR/LAST MILE FINANCIAL AID**
Provide dedicated state financial aid to qualifying learners that fills in gaps in federal assistance (last dollar) and promotes attainment for learners just shy of completing a degree (last mile).

**OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING**
Transition postsecondary funding models from those based on learner enrollment to ones based on learner outcomes. Dedicate more funding to programs and institutions that show demonstrated success in meeting success metrics such as job placement and long-term wage earnings.

**STACKABLE DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS**
Define and promote a combination of industry and academic credentials that reflect articulated pathways to advanced learning and employment. Ensure that postsecondary credential programs are widely accessible to all learners and reflect value in the labor market.
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Note: Although reverse transfer exists, there does not appear to be a state policy behind its implementation.

Reverse transfer allows students who have transferred from a community college to a public university with at least 16 transferrable credits to transfer credits earned at the four-year institution back to the community college. These reverse transfer credits count toward earning an associate degree, which gives students an additional credential and improves employability. Students must earn at least 16 credits from a single Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) college, earn at least 62 credits combined from MCCB and a State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) university, be in good financial standing at the IHL university, and agree to allow the IHL university to automatically provide their transcript to an MCCB college.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

While the vehicle for reverse transfer of degrees is present across various public postsecondary institutions in Mississippi, the state can consider the development and promotion of systemwide policies that affirm the actual conferral of awards consistently across all institutions.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – Reverse Transfer Process
- Florida – Reverse Transfer Statewide Articulation Agreements
- Texas – Reverse Transfer Process

RESOURCES

- Education Commission of the States Mississippi Reverse Transfer Profile
- Mississippi Public Universities Reverse Transfer

POLICIES

N/A
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
In 2019 Mississippi began implementing the Mississippi Works Career Tech Scholars Program. The program is a state-assisted tuition scholarship (last dollar) program for eligible community college students that provides financial assistance for tuition costs associated with eligible CTE programs at each community college. The program is only for specific CTE courses. The Mississippi Works Career Tech Scholars Program has not been codified in state legislation policy.

No comprehensive last dollar or last mile scholarships exist. Across the state various last dollar programs exist funded by foundations or county programs.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
To reduce financial barriers and increase postsecondary completion for its citizens, Mississippi can consider implementing a last dollar or last mile program for students attending public postsecondary institutions.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Florida – Last Mile College Completion Program
- Rhode Island – Rhode Island Promise
- Tennessee – Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect

RESOURCES
- Mississippi Works Career Tech Scholars Program

POLICIES
N/A
Outcomes-Based Funding

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
In 1994 Mississippi passed the Performance Budget and Strategic Planning Act. However, the cumbersome process for agencies was difficult to utilize to inform budget decisions. Over the past few years, the Legislature has taken steps to strengthen performance-based budgeting. The state developed a statewide strategic plan and directed agencies to align goals and performance measures with overall state goals. This process, along with improved technology, will allow lawmakers to better evaluate agency performance and direct funding to programs that reflect the state’s priorities.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Mississippi can consider continuing to streamline and strengthen its performance-based budgeting system, including data captured and reported on, and to develop clearer guidelines on ramifications if systems/institutions do not meet their agreed-to targets. By creating a more robust outcomes-based budgeting process, the state will help incentivize its postsecondary systems and institutions to make the necessary changes to increase their student completion outcomes and strengthen their program alignment with state workforce priorities and needs.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Missouri – Performance Funding
- Tennessee – Outcomes-Based Funding Formula
- Texas – State Technical College Funding Model

RESOURCES
- Performance-Based Budgeting in the States
- A Legislator’s Guide to Revitalizing Performance Budgeting in Mississippi

POLICIES
- Mississippi Performance Budget and Strategic Planning Act
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
Mississippi community college credentials are designed as stackable to a 15 semester-hour college credit, 30 semester-hour career certificate, 45 semester-hour technical certificate and 60 semester-hour associate of applied science degree.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
To clarify and reinforce the value placed on already earned credentials as students pursue additional credentials, Mississippi can consider establishing a cross-agency committee that affirms what constitutes stackable credentials from K–12 through postsecondary, including skills retraining certificates. The committee can help ensure that all stackable credentials hold market value in the workforce.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
• Colorado – Stackable Credential Legislation
• Idaho – SkillStack
• Indiana – Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant

RESOURCES
• Mississippi Community College Board

POLICIES
• Mississippi Community College Board, Postsecondary and Career Technical Guidelines
## WORKFORCE READINESS

Ensure the skills, credentials and apprenticeships students pursue help to prepare a strong workforce within the state.

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### WORK-BASED LEARNING
Establish a statewide K–12 and postsecondary work-based learning program that promotes learning through a series of progressive learner experiences both in the classroom and in a work setting. Provide guidance and support for how education and business and industry collaborate to achieve mutual priorities.

### APPRENTICESHIPS
Establish clearly defined program guidance for state-promoted apprenticeships outlining prerequisites, requirements, funding, stakeholder incentives and participant outcomes.

### INDUSTRY-VALUED CREDENTIALS
Ensure all industry credentials earned in K–12 or postsecondary are aligned with high-demand, high-skill, high-wage occupations and valued by state and regional employers.

### SKILLS RETRAINING/CREDENTIALING
Identify and promote non-degree programs and credentials that support new, transitioning and displaced learners in career change and advancement. Ensure that supports include funding supports for learners and incentives for participating employers who train or retrain them.
KEY POLICY

Work-Based Learning

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Note: No work-based learning policy is listed in statute. The only time work-based learning is listed is for a district applying to be designated as a district of innovation.

Mississippi currently offers a credit bearing course, Career Pathways Experience, for work-based learning in K–12. Mississippi’s 2020 strategic plan update mentions that the state researched a new state plan for work-based learning that aligns to Perkins V and promotes equitable opportunities across Mississippi, but the plan could not be found online.

Mississippi community colleges also offer work-based learning with combined credits and work experiences.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Mississippi can consider developing a statewide work-based learning strategic plan with leadership and support across state agencies and private industries. Once developed and implemented, the plan will ensure work-based learning opportunities are high quality and reflect strong alignment with the academic, technical and employability learning and skills students mastered. A strong first step could be to develop a credit bearing work-based learning practicum course aligned with CTE programs of study. ExcelinEd’s Developing High-Quality State Work-Based Learning Programs playbook provides guidance on developing a comprehensive work-based learning program.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

• Delaware – Work-Based Learning Practicum
• Georgia – Work-Based Learning Framework
• Rhode Island – PrepareRI Work-Based Learning Navigator

RESOURCES

• 2020 CTE Work-Based Learning: Credit Bearing Course Guidelines
• 2020 Strategic Plan Update
• Mississippi Delta Community College Work-Based Learning
• Mississippi Community College Board Office of WBL/Apprenticeship

POLICIES

N/A
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
In addition to traditional registered apprenticeship programs, Mississippi’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act plan outlines an innovative apprenticeship program under the Mississippi Apprenticeship Council. This program connects apprenticeships to CTE training programs within the state’s community college system. Apprentices can receive both college credit hours and wages for their training. Mississippi also has a goal of offering “reverse apprenticeships,” which will let workers retroactively receive college credit for their skills and work experience. The status of the implementation of the reverse apprenticeships could not be found online.

K–12 school boards are given the authority to establish vocational apprenticeship programs in state policy 37-31-69. These apprenticeships appear to be locally driven and are not part of a formal registered apprenticeship through the U.S. Department of Labor.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
To build on its steady progress, Mississippi can consider an incentive program for students who are in registered apprenticeship programs to be eligible for reimbursement of tuition, books, required tools and other approved expenses required for participation in the program.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Iowa – Earn and Learn
- Kentucky – Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky and Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship
- New Jersey – Apprenticeship Network
- South Carolina – Apprenticeship Carolina

RESOURCES
- Mississippi Works
- Mississippi Community College Board Office of WBL/Apprenticeship
- My Way Mississippi

POLICIES
- MS Code Ann. § 37-31-69, Vocational Apprenticeships
**STATE POLICY ANALYSIS**

Mississippi’s Perkins V plan includes the percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having attained a recognized postsecondary credential as one of its metrics, and the goal is for 20 percent of secondary CTE students to earn an industry-recognized credential. Mississippi maintains a list of approved credentials and defines criteria to identify industry-recognized credentials that are in demand or of value, but the list is not developed collaboratively with employers and industry. The list of approved credentials could not be found online.

The Mississippi Comprehensive Career and Technical Education Reform Act of 2022 tasks AccelerateMS with developing a list of nationally recognized industry certifications and establishing, with MDE, an incentive grant program providing $600 for each student who earns a “qualifying industry certification.” Qualifying industry credentials are defined as as being connected to an industry that addresses a state- or local-economic need, is included on a State Department high-demand occupations list, or is identified as being an emerging occupation, and leads to a career with an estimated salary of at least 70% of the median statewide salary.

**OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN**

According to ExcelinEd’s research with Burning Glass for CredentialsMatter.org, in 2017–18, just 30 percent of industry credentials earned by Mississippi K–12 students were asked for by employers and were associated with occupations that pay at least $15 per hour. Mississippi can consider establishing clear criteria for what defines a credential of value across K–12 and postsecondary systems and for the collection and analysis of reported data on earned credentials. Additionally, workforce representatives can be brought to the table by state K–12 and postsecondary leaders to annually evaluate and update the list of approved industry-valued certifications. Mississippi can also consider approaches to incentivize increased student attainment of identified certifications.

**PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES**

- Indiana – Promoted Industry Certifications
- Kentucky – Valid Industry Certifications
- Louisiana – Industry-Based Certification State Focus List

**RESOURCES**

- Mississippi Perkins V State Plan
- CredentialsMatter.org

**POLICIES**

- HB 1338 – Mississippi Comprehensive Career and Technical Education Reform Act
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
The Workforce Investment Network (WIN) in Mississippi operates a system of more than 60 WIN Job Centers throughout the state. Each center is a resource for employment and training services for businesses and job seekers. Businesses can qualify for up to half of a new hires’ wages while they are participating in the training.

In 2016, Mississippi established the Mississippi Works Training Fund, allocating $50 million over 10 years to enhance training opportunities at the state’s 15 community colleges. The Mississippi Development Authority has the ability to direct funds as part of industry recruitment and expansion efforts with 75 percent of the total funding commitment dedicated toward new job creation and 25 percent to existing industry. Training is conducted primarily through Mississippi’s community college system, local workforce development areas and universities.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Mississippi can consider focusing its efforts and ensure its skills retraining programs align with high-demand job fields. Mississippi can consider providing a grant that provides employers or individuals reimbursement for skills retraining upon completion of a qualifying degree within an in-demand, high-skill field.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Indiana – Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant
- Ohio – TechCred
- Washington – Worker Retraining Program

RESOURCES
- Mississippi Workforce and Training
- WIN Job Centers

POLICIES
- MS Code Ann. § 57-1-451. Mississippi Development Authority Job Training Grant Fund
Incentivize workforce engagement in student pathways and reduce the barriers that keep employers from participating.

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT INCENTIVES
Establish, sustain and promote a comprehensive set of industry and employer engagement incentives for supporting education to workforce pathways. Incentives may include grant funds, tax credits, or local and regional support services.

LEGAL BARRIERS
Remove or lessen legal barriers such as liability insurance, workers’ compensation and worksite age restrictions to provide more learners with work-based learning opportunities.
EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

KEY POLICY

Industry Engagement Incentives

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Employers are eligible for tax credit if they provide their employees basic skills training or retraining that is certified by a junior or community college. The official procedures for the certification program are developed by each community or junior college.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Mississippi can consider continuing to strengthen its industry engagement incentives. Mississippi can also consider providing financial incentives or tax credits for employers that hire students participating in a formal work-based learning program or funding reimbursement for employers who train, hire and retain new or incumbent workers to fill in-demand positions within recognized job fields.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Georgia – Work-Based Learning Premium Credit
- Indiana – Next Level Jobs Employer Training Grant
- Iowa – Tax Credit

RESOURCES

- Basic Skill Training or Retraining Tax Credit

POLICIES

- MS Code Ann. § 57-73-25. Certification of Basic Skills Training and/or Retraining Tax Credit Rule
MISSISSIPPI

KEY POLICY

Legal Barriers

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
No policies removing legal barriers could be identified.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Mississippi can consider implementing policies to reduce legal barriers for employers engaging in K–12 and postsecondary worksite-based learning. Mississippi can consider a partnership with an external company to employ work-based learning students who are then placed at businesses. This helps to reduce many of the burdens such as workers’ compensation liability and other restrictions. Mississippi could also consider allowing public schools to purchase certain insurance coverage for the benefit of businesses and students participating in CTE programs and provide for some immunity from liability of certain public school students participating in these programs.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Kentucky – Apprenticeship Programs & Partnerships
- Rhode Island – Work Immersion Training Grant
- Texas – Insurance Coverage

RESOURCES
- N/A

POLICIES
- N/A
DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

To ensure the strength of all the other policies, there must be cross-sector agreement on outcomes, strategies to get there and data to track progress.

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<td>PROGRAM QUALITY MEASURES</td>
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<td>STATE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM</td>
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PROGRAM QUALITY MEASURES
Establish shared statewide definitions and measures for quality of and success in education to workforce pathways. Ensure these shared priorities extend across agencies and systems and inform decisions about program offerings, funding and outcomes.

STATE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM
Ensure the state’s cross-agency data system collects and reports on data needed to evaluate education workforce programs against shared metrics for quality and success. Data should span agencies and education systems and into the workforce to inform decision-making and drive outcomes.
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Mississippi has an Education Achievement Council whose purpose is to sustain attention to the state’s goal of increasing the educational attainment and skill levels of the state’s working-age population benchmark to the national average by 2025. The council members are representatives of state government; public K–12 leaders; public, private and proprietary higher education officials; and business community leaders.

The Education Achievement Council is tasked with monitoring and reporting on the progress toward the achievement goals by preparing an annual report card. The report consists of degrees awarded, college readiness (ACT, intermediate course enrollment, completion of gateway courses), student progress in credit hour completion, graduation rates and research projects.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Mississippi can consider setting state-level goals reflective of state economic and workforce priorities that would directly affect the well-being of its citizens. The metrics collected and reported could be strengthened through a cross-agency process that includes breaking out the data by demographic and geographic fields to determine levels of equity across the state. Mississippi can also consider developing cross-agency shared definitions and metrics that are student focused and uniform, with an emphasis on CTE pathways linked to middle- to high-wage occupations.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – Talent Pipeline Report
- Indiana – Governor’s Workforce Cabinet
- Rhode Island – PrepareRI

RESOURCES

- Education Achievement Council

POLICIES

- MS Code Ann. § 37-163-1, Education Achievement Council
Mississippi has a state longitudinal data system (SLDS) known as Mississippi Life Tracks that includes data from:
(a) Mississippi Department of Education;
(b) Mississippi Community College Board;
(c) Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning;
(d) State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB);
(e) Mississippi Department of Employment Security;
(f) Mississippi Department of Human Services; and
(g) State Early Childhood Advisory Council.

Each agency also participates in the SLDS Governing Board. All of the data is publicly available on the website LifeTracks.MS.gov.

Mississippi can consider leveraging the SWIB to lead the effort to utilize the SLDS data to inform identification of shared priorities and mapping progress against meeting them.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Colorado – Talent Pipeline Report
- Florida – Talent Development Council
- Kentucky – KYStats

RESOURCES
- Mississippi Life Tracks

POLICIES
- MS Code Ann. § 37-154-1, SLDS