

Support for Success Planning: Public Comments from Teach Plus MS Policy Fellows

Introduction

Teach Plus Mississippi strongly supports the proposed changes to Process Standard 14.1 of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards. This proposed change clarifies that all students must have an Individual Success Plan (ISP) by the 7th grade, and that these plans “must be reviewed and updated annually through the senior year.” This adjustment to the accountability standards has the potential to greatly assist schools, districts, and communities in ensuring that our students are prepared for success after high school.

In Spring 2025, Teach Plus Mississippi teacher leaders submitted a [policy memo](#) recommending for MDE to explicitly clarify that ISPs must be completed and updated annually for every student. This recommendation was rooted in clear evidence demonstrating the positive impact success plans have on improving grades, strengthening goal-setting skills, and increasing postsecondary enrollment rates.

“I don’t think the importance of ISPs is being emphasized. All faculty and staff need to understand how this helps guide the students’ academic careers.” **Mississippi educator**

Learning about ISP Implementation

Currently, Teach Plus teacher leaders are spearheading two initiatives intended to increase the completion and utilization of ISPs:

- + Our **Delta Change Agents** are working across multiple districts in the Mississippi Delta to increase the number of students who have completed ISPs. They have utilized existing career interest surveys, where available, and developed their own tools to identify the career clusters their students are most interested in.
- + Simultaneously, our **Policy Fellows** are conducting a statewide survey to better understand the current landscape of ISP implementation.

While we are still analyzing the qualitative data from this survey, our preliminary findings reveal critical gaps:

- + There is a wide variance in ISP completion rates across grade levels.
- + Only **38.7%** of respondents report that parents are informed about their student’s ISP results.
- + **Fewer than half** of respondents state that ISPs created in middle school are shared with

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the high schools that students subsequently attend.

“Additional professional development is needed for counselors, teachers, and administrators on effective ISP implementation and integration into instruction. Training should focus on how to use ISP data to guide student goal-setting, course planning, and career pathway alignment.”

📍Mississippi educator

In the coming months, we look forward to collaborating with MDE to share our complete survey findings and implementation experiences, offering concrete recommendations for increasing ISP completion. We also want to partner with the department to establish practices that drive greater utilization of ISP data. While we recognize the power ISPs have in helping individual students explore and select their preferred career pathways, we believe that this data, when viewed in aggregate, can further prepare students for postsecondary success by::

- + **Informing** school and district-level decisions regarding advanced course offerings.
- + **Increasing** access to career and technical education (CTE) programs, particularly those yielding industry-recognized certifications.
- + **Encouraging** robust partnerships between public schools and local business communities to provide internships and other workforce development opportunities.

Conclusion

While it is important to meet the workforce needs of our business and manufacturing sectors, it is equally vital to ensure that students in every corner of our state have the opportunity to explore career pathways that align with their aspirations and talents. Supporting students as they explore, select, and pursue their career choices is essential to building an economy that works for everyone. Our teacher leaders look forward to working alongside local and state policymakers as we work to prepare all Mississippi students for postsecondary success.



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Teach Plus Mississippi Policy Fellows

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About Teach Plus

The mission of Teach Plus is to empower excellent, experienced, and diverse teachers to take leadership over key policy and practice issues that advance equity, opportunity, and student success. In pursuing this mission, Teach Plus is guided by the Student Opportunity Mandate: All students should have the opportunity to achieve their potential in an education system defined by its commitment to equity, its responsiveness to individual needs, and its ability to prepare students for postsecondary success.

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