



Current Education Options in MS

Most Mississippi students can only attend the public school they are assigned to based on where they live. While other options may exist, access is often limited by geography, eligibility rules, or the financial ability of the student's family.

Traditional Public Schools

The default option, where students are assigned to schools based on residence.

- Tuition-free; funded by local, state, and federal taxes.
- Students may only attend schools to which they are assigned by the local school district unless the district allows transfers within the district or to another district, or the student qualifies to attend a magnet school operated by the district.

Expansion option:

Districts could adopt broader intra-district transfer policies.

Portability/Open Enrollment in Public Schools (Across District Lines)

Allows students to transfer to schools outside their home district with approval.

- Both sending and receiving districts must approve; some receiving districts charge tuition.
- No transportation provided across district lines.

Expansion options:

Remove sending-district veto power while allowing receiving districts to limit enrollment from out-of-district students; prohibit or state-fund tuition costs.

Public Charter Schools

Publicly funded, tuition-free schools run independently of local districts.

- Open to students in the district where charters exist; others may attend if from C, D, or F-rated districts; may only open in D or F districts upon approval by the state Charter School Authorizer Board, which may also approve charter schools in A, B, or C districts with local school board approval.
- Only 10 charters exist statewide in 5 districts; first high school opened in 2025.

Expansion options:

Allow charters in all districts; remove restrictions based on district ratings.

Private Schools

Tuition-based schools that may be made more accessible through state-directed scholarships.

- Families pay tuition unless financial assistance programs, like Education Savings Accounts (ESAs), are available to help cover costs.
- Mississippi currently offers limited state-funded financial assistance programs, which are outlined below.

Expansion option:

Broaden ESA eligibility to all students for tuition, therapies, or other educational needs.

Homeschool

Parents provide education directly, covering curriculum and related costs.

- Parents must notify the local district.
- Costs are borne by families; no state funding.

Expansion options:

Consider ESA eligibility; allow participation in public school extracurriculars.

Scholarship Programs

Financial aid options that help families access private or specialized schools.

Publicly-funded:

Education Scholarship Account (ESA) – For students with special needs.

2024-2025: 345 students participated

Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship – For students with dyslexia.

2024-2025: 246 students participated

Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship – For K-6 students with speech-language impairments.

2024-2025: 10 students participated

Privately-funded:

ACE Scholarships provide partial tuition for low-income families.