



42 FOR BETTER SCHOOLS

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Funding “roadmap” makes K-12 funding possible *Legislature should do its job and keep its promise*

JACKSON, Miss. (July 8, 2015) – Last year, nearly 200,000 petition signers for Initiative 42 gave state lawmakers a roadmap for fully funding Mississippi’s public schools without tax increases or agency budget cuts, the 42 For Better Schools campaign said today.

“This phase-in using natural growth in state revenue across several years was key to why so many people – Republicans and Democrats – signed the petition to place Initiative 42 on the November ballot,” said Rana Mitchell of Eupora, mother of two and a Carroll County Schools administrator who supports Initiative 42.

The citizen-led initiative would require the Legislature to fully fund the state's share of support for some 150 school districts, as promised 18 years ago but done only twice.

“This blueprint for school funding isn’t something new. It was spelled out on every petition that was signed and turned in to the Secretary of State for certification,” said Mitchell. “The Legislature now needs to do its job and follow the instructions that the voters of Mississippi gave to them more than a year ago.”

The petitions carried a proposal with these word-for-word points:

- Funding the initiative will not require a reduction in, elimination of, or reallocation of funding from any currently funded programs.
- The initiative will be funded by maintaining current funding levels for public education through the 12th grade adjusted for inflation, and then devoting to public education not less than 25% of future increases in general fund and other tax collections in order to achieve the constitutionally required level of adequacy and efficiency in the public educational system by a target date of Fiscal Year 2022 and maintain it in the future.
- For example, the state’s general fund revenues are projected to increase over Fiscal Year 2014 levels by approximately 3% annually, which will produce an additional \$150 million in Fiscal Year 2015. Twenty-five percent of that would be \$37.5 million.
- A similar amount for seven years could reach the additional \$265 million a year in current dollars which will be needed to provide Mississippi’s public school students with an education that is adequate and efficient by contemporary standards.

In the 2015 legislative session, lawmakers short-changed the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) funding formula by \$200 million. Since 2008, the Legislature has failed to fund school districts nearly \$1.7 billion, causing financial difficulties and pressuring cities and counties to raise taxes to try to bridge the gaps.

“Our legislators have two choices: either continue to scare voters into believing the sky will fall if they fund our children’s public educations, or man up and keep the promise they made to the citizens of Mississippi to fully fund our schools,” said Shannon Eubanks of Brookhaven, a 42 supporter and principal at Enterprise Attendance Center in Lincoln County.

For more information about Initiative 42, go to www.42forbetterschools.org.

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