The Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013 established Mississippi’s first state-funded, voluntary pre-K program. The Early Learning Collaborative Act provides funding to local communities to establish, expand, support, and facilitate the successful implementation of quality early childhood education and development services. Implementation began in January 2014, with capacity to serve 1,774 children. Pre-K programs in Head Start centers, licensed child-care facilities, and public, parochial, or private schools formed and maintained a stakeholder council called an Early Learning Collaborative, involving a minimum of two of those program auspices. The Early Learning Collaborative designated a Lead Partner of either a public school or other nonprofit entity with the instructional expertise and operational capacity to manage a Collaborative’s Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) program.

The 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years saw steady state funding for preschool in Mississippi, at $3 million per year, but state funding increased to $4 million in 2016-2017. In January 2017, four new collaboratives were funded and used the remainder of the 2016-2017 school year as a planning period. Full services in these new collaboratives launched with the 2017-2018 school year. As long as the Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013 is funded, current collaboratives that meet program requirements will continue to be funded.

The voluntary pre-K program intends to improve quality, increase access to high-quality pre-K programs for 4-year-olds, and prepare more children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school. The program also supports local programs to improve quality, and families have access to information about the pre-K program. Pre-K programs will increase their collaboration with other early childhood education programs and related services. Pre-K programs also implement an integrated, effective system of early childhood curriculum, instruction, assessment, and program evaluation, including curricula aligned with the MDE’s Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children. In the 2016-2017 school year, the program implemented the LAP-3 assessment in order to identify children who may need additional interventions or gifted services.
MISSISSIPPI EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment.................................................. 1,642
School districts that offer state program............................ 10%
Income requirement...................................................... No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation.............................. 6 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule...................................................... School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .............. 4,125
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4........... 21,333
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4............... 0

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
<th>MS PRE-K REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>CURRENT BENCHMARK</th>
<th>MEETS CURRENT BENCHMARK?</th>
<th>NEW BENCHMARK</th>
<th>MEETS NEW BENCHMARK?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early learning &amp; development standards</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>New in 2015-2016</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher degree</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher specialized training</td>
<td>ECE, CD</td>
<td>Specializing in pre-K</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Specializing in pre-K</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher degree</td>
<td>AA in ECE or CD</td>
<td>CDA or equivalent</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>CDA or equivalent</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff professional development</td>
<td>15 hours/year; PD plans (classrooms on probation)</td>
<td>For teachers: At least 15 hours/year</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum class size</td>
<td>14 (3-year-olds); 20 (4-year-olds)</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-child ratio</td>
<td>1:7 (3-year-olds); 1:10 (4-year-olds)</td>
<td>1:10 or better</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>1:10 or better</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening &amp; referral</td>
<td>Vision, hearing, health &amp; more; Support services</td>
<td>Vision, hearing, health &amp; at least one support service</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals</td>
<td>At least one meal/day</td>
<td>At least one meal/day</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Discontinued</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring/ Continuous quality improvement</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement</td>
<td>Site visits</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Structured classroom observation; program improvement plan</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending............................................. $4,000,000
Local match required?................................................... Yes
State Head Start spending........................................... $0
State spending per child enrolled.............................. $2,436
All reported spending per child enrolled*....................... $5,832

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
** Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.
*** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

PRE-K

HDST**

K-12***

State contributions
Federal contributions
Local contributions
TANF spending

STATE PRE-K AND HEAD START ENROLLMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION

3-YEAR-OLD

4-YEAR-OLD

Pre-K

Head Start†

Special Ed††

Other/None

† Estimates children in Head Start not also enrolled in state pre-K.
†† Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

Data are for the 2016-2017 school year, unless otherwise noted.