

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 26, 2013

Emily Kingsland  
(202) 379-1800  
[ekingsland@ncee.org](mailto:ekingsland@ncee.org)

***Excellence for All Expands to More Schools in Mississippi***  
*Six Schools Across Mississippi Now Implementing a New Performance-Based Model  
Designed to Prepare Students for College and Careers*

WASHINGTON, DC — *Excellence for All* has expanded to four more schools in Mississippi since it was first launched in fall 2011. The initiative provides a performance-based pathway for every student to graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college or in a career and technical education program that will lead to a successful career.

Starting in the 2013-2014 school year, Oak Grove High School, Sumrall High School, Purvis High School and Columbia High School will join Corinth High School and Clarksdale High School in implementing the model. Earlier this year, the Mississippi Department of Education awarded participating school districts planning grants of at least \$50,000 each.

“The Mississippi Department of Education commends the *Excellence for All* districts for their innovation and commitment to providing students with enhanced opportunities for success after high school. It is critically important to prepare our students for a global economy. By offering more flexibility, options and relevance, students will be less likely to drop out of school and will graduate with the skills needed to be successful citizens of our state and nation,” said Dr. Lynn J. House, interim state superintendent of education.

*Excellence for All* is rooted in more than 25 years of research on the education systems of the countries that consistently outperform the United States in student achievement. Participating U.S schools use the best high school instructional systems available in the world. These systems include world-class syllabi, instructional materials, examinations and teacher training.

The Mississippi schools that are joining this fall have chosen ACT *QualityCore* as their provider while Corinth and Clarksdale High Schools use Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge Advanced. The instructional systems are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, enabling participating high schools to not just lay the foundation for the Common Core but to get a head start on implementation.

Students enrolled in the program are able to advance based on their mastery of the rigorous curriculum instead of relying on the outdated model of “seat time” or how much time they spend in the classroom. Once students have met college-ready standards in a series of core courses in English, mathematics, the sciences, history and the arts, they have several options from which to choose, as early as the end of their sophomore year. These options include staying in high school and continuing to prepare for admission into a selective college, pursuing a career and technical education, enrolling in a community college without having to take remedial courses or directly entering the workforce.

"As we strive to increase our graduation rate and also to better prepare our students for college and career readiness, we feel that the rigor of the *Excellence for All* program will be a step in the right direction," said Dr. Ben Burnett, Superintendent of Education at Lamar County School District. "The high school student of today needs to be challenged and to have options in their high school experience. We are excited to be a part of this program in trying to provide more options for our students."

"The Columbia School District is honored and excited to participate in the *Excellence for All* initiative," said Dr. Marietta James, Superintendent of Columbia School District. "Our district has a rich tradition of providing new and innovative opportunities for students to excel. Through this partnership with the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), the Mississippi Department of Education, and ACT *QualityCore*, students have another such opportunity. This initiative will provide a smooth transition to the Common Core State Standards for students at Columbia High School."

Nationally, over forty schools are participating across Arizona, Connecticut, Kentucky and Mississippi. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has contributed to the planning, research and evaluation phases of the effort and the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan is conducting a rigorous independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the model. To learn more about the program and for a full list of the participating schools, visit: [www.ncee.org/e4a](http://www.ncee.org/e4a).

###

*The National Center on Education and the Economy was created in 1988 to analyze the implications of changes in the international economy for American education, formulate an agenda for American education based on that analysis and seek wherever possible to accomplish that agenda through policy change and development of the resources educators would need to carry it out. Follow NCEE on Twitter [@CtrEdEcon](https://twitter.com/CtrEdEcon) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CtrEdEcon).*