

Mississippi Struggled in Latest Bar Exam Report



Summary: Mississippi's law schools continue to decline in bar passage rates, causing the schools to react and implement strategies to help their graduates pass the exam.

The results are in and things don't look good for Mississippi law schools. The passage rate of graduates taking the bar exam in Mississippi continues to decrease. Less than a third, or 29 out of 90 candidates, passed the exam this past February, according to the preliminary results reported by the Clarion Ledger.

This is a significant decline from the results of February 2017 where 36 out of 88 applicants passed the exam. Mississippi Supreme Court spokeswoman Beverly Kraft explained that applicants can request to have their exams regraded, which may increase the numbers slightly. In 2017, the result was revised with the addition of seven passed exams.

The passage rate in the state has dropped from a high of 75 percent in 2015 to its current 32 percent in 2018. The rate in 2016 was a 68.8 percent and then dropped again in 2017 to 52.2 percent. The reason behind the decline is not clear but [Mississippi College School of Law](#) Dean Patricia Bennett speculates that the results are from the law schools accepting less qualified students in order to keep enrollment numbers up.

Executive Director Kyle McEntee of Law School Transparency said their investigation in 2015 found that law schools were accepting more students than before with lower incoming credentials like LSAT scores and GPAs.

Bennett admits the both Mississippi law schools – MC and the [University of Mississippi](#) could do better but that they are keeping competitive. The University of Mississippi first-time takers passed the exam at 73.4 percent. Those taking the exam for the second time have a higher failure rate, according to UM Law Dean Susan Duncan. Overall, her school had a 64 percent passing rate. Even though the rates are not really low, the law school has taken steps to ensure they don't continue to decline. Students are now required to take bar review courses to help them prepare better for the exam.

Mississippi is not the only state seeing declining scores. Alabama also had a low passage rate of 32.5 percent. However, next door, Louisiana was able to secure a 61 percent rate. Tennessee also saw low scores but they contribute the lower number to one law school that brought down the rate for the whole state. Nashville School of Law had a pass rate of only 13 percent.

Do you think Mississippi law school's are struggling or is it just the February exam's varying results from smaller groups taking the exam that is making the state look bad? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

To learn more about the law school's in Mississippi, read these articles:

- [Former Dean of University of Mississippi School of Law Dies](#)
- [Mississippi College School of Law Introduces Its First African American Dean](#)
- [University of Mississippi School of Law Sees Drop in Enrollment](#)

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