

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Technology and Strategic Services

SAO PORTAL — GUEST USER ACCESS GUIDE

Registration, Training, and Folder Access for School District Staff

⚠ IMPORTANT — MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION (MFA) IS NOW REQUIRED

MDE requires multi-factor authentication for all external (guest) users. During registration or sign-in you may be prompted to set up a second verification method — most commonly the **Microsoft Authenticator app** on your phone, or a one-time code sent by text or call.

This is a **one-time setup**. Afterward, you will simply approve a prompt or enter a code when signing in. If your school district already requires MFA on your work account, you may not see an additional prompt.

If you reach a screen that says “**More information required**”, complete the setup as prompted — this is expected and required to continue.

Overview

The SAO Portal allows school district staff to upload referrals and monthly reports directly to secure folders for their district and school. Before you can access your folders, you must complete three stages:

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
Register as an MDE guest user (one time)	Complete SAO Portal training and mark attendance	Request access to your district and school folders

Already have MDE access? Skip to Part 2 on page 2 — you only need to complete the training and folder access request.

Part 1 — New Users (No Existing MDE Access)

Step A — Register on the MDE cloud. Open the registration link below in your web browser:

<https://myaccess.microsoft.com/@mdek12.org#/access-packages/8d630bfa-ca34-4ecc-830c-52c8a43f0a0d>

1. Enter your **school email address** and password.
2. A passcode will be sent to your email (**check your spam folder**). Enter the passcode.
3. **MFA setup:** you may now be prompted to register for multi-factor authentication — the Microsoft Authenticator app or a phone number for text/call verification. Complete this setup when prompted. It is required under MDE security policy and only needs to be done once.

4. In the Guest User Access Panel, enter your **justification (job title)**, check the box to consent to the MDE user guidelines, and submit.
5. Approval normally takes about **30 minutes**. Track progress under **Request history** on the left side of the screen (pending, awaiting approval, approved, delivered).
6. Once approved, continue to **Part 2** below.

Part 2 — Training and Folder Access (All Users)

Step B — Open the SAO Portal:

<https://mdek12.sharepoint.com/sites/SAOPortal>

1. Sign in with your school email. You may be asked to verify with MFA. **Existing users:** you may be prompted to set up MFA the first time you sign in after the new security policy — complete the setup when prompted.
2. If you are not allowed in, close the window and try again after several minutes.
3. Click the **Training** block and watch the five short videos.
4. Click the **Mark Attendance** block. A page opens with your training date — click **Save**.
5. Return to the SAO Portal home page and click **Request access – school district user**.
6. Complete the drop-down boxes (district, name, email, job title):
 - **School users:** School → District (select your district) → School → Job title
 - **District users:** District → District (select your district) → Job title
 - Request access to **your district and your school only**. This determines which folders you can see.
7. Click the **SAVE tab in the upper-left corner** — there is no submit button.
8. Your request is routed for approval. You will receive an **approval email with a link to your SAO Portal folder**. Timing depends on the approver.
9. Click the link in the email. We recommend **pinning the site as a favorite** so you can return to it directly.

WHAT YOU WILL SEE AFTER APPROVAL

District users see all school folders for their entire district.

School users see only their assigned school's folders — the emailed link opens directly to it.

Troubleshooting

Problem	Solution
Stuck at “More information required” or an MFA registration screen	This is the new MDE security policy. Complete the Microsoft Authenticator or phone setup to continue — it is a one-time step.

Passcode email never arrives	Check your spam/junk folder. The passcode may come from Microsoft on behalf of mdek12.org.
Sign-in loops or shows the wrong account	Open an InPrivate/Incognito browser window and sign in with your school email only. If multiple Microsoft accounts appear, select “Work or school account”.
Not allowed into the SAO Portal after approval	Close the browser window, wait several minutes, and try again. Access can take a short time to propagate.
Can't find the school in the request form	Make sure you selected the correct district first — schools populate based on the district selection.

Mississippi Department of Education — Office of Technology and Strategic Services
 Questions? Contact your district's SAO Portal coordinator or MDE IT Support.