

By: Representatives Scott (17th), Barnett  
(92nd), Broomfield, Chaney, Coleman (65th),  
Fredericks, Markham, McElwain, Miller,  
Peranich, Reynolds, Shows, Simmons, Thomas,  
Vince, Holland

To: Education;  
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 973  
(As Passed the House)

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO  
2 IMPLEMENT A PILOT PROGRAM TO ASSIST IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FAMILY  
3 SUPPORT CENTERS AND PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE  
4 GOAL OF FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS AND PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS SHALL  
5 BE TO CREATE A BETTER LIFE FOR MISSISSIPPI FAMILIES AND CHILDREN;  
6 TO SPECIFY CERTAIN PROGRAMS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH FAMILY  
7 SUPPORT CENTERS; TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO ESTABLISH AN  
8 APPLICATION PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PILOT PROGRAM; TO  
9 REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO GIVE PRIORITY TO APPLICANTS FROM CERTAIN  
10 LEVELS I, II AND III SCHOOL DISTRICTS; TO REQUIRE APPLICANTS TO  
11 HAVE IN PLACE AN ADVISORY BOARD FOR THE FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER; TO  
12 AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT TO USE AVAILABLE FUNDING FOR GRANTS TO  
13 PARTICIPATING FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS; TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO  
14 APPOINT AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO ASSIST THE DEPARTMENT IN  
15 PROMULGATING REGULATIONS FOR THE PILOT PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE  
16 DEPARTMENT TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEGISLATURE WHETHER OR NOT THE  
17 PROGRAM SHOULD BE PERMANENTLY ESTABLISHED; AND FOR RELATED  
18 PURPOSES.

19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

20 SECTION 1. (1) The State Department of Education, in its  
21 discretion, may develop and implement a pilot program to assist in  
22 the establishment of community-based family support centers and  
23 individual family or parent education services. The goal of the  
24 programs shall be to create a better life for families and  
25 children in Mississippi, with emphasis being placed on the  
26 emotional, physical, social and mental needs of the whole family.  
27 The family support centers and family or parent education service  
28 programs shall provide parents with opportunities to voluntarily  
29 obtain support and services that will enable them to provide  
30 optimum learning environments for their children, particularly  
31 from birth to the age of three (3) years, within the home. The  
32 family support centers shall serve to build community networks to  
33 support children and families through the implementation of the  
34 following care activities: parenting classes; developmental

35 programs for prekindergarten-age children during parent education  
36 classes; support groups; individual family or parent education  
37 services; a resource library; and resource and referral services.

38 Additional services may be provided to meet the identified family  
39 needs of the community and in keeping with the goals of the  
40 program. The family support centers shall focus on school  
41 readiness and early literacy.

42 (2) Under the pilot program, the department shall establish  
43 a procedure for interested school districts and other nonprofit  
44 entities in partnership with a school district to apply for  
45 assistance in establishing a family support center. In selecting  
46 school districts and nonprofit entities for the program, the  
47 department shall give priority to applicants that are school  
48 districts having Levels I through III accreditation which have  
49 high instances of teenage pregnancy, welfare dependency and  
50 delinquency. At least one (1) family support center shall be  
51 established in each congressional district.

52 (3) Under the pilot program, the department shall establish  
53 a procedure for interested school districts and other nonprofit  
54 entities in partnership with a school district to apply for  
55 individual family or parent education programs. Programs must use  
56 research based, independently evaluated, proven research models  
57 that are documented to have a positive impact on reducing special  
58 education placements, development of language and social skills,  
59 and parental involvement in schools.

60 (4) As part of the application process for participation in  
61 the pilot program, applicants must demonstrate to the department  
62 that the family support center is a collaborative undertaking of  
63 various community organizations. Each applicant must have created  
64 an advisory board for the family support center or parent  
65 education services programs, involving the participation of the  
66 local school district or districts, the city and county governing  
67 authorities, the county health department, regional mental health  
68 centers, the extension service, representatives of the Department  
69 of Human Services and any other private or public entities  
70 participating in the partnership.

71 (5) The State Department of Education may accept any funds,

72 public or private, made available to the department for the pilot  
73 program. The funds shall be used to award grants to the  
74 participating family support centers or family or parent education  
75 services programs for the support of such programs. A family  
76 support center or family or parent education services program may  
77 use any available funding to support the administration and  
78 programs of the center or education services program.

79 (6) The State Department of Education shall promulgate  
80 rules and regulations necessary for the proper administration of  
81 this section. An advisory group shall be established to assist in  
82 the development of the rules and regulations for administration of  
83 the program. Members of the advisory group shall include, but not  
84 be limited to, representatives of the following categories:  
85 parents; local school districts' parent education programs staff;  
86 the Department of Human Services, Division of Family and  
87 Children's Services; Head Start; the cooperative extension  
88 services; and USOE funded parental assistance programs.

89 (7) If the family support center and family or parent  
90 education services pilot programs authorized by this section are  
91 implemented, the State Department of Education shall report to the  
92 Legislature, within three (3) years after the pilot program's  
93 implementation, on the desirability of expanding and permanently  
94 establishing the program.

95 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
96 and after July 1, 1999.